



# Cathedral Script

1440 Union Avenue, Montréal H3A 2B8  
cathoff@attglobal.net  
www.montreal.anglican.org/cathedral/

**Editorial Board:** Elizabeth Adams, William Converse, Ann Elbourne, Janet King, Tania Lesack, Joyce Sanchez, Marjorie Sharp

Christ Church Cathedral, Montréal

Vol. 262 Advent 2007

## CHILDHOOD CHRISTMAS MEMORIES

By Ann Elbourne

Every year, the pageant performed by the Sunday School reminds us that Christmas celebrates the birth of a baby. The years when a real baby is placed in Mary's arms are particularly meaningful. And who could forget the year when the children wrote the play themselves? Herod was a histrionic mob boss, Joseph a garage mechanic and the angels squeegee kids on skates.

Pageants, music, Christmas services and family celebrations – these are what people remember when they are asked about Christmases past.

Susan Lawrence says her Christmas in Jamaica started with the pageant. She sang in the choir; “Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all ye lands.” Next came a service at 11, then a family dinner of chicken or pork before everyone was back in church again for the evening service.

Patrick recalls playing the organ in Toronto Cathedral for the first time at Advent and Christmas carol services. He was only 18, and coming from small-town Ontario he felt he had hit the big time!

Cynthia has vivid memories of people in Trinidad going house to house singing *parang*, Caribbean Christmas folk music, sung in Spanish or French.

I sang carols in Yorkshire, clutching flashlight and music in my frozen hands. The stars were points of ice, but we had the voices of angels in the crystal clear moonlit air. In spite of the cold, people even carol sing in Montreal. Back in the 70s the 3CYC (the senior Sunday School) went carol singing to buy Christmas gifts for the Vietnamese refugees sponsored by the Cathedral.

Jane's warmer memories of Christmas at the Cathedral include Phyllis Parker's home-made egg nog, a tradition later taken over by Jane, and Bishop Hollis preaching about friendship with a monkey puppet draped around his neck.

Eva was living in East Germany during a period of austerity, but Christmas was joyful. Her parents shut themselves in the parlour to decorate the Christmas tree and put out the gifts. By 5pm the children were standing outside the door, trying to peer through the keyhole. They had to play the flute or sing in order to be admitted. The tree, lit by real candles, reached to the ceiling. Gifts were not wrapped. Every

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In 1848, the *Illustrated London News* ran this engraving of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert and their Christmas tree. Albert, who was German, helped the tradition catch on in Britain and Canada.

child had a table or a corner and had to sing Christmas songs before going to their places. There were not many consumer goods available so gifts might be second-hand or home-made. One year her father made dolls' houses out of cardboard for the three girls. After the tree ceremony the family ate a big dinner with carp as the main dish. There was also *ein bunter Teller*, a dish of sweetmeats, fruit and gingerbread, and a huge stolen which had been taken on a big board to the baker because it wouldn't fit in the family oven. Ingredients for the feast had been saved for several months because of the shortages. After the dinner the family went to Midnight Mass.

René recollected sleepless celebrations in the Philippines. Midnight Mass was followed by a large meal which ended with sticky rice in banana leaves accompanied by hot chocolate. After the meal there were presents. Everyone was back in church the following morning.

In Finland, Kyllikki also celebrated on Christmas Eve. At 6pm, Christmas Peace was declared on the radio and festivities began. There was a meal of ham, turnip casserole, beetroot salad with herring and rice pudding for dessert. The pudding contained an almond. Whoever found it would get married in the following year. Without knowing about this tradition Michael happily crunched the almond and did indeed marry Kyllikki the following year.

Nobody mentioned turkey. Marjorie had roast beef at her grandmother's place. She remembers her grandfather setting the pudding alight and hoping to get a threepenny piece in her helping – common memories for those with an English background. My mother kept a bottle of brandy, to dose sick hens and children, and to soak the Christmas pudding. Last year, in Australia, Marjorie ate seafood and mincemeat ice cream after an afternoon in the pool.

Susan said her early life was poor, but happy. The family kept pigs, hens and goats, and there was enough to eat. There was no electricity or running water. The Christmas cake was baked in the oven of a wood-burning stove. Susan helped get the wood and also fetched water from the concrete tank in her aunt's garden or from the rain barrel under the coconut tree. They didn't buy presents, but made cookies and cards. Susan drew goats on her cards because she loved them.

Jacqueline and Yvonne Barrow, with roots in Barbados, summed up the past: "Christmas was church and food and music. There were not so many presents."

