

topic

The Life, Work, and
Worship of the Diocese
of New Westminster

Volume 1
Number 1
February 15, 1970

SYNOD OFFICES PROPOSE MOVE TO CATHEDRAL

It has been announced that the Synod Offices, which are presently located at 837 West Hastings Street, will move to Christ Church Cathedral when the current lease on their existing accommodation expires at the end of June of this year. Mr. Peter Kaye, Chairman of the Administration and Finance Committee and Honourary Treasurer of the Diocese, indicated that negotiations have been in progress with the Cathedral for some time, and that architectural and building modifications required at the Cathedral have already been worked out. Agreement for the move has been reached between the Cathedral and the Administration and Finance Committee, and final approval rests with the Diocesan Council at their meeting on February 17th.

When asked about the financial implications of the move, Mr. Kaye indicated that it would be of mutual benefit to both the Diocese and the Cathedral. It would certainly be most appropriate for the Synod Office to be located at a focal point of downtown Vancouver.

LENTEN SERIES AT ST. JOHN'S SHAUGHNESSY

Professor J. Moir and Canon T. Bailey, from the Anglican Theological College, will each be giving a series of six lectures during the Lenten season. These will be held in the parish hall of St. John's Memorial Church (Shaughnessy).

Canon Bailey's lecture title will be "Modern Man's Approach to the Gospels in the 70's." These will be held on Thursday evenings commencing February 12 at 8:00 p.m. Professor Moir will give a series on "Some of the Prophets" on Tuesday evenings commencing February 17 at 8:00 p.m.

There will be a registration fee of \$2.00 *per series*. For further information, please contact the church office at 731-4966.

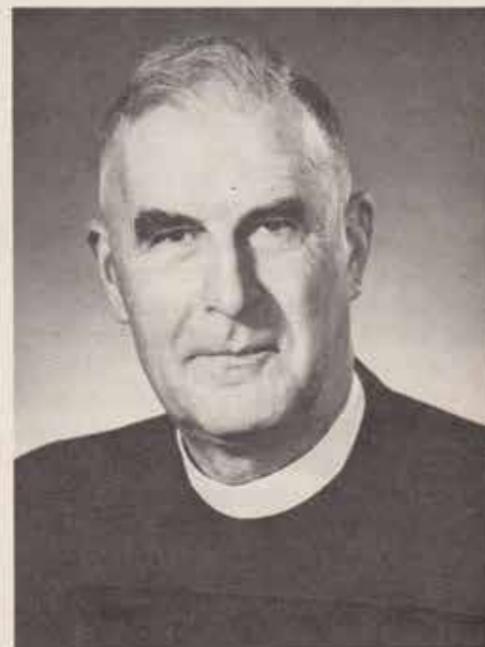
Archdeacon Watney Appointed National Consultant on Theological Education

Archdeacon D. P. Watney has been appointed as National Consultant on Theological Education effective March 1, 1970. What will be an undoubted gain for the National Church will be a loss to our Diocese. The Archdeacon's association with the Diocese and the Anglican Theological College covers a span of over forty years.

One could probably trace the origins of Archdeacon Watney's new appointment to 1967 when he was asked, with two other Commissioners, to make a study and assessment of the Anglican Theological Colleges across the country, and to make recommendations as to the future program and deployment of total resources of buildings, manpower and money in the whole area of theological education and the training of people for full time ministry. The report "Theological Education for the Seventies" was issued in August 1969 and was received and endorsed by General Synod.

The terms of reference for the Archdeacon's new post include assisting the church and, in particular the theological colleges in the implementation of the recommendations of this report. In addition he will consult with other churches with a view to developing joint programs and pooling of resources. He will also assist in the coordination of the roles of the various colleges so as to produce a totally integrated pattern of theological education which will take account of both secular and church resources.

While the Archdeacon's new post will involve working across the entire country, he expects that a fair amount of his time will be spent in Western Canada, and he will con-



ARCHDEACON D. P. WATNEY

tinue to retain his residence in Vancouver.

A motion at the Diocesan Council meeting on January 20 aptly sums up the high regard with which Archdeacon Watney has been held in this area:

"That this Diocesan Council, having learned of the appointment of Ven. D. P. Watney, D.D. as consultant to the National Commission on Theological Education, extends warmest congratulations and sincere good wishes for every success in his new work. . . ."

. . . "We pledge him our full support and pray that God's blessing will be with him in the days ahead."

In the fall of 1969, I was a planning engineer plying my trade as an employee of BC Hydro. I attended Christ Church Cathedral, and—for my sins—had been persuaded by Dean Herbert O’Driscoll to edit the parish newsletter *Contact* (still going strong).

Earlier in 1969, David Somerville had been elected as the Coadjutor Bishop of the diocese of New Westminster. Bishop David was given the task by his boss, Archbishop Godfrey Gower, of rebranding the official diocesan publication, *Anglican News*, which had been edited by among others, the Rev. Grant Dale.

While I was not privy to the planning deliberations at that time, I was invited to become the founding editor of a publication to replace the *Anglican News*. The changes made were as follows:

1. The new, yet to be named publication, was to be edited by a lay person who would take his or her direction from an editorial board.
2. This lay person would be paid an honorarium — \$150 per issue.
3. The format of the publication would be letter size, replacing the former tabloid format of the *Anglican News*.
4. While not explicitly spelled out, the understanding was that the publication would have an independent editorial voice while dependably reporting on current news within the diocese.

The first order of business for the new editor was to propose to the Editorial Board possible names for the publication. The Board presented several names to Bishop David. Ultimately he chose *Topic*, a name that I had suggested. I had encountered the name as the house organ of an engineering company where I had worked in England. That company and its publication are long gone.

I was editor of *Topic* from February 1970 to March 1976. During that time, *Topic* started out with a four-page letter size format intended for bulk delivery to all the parishes in the diocese. Those parishes with their own publications could append *Topic* as was the case for the Cathedral’s *Contact*.

Meanwhile, the national publication, the *Canadian Churchman*, was mailed to all Anglicans in the diocese. The *Canadian Churchman* was printed by Charters in Brampton, Ontario. In early 1971, the editor of the *Canadian Churchman* encouraged *Topic*’s editorial board to print *Topic* in a tabloid format and have it included as an insert to the *Canadian Churchman*. The persuasive case was made that there would be no increase in mailing costs and all parishioners in the diocese would receive the publication. The challenge in this pre-electronic publishing era was that content had to be mailed to Ontario for typesetting of copy. Galley proofs were mailed back to me for editing and final approval prior to publication. There were tight deadlines in the process and the only way to ensure the prompt mailing of copy was to drive down to the main post office building in Vancouver—often very late at night.

As editor of the new publication I took direction from *Topic*’s editorial board, which was chaired by Father Ron Barnes, Rector of St. Barnabas in New Westminster. Also, on the Board (among others) were Elizabeth Murray, a professional communicator with BC Tel (predecessor of Telus) and the then Dean of the diocese, Herbert O’Driscoll.

In early 1975, *Topic*’s reporting structure changed. The role of the editorial board was transferred to the Diocesan Program Committee and the Program Director, the Rev. Eric Powell. Also, in March 1975, the Rev. Ron Harrison, who had been taking photographs for *Topic*, was appointed Associate Editor, a post he occupied until 1984.

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“The first order of business for the new editor was to propose to the Editorial Board possible names for the publication. The Board presented several names to Bishop David. Ultimately he chose *Topic*, a name that I had suggested to the Board.”

Topic’s first editor circa 1972, Conrad Guelke. PHOTO Anglican Archives, diocese of New Westminster

FOUNDING EDITOR LOOKS BACK

Conrad Guelke, ODNW | Editor 1970–1976 | Contributor 1970–Present



Eucharist at the 1975 consecration. Check out the organ. PHOTO Anglican Archives, diocese of New Westminster

Growing communities of faith in Jesus Christ to serve God’s mission in the world.



Published eight times a year as a section of the *Anglican Journal* by the Archbishop and Synod of the diocese of New Westminster.

Editor Randy Murray
rmurray@vancouver.anglican.ca

Designer Jennifer Ewing, BDes

Issue This is the 500th issue and 2nd issue in the 51st year of publication

Deadline For Submissions

February 21 for April issue;
March 20 for May issue

Address changes in writing to:

Topic c/o Anglican Journal,
80 Hayden Street, Toronto, Ontario M4Y 3G2
or visit www.anglicanjournal.com/subscribe.

This issue printed by:

Renaissance Printing Inc. (Pickering, Ontario)

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The Most Rev. Melissa M. Skelton

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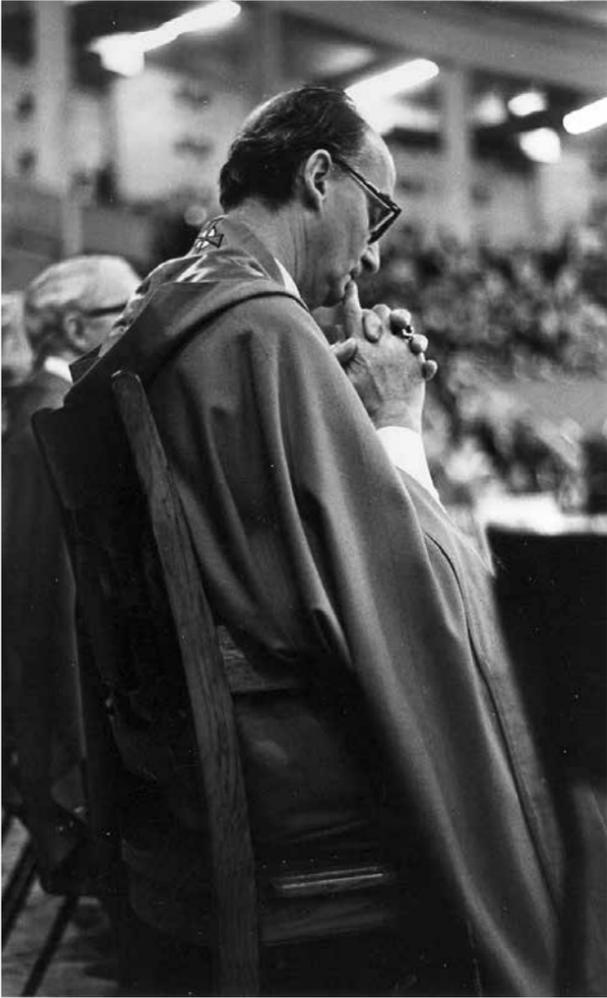
1410 Nanton Avenue,
Vancouver, BC V6H 2E2

Phone 604.684.6306

Many thanks to all who contributed to this 50th Anniversary issue, with added thanks to Anglican Archivist, Marche Riley and the Venerable Ronald Harrison for their work sourcing and supplying images.

And special thanks to Saskia Rowley of the *Anglican Journal* for facilitating the printing and distribution processes.

Thank you!



LEFT Bishop David Somerville in a reflective pose during worship at the Agrodome on the PNE grounds in 1975. RIGHT The first *Topic* Editorial Board Chair, the Rev. Ron Barnes (left) and former editor of *The Anglican News*, the Rev. Harold McSherry (right) at the 1977 Clergy Conference in Manning Park.

PHOTOS Anglican Archives, diocese of New Westminster



Archbishop Somerville signs "oath of obedience" at Christ Church Cathedral prior to his installation as Metropolitan of BC/Yukon in 1975. He is observed by Provincial Synod Officials: the Rev. Eric Powell, Huber King, Ruth Scott, and Bishop Frame. PHOTO Anglican Archives, diocese of New Westminster



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An issue of *Topic* typically comprised:

- An article describing a major event in the diocese, usually involving the bishop.
- Diocesan news under the heading *Roundup*, which highlighted newsworthy events in parishes throughout the diocese.
- An editorial column related to an issue of the day. (Editorial independence was not an issue although it was an unwritten rule that *Topic* would present its editorial views in a fair and balanced manner.)
- Listings of the archbishop's and co-adjutor bishop's engagements.
- Letters to the editor — space permitting.

During my tenure, the two major stories were about the priesthood and a church building. In a global, Anglican context, the ordination of women was an issue where Bishop David Somerville provided outstanding leadership. There was significant pushback from some clergy in the diocese and, indeed, in 1976 when the first women, the Rev. Virginia Briant and the Rev. Elspeth Alley, were ordained in Christ Church Cathedral, the service was temporarily interrupted when a member of the diocesan clergy stood up, read out a statement expressing his opposition to the ordination of women and then walked out of the building. In my opinion, Bishop Somerville's leadership in pioneering the ordination of women was his most important achievement during his episcopacy.

The other newsworthy event during my time as editor was the public outcry that emerged when Christ Church Cathedral attempted to redevelop its prime real estate in Vancouver into a combined church and office tower building. The timing was such that the issue became a cause célèbre for several prominent non-Anglicans who opposed the demolition of the Cathedral building—a necessary precursor for the redevelopment of the site. "Saving" the Cathedral became the rallying cry of those wishing to preserve the historic building. Eventually, the City of Vancouver intervened with an elegant solution. The Cathedral's "air rights" could be transferred to an adjacent building on the block which, consequently, could be built to a greater height. In return for this concession the developers of the adjacent property would pay a fixed annual fee to the Cathedral by way of consideration for those air rights—a "quid pro quo" in modern (or ancient Latin) parlance.

In many ways it was a "win-win" solution. The building was preserved and the Christ Church Cathedral community avoided bankruptcy, thereby enabling its downtown ministry from the corner of West Georgia and Burrard to continue.

As for the *Roundup* content, I would meet every month with the diocesan administrator, Nigel Snelgrove, who was well tuned into happenings throughout the diocese. With the help of Nigel, I was able to provide a hopefully balanced overview on comings and goings about parishes in the diocese.

My successor at the editorial helm of *Topic* was Lyndon Grove, an experienced radio and print journalist. Lyndon brought to the task a breadth of knowledge not only of the Anglican Church but of the unfolding media climate in Vancouver.

After calling it quits as *Topic's* editor, it turned out that Bishop David had another task in mind for me, namely that of chairing the Diocesan Centennial Committee. (I never did find an effective way of saying "no" when faced with an episcopal request. It's up there with royal commands.) The diocese of New Westminster was established in 1879 and it was determined that a committee should be struck to recommend how to celebrate the diocesan centennial in 1979. Having made the recommendations, the Centennial Committee was also charged with implementing its recommendations subject to a tight budget.

Three separate projects were recommended and approved:

- A diocesan history; Lyndon Grove was commissioned to write a book describing the characters and events which had shaped the diocese. The result was *Pacific Pilgrims*, a most readable narrative describing how the diocese of New Westminster had adapted to the unfolding of the history of British Columbia and the world beyond. (It was a busy time for Lyndon as he undertook this writing project while also editing *Topic* and "commuting" from Edmonton, where his work had taken him for five months. During the commute *Topic's* editorial tasks had been taken over — reluctantly — by Cynthia Ashton, another Cathedral parishioner employed by BC Hydro. According to Lyndon, "Somewhere, Cynthia is still cursing me.")



LEFT Ordination of Women to the priesthood (November 1976). RIGHT The Rev. Keith Gilbert and Lesley Godwin performing at the Orpheum for the Centennial Celebration of the diocese of New Westminster (November 29, 1979). PHOTOS Anglican Archives, diocese of New Westminster



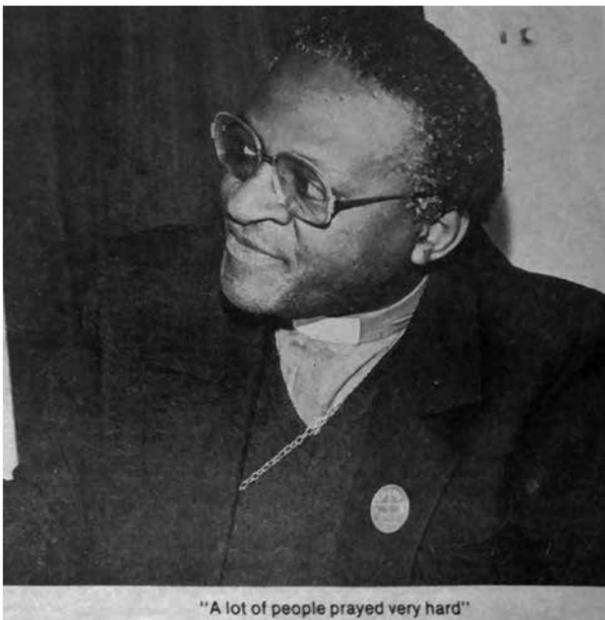
"I was invited to interview Desmond Tutu, who at the time was the Bishop of Lesotho (formerly Basutoland). This was at a time when the apartheid regime in adjacent South Africa was effectively suppressing all opposition."



Two Tutus at Youth Synod, St. Mary's, Kerrisdale — a long way from Lesotho.

LEFT Nomalizo Leah and Desmond Tutu at St. Mary's, Kerrisdale in 1977. RIGHT Archbishop Desmond Tutu during his 1977 interview with Conrad.

PHOTOS Anglican Archives, diocese of New Westminster



"A lot of people prayed very hard"

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FOUNDING EDITOR LOOKS BACK

Conrad Guelke, ODNW | Editor 1970–1976 | Contributor 1970–Present

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- An evening celebration at the Orpheum Theatre to which all parishes in the diocese were invited. It was an intergenerational event involving music and tableaux.
- A centennial hymn competition.

Also, my association with *Topic* continued. Notwithstanding my partiality to puns, Lyndon invited me to be a “Contributing Editor.” This involved the writing of a column for each issue under the byline *CBG*. I was given free rein in respect to my contributions. (Indeed, I have no recollection of ever being reined in.) My *CBG* columns continued through to September 1983; the following selection of titles is indicative of the range of topics covered:

- A year for the child (January 1980)
- Energy, the church and society (November 1980)
- Caesar’s things (December 1980)
- A message of hope (March 1981)
- Faith and sexuality (April 1981)
- Exclusive use of inclusive language (June 1981)
- Who does speak for the Church? (October 1981)
- A plague of loneliness (December 1981)
- An ideal we call Canada (January 1982)
- Caring cannot be selective (March 1982)
- The powerful and the dispossessed (May 1982)
- Nuclear dilemmas (December 1982)
- What do we owe tomorrow? (March 1983)
- Of death and dignity (April 1983)

While on my successor Lyndon Grove’s watch in May 1977, I was invited to interview Desmond Tutu, who at the time was the Bishop of Lesotho (formerly Basutoland). This was at a time when the apartheid regime in adjacent South Africa was effectively suppressing all opposition. Nelson Mandela had been sentenced to life imprisonment in 1964. At the time of the interview with Bishop Tutu, I had no idea that seven years later—in 1984—this forceful, yet modest, man would win the Nobel Peace Prize. I remember being impressed by Bishop Tutu’s courage and sense of humour.

