



BY RANDALL FAIREY

RANDALL FAIREY IS A  
DIOCESAN DELEGATE,  
COUNCIL OF GENERAL SYNOD

Later this month the Council of General Synod will meet for the last time before General Synod. Significant resolutions will be drafted to develop the main agenda, and important issues are forthcoming. Recently the purportedly final edition of the proposed Anglican Communion Covenant has been released, and perhaps will come to General Synod for debate and possible decision. I say perhaps, because significant concerns remain about this document despite direct Canadian input to the Covenant Design Group. I have read the Covenant carefully, and as an Anglican I need to be convinced about both its purposes and its merits.

The seven year evolution of a covenant has resulted from the 2004 Windsor

## Commentary CoGS wheels

Report, the final report of a Lambeth Communion Commission. This Commission was initiated in 2003 by the Instruments of Communion, including particular support by the Archbishop of Canterbury, because of the growing discord and threats of schism arising from the blessing of same sex unions by the Diocese of New Westminster, and the ordination of an openly gay partnered bishop in the Episcopal Church. Despite huge divisions over other issues; the place of women in the priesthood and episcopacy, divorce and remarriage, and alternative services to the Book of Common Prayer, almost universally worldwide Anglicans have accepted that human sexuality should be the single issue that places us into a crucible of disunity.

The Preamble, and Sections One through Three of the Covenant are well written, and for the most part uncontroversial descriptions of the nature of the Anglican

Communion. Section Four, Our Covenanted Life Together, has undergone the most revisions. In the first draft, it was hostile and punitive in tone and indirectly aimed at the Anglican Church of Canada and The Episcopal Church. After four iterations it seems to have reached a final form that still articulates discipline, and dispute resolution. For me the language remains overly juridical, and now so nuanced, as to be readily misinterpreted.

Like the Rev. Dr. Giles Fraser, Canon Chancellor of St. Paul's Cathedral London, I am sadly resigned to the fact that adoption of this Covenant has enough momentum that it will likely happen. However, I believe the premises for its origin are wrong, and worse, is not what Jesus intends; and runs counter to our calling for "one Lord, one faith, one baptism." (Eph 4:5) I have enormous respect for the pastoral wisdom of the Archbishop of Canterbury, but he is facing

the terrible prospect of being the Archbishop who potentially could oversee a breakup of the Anglican Communion. Consequently he is under enormous, and I suspect irresistible pressure to assert by means of this Covenant an increased centralized authority via the Instruments of Communion. Running even more counter to traditional Anglicanism, is that the future maintenance of the Covenant and its dispute resolution powers are specifically vested in a select Standing Committee of the Anglican Communion. This Committee meets in closed sessions and is responsible only to the Instruments of Communion. And I have to agree with Canon Fraser when he says "no amount of Lambeth Palace spin is going to persuade me that like a pre-nuptial agreement, this Covenant isn't a way of arranging, in advance, the terms of a future divorce."

The word "Church" is used throughout the Covenant

document. It is of course assumed that refers to a Province of the Anglican Communion with membership on the Anglican Consultative Council. "Church," however, is already being held open to broad interpretation; for some it could include a covenanting diocese, and for others, even a parish. And we already see the zealots in disaffected break-away parishes of the Anglican Church of Canada, and the Episcopal Church anxious to sign the Covenant believing it to be a vehicle for recognition, and thereby vicariously acquire legitimacy in the Anglican Communion. Over four hundred years of history has not required a Covenant. For the sake of the Gospel and the future of Anglicanism I believe we should drop the whole idea. If it is somehow inevitable, then at least remove Section Four. I believe Canada should not sign this final draft.

□



BY NORENE MORROW

One of my life's passions is musical theatre, and I have the good fortune of working as a set painter, props maker, costume designer, and performer at the Kelowna Actors Studio dinner theatre. What does this have to church music, you may ask? Not much really, except that when I got to thinking about children and church I couldn't help thinking about a beautiful song from one of my favourite musicals, "Into the Woods," by Stephen Sondheim. The song is called "Children Will Listen," and it says...

Careful the things you say,  
Children will listen.

Careful the things you do,  
Children will see and learn.

Children may not obey, but children will listen.

Children will look to you for which way to turn to learn what to be.

Careful before you say, "Listen to me."

Children will listen.

## Music

# Children will listen

When our family moved to the Okanagan in 2001, our kids did not want to get involved in church at all, especially since they had the label of PKs (priest's kids) and were not keen on this fish bowl life we lead. Our daughter did sing in the children's choir a few years and the boys had been servers in our previous church, but in all circumstances they would probably say that they did these things under duress or through bribery. At the very least, they were expected to attend church until they reached adulthood, when the decision about church attendance would be up to them. The boys are now 19 and 21, so we only see them at Christmas, Easter, and for special occasions.

Our daughter (nearly 17) still has a little over a year until her sentence is up, so she continues to carry on the tradition, started by her brothers, of sitting at the very back of the church trying to be invisible.

Over the years we have had to listen to our children's protestations about how boring and pointless church is, especially when they had to leave a sleep-over party early in the morning to go to church. However, occasionally it has been let slip that maybe they did get something out of it. The first indicator occurred within a year of our move when our middle child pointed out that the servers had done something wrong at the altar; another time he pointed out that the same reading had been read two weeks in a row; and then, the one which really warmed the cockles of his mother's heart, was when he walked into the kitchen absentmindedly singing a refrain from a hymn. When he realized what he was doing he repeatedly hit his head saying, "Why I am singing that?"

Why am I singing that?" I do not remember any circumstances like this with the other two, but we have often had interesting discussions with them after church about what was said in a sermon. Let's just say that our kids have definite preferences when it comes to which preachers they are prepared to listen to.

The point of my telling you these anecdotes is to demonstrate that even though they may protest, children do listen ... and watch! That is why, from a musical standpoint, it is crucial that we think of **music as educating our children in their faith**. To quote John Bell (one of my heroes), "Children's hymns should never be seen as a form of entertainment to keep the kids happy. These songs, in the future, will be evocative of God." He asks us to consider a child born in the 1970s, finding himself coming towards the end of his life in a geriatric ward in the 2060s, and as he prepares to make peace with God summons up such deeply spiritual ditty as, "If I were a fuzzy, wuzzy bear, I'd

thank you Lord, for my fuzzy, wuzzy hair." Something to think about!

We need to remember the power of words, music, and our actions in church. Children are capable of relating to music that has more substance. They also need to be included in the whole worshipping body by allowing them to sing the same hymns that "grown ups" do. However, choosing music that works for the whole community is only part of how we engage children in worship. The other part has to do with setting an example. Week after week, many of us come to church without joining in the singing. I've noticed that this seems to be particularly true of men, and causes me to wonder, "Would more boys sing if they saw their fathers, uncles, or grandfathers singing?"

Next time you go to church I hope that you will think the words of Stephen Sondheim because, although it may not be immediately apparent, children are listening.

□