## LUTHER'S CHRISTMAS SERMONS

by Roger Balk, Honorary Assistant



Martin Luther as a Monk, 1520  
Lucas Cranach the Elder (German,  
1472–1553)

Over the past several years it has been my custom to read excerpts from one of Martin Luther's Christmas sermons.<sup>1</sup> They are part of his remarkable output of scholarly, devotional and polemical writing that includes the seminal version of the Bible in the German language. Altogether they total some 127 quarto volumes in the Weimar *Aufgabe* which is the critical edition of his published works. In

the recent English version of his work, which totals 54 volumes, two full books (volumes 51 and 52) are given over to his sermons. In his role as leader of the German Reformation, Luther preached an average of 150-200 sermons a year.<sup>2</sup> These included days which were familiar to the Roman Liturgical Calendar but often discarded by later non-Lutheran or Anglican reformers.

Obviously Luther was a product of his time so we cannot expect he would approach the Bible with the same understanding as that of contemporary biblical criticism. He was, however, no biblical literalist. In his introduction to his collection Roland Bainton notes that:

*He was not himself primarily interested in miracles. "The Gospel," he once said, "is not so much a miracle as a marvel." Compared with his contemporaries he was singularly parsimonious with regard to miracle<sup>3</sup>.*

Luther took his course based upon a biblicism which refused to speculate beyond that which was included in the words themselves. Thus Mary may have ridden a donkey but the Gospel does not say so, and the Wise Men may have been three, but at best this number was an inference from the three gifts. Perhaps inspired by the practice of Renaissance artists to portray Biblical characters with the features of their contemporaries, Luther's Christmas story was moved from Palestine to Germany. The human aspect of the biblical stories was highlighted often with touches of the humour for which Luther was famous. My favourite is from a Nativity sermon:



## WINTER READING

By Duncan Shaddick

The most important book I've read recently was *Energy Autonomy - The Economic, Social and Technological Case for Renewable Energy* by Hermann Scheer, a physicist and member of the German Bundestag. It's an impassioned plea for all of us to concentrate our efforts on developing renewable energy (solar, wind, water etc) rather than burning carbon based fuels or using atomic energy. One quotation gives the flavour of the book - "Renewable energy is about the future, about leaving behind the disastrous present shaped by traditional energy".

*Heat: How to Stop the Planet From Burning* is by the *Guardian* journalist (and also former university professor), George Monbiot. He gives very practical advice on how governments should tackle the global warming problem and what we can do as individuals

*Once Upon a Country - A Palestinian Life* is written by Sari Nusseibeh, who is the president of Al-Quds University near Jerusalem. He is a moderate Palestinian intellectual leader searching for ways out of the present political impasse (he spoke at McGill a few weeks ago and was most impressive).

Shlomo Ben-Ami, a former Israeli foreign minister, shares an Oxford background with Nusseibeh and is also a moderate. His latest book *Scars of War, Wounds of Peace - The Israeli-Arab Tragedy* is an excellent overview of the tragic conflict.

Jared Diamond, author of *Guns, Germs and Steel* followed up with, to my mind a better book entitled *Collapse - How Societies Choose to Fail Or Succeed*. Amongst other societies he discusses the failure of Easter Island, the Mayan and Inca civilisations and the Viking settlements in Greenland.

*In Spite of the Gods - The Strange Rise of Modern India* is by Edward Luce who was the correspondent for the *Financial Times* in India for a number of years. ("Strange" because of the incredible mixture of ancient and modern in present day India.)

In the short space left for novels I will mention four that I particularly enjoyed. The first was *Suite Française* by Irène Némirovsky. She wrote her book while living in Occupied France and it describes life there in Paris and the countryside during the early years of the occupation. She herself died in a German concentration camp a year or so later.

If you would like a book detailing the subtle distinctions in the world of the English middle and upper classes the aptly named *Snobs* by Julian Fellowes (who won an Oscar for his screenplay for *Gosford Park*) is a first class guide.

*The Yacoubian Building* by Alaa Al Aswany, an Egyptian novelist, is well worth a read and was made into a successful film shown here a few months ago.