While the focus of the interview was on South Africa, I did ask Bishop Tutu about the church in Canada:

“The Bishop was asked for his observations of church life in Canada. It was interesting that he considered that parishes tended to lack a sense of being part of a diocese. He felt there was too much of a ‘we-they’ attitude in the thinking of individual parishes.” Deja-vu?

When David Somerville retired, I wrote an editorial tribute in the October 1980 issue of *Topic* under the heading *Grace and Tenacity*. Here is an extract:

“It is appropriate that Topic express its appreciation to Archbishop David for his support during this time.

Over the years Topic enjoyed an independent editorial status that Archbishop David had steadfastly respected. While he must, on occasions, have preferred that Topic contain its editorial zeal, he chose not to invoke episcopal privilege.

A leader’s place in history is a concern usually reserved for second-term U.S presidents (and possibly long-term Canadian prime ministers).

The interest of Anglicans in their history is circumspect at best and, at that rate, Archbishop David would have to resign himself to recognition by the chronicler of Pacific Pilgrims II in 2079.

However, an action for which the verdict of history will surely be favourable relates to his role in supporting the ordination of women. Just as our first bishop, Acton Sillitoe, was the driving force that resulted in the convening of the first Canadian General Synod, it was Archbishop David’s bold leadership that was largely instrumental in shepherding the cause of women’s ordination to its successful and rightful conclusion.

He could easily have backed away from the issue in face of the strong opposition and obvious distress of some of his flock. He chose not to and, as a result, assisted in liberating the Anglican Church of Canada from the yoke of an inequity that continues to haunt the Church of England.

On this and many other issues Archbishop David demonstrated that his modest and gracious manner was matched by quiet determination and tenacity.

He has been a familiar visitor to parishes in the diocese, and it is this pastoral role which he may perhaps have found the most rewarding of his many activities.

Archbishop David will be joining the ranks of his predecessor and fellow-warrior, Archbishop Godfrey Gower, and may well discover himself working as hard as ever.”

The process of jogging my memory for this article included a visit to the Diocesan Archives, where I was able to pore over back issues of *Topic*. I realized what an honour it had been for me to edit this publication which has, over the last 50 years, progressed to become the prestigious

“During my tenure, the two major stories were about the priesthood and a church building.”



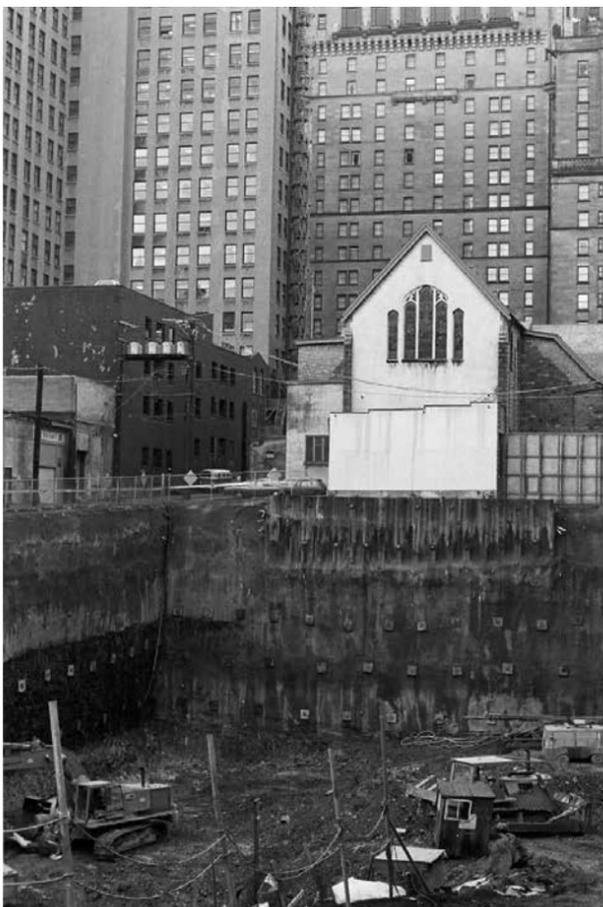
LEFT Conrad Guelke (1977). RIGHT The Rev. Elspeth Alley cuts the cake after her induction as rector of Holy Trinity, Vancouver (November 15, 1979). Rev. Alley was one of the two women priested on November 30, 1976. PHOTOS Anglican Archives, diocese of New Westminster



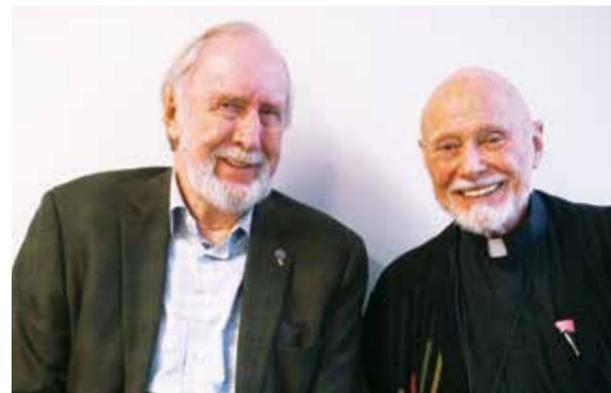
The Centennial Celebration Eucharist (November 1, 1979) at Holy Trinity Cathedral. PHOTO Anglican Archives, diocese of New Westminster



The Rev. Virginia Briant one of the first two women to be priested in the diocese of New Westminster is inducted by Archbishop Douglas Hambidge (right) as Rector of St. Richard’s. Archbishop Godfrey Gower (left), the 5th Bishop of New Westminster was the preacher (early 1980s). PHOTO Anglican Archives, diocese of New Westminster



The construction of Christ Church Cathedral’s current neighbour to the north, Park Place in early March 1982. PHOTO Anglican Archives, diocese of New Westminster



Conrad Guelke, ODNW and the Rev. Ron Barnes (December 10, 2019). PHOTO Randy Murray

A beloved Scots author of a series of whimsically-named novels called himself a joiner. Not the joiner (carpenter) of Scotland's building trade, but the joiner of words. Angus MacVicar's name is irrevocably linked with such titles as *Salt in My Porridge*, *Rocks in My Scotch*, *Silver in My Sporrán*, *Golf in My Gallouses* (trouser braces), to name only a few but, alas, he graciously declined to write yet another tale entitled *Canadians on my Door Stoop!*

When I first met Angus MacVicar, at the Mull of Kintyre in 1991, I had been a serious joiner/wordsmith with BC Tel (soon to be Telus) for more than 35 years. Far short of his high-level of authorship, we did share a common journalistic flair for the unusual, laced with snippets of history.

My corporate communications career with *BC Tel News* came to the attention of the Rt. Rev. David Somerville, the then Bishop of the diocese of New Westminster, and in late 1969, I was invited to join a small group of writers for the purpose of revitalizing the diocesan publication. Among those whom I already knew were the Rev. Ron Barnes, rector of St. Barnabas, New Westminster (chair); the Very Rev. Herbert O'Driscoll, Dean of Christ Church Cathedral; and the bishop. Others were James Gardner, classified advertising manager of *The Vancouver Sun*, and Campbell Kenmuir of James Lovick Advertising agency. (Conrad Guelke of St. Philip's, Dunbar was subsequently appointed editor of the folded, one-sheet, four-page, fledgling newsletter named *Topic*.)

On January 25, 1970, our first editorial (luncheon) meeting was held in the Synod Offices at 818–837 West Hastings Street. To my utter surprise (and likely horror), Bishop Somerville asked me to say grace. Unaccustomed as I was to this totally unexpected episcopal request, I managed to recite the Selkirk Grace—on the anniversary birth date of Robert Burns!

In September 1972, Ron Barnes advised the then editorial board that our *Topic* Committee had been dissolved.

My letter from the Rev. E. D. Powell, director of programme, read:

"During the past year, the Bishop's Executive Committee has re-evaluated the future of Topic in the overall Diocesan restructuring and we believe that it should become part of the Communications Unit... May I take this opportunity to thank you for your service in the past as a member of the Topic Board..."

During those formative years, 1970–1972, my contribution seems to have been focused on clergy and the unusual side of their ministry. Looking back to three of the articles I wrote, I find in each an odd connection with stones and rocks:

- From the Stone Age to the Nuclear Age in 100 years (December 1973)
- If New Westminster had a Bass Rock (March 1976)
- White Rock traditional retirement spot for Anglican clergymen (May 1976)

From a prehistoric age in 100 years was how the Rev. John Bodger, an Honorary Canon of Dogura Cathedral, described Papua New Guinea when he visited Vancouver in 1973 en route to England and a well-earned furlough. Rector of the Church of the Ascension, which he built at Alotau in the new township of Milne Bay, Canon Bodger watched New Guinea's progress for almost half of its 100-year-history. Reflecting on the cathedral at Dogura, he said people from the district will walk all day Friday and most of Saturday in order to be present at the altar on Sunday morning. He recalled a particular Sunday in 1966, when Prince Charles and the Geelong Grammar School boys attended the service. There were more than 1,000 communicants, and Prince Charles along with the rest of his



"During those formative years, 1970–1972, my contribution seems to have been focused on clergy and the unusual side of their ministry."

Member of the original *Topic* Editorial Board and *Topic* contributor for 50 years, Elizabeth Murray, ODNW seen here with the soon-to-be Reverend, Jeanette Stigger in the late 1970s. PHOTO Anglican Archives, Diocese of New Westminster

AN ODD CONNECTION TO STONES & ROCKS

Elizabeth Murray, ODNW | Editorial Board Member 1970–1972 | Contributor 1970–Present

classmates had to find a piece of concrete on which to kneel.

Unlike the Garden of Eden and the Bass Rock of author Bruce Marshall's *Father Malachy's Miracle*, St. Barnabas, New Westminster, was not about to levitate its parish hall while workmen laboured beneath the building to carry out the Rev. Robert Warren's excavation plan. Expansion and renovation of space was to enable St. Barnabas to continue its ministry in the community through an enlarged day care centre, established as a separate entity in 1974, by the then rector, the Rev. Ronald Barnes. As president of the St. Barnabas Day Care Society, Robert Warren said that he rejoices when "25 to 30 nippers are running about making pals under Christian influence."

White Rock failed to attract any one of the four priests of the diocese of New

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The Rev. Ronald Harrison with the Rev. Cap Cummings in 1983. PHOTO Courtesy of Elizabeth Murray



LEFT Janis Waller, Norman Bradbury, and Elizabeth Murray, at St. James' Canterbury Fayre (1973). MIDDLE Jack Cochrane, Rev. Robert Ross, and Rev. Harold Nahabedian, at St. James' Canterbury Fayre (1975). RIGHT Brian Rocksborough-Smith and Paul Stanwood, at St. James' Canterbury Fayre (1973). PHOTOS Courtesy of Elizabeth Murray



LEFT Songsters Shirley Whiteside, Frits Jacobsen, and Douglas Edwards, at St. James' Canterbury Fayre (1978). MIDDLE Sybil Ainsworth, Arthur and May Gutteridge, and Bob Ainsworth, at St. James' Centennial Fair (1981). RIGHT Mary Brown and Mavis Teasdale, at St. James' Petticoat Lane (1980). PHOTOS Courtesy of Elizabeth Murray



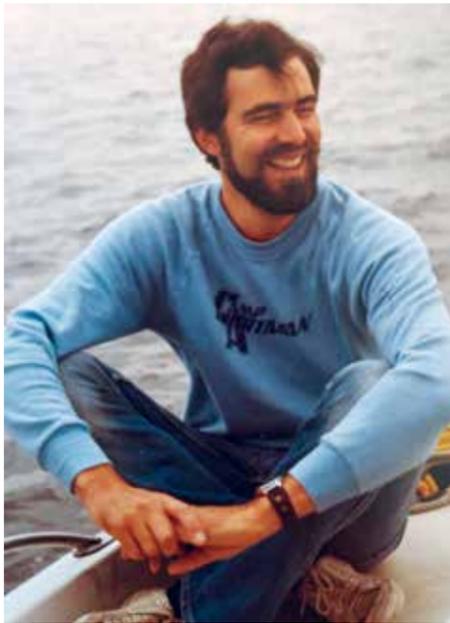
My *Topic* connection was not initiated by me; as the assistant priest at St. Philip's, Dunbar (1972–1976) I was author of many bulletin *Forewords* routinely included, giving insights on the readings, the liturgical cycle or related stories. I was surprised to find a few of them duplicated in *Topic* so I phoned to ask why my permission was not asked. Next thing I knew, I was on the *Topic* editorial committee. Besides the occasional column under "REH," I was asked by editor Conrad Guelke to take a few pictures; he lent me a small camera to get a shot of the parish Christmas tableaux, my first pic made the front page.

Motivational juices now activated, I went out and bought my first single lens reflex 35mm. camera, an Olympus OM1. Most pictures I took recreationally were "still life": trees, mountains, the sea, and buildings. I admired the portraits of Josef Karsh, and the stunning landscapes of Ansel Adams. A diocesan paper required "people pictures," and most, not all, un-posed. Hurriedly I consulted a few books, but the only one to make a lasting impression was Henri Cartier-Bresson's *The Decisive Moment* (1952). Cartier-Bresson, a French humanist photographer, pioneered the genre of street photography, capturing the "decisive, spontaneous moment" with a 35mm lens. This was, of course, pre-digital: negatives had to be developed, contact sheets made, pictures chosen with a magnifier, edited with a pencil on the contact sheet, and then taken to the shop to get a print made.

Being a cleric aided my *Topic* role, because the diocese put me on various committees, and I travelled a lot to attend conferences, allowing me to capture a few frames while doing my other work. I went to ordinations, consecrations, installations, retreats and inductions. Some examples: in 1976, I attended *Probe '76 Media and the Church* in Toronto and got to photograph Pierre Juneau (head of the CRTC), and *Maclean's* Editor Peter Newman in his office, sitting on his bookshelf. In 1979, I represented the diocese in Ottawa at an ecumenical church conference on disarmament.

In my role as "associate editor," I attended three Anglican Editors' Conferences and Workshops in Toronto (1977, 1979 and 1981). I recall a Ryerson Press expert advising on photo layout: a person's profile should "look away" from the margin if on the left of the page or "toward the margin" if on the right. That helped when a national mail strike meant no way of mailing *Topic* in the usual manner. I flew to Toronto, rented a car, and drove to Goderich, Ontario to the longtime printers, Silver Star with the layout; I worked all day as we moved things around, then saw *Topic* run on the press; it was trucked to Vancouver in bulk and I, and other volunteers, drove bundles around the diocese to each parish for distribution. ("neither rain nor sleet...") Lyndon Grove's editorial run saw a grand use of artwork and photography, often dominating more than text. I was pleased to see *Topic* win six *Canadian Churchman* (pre-*Anglican Journal*) photography awards between 1977 and 1983.

Because the national Anglican paper took notice, I was asked to photograph the Canadian bishops at the Lambeth Conference in Canterbury in 1978. The idea was to provide each diocese with pictures for their local publications. One of my favourites was arriving just in time to capture Archbishop David Somerville, just off the train, being greeted by Archbishop Coggan and his wife. That pic was repeated in the diocesan centennial publication *Pacific Pilgrims* by Lyndon Grove. On the side, I was taking the CANTESS course on biblical studies at Christ Church College, which got me to Canterbury in the first place. I photographed one of my favourite persons,



"As an introvert, it has been a challenge over the decades to preach and provide leadership, but I found that my *Topic* role provided me with growing confidence, charging in where I should have been trembling to get 'a good shot.'"

The Ven. Ronald Harrison on "Poppy's" boat (circa 1979). PHOTO Courtesy of Ronald Harrison

HAVE CAMERA WILL TRAVEL

Ronald Harrison | Associate Editor & Photojournalist 1972–1984 | Executive Archdeacon of the diocese of New Westminster 2001–2012

Dr. Kathleen Kenyon, best-known for her archaeology work at ancient Jericho.

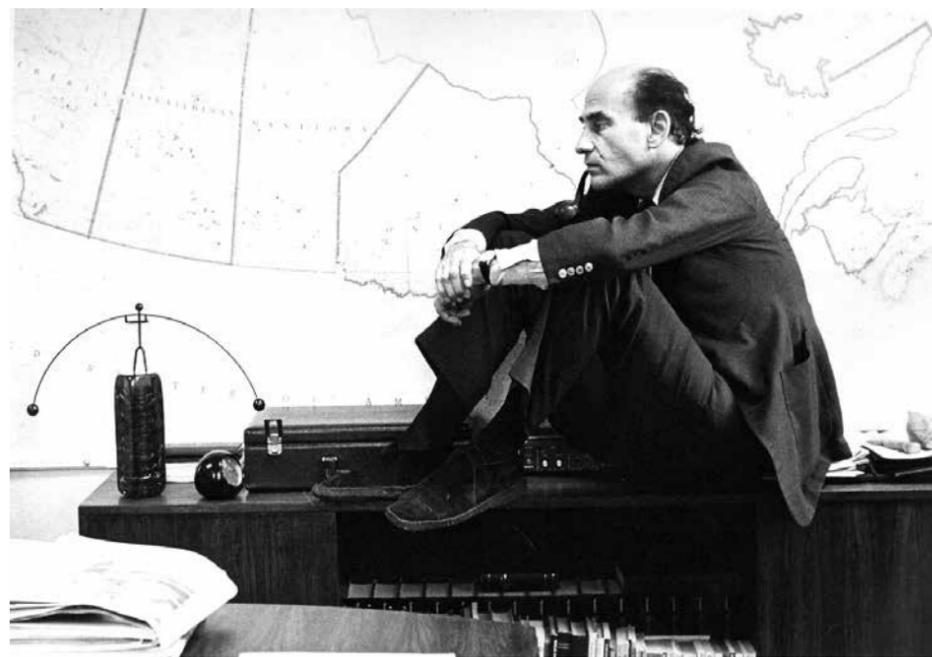
A sinister note about Lambeth (1978): the Ugandan bishops, after the murder of their Archbishop Janani Luwum by the Idi Amin government in 1977, could attend but without their spouses, the latter and the rest of the family under threat at home. More than once I stood beside "Ugandan press," thugs from the secret service recording everything the Ugandan bishops said for monitoring back home. One bishop I photographed with our Primate, Ted Scott, was murdered later, his body found in a crocodile-infested river. Daily meditations were led by Russian Orthodox Archbishop Anthony Bloom, a person whose books I had read and who spoke at a Trinity Institute I attended.