And finally a local author Louise Penny has written several detective stories set in a small village in the Eastern Townships. *Dead Cold* is the latest one of the series and I enjoyed it for the characters and local colour. ☺

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## LUTHER'S CHRISTMAS SERMONS *continued from previous page*

*The birth was still more pitiable. No one regarded this young wife bringing forth her first-born. No one took her condition to heart. No one noticed that in a strange place she had not the very least thing needed in childbirth. There she was without preparation: no light, no fire, in the dead of night, in thick darkness. No one came to give the customary assistance. The guests swarming in the inn were carousing and no one attended to this woman. I think myself if Joseph and Mary had realized that her time was so close she might perhaps have been left in Nazareth. And able to think what she could use for swaddling cloths - some garment she could spare, perhaps her veil - certainly not Joseph's breeches which are now on exhibition at Aachen.<sup>4</sup>*

Underlying his sermons was his conviction that if we can believe that it was God that lay in the manger then all our other questions become trivial. The reflec-

tions of the principal characters on how all this was possible reflect precisely the questions which were going through Luther's mind. The willingness of God to empty himself was for Luther the great wonder. Behind Bethlehem stands Calgary and the mystery of God's unending love.

All these feelings were gathered together in the five carols that Luther wrote celebrating the Christmas mystery. Here is one of them

*Our little Lord we give thee praise  
Thou hast deigned to take our ways  
Born of a maid a man to be  
And all the angels sing to thee<sup>5</sup>* ☺

### Notes:

<sup>1</sup> Roland H. Bainton, *The Martin Luther Christmas Book*, 1958, Philadelphia, Westminster Press

<sup>2</sup> Bainton, p.13

<sup>3</sup> Bainton, p. 10

<sup>4</sup> Bainton, p. 38

<sup>5</sup> Bainton, p.75

## A BRIEF HISTORY OF PULPITS

By *William Converse*

“Pulpit” comes from the Latin *pulpitum*, “platform,” though the Latin term is now normally used for a stone choir-screen that separates the choir from the nave in some cathedral and monastic churches.

In the 4th century the bishop preached from his cathedra, the bishop’s chair or throne, placed in the center of the apse of the early Christian basilicas. Later the practice developed of preaching from the ambo, the raised platform or tribune (Gk. *ambon*), constructed of marble or wood and placed at the low barrier that separated the sanctuary from the nave. Originally there was only one ambo, later there were two, one on the south side, the other on the north. Here the Epistle and Gospel were read as well as the litanies. The custom of preaching from the ambo is said to have begun in Hagia Sophia, in Constantinople, with St. John Chrysostom (347?- 407), whose voice did not carry from his cathedra in the apse to the galleries of the Great Church. Examples of the ambones survive, for example, the two marble ambones in San Clemente, near the Colosseum, in Rome, dating from the 12th century. However, after the 14th century, the ambones gave way to the lectern and pulpit. With the introduction of modern sound systems the ambo has recovered its ancient function. A Vatican Instruction of 1964 allowed for its use both for reading the lections and preaching instead of the pulpit, especially when the pulpit was located far from the sanctuary. Pulpits became general only in the later Middle Ages, in refectories of monasteries as well as in churches and baptisteries. Except in cathedrals, the pulpit stood on the north side of the middle of the nave so that the people could more easily assemble to hear the preacher. Some pulpits were located outside, adjacent to the church building, for example “St. Paul’s Cross” in the north-east part of the Close of Old St. Paul’s Cathedral in London and the pulpit at Magdalen College in Oxford.

Many pulpits were elaborately carved. Some were made of marble, for example, the octagonal pulpit in the Pisa Baptistery (1260) and the octagonal pulpit made of Carrara marble in the Siena Duomo (1268), both by the Italian sculptor Niccolò Pisano. Others were made of marble and bronze, for example, the two pulpits (both dated 1465) by the Italian sculptor Donatello in San Lorenzo, in Florence

The establishment of the mendicant orders, the Franciscans or the Order of Friars Minor, founded by St. Francis of Assisi in 1209, and of the Dominicans, also known as *Ordo Praedicatorum*, founded in 1220 by St. Dominic, did much to promote preaching, at least, in the towns. The Mendicant Friars were usually univer-

sity trained and combined rhetorical skills with exposition of the biblical text. Their churches were designed to facilitate preaching as may be seen in the Franciscan church of Santa Maria Gloriosa (1250-1338) and the Dominican church of SS. Giovanni e Paolo (1333-1390) in Venice.

During the Tudor era, under the influence of Queen Elizabeth I, long sermons became the norm. Those by famous preachers, like John Donne (1571/2-1631) and Lancelot Andrewes (1555-1626), were later collected and printed. These sermons, because of their extreme length, necessitated pews. Many pulpits in English parish churches today date from this period.

The Protestant Reformation, with its renewed emphasis on the Ministry of the Word, made the pulpit the focus in the design of new Protestant churches, especially in France and the Netherlands. These churches were designed principally as preaching theaters, with very large pulpits, equipped with an acoustic sounding board and even an hour glass!