As an introvert, it has been a challenge over the decades to preach and provide leadership, but I found that my *Topic* role provided me with growing confidence, charging in where I should have been trembling to get "a good shot." The climax

of the Lambeth Conference was a trip to London for Evensong at Westminster Abbey. I photographed the bishops processing in, but ran into difficulties with the Abbey

ushers, trying to shoo me away. I persisted, flashed my Lambeth pass, and went in with my camera after the bishops. The lighting

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Peter Newman sitting on his desk at *Maclean's Magazine* in 1976. PHOTO Ronald Harrison



The photo taken by Ronald of Lord Michael Ramsey, Archbishop of Canterbury, (1961–1974) in Westminster Abbey. PHOTO Ronald Harrison



Bishops at the Agrodome for the consecration and welcoming of the year of rejuvenation (May 11, 1975): The Most Rev. Ted Scott, Primate of the Anglican Church of Canada; the Rt. Rev. Amos Betungura, Bishop of the diocese of Ankole, Uganda; and Archbishop David Somerville. PHOTO Ronald Harrison



Mother Teresa in 1976 at Habitat Conference in Vancouver. PHOTO Ronald Harrison



LEFT The Habitat Forum held at Jericho which ran concurrently with the official programme. RIGHT Archbishop Somerville is welcomed to the Lambeth Conference by the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Most Rev. Donald Coggan and his wife, Jean (July 22, 1978). PHOTOS Ronald Harrison



Jean Vanier in Vancouver at the World Council of Churches (1983). PHOTO Ronald Harrison



Dr. Philip Potter beside Archbishop Ted Scott at the World Council of Churches (1983). PHOTO Ronald Harrison

HAVE CAMERA WILL TRAVEL

Ronald Harrison | Associate Editor & Photojournalist 1972 – 1984 | Executive Archdeacon of the diocese of New Westminster 2001 – 2012

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was terrible, and flash was forbidden, but I got two quick frames of retired Archbishop of Canterbury, Michael Ramsey, by propping the camera against a pillar. Later, we all went off to Buckingham Palace for tea with the Royals, I had my camera “checked”: the only pictures allowed were by designated folk up on the roof. In leaving, all the bishops boarded buses to return to Canterbury, while I walked out the front of the palace with Archbishop and Mrs. Ramsey, the tourists wondering who this strange trio might be.

Press passes to international events meant I met some fascinating folk, while stretching the scope of *Topic* a wee bit. Vancouver hosted two such events I attended: the UN Conference on Habitat (1976) and the World General Assembly of the World Council of Churches (1983). Opportunities for photos at Habitat included plenaries at the Queen Elizabeth Theatre, under heavy security, with the infamous Imelda Marcos of the Philippines, the West German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt, and other politicians attending; press conferences in smaller venues by leading politicians, such as Pierre Trudeau, afforded opportunities. A counter conference open to a wider public was going on in parallel at the old airbase at Jericho Beach. I recall a fascinating architect who had been part of Warsaw’s rebuilding after the war devastation. Participants in-

“A diocesan paper required ‘people pictures,’ and most, not all, un-posed.”



The Ven. Ronald Harrison (2019). PHOTO Randy Murray

cluded Mother Teresa, Buckminster Fuller, Margaret Mead and Paolo Soleri.

The World Council of Churches followed a similar pattern, with UBC as the venue. It was good as always to hear Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Coretta King, and church leaders from all over the world representing many traditions. Dr. Philip Potter was General Secretary. The Archbishop of Canterbury, Robert Runcie, presided at a Eucharist, and our own Primate, Ted Scott, chaired events. It was a grand gathering, full of joy for the most part, and a proud moment for our city.

Were there missteps? Of course! Work-

ing with film and grabbing photos quickly and under pressure, one never knew if the results would be useful or not. Sometimes they were “not.” Given that I had a day job, fitting in alternative schedules did not always work and opportunities were lost. I recall a letter from Church House, Toronto telling me that a batch of photos “...were not up to your usual standard.” Excuse me all to pieces, you could have hired a professional instead of exploiting a volunteer! However, as I look back on my avocation as a photojournalist, I am grateful to have had the opportunity to add this largely unplanned component to my ministry. ✦

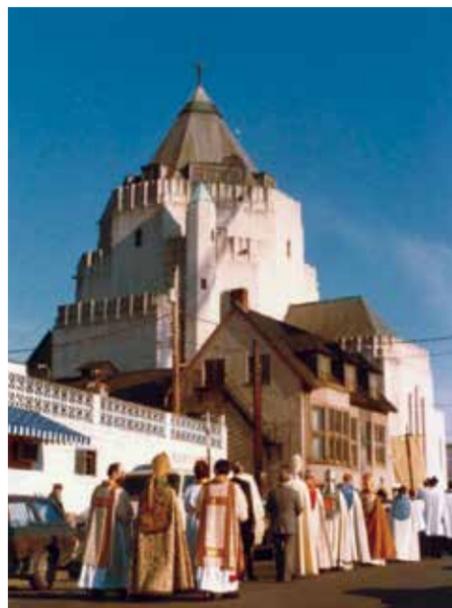
AN ODD CONNECTION TO STONES & ROCKS

Elizabeth Murray, ODNW | Editorial Board Member 1970–1972 | Contributor 1970–Present

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Westminster who in 1976 might have been expected to join earlier-retired clergy in the popular oceanfront community. The Rev. Alfred Hutchins of Vancouver’s St. David of Wales parish, and the Rev. Maxwell Cooper of St. Mark’s, Kitsilano, planned to settle on Vancouver Island, while the Rev. Canon Alfred “Cap” Cummings of St. Augustine and the Rev. Bill Hilliary of St. Michael decided to live in Marpole and Delta. Their combined years as priests in the service of the Anglican Church in Canada totalled 125 years, a figure that did not include Cap Cummings’ and Alfred Hutchins’ service with the Canadian Church Army before ordination to the priesthood. Adding to that Maxwell Cooper’s and Bill Hilliary’s chaplaincy service during WWII and the overall picture is one of four lifetimes dedicated to the Church. Interestingly, three of the four priests were born and educated in England; Cap Cummings was born and brought up in Canada.

This writer’s quest for the unusual had not to look beyond her own parish when, in 1969, the newly ordained Rev. Ronald Sands of St. James’, and parishioner/artist Frits Jacobsen, turned the crypt of the Downtown Eastside church into a re-enactment of the old lively and formative days of our city. The quasi-version of neighbouring Gastown was a poignant reminder of the role the parish of St. James’ played in the brawling 1880s of Gassy Jack’s Saloon. Ron’s priestly ploy was the forerunner of St. James’ Canterbury Fayre, a two-and-a-half-day Mediaeval Fayre held every November for ten years, and which may have enjoyed the most successful “run” in diocesan history. Incredible is the only



LEFT Procession to St. James’ from site of the plaque which was dedicated May 15, 1981 marking the site of First St. James’ destroyed in the Great Vancouver Fire on June 13, 1886.



MIDDLE Elizabeth Murray, Rev. Ronald Sands, and Linda Wills, at Elizabeth and Linda’s Land Office from where they held day-long auctions (Gastown Days 1969).

PHOTOS Courtesy of Elizabeth Murray RIGHT Receiving congratulations from Archbishop Skelton (ODNW 2015). PHOTO Wayne Chose



way to describe those unique events that took the church into the community, and the community into the church, at the same time raising many thousands of dollars for parish outreach.

The 800th anniversary (1170–1970) of the martyrdom of St. Thomas à Becket, Archbishop of Canterbury, took seed in the creative mind of Frits Jacobsen, and in November 1971, the doors opened on St. James’ first Canterbury Fayre. Narrow passageways with such names as *Pilgrim’s*, *Fishmonger’s*, *Scribe’s*, and *Cistern Lanes* guided visitors through a labyrinth of self-contained stalls that transformed the church crypt into a pseudo Canterbury-town, and

“Unlike the Garden of Eden and the Bass Rock of author Bruce Marshall’s *Father Malachy’s Miracle*, St. Barnabas, New Westminster, was not about to levitate its parish hall while workmen laboured beneath the building to carry out the Rev. Robert Warren’s excavation plan.”

its costumed tradespeople, Mystery Players, musicians and performers into a mediaeval mode.

Ten years later the “re-enactment cast” moved-on chronologically to London and

a mock Petticoat Lane Market, thereafter, putting away the make believe in anticipation of 1981’s St. James’ Centennial Fair and the year-long celebration of Vancouver’s oldest Anglican parish. ✦

Wordsworth was in his early twenties when he got excited about the early stages of the French revolution. In a long poem *The Prelude* he wrote, “Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive but to be young was very heaven.” He wasn’t very happy with the later stages of the revolution which became rather bloody, but that’s another story.

I recall this because it describes exactly how I felt when we moved from Ottawa to Vancouver in the Fall of 1968. Coming from the Ottawa of that time was to feel one had come from what Allan Fotheringham relentlessly called Dullsville in his *Vancouver Sun* columns.

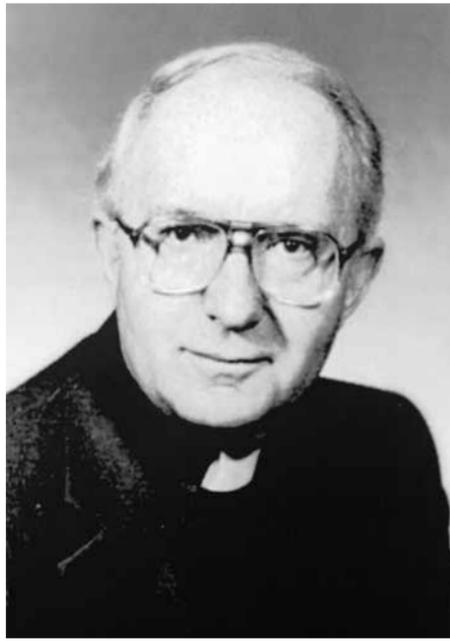
Vancouver in 1969 may not have been exactly the best of times or the worst of times, but it certainly was an exciting time. The city was about to take one of its giant surges into its next urban phase. A gas station on the corner of Burrard and Georgia—can you imagine?—was about to morph into the gleaming soaring Hyatt. Joachim Foikis was wandering around the downtown area in his colourful motley as the *City Fool* or *Jester*. Believe it or not, he was actually a salaried employee of the city. I recall sitting outside the then courthouse having a coffee with him, surprised to find him anything but a fool, rather cultured, sophisticated, well informed and with a good sense of humour.

Jack Webster, whom I once heard referred to as the wealthiest shepherd in the world on his Salt Spring Island property, was terrorizing guests on his daily talk radio show. I was eternally grateful that he and I got along well when I did have to sit more than once at his microphone desk and chat about Christ Church Cathedral. I think we got along because we were both Celts. In an Anglo world—as it was in those days—Celts kind of stuck together. After all Jack’s Scottish ancestors and my Irish ancestors had been working hard to survive in an Anglo world for many centuries before George Vancouver sailed into Burrard Inlet. Again, another story.

Far out in New Westminster a new reality was beginning that would affect the cathedral. The new orthodoxy of mental health thinking had decided that institutionalizing people was a bad idea. Much better to give them their therapeutic drugs and send them out into the community. It was wonderful idealism that had interesting consequences in its early years. We became used to weekday visitors who had taken their medication until, feeling better, they stopped taking it and rapidly arrived back at square one, whereupon they would feel the urge to talk to a priest about the universe or some aspect of it. We also became used to figures appearing in the cathedral gallery on Sunday morning asking to be heard by singing a song. On more than one Sunday we had a large poster being carried up the main aisle of the cathedral demanding that the dean resign.

Those long ago early seventies were indeed in their own way revolutionary. Faculty clubs were invaded by belligerent students vociferously denying there was any necessity for such clubs. The downtown YWCA was suddenly inundated with young women filling its entrance and seated in serried ranks on its stairs, protesting some injustice. Saturday evening protesters against the Vietnam War would light their candles at the Courthouse and ask if they could use the cathedral as a venue for protest songs and speeches. Every time this would happen we would bleed a dozen or so parishioners into the safer world of suburban parishes. In our family deanery, anonymous mail would arrive exhorting me to please go home to where I came from.

And so, it came to pass that in the fullness of this crazy but exciting and exhausting time that there was in the diocese a new



“I knew he (Bishop David) was on a wavelength with me on the need for some expression of communication that would at least begin to present a new image of the diocese, not only to its people but also to the surrounding city.”

Dean Herbert O'Driscoll (1970).
PHOTO Anglican Archives, diocese of New Westminster

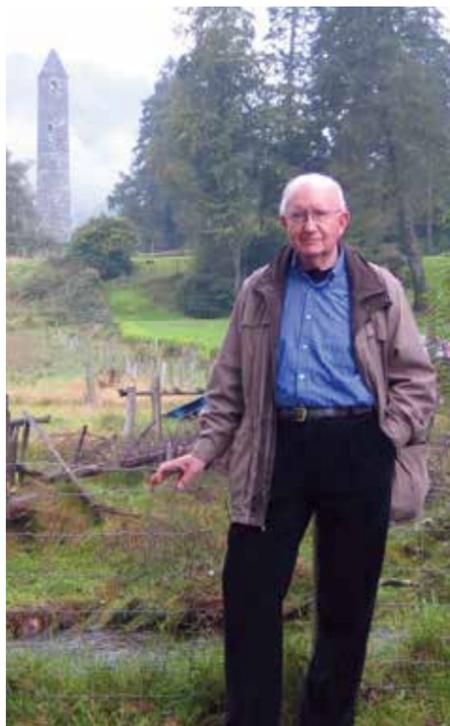
LEGACY OF A WISE BISHOP

Herbert O'Driscoll | Dean of the diocese of New Westminster & Rector of Christ Church Cathedral 1968 - 1982

street—savvy, on-the-ball Bishop named David Somerville, exactly the right kind of leader for the diocese and the times. A fine mind, a natural deep understanding of human nature, and an instinct for what was happening in the zeitgeist. Bishop David was only too aware that the new realities that were rapidly coming into being called for the church to emerge from its institutional self sufficiency and to demonstrate to the rapidly changing society around it that



Vancouver's Town Fool, Joachim Foikis.
PHOTO City of Vancouver Archives



The Rev. Canon Dr. Herbert O'Driscoll in Glendalough, Ireland.
PHOTO Submitted

the stereotypical understandings of religion and the church were themselves being transformed by the tsunami of change. To do this meant a new attitude to the necessity to communicate, to inform, to open windows and doors that had long been shut.

It was with all this in mind that soon after David's taking over the reins of the diocese from his predecessor Archbishop Godfrey Gower, I asked one day for an appointment with him. I knew he was on a wavelength with me on the need for some expression of communication that would at least begin to present a new image of the diocese, not only to its people but also to the surrounding city.

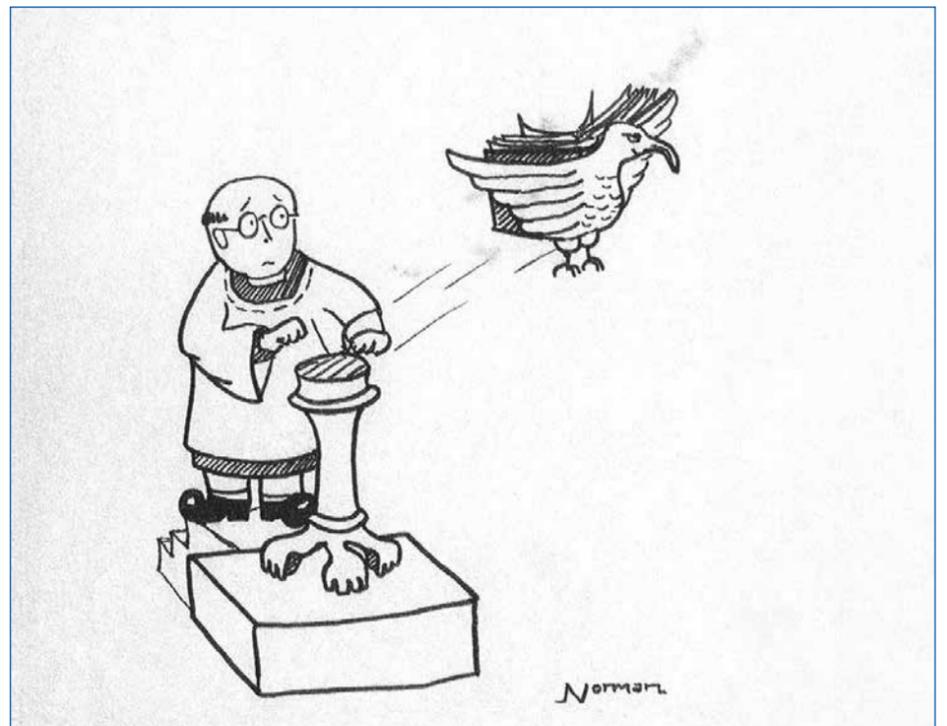
There had already been some communications vehicles but for the most part they had been primarily house organs. What was needed was a paper that, while it would still carry news of the church's life, would look for the seeds of the new that were growing in the diocese, and would also have in mind how the reality of a changing church could be communicated to those outside it, many of whom, even in those comparatively early days, had begun to dismiss the church as having any relevancy whatsoever in late 20th century Canada.

It was suggested to David that we should invite Conrad Guelke, then a senior

executive with BC Hydro and a deeply committed Anglican, to be the first editor of what would be called *Topic*. Thus, began a succession of editors through the ensuing decades, all of them able, creative and committed to the life of the diocese as it was being lived out in the midst of a relentlessly changing culture.

My goodness! How long ago all this is! Fifty years, half a century, no less. In those fleeting decades, Vancouver and the lower mainland have become a landscape of satellite cities sending soaring towers to the skies. Its life has become cosmopolitan, multicultural and inclusive to an extent undreamed of in those long ago late 1960s and early 1970s. As ever, great change has not come without cost. Excess abounds as does homelessness. Natural beauty clashes with social squalor. The never-ending quest of seeking a society of dignity and justice goes on.

Month by month the pages of *Topic* hold a mirror to the life of the Anglican Community, all the while calling that community to its timeless vocation to serve the human quest. To do so is no more than to obey our Lord's admonition in the last moments of his presence on the planet. “You are my witnesses,” he said, “stay here in the city.” ✠



A cartoon by Ed Norman (organist/choirmaster, St. Philip's, Dunbar) from the late 1970s and early 1980s.

Eric Powell, the powerful program director of the diocese, called one day in the mid-1970s and invited me to lunch. At the restaurant, he moved quickly to the purpose of the meeting.

"Archbishop David," he said, "wishes you to be editor of *Topic*."

"Thanks, Eric," I said. "I'll think about it."

"You don't understand," Powell said. "David *wishes* you to be editor."

Recognizing I had no choice, I took a modicum of satisfaction in letting Powell pay for lunch and left to pull together a team of similar volunteers.

The ruthless punster Conrad Guelke had been editor from the paper's beginning, and may have thought he had retired, but I persuaded him to hang in with the editorial group. Also, on board: Ronald Harrison, Mary Murray and Cynthia Llewellyn. Later, Cynthia Ashton, a public relations writer for BC Hydro, joined us.

We began monthly meetings below stairs in the Cathedral. Conrad brought puns, Ron brought photographs, and I brought pastries from the Danish Tea Room. Once or twice Powell came, presumably to make sure we weren't planning anything crazy. He gave up doing this, but would occasionally call me to ask about something, such as the quotations used in the upper right of the front page ("God has blessed my timing" — Duke Ellington and "The Sacred Heart is Enough" — Allen Ginsberg). "Archbishop David," he would say, "wants to know what this means." I knew it was always Powell who wanted to know what it meant.

Dominant on the front page of our first edition was a photograph of Anton Kuerti in recital at Christ Church Cathedral. Inside, a mélange of diocesan news included a mild joke involving Desmond Kimmitt. He was not amused, and complained, although not to me. Archbishop David laughed, and said, "Desmond will have to take his lumps along with the rest of us."

The paper was then almost always only four pages; occasionally we were able to push it to eight. The editorial budget was minimal; the editorship was not a paid position, although there was an honorarium, which would cover parking meters and aspirin. I had previously edited two magazines, but neither had proved as wearying as *Topic*, which, until we scraped together enough to hire a part-time layout artist, often found me scrambling at 2am to get the pages off to the printers in Goderich, Ontario.

Goderich, Ontario. County seat of Huron County. Base of Signal Star Publishing, where the church's national monthly, *The Canadian Churchman* (now the *Anglican Journal*), was printed up until 2013. And where all diocesan papers also had to be printed, to be folded inside the *Churchman* for mailing. This arrangement meant significant savings for the dioceses but imposed awful deadlines on their papers. By the time events covered in *Topic* and the other papers appeared, the news was six weeks old. I kept trying to find a way to speed the delivery of news, now done so well by Randy Murray on the Vancouver Anglican website, but this was decades before the digital age.

But there was great satisfaction in what we were able to get into print. Ronald Harrison covered Diocesan Council meetings, and we began a regular *Council Notes* column. Learning that Michael Ingham, recently arrived from Ottawa, had a political science background, we asked him to write a column under the title *Church and State*. And Jim Cruickshank alerted us to a Salt Spring Island artist named Caroline Hamilton, who could, he said, illustrate a sermon on a chalkboard as he preached. Our December issue came with her full-page painting of the Madonna and Holy Child.

No church publication had used graphic art this boldly, and Jerry Hames, *Canadian Churchman* editor, was nonplussed — not perhaps displeased, but certainly puzzled. It was my first encounter with the tall, often agitated Hames, and I was to continue as the sand in his spinach, but more on that later.

Realizing feature articles would have a longer shelf life than hard news, we scheduled more of these, and drew in some interesting writers, not all of them church members. And we were most fortunate, issue after issue, to have Harrison's brilliant and revealing photographs: Ingham and John "Boots" Barton fighting for the ball in a clergy soccer game, Michael Ramsey at Lambeth looking like a sly Shakespearean senator, David Somerville and Herbie O'Driscoll in a moment that captured the essence of their relationship.

About a year in, a conference of the editors of diocesan papers was called, to be held in the national church offices on Dundas Street — not the most desirable location, at that time — in Toronto. It was good to meet fellow editors, and there were memorable moments, including a Eucharist celebrated by Jerry Hames and a happily raucous evening in a piano bar, with a Montreal priest-editor at the keys.

The highlight and climax of the gathering was to be the



"There were other occasions when readers were angry, and I had one or two shouting matches with priests that had Synod Office staff members wide-eyed and holding their breath."

Lyndon J. Grove in the 1970s.
PHOTO Courtesy of Lyndon Grove

TAKING CHANCES

Lyndon Grove, ODNW | Editor 1976–1984 | Contributor 1972–Present



Lyndon Grove meeting with retired archbishop, the Most Rev. Godfrey Gower (1979).
PHOTO Anglican Archives, diocese of New Westminster



A common sight in Lyndon's day, a member of the Hare Krishna Temple at 11th and Burrard cutting the lawn. PHOTO Anglican Archives, diocese of New Westminster



LEFT Barbara and the Rev. Ernie Eldridge of St. Matthias are amongst this group of 30,000 participating in the Walk for Peace from Kits Beach to Sunset Beach (June 1982). A Mass was held at St. Mark's, Kitsilano prior to the march. RIGHT St. John's, Shaughnessy longtime rector, the Rev. Harry Robinson addresses Synod.
PHOTOS Anglican Archives, diocese of New Westminster



presentation of awards for excellence in church journalism. The ceremony was to take place at the Queen of the Apostles Retreat Centre in Mississauga, and the presenter would be the Primate, the Most Rev. Ted Scott.

I was glad to see Ted, whom I had known since we met in the kitchen of *Spes Bona* in Sorrento, where he was washing dishes, and I think he was pleased when he was able to call me up to accept three awards for *Topic*: one for Harrison's photography, one for Caroline Hamilton's artwork, and one for editorial commentary, for a Michael Ingham *Church and State* column on the Vietnamese refugees known as boat people.

Hamilton and Harrison continued to deliver; she with sketches from Oberammergau he with widely reprinted photographs from Lambeth, both with illustrations from the World Council of Churches (WCC) Assembly in 1983. My strongest memory from that WCC event is standing in the narthex of the packed Cathedral on a sweltering summer evening with Robert Runcie and Terry Waite.

The three of us — Ronald, Caroline and I — had worked together to cover the 1980 Electoral Synod at St. Catherine's, Capilano. That evening, after Douglas Hambidge had become the seventh Bishop of New Westminster, we spread our materials on a living room floor and put together a two-page election special. With everything in place, we rushed it to a print shop, and the following morning, my sons, Christopher and Peter, got in their cars and drove

around the diocese, delivering bundles to parishes. It was, so far as I know, the only overnight production of *Topic*.

The lead-up to the election had not been without drama. When the Search/Nominations Committee, chaired by Mike Karabelas, released the names of nominees, no information on them, apart from names and current positions, was given. I thought this offensive to Synod delegates and to the diocese at large; how could an informed vote be made without comprehensive knowledge of the candidates, their experience, their theology, their approach to the episcopacy? When the pre-election issue of *Topic* came out, the front-page headline read *Toward the Election, Blindfolded and Hesitant*.

I knew this had been standard procedure; I had been a delegate to the Synod that elected David Somerville, and almost no information had been supplied on the 12 candidates. But I also knew that it was wrong. The follow-up story in that May 1980 issue went on to make the point that delegates to an Electoral Synod should know as much as possible about the nominees. I wrote that I had tried to get this information from the Search/Nominations Committee for publication in *Topic*, but it had been refused. So, "blindfolded and hesitant," delegates were chosen by parishes to cast their votes.

When that issue of *Topic* came out, Karabelas was furious. At a clergy meeting I attended, he seemed intent on

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When the diocese of New Westminster hired me as communications officer 36 years ago, the Synod Office occupied half a floor in a three-storey building on Richards Street. The work space assigned to *Topic's* editor consisted of a typewriter (a computer came months later), a desk and, hanging over it, a large, framed sign that read: "The most powerful human emotion is neither love nor hate but the desire to edit other peoples work." The poster had been defaced with many words scratched out and new ones scribbled in. I suspect that one of my predecessors, the then Reverend and the now Venerable Ronald Harrison, had arranged for it to be there. I am sorry I didn't take it with me when I left.

Mine was one of five paid staff positions made possible through *Anglicans in Mission*. Hugely successful, the initiative meant to help parishes meet the many challenges they faced and to develop new programs to engage the community they served. Stories about the success of *Anglicans in Mission* occupied several stories in *Topic* during the program's three-year duration.

Among the many friends I made among the diocesan leadership, I particularly remember the Ven. Dennis Popple who served as Administrative Archdeacon in the Synod Office. He was tireless and patient in his readiness to help me, a non-Anglican, understand everything I would need to know about the Church and how it was structured.

Luckily for me, the *Topic* editors who had come before me had created a newspaper eager to serve parishes by telling their stories and celebrating their unique histories and accomplishments. Working together with an editorial board, *Topic* did its best to carry on that tradition with features aimed at helping parishes discover a sense of community as the diocese of New Westminster. In particular, the board expressed a desire to make individual parishioners feel connected by voicing their views in feature stories. For several years, *Topic* ran a column by Nonie Guthrie. Writing about her life at St. Mary's on Salt Spring Island. Her poignant and often amusing stories offered a personal perspective on the life of a parishioner and the perils of volunteering for its annual fundraisers. Guthrie was one of many contributors that made my life as editor rewarding.

It was a great joy to meet my counterparts (*Anglican Editors Association*) from across the country every year. While gratifying to receive recognition from our peers (*Topic* won several awards including best editorial written by the then Reverend and later Archbishop David Crawley of St. Paul's), the guidance of the *Anglican Journal* editor made us better at our craft. Our annual conference created a closer connection to the Anglican Communion as a whole. In my final year, I had the good fortune to cover the election of the primate, the Most Rev. Michael Peers at the 31st General Synod in 1986. For *Topic* readers it meant sharing the perspective of representatives from our own diocese. Covering Synod, even those endless diocesan debates, remained fascinating for me. Shedding light on Synod discussion for *Topic* readers always made good copy.

But choosing topics that would resonate with readers was not always an easy task. At the time not everyone embraced the changing worship style offered in the Book of Alternative Services (BAS). Looking back, *Topic* covered the fundamental nature of the BAS but shied away from addressing the conflict that ensued. In fact, the economic hardship suffered by so many during the recession of the mid-1980s was a prevalent theme in *Topic* editorials. One issue that featured a photo of people lined up for the food bank at St. Paul's in the West End generated more response than any other story we ran.

By far, the most challenging story to cover was the murder of the Rev. John Taylor in his office at St. George's, Maple Ridge in 1985. He had been killed, mid-day in his parish office. The case shocked the community and baffled police who believed the killer was someone Rev. Taylor knew or was counseling, thus casting a pall of suspicion on his parishioners. By the time *Topic* went to press, the investigation had not uncovered a suspect, but the sensational nature of the crime continued to receive wide media attention. In the end, *Topic* covered the story by simply paying tribute to the service of a caring and compassionate man whose loss was difficult to bear.

There were, of course, other headline-grabbing stories to cover. Archbishop Douglas Hambidge was among the dignitaries to meet his holiness Pope John Paul II during his Vancouver visit in the spring of 1985. My job was to take what would have to be a front-page photo. But securing press passes to cover the pope who had survived an attempt on his life the year before, required intense scrutiny by the RCMP. It also meant being stuck in a scrum so far from the action that I missed Archbishop Hambidge completely. *Topic* had to settle for a touching but slightly out of focus picture of His Holiness embracing a small child. In the days before everyone had access to cell phones, accessing photos



"By far, the most challenging story to cover was the murder of the Reverend John Taylor in his office at St. George's, Maple Ridge in 1985."

Joanne Leslie at an AEA conference in 1984.
PHOTO Courtesy Joanne Leslie

TOPIC GOES PRO

Joanne Leslie | Communications Officer & Editor 1984–1988



Visit of Archbishop Runcie to Yukon in 1985. Archbishop Hambidge (right, in profile) and Terry Waite (far left). PHOTO Anglican Archives, diocese of New Westminster

suitable to print was a monumental challenge.

Months after the pope's visit, the Most Rev. Robert Runcie, Archbishop of Canterbury came to BC. Enchanted by tales of Yukon's gold rush days he had read as a boy, he insisted his itinerary include a stopover to the tiny village of Old Crow, just north of the Arctic Circle. The parish of St. Luke had served a congregation of faithful Anglicans since its move to the banks of the Porcupine River in 1867. All 275 parishioners were on hand to greet Archbishop Runcie who possessed the sort of charisma that made everyone he spoke to feel special. In my interview with the archbishop, I had the sense he was relieved to be free—even briefly—from what was then a raging debate over the ordination of women in the Church of England as well as the fallout from the ordination of women as priests and bishops in other parts of the Anglican Communion.

Terry Waite was part of the Archbishop's entourage. In one candid moment, he expressed dismay at the fact that few of the faithful greeting the "big bishop" could speak English. As archbishop's "special envoy," Waite had been successful in extricating three missionaries held hostage in Iran a few years before and was now working in Lebanon. Waite was a great bear of a man, easily six foot five inches. In an interview for *Topic*, he was asked if he was fearful of being in such a volatile place. He countered that as a representative of the Church, he would come to no harm. Barely six months later he was kidnapped and held captive for five years.

When the Prince and Princess of Wales came to Vancouver to open *Expo '86*, their brief stay included Sunday



Prince and Princess of Wales ahead of Archbishop Hambidge and then Dean, Bishop Jim Cruickshank. PHOTO Courtesy of Joanne Leslie

worship at Christ Church Cathedral. Curiously, and for the first time in its history, admission to the congregation was by ticket only. The then Dean and later Bishop Jim Cruickshank, who was cathedral rector at the time, had hoped to give the Royals some exposure to the Canadian Anglican Church's liturgical reforms of the past decade by celebrating Eucharist. The cathedral had adopted the Book of Alternative Services (BAS) upon its release for use at the major Sunday services. The royal advance team strenuously objected to the idea, so a traditional Morning Prayer service was held instead. Interestingly, the intercessions and the collect came from the BAS!

That wasn't the only time the cathedral made news. One Christmas Eve midnight service was particularly eventful. The dean, who confessed to enjoying high church liturgy, introduced incense to Christ Church. Unfortunately, clouds of the fragrant white smoke set off a smoke detector in a building which had never seen incense in its entire history, and an alarm heard only by the choir in the basement, which was preparing to march upstairs. Choir director, Rupert Lang, dutifully ordered them to process out of the building and into the alley. Fire engines pulled up outside just as the service was about to begin.

Topic continued to cover the evolving story of the cathedral itself. The turbulence caused when radical plans emerged for a Cathedral tower was "old news" by 1985 but the appointment of the new dean meant significant changes in the role of laity as well as major renovations to the building itself—the first since 1940.

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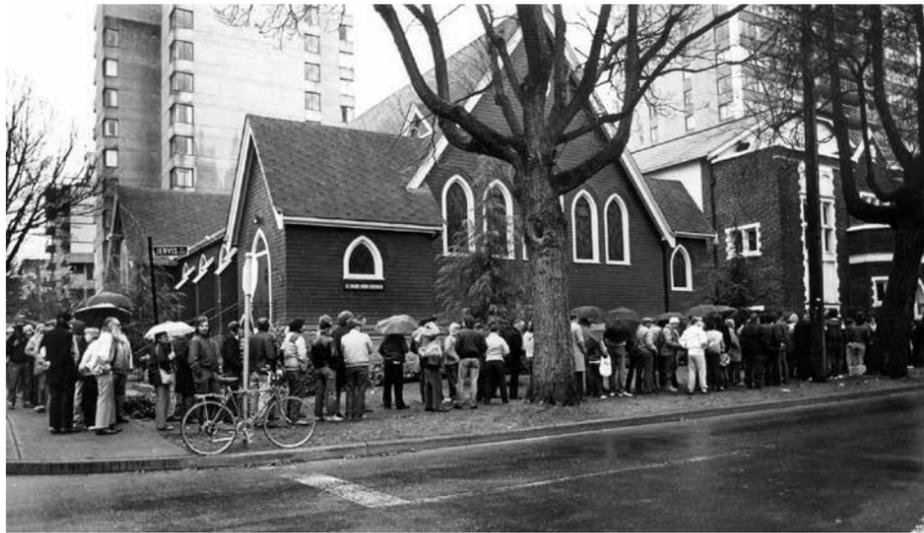
TOPIC GOES PRO

Joanne Leslie | Communications Officer & Editor 1984–1988

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10

As communications officer, it fell to me to inform the public about what was happening in the diocese. Every news release made it clear that Archbishop Douglas Hambidge was available to media for interviews. People who are lucky to know the archbishop will attest to his rather droll and often wicked sense of humour. Not surprisingly, he was often in demand by reporters for comment on any news that had ethical or moral implications. Handling interviews can be tricky. Avoiding the pitfalls of an off-hand comment taken out of context can be disastrous. To avoid any misinterpretations, we used to practice making statements on a range of issues that would fit into 15 and 30-second soundbites. An able student, Archbishop Douglas' biggest test on the day when dozens of sex-trade workers, having been pushed out of the West End, took sanctuary in Christ Church Cathedral. Looking back, I am still surprised by the media attention it got.

Today, one of the dioceses' priorities is to advance the *Calls to Action* of the Truth



“In the days before everyone had access to cell phones, accessing photos suitable to print was a monumental challenge.”

Food line in front of St. Paul's.
PHOTO Anglican Archives, diocese of New Westminster

and Reconciliation Commission. But in the mid 1980s the struggles of Indigenous people were often ignored. When Ottawa agreed to enter treaty talks with the Nisga'a in 1980, their fight for the legal authority to conduct their own affairs was big news.

The torturous process would take 15 years to complete and would mark the end of their 113-year journey toward independence. As the former Bishop of Caledonia, Archbishop Hambidge had first-hand knowledge of the people of the Naas River

and often spoke out on their behalf.

My departure came at the end of the *Anglicans in Mission* era. Shortly afterwards, the very able Lorie Chortyk sat in the editor's chair for the next 11 years. ✦

TAKING CHANCES

Lyndon Grove, ODNW | Editor 1976–1984 | Contributor 1972–Present

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9

doing me physical damage, but was talked back by Michael Ingham. Blessed are the peacemakers.

When the next Electoral Synod was announced in 1993, there were full biographies of all the nominees, and that practice continued in 2013. Elections for the Primacy also have been preceded by detailed articles on the candidates. Perhaps *Topic* can't claim credit for this, but we'll take it anyway.