On the Continent, the pews were so arranged that the people could focus their attention on the sermon. The interiors of medieval gothic churches were rearranged; the pulpit rather than the Communion Table now became the focus. There was also a shift to a north-south from an east-west orientation which ran counter to the original architectural design of medieval churches. De Oude Kerk in Amsterdam, with its sumptuous pulpit, is an example of this shift.

There are many outstanding examples of pulpits constructed out of wood, especially in France and the Netherlands, dating from the 17th century, for example, the elaborate pulpit in l’Église St-Étienne-du-Mont in Paris. The 17th century was the golden age of pulpit oratory in France. The French bishop and orator Jacques-Bénigne Bossuet (1627-1704) was renowned for his eloquence. The very elaborate pulpits dating from the period were admirably suited to such eloquent preachers.

The triple-decker pulpit with a sounding board was introduced in the 18th century. This was a single combined liturgical station, comprised of three levels. On the bottom level was the clerk’s desk. The clerk led the congregation in the singing of the psalms and in making the responses. On the middle level was the reading desk. Here the minister read the service. The sermon was delivered from the top level, directly beneath the acoustic sounding board. In “The Sleeping Congregation” William Hogarth (1697-1764) depicted the minister delivering his sermon from the third deck of the triple-decker pulpit, while the clerk is seated on the bottom deck. Examples of the triple-decker pulpits, dating from colonial times, may still be found in the United States, in Virginia, for example.

That the sermon was the summit of reformed worship was further emphasized spatially by the “high” pulpit which elevated the preacher well above the congregation. There is an example of such a “high” pulpit in St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Church in Quebec City. This historic building has largely preserved its original interior design dating from 1810. Here the pulpit is placed off somewhat to the side and the pews are so arranged that the congregation is gathered around it on three sides.



William Hogarth, *The Sleeping Congregation*, 1761

In the Anglican Cathedral of the Holy Trinity in Quebec City, dating from 1804, there is a pillar pulpit that was originally placed front and center, obstructing the view of the Holy Table, though there was a track that allowed it to be moved when Holy Communion was celebrated. At Christ Church Cathedral in Montreal the pulpit was first placed in the centre, in front of the chancel steps, then moved down to the left side of the nave at the third pillar and finally to its present location.

With the Counter-Reformation preaching and hence the pulpit again became prominent in Roman Catholic churches. Erasmus (1466/69-1536) wrote what later came to be considered the textbook on sacred rhetoric. The Council of Trent (1545-1563) decreed that it was the proper duty of bishops to preach and to teach on Sundays and major feasts of the Church. St. Charles Borromeo (1538-1584), Archbishop of Milan, was a leader in the renewal of preaching in the post-Tridentine Roman Catholic Church. In Rome, the Gesù, the principal church of the Society of Jesus, founded in 1540 by St. Ignatius Loyola, was designed to embody the liturgical prescriptions of the Council of Trent. Built between 1568-1575, this very ornate baroque church has a spa-

cious nave that allowed hundreds of people to gather around the pulpit to hear the eloquent preaching for which the Jesuits were renowned.

The Oxford Movement in the Church of England in the early 19th century, along with the Gothic Revival, profoundly altered popular understanding of liturgical space. The Cambridge Camden Society, founded in 1839 by John Mason Neale and Benjamin Webb, revived interest in church architecture and traditional Catholic ritual and ceremonial. This led to the liturgical revival in the Church of England in the later 19th century. The pulpit was now placed outside the rood screen. The Church of St. John the Evangelist in Montreal (erected 1878) illustrates this development.

At the beginning of the 20th century the Liturgical Movement in the Roman Catholic Church, which had begun in the 19th century with the French Benedictine Guéranger (1805-1875), emphasized the restoration of traditional liturgical worship, preaching and the active participation of the people.

The influence of the Liturgical Movement was by no means confined to the Roman Church or the Church of England. It spread to the Reformed Churches. The result was the modification of the traditional interior layout of these churches. The pulpit was no longer the centrepiece. In Montréal, the Church of St. Andrew and St. Paul (built in 1931/32) reflects the influence of the Liturgical Movement. There was now a conscious attempt to balance word and sacrament. Trinity Memorial Anglican Church in NDG (built in 1923) with its very fine Messmer pulpit has an equally impressive altar.