In 1978, Marion, my nursing instructor wife, was accepted into a year's program in advanced obstetrics at the University of Alberta. I was working then for a public relations firm that had wanted to open an office in Edmonton, so I said I would go. This meant taking a break from *Topic*. The person who should take it over in the interim, we decided, or I decided, was Cynthia Ashton, remembered by some for being carried out of a yoga class at Christ Church Cathedral in the lotus position.

I didn't give her much notice of this new, and probably unwelcome, responsibility. She came to my office, I pushed a file of material on her, and told her the deadlines, one rapidly approaching. Cynthia picked up the file, gave me a rueful smile, and said, “You son of a bitch.”

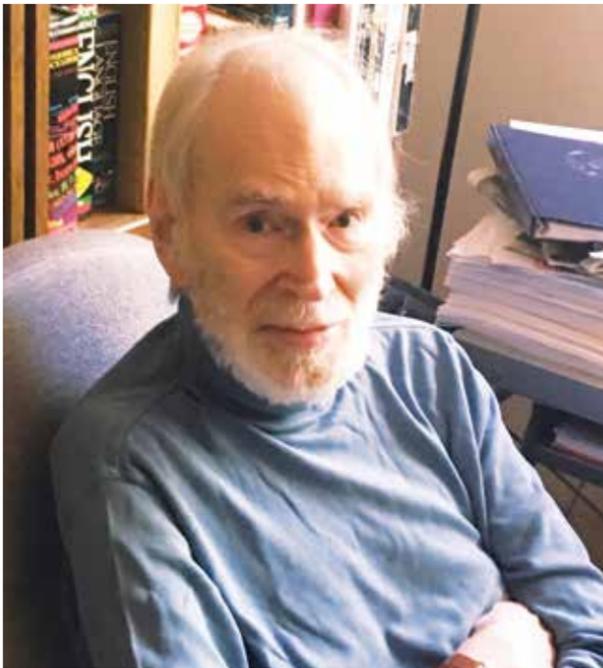
There was a further complication to this year. The diocese was preparing to celebrate its centennial in November 1979. A committee had been formed to organize projects and events, and the chair was my longtime colleague Conrad Guelke.

The most ambitious of these projects was the writing and publication of a diocesan history. It was said that Archbishop Godfrey Gower was ready to write this, but we found that what he had was a concept, and a good one — “the history of the diocese can be told in its bishops and deans” — and a few notes. I had offered, or been drafted, to edit the archbishop's manuscript; now, it seemed, it was going to be a collaborative effort.

But the experience became richly rewarding. Every two weeks or so I flew into Vancouver for a day, met Godfrey in the Synod Office, and collected his reminiscences. There was also digging through the archives at the Vancouver School of Theology, and interviews to be conducted, and somehow it all came together.

Back in Vancouver after the Edmonton experience, I picked up the editor's blue pencil and began work again on *Topic*. Eric Powell had moved on to a government post, and the key figures in the Synod Office, under Archbishop Hambidge, were Charlie Wilkins and Hank McAdams. We had a friendly, bantering relationship, but not everything that turned up in *Topic* was to their liking. Or, at times, anyone's.

There was, for example, a longish piece I wrote on Jim



“Realizing feature articles would have a longer shelf life than hard news, we scheduled more of these, and drew in some interesting writers, not all of them church members.”

Lyndon Grove, ODNW (2019).
PHOTO Courtesy of Lyndon Grove

Penrice, then rector of St. David's, but remembered principally as the biretta-wearing priest who presented a formal protest to women as priests at the ordination of Elspeth Alley and Virginia Briant. But he hadn't left the Anglican Church and gone to some breakaway congregation as some had, and I had heard him deliver some challenging sermons, and knew he had been helpful to First Nations families in his parish. I thought more should be known about him.

When the story appeared, Charlie and Hank thought it had been too kind to Penrice and critical of the Synod officers. Penrice thought it had been a slam on him. Some days you can't win.

There were other occasions when readers were angry, and I had one or two shouting matches with priests that had Synod Office staff members wide-eyed and holding their breath. And then there was a diocesan Synod, which I was covering in my reportorial role, and was surprised, near the end of what had been a rather boring day, to hear a delegate rise and lodge some complaint about *Topic*. I can't remember who it was or what his grievance was, but he clearly had some support, and I found myself in the unusual position of having to stand and defend the paper. As you have seen, the paper has survived.

It survived, as well, my worst *Topic* month. As usual, I had been quarreling with Hames and the Signal Star people over deadlines, and, as usual, I was late. They retaliated by sending out *The Canadian Churchman* without a *Topic* insert.

Feeling a staggering amount of guilt, I went to Archbishop Hambidge and offered to resign. But Douglas is a generous man, and he brushed my offer aside.

There were many interviews over the *Topic* years, and in other situations I have interviewed people from T. C. Douglas and Robertson Davies to Sonny Rollins and Cecilia Bartoli, but of all those encounters, the most memorable were with David Somerville. Beside his wit and his wide-ranging intelligence, he had remarkable prescience. In the 1970s, he predicted a societal move toward conservatism, a retrenchment into small, separated communities, a kind of tribalism.

But he was full of hope for the church. He said, “God has given us grace to live together in extraordinary diversity, at the heart of which there is a strong unity.”

“From the outside,” he said, “it looks like a muddle. But from the inside, it feels like freedom.”

Freedom is what I, and, I presume, the other *Topic* editors, enjoyed. Never pushed toward a story or point of view. Never told what to do. Never censored. Never chided... although there might have been the occasional raised eyebrow.

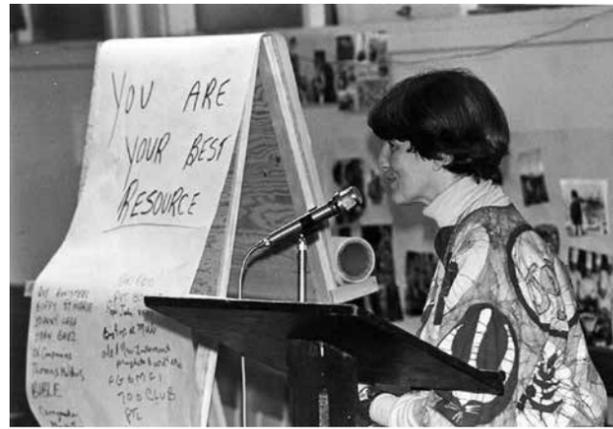
What I've kept from those years are memories of people I loved. Godfrey Gower. David Somerville. Jim Cruickshank. Caroline Hamilton. Ted Scott. John Bishop. People I still love. My 40-year-old copies of *Topic* may have faded, and the stories long forgotten, but love is never outdated. ✦



1976 Camp Artaban Girl's Camp Staff.
PHOTO Anglican Archives, diocese of New Westminster



Archbishop David Somerville at St. Mary's, Sapperton.
PHOTO Anglican Archives, diocese of New Westminster



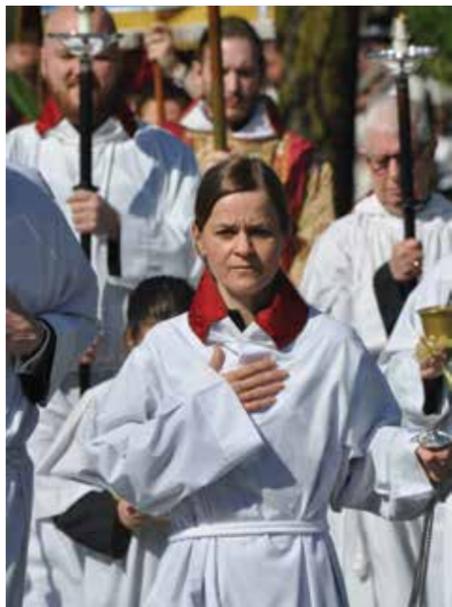
Social Justice and Children's Christian Formation lay leader, Shirley Harding in 1978.
PHOTO Anglican Archives, diocese of New Westminster



LEFT The Rev. Dr. Don Grayston at St. Oswald's, Port Kells Remembrance Day 2000. PHOTO Anglican Archives, diocese of New Westminster



RIGHT The Lord Coggan, Donald Coggan Archbishop of Canterbury, 1974 – 1980. PHOTO Ronald Harrison



St. James' Palm Sunday procession in 2014.
PHOTO Randy Murray



Dame Kathleen Kenyon.
PHOTO Ronald Harrison

Fifty Years of Topic in Pictures



St. James' Palm Sunday procession 2012.
PHOTO Randy Murray



Campers on the pier at Camp Artaban (1976).
PHOTO Anglican Archives, diocese of New Westminster



The 1985 Artaban fundraiser "Barn Dance" an early exploration of product placement. PHOTO Ronald Harrison



LEFT Chief Bobby Joseph (late 1990s).



MIDDLE Mr. Garth Walker, AMA, ODNW — the Anglican Archivist (1980 – 2005).



RIGHT The Rev. Virginia Briant being honoured at St. Richard's, North Vancouver on occasion of the 10th anniversary of the first two women ordained to the priesthood in the diocese of New Westminster. PHOTOS Anglican Archives, diocese of New Westminster



The first person to be invested into the ODNW in November 2009, Linda Adams. PHOTO Wayne Chose



LEFT Bishop Michael chairing one of his last Diocesan Council Meetings (April 2013). PHOTO Randy Murray



RIGHT As leaders of St. David's, Tsawwassen looked on, Delta Mayor Lois Jackson unveils a plaque honouring the parish for the donation of St. David, Delta's original church building (2000s). PHOTO Al Wararchuk



LEFT *Topic* has always used archived photos: Archbishop Gower and the Rev. Art Hives, in a 1960 photo, was used in a 1979 parish centennial article. PHOTO Anglican Archives, diocese of New Westminster



RIGHT Archbishop Skelton has a discussion with some of the younger members of the Church of the Epiphany, Surrey (2018). PHOTO Randy Murray



LEFT Visit of the Winchester Cathedral Choir to Vancouver (April 1982) The Rev. John Bethel, St. Mary's, Kerrisdale; the Very Rev. Michael Stancliffe, Dean of Winchester Cathedral; the Rt. Rev. John Taylor, Bishop of Winchester; the Most Rev. Douglas Hambidge, Archbishop of New Westminster; and the Rev. Ronald Harrison, Rector of St. Augustine's, Marpole. PHOTO Jim Rattee.

RIGHT Yes, there was an Anglican Bookstore. Kim Lotherington loads the shelves (1981). PHOTO Anglican Archives, diocese of New Westminster



Archbishop Melissa Skelton and Rev. Eric Stroo at the Pride Parade (2016). PHOTO Randy Murray



A visit to the Episcopal Diocese of Northern Philippines (early 1980s). PHOTO Anglican Archives, diocese of New Westminster



The Rev. Jim McCullum and Caroline Hamilton in late 1979, the genesis of flipcharts. PHOTO Anglican Archives, diocese of New Westminster



LEFT The Parish of St. James' participating in the walk around the parish boundaries in 1981. PHOTO Anglican Archives, diocese of New Westminster
RIGHT And in 2015, St. James' walking the parish boundaries. PHOTO Wayne Chose



Princess Diana with the much loved "Jimmy Dean" soon to be Bishop Jim Cruickshank. PHOTO Anglican Archives, diocese of New Westminster



LEFT An Artaban Tug of War in 1978. RIGHT The Rev. Andrew Pike, the Rev. Tess Meadows and Ellie Vaines at a diocesan programme workshop held at St. Helen's, West Point Grey (October 1977). PHOTOS Anglican Archives, diocese of New Westminster



LEFT After the ordination and vesting, Bishop Skelton displays the episcopal ring (March 1, 2014). The photo went viral with thousands of views on social media. PHOTO Wayne Chose
RIGHT Church of the Good Shepherd and the Rev. Peter Pang near the altar (1975). PHOTO Anglican Archives, diocese of New Westminster



In 1988, I was working in the Communications Department at the University of British Columbia (UBC) when I saw an advertisement that *Topic* was looking for a new editor. While I loved my job at UBC, something nudged me to apply, and a short time later I was meeting with Archbishop Douglas Hambidge at his home to finalize arrangements for my new position. Little did I know how much my life would be changed by the people and situations I was about to encounter.

My years at the Synod Office coincided with a decade of important and potentially divisive issues facing the church, including reconciliation efforts for the church's role in residential schools and the blessing of same-sex unions. I attended many of the diocesan dialogues on same-sex blessings, and while views were widespread and often conflicting, I was always impressed with the genuine desire I witnessed on the part of so many clergy and lay people to truly listen to one another with a view of broadening their



“The greatest gift of my time as *Topic* editor was meeting so many people who lived each day with faith, empathy and courage.”

Lorie Chortyk leading the music in worship at St. Thomas' Collingwood (2019). PHOTO Randy Murray

MEETING PEOPLE WHO LIVE EACH DAY WITH FAITH, EMPATHY & COURAGE

Lorie Chortyk | Communications Officer & Editor 1988 -2000

own understanding. Obviously there were some significant exceptions to this respectful tone of dialogue, and the issue resulted in significant upheaval for several parishes. But the overall desire to find “unity in diversity” and the role of the diocesan newspaper in voicing diverse views made me proud to be part of our unique Anglican tradition. I also witnessed first-hand the challenges (and the personal toll) that a bishop experiences in providing leadership and pastoral oversight for a church grappling with vastly different interpretations of scripture.

As communications officer, I was privileged to attend General Synods, many Diocesan Synods and to worship in every church in the diocese. Coming from a small church in East Vancouver, it was inspiring to see the full range of worship styles, outreach programs and diverse views that come together under the umbrella of our diocesan expression of the Anglican Church.

One of the major diocesan program initiatives taking place during my time as *Topic* editor was the *Stewards in Action* program, a successor of *Anglicans in Mission*. The program was led by former CBC reporter Colin Hoath, who embraced his role as diocesan program director with an infectious enthusiasm. In writing stories and producing videos to highlight the work being funded by *Stewards in Action* grants, I witnessed what it meant to be part of a larger church family—one body with many parts—that was working together to achieve what no single parish could do alone. During that time parishioners gave tens of thousands of dollars to allow parishes—large and small—to reach out to share the love of God in their communities.

A significant change that came during my time as diocesan editor was the retirement of Archbishop Douglas Hambidge and the consecration and installation of Bishop Michael Ingham in early January 1994. The diocese decided to create a video of the consecration service at St. Andrew's-Wesley United Church and have cameras follow the procession through the downtown streets to Christ Church Cathedral where the installation was held. Liaising with the production company to ensure there was proper lighting, sound and camera angles for such a complicated live shoot in multiple locations took many weeks of planning. A few days before the big event, just after Christmas 1993, my father died unexpectedly. I recall the haze of dealing with grief and funeral planning along with a myriad of last-minute production details that week. However, I remember the amazing job the organizers of the consecration and installation did to create such a wonderful, celebratory moment in the life of the church.

Two other experiences that stand out for me from my time as *Topic* editor include a trip to Windsor Castle in England and a visit to the diocese of Northern Argentina. The diocesan communications committee, with the support of Synod, had launched a billboard advertising campaign inviting people back to church. The initiative was rather novel at the time and resulted in the diocese being mentioned in best-selling books on church growth and in me being invited to speak at a church communications gathering organized by the Church of England. The invitation noted that “accommodation was provided” and when I arrived in Windsor I discovered that my accommodation



LEFT *Stewards in Action* leaders Jane Osler, ODNW and Bob Hutchinson, ODNW (late 1990s). RIGHT Bishop Lynne McNaughton then assistant priest at Christ Church Cathedral; the Ven. David Retter, St. James'; Bishop Jim Cruickshank then Dean and Rector of Christ Church Cathedral; the Rev. Donald Dodman, St. James'; Archbishop David Crawley then Rector of St. Paul's; and the Rev. Bruce Chalmers, then an intern at Christ Church Cathedral. The three downtown churches united to plan deliberate strategy to serve the changing needs in Vancouver's downtown core (1989). PHOTOS Anglican Archives, diocese of New Westminster



LEFT Colin Hoath. RIGHT The Most Rev. Sir Paul Reeves, Anglican Representative to the UN at the Vancouver School of Theology's Native Ministries Consortium Summer School (1991). PHOTOS Anglican Archives, diocese of New Westminster



was at Windsor Castle, as a guest of the Archbishop of Canterbury. The stage I presented on was in a library where William Shakespeare had performed his plays for members of the Royal Family, and while wandering in the garden one morning before a session I encountered the queen out walking her corgis. A memorable experience to be sure!

The second trip, to our partner diocese of North Argentina, was equally memorable. The South American diocese includes urban churches as well as tiny communities in a very remote and isolated region in the far north of the country. Many of the people we met lived in impoverished circumstances, but they were the most joyful and content people I have ever encountered. It was in one of these remote communities in the northernmost Chaco region that I learned my most profound lesson on stewardship. We were asked to take some flour and other supplies on our visit into the Chaco to distribute to people in the villages. At our first stop, the women we met were so grateful for the supplies (I assumed it was because food was so scarce). But they immediately began baking delicious buns over a fire

“In writing stories and producing videos to highlight the work being funded by *Stewards in Action* grants, I witnessed what it meant to be part of a larger church family—one body with many parts—that was working together to achieve what no single parish could do alone.”

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MEETING PEOPLE WHO LIVE EACH DAY WITH FAITH, EMPATHY & COURAGE

Lorie Chortyk | Communications Officer & Editor 1988 -2000



LEFT Archbishop Hambidge blesses the land where the new St. Cuthbert's, Delta will be built. On his right (our left), the Ven. Dan Anonby whose amazing vision and energy drove the building of the new church (March 13, 1989).
RIGHT Guests gathered at Christmas at the Mission to Seafarers in the mid-1990s. PHOTOS Anglican Archives, diocese of New Westminster

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that they insisted on serving to us, their guests, while they sat beside us without eating. We felt terrible about taking food away from people who clearly needed it so badly, but our guide cautioned us that it would be an insult to turn down their generosity. One woman expressed through our interpreter how happy and truly blessed she felt that on the one day that they had visitors from afar God had generously provided food that they could offer us. It was a powerful lesson to me about the meaning of stewardship and about what it means to give sacrificially, with thanksgiving. It was also a reminder of the amazing lessons that come from being part of the worldwide Anglican Church family.

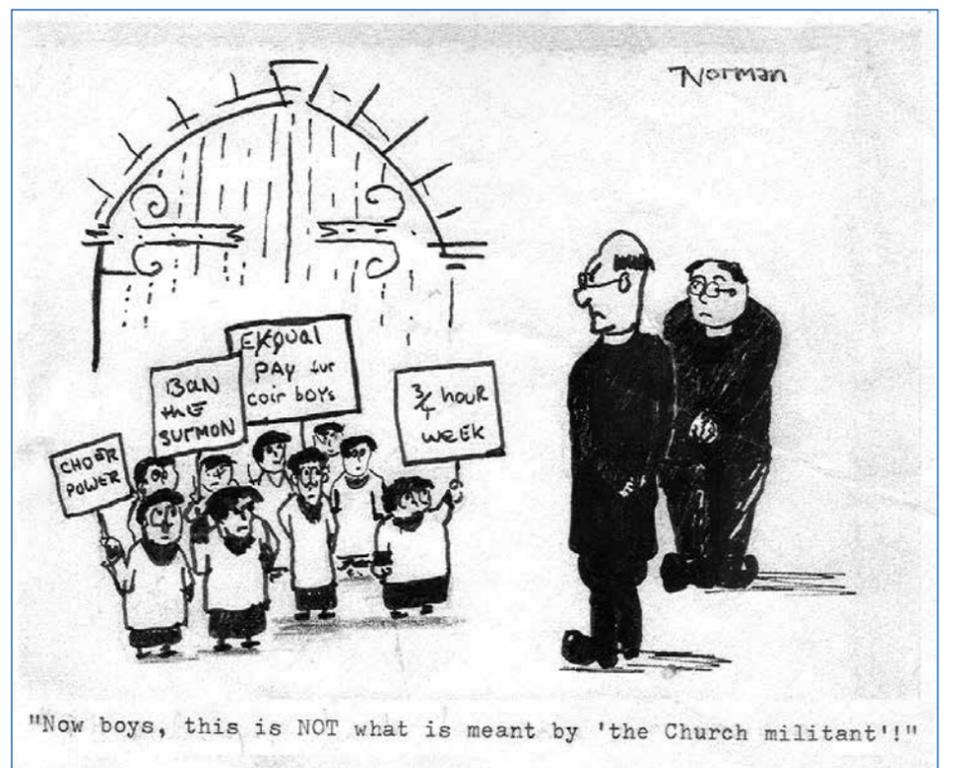
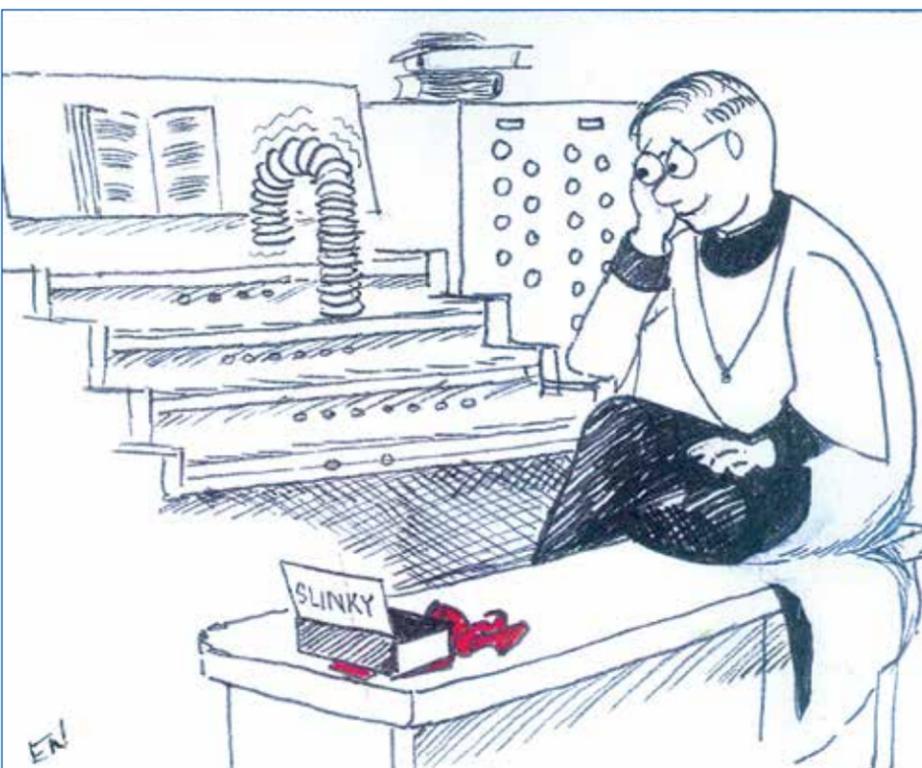
The greatest gift of my time as *Topic* editor was meeting so many people who lived each day with faith, empathy and courage. In interviewing members of the diocese for *Topic*, I received inspiring insight into how others put their faith

into action. One *Topic* profile that stands out in my memory was of a well-known member of Christ Church Cathedral who served as a Synod delegate and who participated on many diocesan committees. We met for an interview and I wrote a profile outlining her involvement in diocesan ministries. She approved the story, but two days later she called me and said, "We need to change my profile." She then went on to say that she realized that she couldn't talk about her life in faith without being completely honest about who she was. "I only shared things in the story that I thought people would find acceptable, but I've been living a lie. I am gay. I have not talked about this openly before and I want to use this story as an opportunity to finally speak my truth." She was clearly very nervous about the reaction she might face (sexuality was not discussed openly when she was growing up) but she was determined to present

herself honestly and proudly. I gladly rewrote the story but, sensing her anxiety, told her that I would contact her before *Topic* was published so she could choose which version she would like me to run. She chose the story that "outed" her to her church family and friends. What I recall about that situation is the strength of character this individual showed in making herself vulnerable in such a public way—and her absolute joy when her disclosure was met with acceptance, affirmation and love from her diocesan family.

The church has had, and always will have, challenges, conflicts and moments that do not represent our best selves. But the church I experienced in my 11 years with the diocese was a place of hope, compassion and integrity. I am very grateful that I did not ignore that "quiet voice of God" that nudged me to leave UBC to become the editor of *Topic*. ✦

Cartoons by Ed Norman (Organist and Choirmaster in the diocese of New Westminster, 1970s and 80s)



“The Church needs people all along the theological continuum. The liberals need the conservatives and the conservatives need the liberals.” So said Bishop Richard Holloway in December of 1999. I tried to put this idea into practice as editor of *Topic* and Communications Officer for the diocese of New Westminster. The results were mixed.

During my nine years, the diocese of New Westminster was affected by ongoing controversy over whether the marriage of same-sex couples should be blessed. Of course, there were other issues, projects, and causes. I considered it a large part of my job to try to remind the diocese that we were a lot more than a one-issue church despite all the secular media’s dwelling on “the” issue.

In 1998, two years before I was hired, to the surprise of many the Diocesan Synod voted narrowly to ask Bishop Michael Ingham to authorize a blessing. The bishop didn’t consent at that time but asked members of the diocese to engage in a “dialogue process.” Parishes with a preponderance of supporters of the blessing were to meet with parishes with congregations that tended to oppose it. All diocese of New Westminster Anglicans were instructed to dialogue, study, and pray about the issue for three years, and to consider the motion again at a Diocesan Synod in 2001.

My editor predecessor, Lorie Chortyk, did a fine job in *Topic* reporting the 1999 Diocesan Synod and its decision, and outlining what the bishop hoped would emerge from the dialogues. After I came on the scene, I tried to continue pretty much as she had, reporting and explaining the process. Since what actually was said during the dialogues was confidential between the parties and couldn’t be reported or appear in *Topic*.

Proponents of a blessing were convinced that a blessing rite for same-sex couples was the loving, Christian thing to do to serve the pastoral needs of Anglicans whose sexual orientation was directed to people of their own sex and who had committed to love and live with each other. Opponents were convinced that the scriptures clearly stated that homosexual behaviour was sinful, and to acquiesce and accept the blessing was to risk their own salvation. There were few people or parishes undecided.

In January 2001, *Topic* ran a story strongly suggesting that the selection of delegates to Diocesan Synod in June should not be dominated by the same-sex blessing issue. Fond hope! There was another very important issue focusing on the legacy of residential schools that affected the diocese, which *Topic* reported, and our neighbouring diocese of Cariboo was being sued—an action that later resulted in a drastic reorganization of the Anglican presence in much of British Columbia. That however took distant second place to the controversy about the blessing. It did not help that local and later national and international media sensed a sensational topic (tangentially about sex), and the blessing did become top of mind to many Anglicans, especially in parishes opposed to it.

In April 2001, I was privileged to interview Jean Vanier, founder of L’Arche homes, a much admired and loved Christian leader. Among many things he said: “If you’re a Christian it means you are a person who is loving. That means loving all people, not selecting.” He was referring to the mentally challenged people L’Arche was founded for, but that statement could have been taken many ways.

That spring a decision came from a panel of lawyers who had been asked by Bishop Ingham to give an opinion about the legality of a blessing of same-sex unions under Canon law (that is, Church law). They advised that the Synod could indeed vote to ask a Bishop for such a blessing, and



“It did not help that local and later national and international media sensed a sensational topic (tangentially about sex), and the blessing did become top of mind to many Anglicans, especially in parishes opposed to it.”

Synod 2006 at Capilano College the Rev. Sharon Salomons, Neale Adams and Synod Tech Producer, Martin Knowles. PHOTO Wayne Chose

CONTROVERSY & CHANGE

Neale Adams, ODNW | Communications Officer & Editor 2000–2009, Contributor 1970-Present

the Bishop could authorize one, though they thought that a proposed rite drawn up by another group looked too similar to the marriage sacrament. Only the national Anglican Church of Canada had jurisdiction over the sacraments. The rite had to be rewritten they said, and it was.

On the other side, the *Essentials Movement*, a group of conservative clergy, including about a dozen from the diocese of New Westminster, met in Montreal and voiced strong theological objection to a blessing. All this was duly reported, though I didn’t go to the *Essentials* conference. I should have.

Finally, in June came the 2001 Diocesan Synod in the spacious gymnasium of North Vancouver’s Capilano College. It attracted wide media coverage, including television cameras. A very lengthy debate preceded the vote. Long lineups formed at each microphone for delegates who wanted to make their three minute contribution. I dutifully wrote down a bit of what each of over a hundred speakers said for inclusion on the Diocesan website. The next *Topic* would not be circulated until September and by then the debate would be old news, but on the website the debate appeared the next day.

The vote was held: 226 to 174 in favour. Bishop Ingham took a short walk and returned. Although he hadn’t announced it, he had beforehand decided the blessing would not go forward unless the Synod voted at least 60% in favour. At 58% it hadn’t made that mark. His caution pleased no one. Proponents were unhappy the blessing wouldn’t be happening despite a clear majority in favour; opponents were glad that the blessing would not proceed but remained upset that the bishop had even considered it and worried about the future.

The diocese tried to return to normal. In January 2002, *Topic*’s feature story was the 25th anniversary of the ordination of women priests. That had been a controversial issue, but hardly as heated in our diocese as the same-sex union blessing. I continued to work more on the diocesan website, ably developed by Charles Nurse. We obtained an easy-to-remember web address, vancouver.anglican.ca. United for once, the five British Columbia and Yukon bishops came out in opposition to a populist referendum held by the provincial government basically in opposition to settling First Nation land claims: it passed but later was ignored. The diocese adopted a new overseas partner diocese, the Episcopal Diocese of Taiwan.

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Walkout at the 2002 Synod. PHOTO Neale Adams



LEFT The Rev. Michael Batten voting at the 2002 Synod. RIGHT Bishop Michael Ingham speaks to the media (Synod 2002). PHOTOS Neale Adams



The diocesan group going to Taiwan. PHOTO Neale Adams

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 16

All this was grist for *Topic*.

Behind the scenes though, something was brewing. Proponents were determined that Diocesan Synod again face the issue; they were going to bring a new motion. Bishop Ingham—concerned as a bishop is supposed to be about the “faith, unity, and discipline” of his diocese—attempted to craft a compromise. As Synod approached, much was in flux. In the last issue before the summer break (*Topic* didn’t publish in July or August) I wrote: “It was unclear at the *Topic* deadline what measures—if any—will actually end up before Synod,” adding, in the worst prediction I ever made as a journalist, “The Synod should be busy but may be less dramatic than last year.”

Opponents of the blessing had also been busy. They had won an initial victory and they wanted no part of a compromise put forward by this liberal bishop, whom some of them considered heretical. As the 2002 Synod met, again at Capilano College, an unusually large number of guest observers appeared before the crucial same-sex blessing vote. Another debate followed, then the vote on the compromise put forward: a blessing would be authorized, but only in parishes in which members had voted to consent to becoming a place of blessing, and only if the parish clergy also agreed. There would be a “conscience clause” stating that no clergy person would be penalized in any way for refusing to agree to conduct a same-sex blessing ceremony.

Some 62.5 % voted in favour. Before the bishop could announce his consent, the Rev. Trevor Walters of St. Matthew’s in Abbotsford rose to speak. He said he and many others couldn’t countenance a blessing. Out of conscience they had to dissent. On a prearranged signal, delegates from nine parishes rose in their seats and marched out, joined by the dozens of observer allies.

It made a spectacle for the television cameras present. I grabbed my camera and made a few hurried shots for *Topic* and went out to see what Walters was telling the secular media. “A fractured diocese has broken away from the Anglican Communion,” he asserted. It looked like a massive split, though only about 20% of the actual voting members of the Synod had left. When I returned the remaining members were very quiet, some in tears. Some who had left were people who many of the remaining had known and worked with for years. But the Synod had to make its decision.

The dispute continued in the secular newspapers and occasionally on television for many months. Diocesan revenues took a hit when nine parishes refused to pay their assessments, and a special financial Synod had to be called. *The Cursillo Movement*, affected by the controversy, was suspended for two years. Meanwhile, the diocese was being asked to start a three-year campaign to raise \$1.6 million dollars in support of a national settlement regarding residential schools—even though there had been no residential schools within the diocese’s current borders.

The following year, in 2003, what were labelled reconciliation talks began to try again to bridge the gap between the diocese and the dissenters. As *Topic* editor, I was not invited into them and could not directly report on what was going on. Still, it soon became obvious that they were not going well.

Bishop Ingham’s offer to bring in an “episcopal visitor,” a conservative bishop, to deal with pastoral and other issues was not accepted by the dissenters, even though a distinguished retired bishop from New Brunswick was named and came to the West Coast. A mediator was involved but soon reported that the dissenting parishes (eight now) wanted separation not recon-



LEFT Integrity Leader and St. John’s, Shaughnessy parishioner Steve Shuh, ODNW (2002 Synod).



RIGHT Linda Adams, ODNW (centre) with two representatives of the Coming Home Society (2001). PHOTOS Neale Adams

ciliation. Bishop Ingham felt he had to retain ultimate jurisdiction as the diocesan bishop, and the dissenters would not accept that. Then seven parishes voted formally to renounce Bishop Ingham’s jurisdiction. Meanwhile the annual census of communicants came out and I reported that attendance continued to decline—hardly a new phenomenon, for all mainstream churches had been suffering declines since the 1950s. However, the dissident parishes jumped on the report. My journalistic objectivity had given ammunition to the dissenters.

We were not doing well in the secular media. About this time the diocesan treasurer, Jim Stewart, an experienced businessman, suggested that we get some professional advice on our public relations. At first I bristled at the idea, for didn’t I know what there was to know from my 27+ years as a reporter? However, a public relations expert, Andrew Mackey, was engaged, and I learned that there was indeed a lot I didn’t know.

The problem was that our media engagement was almost always defensive. The dissenting clergy would make a charge and we would deny it. Then another charge and denial would follow. After surveying the work we had done, Andrew advised that we should focus on some positive key messages: that we were insisting that the Anglican Church in Vancouver continues its work of outreach and care for its parishioners; that we wanted every Anglican in our diocese to feel respected and safe, including gay and lesbian Anglicans; and that no priest or congregation was being directed to bless same-sex unions in violation of their conscience.

Every communication from the diocese should in some way echo these key messages, Andrew insisted. He also taught us how to deal with inquiring media: have a designated media contact, always get back to reporters quickly to find out what they want, find the right person to conduct the media interview, work with that person to make sure he or she works in the key messages as appropriate, and always tell the truth—but don’t necessarily volunteer information that hasn’t been requested. I realized I knew how newspaper and television people operated by having been one, but I had a lot to learn about how an organization must respond to media to get its position across.

Work by a liturgical committee continued to create a liturgy for the blessing of same-sex unions. It had to be solemn and speak of the love between the parties without appearing too much like the marriage ceremony. Finally, the blessing was ready. In May 2003, a booklet with the authorized blessing service was printed, and Bishop Ingham released it. His instructions for its use contained the earlier compromise provision both priests and the congregation of a parish must agree to hold same-sex blessings.

At St. Margaret’s in Vancouver, the

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Bishop Michael Ingham in Hong Kong with the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Most Rev. Rowan Williams. PHOTO Anglican Archives, diocese of New Westminster



Christ Church Cathedral procession west on Georgia Street from the Library to the renovated Cathedral (Easter 2004). PHOTO Anglican Archives, diocese of New Westminster

CONTROVERSY & CHANGE

Neale Adams, ODNW | Communications Officer & Editor 2000 – 2009, Contributor 1970-Present

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 17

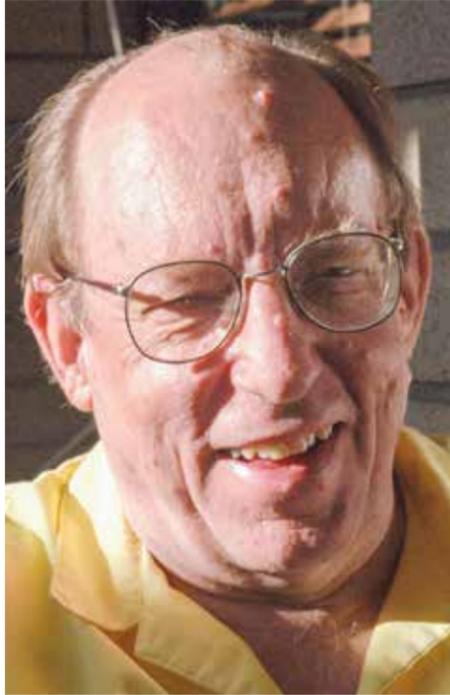
parish meeting as the vestry had already endorsed the blessing and the priest was willing. The Rev. Margaret Marquardt went ahead with a ceremony immediately and blessed the union of Michael Kalmuk and Kelly Montfort, on the day Bishop Ingham authorized the blessing. They were the first.