Pulpits, then, appear relatively late, replacing the original cathedra or ambo. The massive pulpit, with its acoustic sounding board, symbolized both the importance and the authority of the preacher. The preacher spoke down to the congregation, seated directly below him. The earlier custom during the first millennium of Christianity when the sermon was delivered seated, while the congregation remained standing or sitting, conveyed a very different message, that of the master (L.magister as in magisterium). It also recalled the practice of the ancient synagogue: “He stood up to read, and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him.” . . . “And he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. The eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him.” (Lk. 4: 16b-17a, 20 NRSV). We need to rethink our use of pulpits. ❧

**Sources:** *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, 3rd ed., edited by E.A. Livingstone, article “pulpit”, p. 1348; J.N.D. Kelly, *The Story of John Chrysostom: Ascetic, Preacher, Bishop* (1995); Diarmaid MacCulloch, *Reformation: Europe’s House Divided 1490-1700* (2003); *Encyclopedia of Christianity*, edited by John Bowden (OUP, 2005), article “Preaching,” p. 973; *The Oxford History of Christian Worship*, edited by Geoffrey Wainwright and Karen B. Westerfield Tucker (2006); *Dictionnaire de la Civilisation Chrétienne* par Fernand Comte et Josette Bel (Larousse, 1999). For Christ Church Cathedral, see the brochure, “A Walking Tour of the Cathedral.

## NEWS AND NOTES FROM THE PARISH

### Exciting News and an Honor for Joyce

The Rev Canon Joyce Sanchez has been selected to be Part of the IAWN (International Anglican Women's Network) Canadian Delegation to the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) meeting, at UN headquarters in New York City, Feb.24 - March 7, 2008. This group was formed:

- *in order to promote an effective Anglican presence at the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (UNCSW)*
- *and thereby focus the attention of Anglican women around the world on issues important to women and children, particularly those in the third world*
- *and to further impact the fulfillment of the Millennium Goals, in particular #3, calling for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women.*

At the 2007 meeting, 80 Anglican women, from 34 countries in the worldwide Anglican Communion, came together at the UN, both as observers of the CSW proceedings and in order to meet, talk, and learn from one another. This was in March, shortly after the contentious meeting of Anglican Primates in Tanzania. The women issued a statement vowing “to remain resolute in our solidarity with one another and in our commitment, above all else, to pursue and fulfill God’s mission in all we say and do.”

The women wrote that although they were well aware of the tensions in the world, they “do not accept that there is any one issue of difference or contention which can, or indeed would, every cause us to break the unity as represented by our common baptism. Neither would we ever consider severing the deep and abiding bonds of affection which characterize our relationships as Anglican women.”

What better person to represent Canada at this year’s meeting than Joyce! We can be proud that she will bring with her the inclusive spirit of the cathedral, and she should know that she’ll be supported by our prayers and welcomed back by a parish anxious to hear what she experienced and learned. *-Beth Adams*

### Choir Fundraiser was a Success in Many Ways

A chance dinner party conversation, a visionary music director, a dedicated music committee and a supportive congregation brought noted jazz vocalist, Jeri Brown, to the Cathedral on November 7. Well over a year before this date, Jeri, the featured guest artist for the second annual fundraising event, happened to mention her renewed interest in the African American

spirituals she sang in her youth and her great desire to showcase some of these in an appropriate location. Thus began the journey to the Cathedral, a journey of departures for both Jeri and the Cathedral Choirs. Singing African American spirituals instead of jazz allowed Jeri to use her classical training to sing full voice rather than the more restrained scat singing for which she is noted. The Cathedral Choirs dipped into a repertoire not normally heard on Sunday mornings, demonstrating their versatility and talent. Music lovers who had come to the concert for quite different reasons had their musical experience enlarged.

What was striking about the event is how well it all worked, demonstrating yet again the power of music to give expression to people’s spiritual yearnings and the ways in which a person’s earliest experiences of these expressions shape and mold them and stay with them into adulthood. It is not difficult to imagine that the children for whom this fundraiser was dedicated – the Cathedral’s Treble Choir – will one day look back on their musical training and experiences and come to understand that they received much more than technical training. *- Veronica McDermott*

### A Musical Journey Through Advent

On November 19, the cathedral was packed for the first *Messiah* of the season, a concert by the McGill Chamber Orchestra, the Cathedral Singers and Musica Orbium, and four internationally-renowned soloists who sang (most appropriately for this issue of SCRIPT) from the pulpit! It was a remarkable musical journey into Advent, moving the audience to tears, and a standing ovation.

Lessons & Carols took place on December 2, at Evensong and was broadcast by Radio Ville-Marie. On December 3, Patrick Wedd played an equally moving recital of organ music by Bach and Buxtehude, and on December 22, he will perform *La Nativité du Seigneur* of Messiaen, in honor of the 100th anniversary of the composer’s birth. Please consult Donal Ward’s music calendar, on our cathedral website, for a full list of musical offerings this Advent and Christmas season. ♪

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