Someone had informed the local tabloid newspaper, so there they were, on the front page of *The Province*, showing off what seemed to be wedding rings. Neither I nor the bishop knew this was coming so soon — and rings were definitely *not* to be part of the blessing ceremony — rings were for marriage, not blessings. Never mind, the next morning I was kept busy answering calls from all over asking me about this “marriage.” I remember trying to persuade a reporter calling from the London *Telegraph* to use the word blessing, not marriage. It was news in Britain since the Archbishop of Canterbury had opposed our diocese’s action. He used the “M-word.”

The split over same-sex unions continued to bubble throughout the next six years of my service as *Topic* editor. Lots of other things filled up the newspaper, but the dispute was never far from my mind, always in the background. There were international reports from English and other bishops saying we shouldn’t have done what we did, there were dissenting priests leaving the diocese in various stages, there was a Lambeth Conference of bishops critical of the diocese of New Westminster, there were various reports and statements, there were more diocesan priests resigning but not leaving Vancouver, announcing that they were now under the jurisdiction of bishops opposed to same-sex blessings in various dioceses in Africa or in South America. It got to be rather tedious, I felt, and I put only the barest reports in *Topic*, to the relief (I felt) of many diocesan members. The Diocese had moved on.

For *Topic* there were many other stories, usually very positive, that had nothing to do with blessings: a new joint parish in Burnaby; establishing the Young Wolves Lodge as an adjunct of the Coming Home Society in south Vancouver for Indigenous women; a visit from Archbishop Desmond Tutu of South Africa who interacted delightfully with the Dalai Lama; a street ministry by the Rev. Matthew Johnson in Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside. Increasingly I paid attention to the diocesan website (www.vancouver.anglican.ca), which was gaining viewers as *Topic* circulation slowly declined. To try to keep readership, I created a tabloid style makeup for *Topic* in September 2007. The first page usually just advertised stories inside and had lots of pictures.

I retired in the summer of 2009 after producing 99 issues of *Topic*. After my retirement I did cover the British Columbia Supreme Court case during which the dissenting parishes argued they should keep their properties — their church buildings, halls, and grounds — while diocesan lawyers insisted, they were legally owned by the diocese. It was fun to end my journalism career covering a story in court, something I had done so many times over the years, and I enjoyed competing with the dissenting group’s reporter to be first to get the most accurate report up on a website. Of course, every reporter has his or her biases, and I suspect those who read both reports got the most balanced account of the happenings in court. The diocese won the case at trial and then on appeal, and when the Supreme Court of Canada declined to take the case in 2011, the issue was settled in the diocese.



“As the 2002 Synod met, again at Capilano College, an unusually large number of guest observers appeared before the crucial same-sex blessing vote. Another debate followed, then the vote on the compromise put forward: a blessing would be authorized, but only in parishes in which members had voted to consent to becoming a place of blessing, and only if the parish clergy also agreed.”

Neale Adams (2019). PHOTO Courtesy of Neale Adams



LEFT The Rev. Emilie Smith blesses a cyclist and the bike. RIGHT Bishop Michael Ingham and Archbishop Desmond Tutu (2004). PHOTOS Neale Adams



LEFT (now the Reverend) Tasha Carrothers and her children biking to church (2006).



RIGHT Treasurer, Jim Stewart puts forward the proposed Diocesan Budget to Diocesan Council (2005). PHOTOS Neale Adams

It was time for other dioceses in Canada to wrestle with the issue, and lately, for the national Church to consider and narrowly reject same-sex marriage.

I very much enjoyed my stint as *Topic* editor and communications officer for the diocese. At my retirement party, Bishop

Ingham joked that the whole blessings issue had been devised to keep me, with my background in journalism, busy and kept from boredom. Indeed, I do wish the issue had been settled without some Anglicans leaving the diocese, and *Topic* and my work as communication officer had been

focused more often on other things. Still, the struggle to maintain the inclusivity of the diocese, and of the Anglican Church beyond diocesan borders, was and remains essential, in my opinion. We made mistakes but I think that on the whole we upheld the message of the Gospel. ✠

The name of the newspaper for the diocese of New Westminster has always seemed significant: *Topic*. Not like most other diocesan newspapers, many of which have Anglican in their name: the founders of the newspaper of our diocese chose a provocative name for the paper—*Topic*—the dictionary defines it as “a matter dealt with.”

Choosing that name has given editors over its 50 years latitude to explore subject matters ranging from church activities to commentary on topical matters. Indeed, the word “topical” has often seemed most apt to describe the content of *Topic*. This is in part because this diocese has been for many years on the forefront of change for Canadian Anglicans. Archbishop Michael Peers, one-time Primate of the Anglican Church of Canada, often said that a journey across Canada from west to east, beginning in Vancouver, was an experience of time travel—backwards. What New West was exploring was often years ahead of other parts of the Canadian Church.

Whether it was Archbishop David Somerville’s championing of the admission of children to Holy Communion prior to Confirmation, or his leadership in opening ordination to women; or Archbishop Douglas Hambidge’s clear support of women’s ordination and pioneering new efforts in stewardship and financial development: there’s been a long history of embracing new initiatives to enable the church to remain relevant to an ever-changing society.

Bishop Michael Ingham’s courageous leadership in recognizing and celebrating the gifts of gay and lesbian members of our church was accompanied by his ably steering the diocese through a time of deep conflict and division. Similarly, Bishop Ingham’s capacity to address matters of evangelism in an increasingly secular world and his guidance in living authentically as Christians in an interfaith world was chronicled in the pages of *Topic* in fair and measured ways.

Of course, these big changes in the life of the church found their expression in the worship and events of parishes in the diocese. This became particularly evident in the ministry of Archbishop Melissa Skelton with her focus on congregational and leadership development in service of an increased diversity of membership and a greater inclusion in and for the church.

Topic’s succession of fine editors has steered the publication through technological changes: from a black and white paper to full colour, and from print only to a vibrant presence in the digital world, *Topic* has evolved with the times.

Under current editor Randy Murray’s stewardship, *Topic* has told the story of the diocese through events in parishes. If the



“CHOOSING THAT NAME (TOPIC) HAS GIVEN EDITORS OVER ITS 50 YEARS LATITUDE TO EXPLORE SUBJECT MATTERS RANGING FOR CHURCH ACTIVITIES TO COMMENTARY ON TOPICAL MATTERS. INDEED, THE WORD ‘TOPICAL’ HAS OFTEN SEEMED MOST APT TO DESCRIBE THE CONTENT OF TOPIC.”

The Very Rev. Peter Elliott speaking at the 2002 Synod.
PHOTO Neale Adams

A MATTER DEALT WITH

PETER ELLIOTT | RETIRED RECTOR OF CHRIST CHURCH CATHEDRAL
& DEAN OF THE DIOCESE OF NEW WESTMINSTER 1994–2019



LEFT The Very Rev. Peter Elliott speaking to the media (some product placement) just after the “walkout” at Synod in 2002. RIGHT Dean Elliott does, “Here’s the Church and here’s the steeple.”

slogan “names make news” is true, *Topic* in recent years has made news, bringing attention to parishes large and small. *Topic* under Randy’s leadership has given expression to the diocesan vision statement, “Growing communities of faith to serve God’s mission



in the world.” As it has also celebrated the ministry of the whole people of God—the inauguration of the Order of the Diocese of New Westminster has provided *Topic* with the opportunity to tell the stories of faithful disciples of Christ exercising their

ministries in myriad ways.

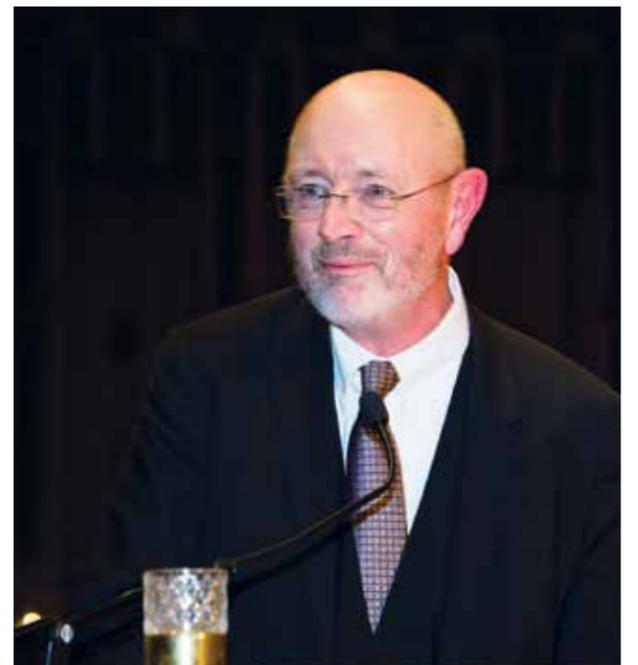
The past 50 years in the life of the Anglican Church in this diocese have been eventful, full of change. Long may *Topic* continue to bring news of the prophetic ministry of this diocese! ✠



Dean Elliott listens intently during one of the 2016 General Synod presentations. PHOTO Melanie Delva



Dean Peter Elliott and Bishop Jim Cruickshank.
PHOTO Topic Archives



Dean Elliott thanks the Christ Church Cathedral community at his retirement party (September 2019). PHOTO Wayne Chose

HOW I GOT HERE | In 1953, my father, a 21 year old, curly-haired railway administrator with a beautiful baritone singing voice and a profound love of church music met my mother at the St. Stephen's, Calgary's Anglican Young People's Association (AYPA). Although just 11 months older than my father, my mother was an accomplished Royal Academy of Dance (RAD) ballet instructor with a thriving school. They fell in love, married, and eleven and a half months after their wedding (December 30, 1954), I was born; three weeks later we moved to Vancouver. My father joined the Christ Church Cathedral choir as baritone soloist, my mother (the daughter of active and committed Anglican church lay leaders) began her life in Vancouver. At that time, I was literally a cradle Anglican. It was preordained that the Anglican church would be a big part of my life, along the lines of the Jerry Seinfeld joke about someone named "Jeeves" whom invariably finds themselves making their living as a butler. However, I did not expect, predict or consciously pursue the path that would constitute a significant portion of my "life's work."

I will fast forward through my years as a chorister at Christ Church Cathedral in the 1960s confirmed by Archbishop Godfrey Gower, schooling, marching bands, youth orchestras, rock bands, university, becoming a professional musician/entertainer, marriage, becoming a father, a stint in broadcasting, five years living in Prince George, returning to Christ Church Cathedral as a chorister, rock mass leader and Vancouver Children's Choir parent to 2002, when the Very Rev. Peter Elliott, then Dean of the diocese of New Westminster and Rector of Christ Church Cathedral parish asked me if I would like to join Christ Church Cathedral staff on a contract basis a few hours a week as Communications Associate. He knew that I was going through some major personal upheavals and I believe that his offer was more than anything an example of his uncanny ability to provide pastoral care unbeknownst to the recipient. I began on Christ Church Cathedral staff in July of 2002, and in 2003 my role expanded to Communications and Development Associate (still on contract), but by the end of 2005 I was a full time staff member. Those were the days of: the major renovations to the Cathedral's interior, the building of the elevator addition, innovations in stewardship campaigns and the arrival of the digital age for communications, database creation and maintenance and donor development software.

Beginning in 2003, I was approached by the soon-to-be Treasure of the diocese, Ian Robertson, ODNW, to take over his diocesan lay leadership role as Producer of the Annual Diocesan Synod. I agreed and have done that job for every Synod except for 2009, up to the present. In that role I became familiar with Synod staff and operations and worked closely with Communications Officer and *Topic* Editor, Neale Adams whom I'd known as a fellow cathedral parishioner. In 2005, I was appointed to the Diocesan Communications Committee (one of the numerous standing committees that were adjuncts of Diocesan Council prior to the White Paper of 2012/2013 and the resulting contraction of numerous diocesan committees down to two) which served as an advisory group for the communications officer and *Topic* editor. When Neale announced his retirement in the spring of 2009, he encouraged me to apply. I hesitated and was less than enthusiastic, for I saw this as primarily a "newspaper" job, an area where my only experience had been for five years in junior and senior high school peddling my bicycle many miles around the suburban and rural regions of Richmond, BC, delivering *The Vancouver Province* at 5am. However, I applied for the job, was short-listed, had an interview with a panel of three: Communications Committee Chair, the Rev. Paul Strudwick; Executive Archdeacon, the Ven. Ronald Harrison; and Business Administrator of the diocese, Rob Dickson. In those days the Business Administrator was the senior staff member with oversight over diocesan communications. There were a number of short-listed candidates that were whittled down to two and the two of us were asked to write our first editorial. I wrote my piece, and later that day I received a phone call from Bishop Michael Ingham offering me the position. I began work July 15, 2009.

NOW THAT I'M HERE | The job I'd accepted was structured so that *Topic* occupied 50% of my time; it did in fact create 110% of my anxiety. I knew that in order to succeed I would need a professional designer to focus on the *Topic* layout which would free me up to expand the other communications vehicles: website, email communications, social networks that were quickly surpassing print as the preferred methods of information sharing, not to mention the ongoing media relations learning curve that I had begun at Christ Church Cathedral. Partnering with a designer would also allow me the freedom to "go and get" the sto-

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Randy Murray with Peter Trotzuk and Michele Ray leading the music in worship at the 2008 Synod. PHOTO Neale Adams

"A set of guiding communications principles inspired by Scripture, the *Five Marks of Mission* of the Anglican Communion, the mission statement of the diocese of New Westminster — *Growing communities of faith in Jesus Christ to serve God's mission in the world*— and the ministry priorities of the diocese crafted with oversight by Archbishop Skelton and affirmed by Diocesan Council are always present in the communications content of our diocese."

IN THE AGE OF INSTANT INFORMATION

Randy Murray | Communications Officer & Editor 2009 – Present



LEFT Cleaning up the bus shelter in front of the building that housed the Synod Offices (June 16, 2011). RIGHT The Rev. Vivian Lam and others crew the Anglican Church of Canada canoe during the Truth and Reconciliation Commission wrap-up (September 2013). PHOTOS Randy Murray



The Anglican Church of Canada Dragonboat team in motion. PHOTO Christine Rowe

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ries where they were happening. The decades old process of soliciting and receiving content from diocesan parishes, diocesan sponsored ministries and groups related to the diocese was diminishing. I knew from my close proximity to Neale that he would worry about receiving sufficient content to every month create a publication that would holistically chronicle the life of the diocese. As an expert reporter, a brilliant writer, a talented artist, an early adopter of technology, Neale did an amazing job of bringing *Topic* and diocesan communications into the digital age while at the same time communicating the details of what was one of the most turbulent periods in the history of the Anglican church; not only in the diocese of New Westminster



Bishop Michael Ingham presents the diocesan crozier to the newly consecrated Bishop Melissa Skelton. PHOTO Sandra Vander Schaaf

but throughout the Anglican Communion. By the time I arrived, the controversy over full inclusion of all people in the life of the church was well on its way to some kind of resolution but I would of course need to follow up as the matter of property ownership was still before the courts. It was also important that as a church communicator I focus on normalizing the inclusion of LGBTQ Anglicans in our diocese and not prevaricate

In the summer of 2009, we contracted with Jennifer Ewing, a communications designer that I had worked with at Christ Church Cathedral. After we assembled that first September issue, Jenn put together a plan to create a consistent look and layout based on current design best practices: fonts, leading, headline hierarchy, consistent colour schemes and more. Jenn's skill, commitment and experience are what gives the current version of *Topic* its "body," its structure. Her contribution is more than just considerable it is essential, and her ability to understand the sometimes fuzzy vision of the current editor is the secret to the success of our collaboration.

Drawing on my experience in the media and in church communications I truly believe that people want to "see" what is happening in the church. What better solution than to include photographs, graphics and images that communicate the overall story and the feeling of the event inviting the person picking up the publication to invest the time it might take to read the accompanying text. I decided to spend some of my budget on a *prosumer* level Digital Single Lens Reflex (DSLR) camera and try my hand at photography, which I have done. But more significant than my modest efforts is the fact that we in the diocese are blessed by the talents of a number of superb photographers who are willing to share their professional skills at a fraction of their market value and/or in many cases as part of their support and service to the church. It can be a mistake to list names as there is always a good chance someone will be left out but in this case it is necessary to thank; Sandra Vander Schaaf, Bayne Stanley, Martin Knowles, Sarah Sovereign, Larry Scherben, ODNW, Cliff Caprani and last but not least, Wayne Chose whose decades of experience as a professional photographer and photo editor has been at my disposal for the ten plus years I have done this job. There are many people who submit excellent images to diocesan communications using cell phones and point and shoot cameras. Jane Dittrich of Christ Church Cathedral has been invaluable to *Topic* and diocesan communications as has Nii K'an Kwsdins (AKA Jerry Adams), not just for their excellent photos and attendance at worship and events of interest to Anglicans, but also for their reporting.

During my tenure, significant changes due to leaps in technology have come to the printing and publishing industry, allowing for the availability of inexpensive and high quality printing of colour images that were not dreamed of by my predecessors in the days of old school



A favourite front page photo; watching water poured into the font. PHOTO Randy Murray

newspaper layout, fledgling desktop publishing software or the early versions of the Adobe programs that have evolved into what we have today. This and the changeover in 2013 to the print company WebNews of North York, Ontario where the AJ and the diocesan papers are printed, afforded we editors the opportunity to expand our publications and keep costs reasonable.

A set of guiding communications principles inspired by Scripture, the *Five Marks of Mission* of the Anglican Communion, the mission statement of the diocese of New Westminster—*Growing communities of faith in Jesus Christ to serve God's mission in the world*—and the ministry priorities of the diocese crafted with oversight by Archbishop Skelton and affirmed by Diocesan Council are always present in the communications content of our diocese. Those constants coupled with the valuable counsel that we've received from Christ Church Cathedral parishioner and advertising creative director, Rod Mackin and media relations professional Andrew Mackey have shaped the overall communications strategy of the diocese. *Topic* remains an important part of that strategy.

SIGNIFICANT EVENTS | Over the past ten years there have been some significant events covered by *Topic*.

It would take up far too much space to list them and information about diocesan milestones between 2009 and 2020 are easily accessible through the diocesan website and back issues of *Topic*, however I think it's important to list these events:

November 2009 | The first Order of the Diocese of New Westminster (ODNW) Investiture liturgy. The creation of the ODNW based on similar lay service recognition programs in the Anglican Church of Canada, crafted primarily by the Very Rev. Peter Elliott, Robert Watt, ODNW and the Venerable Ronald Harrison foreshadowed the coming emphasis on parish rejuvenation and the recognition by the greater diocesan family of the ministry of the laity. From that first Eucharist in November of 2009 at Christ Church Cathedral to the Standing Room Only crowds at the Massey Theatre in New Westminster, the ODNW is by far the best-attended and perhaps the most joy filled of diocesan events.

June 16, 2011 | The day after the Vancouver hockey riots, the Supreme Court of Canada rejects the second and final appeal of the Anglican Network in Canada who had brought suit against the diocese of New Westminster and Bishop Michael Ingham; supporting the 2009 BC Supreme Court decision that church properties are ultimately under the authority of the diocesan bishop who has the responsibility to steward those properties for the present and future use of those who choose to participate in the public worship of God in the Anglican Church of Canada.

Fall 2013 | The retirement of the Rt. Rev. Michael Ingham following nearly 20 years of his servant leadership

The conclusion of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's work which launched a new chapter in the Anglican Church's journey towards reconciliation with Indigenous peoples.

The election of the Rev. Canon Melissa M. Skelton of the Episcopal Diocese of Olympia as the 9th Bishop of the diocese. The first woman, the first American and the first bishop of the diocese to have had a career outside of the church prior to following her call to full time ordained ministry.

2014–2016 | Saw the emergence of innovative ministries: St. Brigid's at Christ Church Cathedral, Salal + Cedar Watershed Discipleship and St. Hildegard's Sanctuary at St. Faith's.

2016–2017 | A Companion Diocese agreement with the Episcopal Diocese of Northern Philippines was affirmed.

May 12, 2018 | The election of Bishop Melissa Skelton as Metropolitan of the Ecclesiastical Province of BC/Yukon that comes with the honorific "Archbishop." The first woman in the Anglican Church of Canada and the second woman in the worldwide Anglican Communion to have the title "Archbishop."

THE DECADE OF THE 2010S & BEYOND | *Topic* has survived the 2010s, a decade that saw a staggering increase in our ability to access information. It seems like yesterday that I assumed the editor's chair just eight months before the launching of the first iPad. In the ensuing ten years a number of words and phrases have been added to our lexicon: bingeable, clickbait, Airplane mode, screen time, ghosting, fake news, troll and emoji. The 2010s have been the decade of social media. In 2010 the year that diocesan communications launched the Facebook page *Anglican Conversation* there were 400 million Facebook users now there are 2.5 billion of which 1.5 billion log-on at least once a day. In North America 70% of adults use Facebook and about 25% use Twitter. In 2010, 20% of adults in North America had smartphones, today that number is close to

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IN THE AGE OF INSTANT INFORMATION

Randy Murray | Communications Officer & Editor 2009 – Present

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90%. But print endures, the *Person of the Year* issue of *Time* magazine was the 95 year old publications' most popular issue ever. Futurists agree that print will continue, but the smartphone will likely morph into something quite different by 2030. Our instant information devices: Siri, Alexa, Google Assistant will exist within glasses, earbuds, bracelets and rings.

As *Topic* begins its next half century it is no longer the publication sent to every member of the diocese listed on the parish roles. Only those who intentionally subscribe receive *Topic* and the *Anglican Journal*. As mainstream protestant denominations, following decades of contraction take their post-modern place as a much smaller piece of the cultural and social mosaic we realize that we no longer have the same level of influence in the world. But that is not a reason to drift away into irrelevance, it is important to shine the light of Christ on the world in new and innovative ways and to share those stories.

In preparation for this article and for editing this special edition of *Topic* I thought about the best articles published during my tenure; the most thought-provoking op/eds, the most inspiring story, the most influential story and of course the most eye-catching images. However, my real hope is that the best story has yet to be written, the



"God has more in store for you than you can even imagine."
• *Ephesians 3:20*

"Just as all the stars revolve around the North Star, so too, all our communications should revolve around fully fulfilling the Great Commission."

• *Yvon Prehn*
The Five Steps of Effective Church Communications & Marketing

Michael Kalmuk, one half of the first couple to receive a same-sex blessing in the diocese with Randy Murray on Pride Day, August 2016. SELFIE Michael Kalmuk

most inspiring and influential events covered by *Topic* have yet to happen and the most brilliant photograph has yet to be taken. As I edited the copy submitted for this issue I was overwhelmed by the skill, commitment, brilliance, sensitivity and faith of my predecessors and the enthusiastic support for this ministry of the diocese for 50 years by ordained and lay leaders. The support I have personally received from my supervisors, Rob Dickson (2009–2015)

and the Ven. Douglas Fenton (2016–present) has been immeasurable. The incredible cooperation and support added to the scholarly and prophetic content supplied by Bishop Michael Ingham and Archbishop Melissa Skelton are huge factors in the ongoing successful ministry that is *Topic*.

Thank you to everyone who reads *Topic*, and please keep those stories, photos, reflections, prayers, poems and opinions coming. ✠



LEFT Archbishop Skelton in a purple "Pussy Hat" made by Judy Graves, ODNW (right). PHOTO Eric Stroo RIGHT The presentation of a ceremonial First Nations mask at St. David of Wales. PHOTO Randy Murray

The Church lost a voice for humour and faith with the passing of Joel Kauffmann, who died May 8, 2015.

 **Ponius' Puddle**



 **Ponius' Puddle**



Some Thoughts from Topic's "Publishers..."

The Most Reverend Douglas Hambidge | Archbishop of the diocese of New Westminster 1980–1993;
Metropolitan of the Ecclesiastical Province of BC/Yukon 1981–1993

One of the strengths of our church is its insistence that we see the bigger picture. We look beyond ourselves, our needs, our successes, our failures. That's where a diocesan paper comes in. It says, in articles and pictures, "this is what is happening; this is what to look forward to." One of the weaknesses of our church is our tendency to tunnel-vision and see no further than our church walls and parish boundaries. So, we wallow in our problems, and leave everyone else to do the same. We rejoice in our successes and celebrate them alone, but a diocesan paper challenges the "blinkered" parish. It says, "Look around; you are not alone; you are part of a rich, lively and loving community."

As well as being *episcopally led*, we are *synodically governed*, but if what happens at Synod is not reported, how can the people of the church respond? How can we feel part of the faith community that is the diocese? So, we read about Synod, we see pictures of friends at Synod. We discover that Synod involves our journey of faith as parishes, and we feel included in ways beyond a report from our parish delegates.

It is a short step to being in touch with the continuing work of Synod by learning of the word done by Diocesan Council month by month. What decisions were made and what effect will they have where I worship and in all the other parishes? Why is this important? I believe that in our Synods and councils we are engaged in God's concerns and priorities. We are entrusted with "the care of all the churches," to use St. Paul's phrase. That is an incredible truth: it is a daunting responsibility! It challenges me to take the work of Synods and councils very seriously, and it also makes me look again at what goes on in my parish annual meeting and the meetings of Parish Council.

Surprisingly in a diocese like ours, although we are all located in a very small area, there is a tendency to feel isolated and



LEFT In this photo from 1981 we see the Lieutenant-Governor of British Columbia, the Hon. Henry "Budge" Bell-Irving (on the left rear view), Archbishop Douglas Hambidge (on the right) and the Rev. David Retter (behind and to the left) on the occasion of Archbishop Hambidge's installation as Metropolitan of the Ecclesiastical Province of BC and Yukon. PHOTO Ronald Harrison
RIGHT Archbishop Hambidge robing prior to the Ordination of Melissa Skelton on March 1, 2014. PHOTO Wayne Chose

alone. We work on our own programmes and activities, we face our challenges, and maybe wonder if anyone else knows about us, or even cares. Are other parishes exploring ideas that we might find helpful? Are they aware of pitfalls we would do well to avoid? A diocesan paper is a way we keep in touch with our sisters and brothers *next door*. Knowing what's happening might even convince us of ways we might actually work together, but if we don't know what's going on, that will never happen. If in my faith community a programme or activity is working well, there may be another parish that would be helped if they knew about

it, and a diocesan paper can be the link between the two.

Over the past 50 years *Topic* has been the instrument that has been doing all the things I have written about. It has served, through dedicated editors, contributors and photographers, to encourage our sense of community as a diocese. Through the pages of *Topic*, I am able to find a place in the mission of New Westminster, and to recognize the journey of faith we are on together.

What would I like to see in *Topic* in the days ahead? Perhaps we might invite *Texts and Emails to the Editor* as we don't

write letters anymore. I think it would be good to have an occasional opinion column—it could be called *Opinions of the Opinionated*—there should be no shortage of material. We might, from time to time, have one of our staff persons tell us about their ministry. Anything that challenges us to think deeply about what we are doing as a diocese with all that God has entrusted to us, strengthens our life of faith.

Congratulations to past and present editors for helping us along the way. We are stronger for having *Topic* month by month. ✠

The Right Reverend Michael Ingham | Bishop of New Westminster 1994–2013

There was a time, not long ago, when people got their news from newspapers.

When I was a schoolboy in Britain, the famous *Times* of London was available to school children for a shilling a week, and I avidly subscribed.

The paper was delivered each day to my school with my name on it. Glares of contempt came from my schoolmates. At first, I didn't understand a word. I sat with a dictionary next to the paper spread out on my desk. In the football reports at the back, I would read, "Matthews was ubiquitous throughout the match." *Ubiquitous? What does that mean?* I had to look it up. Slowly, over the years, my vocabulary increased.

When I worked in Toronto, the morning ride on the Go Train was disturbed only by the sound of fluttering newspapers. Commuters jostled for elbow space on the narrow benches on their way into the city. I remember writing a letter to the editor of the *Globe and Mail* complaining about the width of the broadsheet which, unfolded, obstructed the view of the person next to me. They never printed it. But a little while later, they reduced the size of the paper.

Now the *Globe and Mail* looks exactly like their website. It's a tough world for print news these days. All the majors are

struggling to survive.

I still like to read a newspaper in my hands. And books too. I can peruse any paper online if I want (my wife downloads half the world's newspapers to her iPad every morning and sits transfixed till midday), but I can't abide the dancing screen that moves about as I'm trying to read, thrusting unwanted videos into my face.

It's a bit like what's happening to the church. The older members, the paying subscribers if you like, have certain preferences, borne of long habit: music, solemnity, dignity, a certain ethereal beauty of holiness. Not an effort to emulate an hour at Starbucks.

But the old order is changing. The first edition of *Topic* (that evolved after the demise of *The Anglican News*) announced itself as a necessary innovation in modern communication. And it was. Before it, the clergy and parish members received only laboriously inked notices from the Synod Office run from ancient Gestetner machines, mailed out, and pinned to church notice boards. A diocesan newspaper was a real innovation.

It even started with a certain literary flair. "Gentlemen now a-bed shall think themselves accursed they were not there!" shrieked a bold headline, drawn from



"The old order changeth,
yielding place to new,
And God fulfils himself in many ways,
Lest one good custom
should corrupt the world."
• Tennyson

Michael Ingham (1970s).



Bishop Michael Ingham with Archbishop Michael J. Miller at an Anglican/Roman Catholic clergy day in 2011. PHOTO Randy Murray

Shakespeare's *Henry V*, about the importance of attending your Annual Parish Vestry Meeting.

"Is this the Church's finest hour?" asked Jack Major in an optimistic opinion piece in 1969. We learn that 74 young people were confirmed at St. Mary's, Kerrisdale in one service, and 170 attended a Youth Synod at which they issued a stern warning: "Young People Want Change!"

A charming black and white photograph of Bishop and Mrs. Gower on their way to the Lambeth Conference in England—by ship across the Atlantic—reminds us of a past that's gone (and may yet return). Pho-

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Some Thoughts from Topic's "Publishers..."

The Right Reverend Michael Ingham | Bishop of New Westminster 1994–2013

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tos of clergy in their youth and vigour, some now retired, some dead, adorn the pages of the early editions. And as you leaf through the months and years, they become older and more wrinkled—ecclesiastical versions of the picture of Dorian Gray.

I once proposed (tongue in cheek) a page 3 feature, based somewhat loosely on a tabloid practice, called *Spot the Priest*. For this, clergy would be invited to submit pictures of themselves as babies in diapers or as toddlers rolling on the floor. There would be a monthly prize for successful readers' guesses. It went nowhere, mostly because it was a bad idea, but also because the church in the 90s was trying to rid itself of clericalism.

Topic kept up with the trends. By the time of my episcopacy, from 1994 to 2013, the paper had changed its name and was ablaze with colour. While certain staple items endured—the Bishop's Letter, People Around the Diocese, Parish stories, Reports from Synod, the diocese taking over Camp Artaban again—there was also an effort to inform readers of larger trends and developments affecting the church. The record of this is long.

The 1980s, for example, had been a time of liturgical development and renewal that many welcomed, and others despised.

Topic covered the debates with an attempt at balance and a focus on substance rather than politics. It even ventured into complex intellectual problems—unafraid to take on the science versus religion debate. I was keenly interested in this myself and spent quite a bit of time trying to defend and explain the Christian understanding of Creation. I was happy to see this bit of doggerel, sent in by a reader to *Topic's* letters, which put the matter concisely:

"There is no God" the speaker cries
 "Don't let your thoughts be chained.
 The universe evolved itself.
 The world is self-contained."
 Just then an urchin in the crowd
 A skilfull pebble throws,
 Which accurately lands upon
 His atheistic nose.
 "Who threw that stone?" the speaker roars.
 At which the cockney elf,
 intuitively keen, retorts,
 "No one! It 'frew itself."

By the 1990s, the paper was giving a lot of coverage to social justice questions: gambling addiction, opposition to a proposed casino in Vancouver, elder abuse in homes, the plight of Filipino nannies, the settlement of refugees, assisted suicide, environmental collapse, homelessness, and

the arrival of new Canadians.

The diocese was engaged in all these issues through a variety of task forces, ecumenical coalitions, inter-faith dialogues, and through direct approach to governments at all levels. These were the days when our Synods fearlessly tackled the pressing social issues, often publishing analyses of public policy that veered close to moral judgments. We were not so preoccupied in those days with our own re-organization. We still had a voice in society.

If anyone thinks the church in those years was a tranquil place, they need only browse the strident opinions on all sides of these questions in the pages of our newspaper.

And then came the divisive question of human sexuality. It still comes as a surprise to me to meet Anglicans who don't know the story of New Westminster and the role we played in the struggle for the acceptance of homosexual relationships within the worldwide Anglican Communion. It seems to have faded from memory.

It was covered in *Topic* as extensively as in the secular press, but with more theological depth. The non-church news outlets were interested only in the conflict, the religious battle, the high stakes litigation and subsequent court case. Our own

newspaper focused on the people at the centre of the dispute, the pain and human cost of the schism.

The early debates were about biblical authority and pastoral accommodation. As the stalemate widened between opposing convictions, the questions became doctrinal, and then political. *Topic's* coverage gave space for theological reflection on the moral complexities of Christian tradition and changing social values. Its record of trying to inform, and trying to be fair, was maintained in a difficult time by its writers.

As I browse through these items now, on archival paper yellowed with age, the heart-break and poison of those days come back to me with force. Our newspaper, preserved for posterity in the Diocesan Archives, remains a solitary witness to a moment of tumultuous change in our church that cast ripples across the world.

Over these five decades and more, talented editors have come and gone. They have shaped the paper into something unique—an in-house publication with an independent mind: neither a slavish parrot of the prevailing powers, nor forgetful of its place in the spiritual and religious formation of its readers.

Yet now we move on again, to a new world of communication beyond paper... ✦

The Most Reverend Melissa M. Skelton | Archbishop of the diocese of New Westminster 2014–Present | Metropolitan of the Ecclesiastical Province of BC/Yukon 2018–Present

I have not been resident in the diocese as long as many of those who are commenting on *Topic's* 50th anniversary. What this means is that I don't have the length of experience about the thorough and excellent coverage the editors and writers of *Topic* have offered the people of this diocese and those from the broader church who care about what we say and do. But what I can tell you is this: that during my tenure as Bishop and then Archbishop of the diocese, *Topic*, its stories, its columns and its photos, have kept us connected to one another, have kept us focused on the important priorities of our diocese and have helped us remember that God is alive and active here and now in the people and work of the diocese of New Westminster. All three of these things are very, very important.

KEEPING US CONNECTED TO ONE ANOTHER | In a time when even in Canada, individualism can sometimes be the value of the day, *Topic* has helped us all see ourselves as a part of something larger, as part of the ongoing Christian Anglican story as it unfolds here in this diocese during challenging and exciting times for the Church. This crucial function has meant that in the pages of *Topic* you and I continue to discover that we belong to one another—that the people and churches of Vancouver belong to the people and churches of the Fraser Valley

who belong to the people and churches of the Sunshine Coast. Though our locations and regional cultures are many, we are one people, one church, united in Christ and through the Anglican identity we share.

KEEPING US FOCUSED ON THE PRIORITIES OF THE DIOCESE | I don't know about you but it's easy to get lost in the weeds! I mean it. The constant demands of the everyday can obscure the important priorities we set for ourselves. *Topic* Editor Randy Murray's focus on covering people and stories that reflect the priorities of the diocese have been an inspiration and a gift to me and, I believe, to us all. And so, Randy has unfailingly covered stories about parishes working on the demanding tasks of parish development, stories about parishes engaging with Indigenous peoples in their communities and working together on relationship and reconciliation, and stories about churches creatively dealing with the astounding and humbling diversity of the people in our region, neighbourhoods and churches. Thank you, *Topic* and Randy for continuing to bring us back to what we have said is important.

REMINDING US THAT GOD IS ALIVE & ACTIVE HERE AND NOW | Sometimes when I read *Topic*, I am astounded by the sheer amount of what is going on and by the quality of ministry that is happening across



"Sometimes when I read Topic, I am astounded by the sheer amount of what is going on and by the quality of ministry that is happening across the diocese."

At the Episcopal Church Centre in New York City in the mid-1990s we see then-Canon Melissa M. Skelton (right) and among the new bishops attending the centre we see Bishop Michael Ingham (top left) and Archbishop Fred Hiltz (lower left). PHOTO Courtesy of Melissa Skelton



Archbishop Melissa Skelton (2015). PHOTO Sarah Sovereign

the diocese. God is alive and active through us: in the way that our parishes build community outside the walls of the church in the face of much loneliness, in the ways that

our parishes express kinship with those on the margins, in the ways that our parishes focus on a healthy evangelism and growth, in the ways that our parishes form us in baptismal identity and purpose and send us into the world as salt, light and leaven. *Topic's* stories, news and columns remind us that all we do is for the purpose of serving God's mission in the world.

For these three reasons (and others), what I want to say on this 50th anniversary is this: Thank you, editors of *Topic*, and all those who have contributed to this important way we have come to see ourselves, to understand what is important to us and to see the hand of God in who we are and what we do. ✦



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