Church and Community:
200 Years of Loving God and Neighbour

Saint George's Round Church
Halifax, Nova Scotia

Church and Community:
200 Years of Loving God and Neighbour

Three lectures presented in Saint George's Round Church
in the autumn of the year 2000, to celebrate
the 200th anniversary of its construction

Henry Roper
Brian Cuthbertson
Canon Gary W. A. Thorne

The costs of this publication have been borne by individuals
in thanks to God for the opportunity to worship in
the Round Church and the Little Dutch Church.
It is offered in memory of all those parishioners who have gone before us.

The Parish of Saint George:
Saint George's Round Church
The Little Dutch Church

The Reverend Canon Gary Thorne, Rector

2222 Brunswick Street
Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada
B3K 2Z3
902 423 1059

Introduction

As part of the celebrations to mark the 200th anniversary of the construction of the Round Church, the parish of St. George sponsored a series of five lectures in the autumn of the year 2000 on the theme of "Church and Community: St. George's Church, 1756-2000." The intention was to inform both the members of the parish and the larger public about our church's fascinating history and its changing mission up to the present. With the exception of that by Paul Williams, which was given in the hall, all the lectures were delivered in the Round Church between the 20 September and the 9 December.

A number of those who attended have asked for printed copies and it has proved possible to include three of the lectures. One of those missing, Elizabeth Pacey's "Round Revelations: the Architecture of St. George's Round Church," will, in somewhat altered form, comprise part of her forthcoming history of St. George's. The other, by Paul Williams entitled "Retrieving History: the Archeological Investigations of the Little Dutch Church," is unavailable because of that frustrating New Age problem, computer difficulties. It should be noted that Brian Cuthbertson's lecture on the Reverend Robert Fitzgerald Uniacke has been published in the *Journal of the Royal Nova Scotia Historical Society*, volume 4 (2001), pp. 25-47 and appears here by the kind permission of the Society.

One of the pleasures of organizing the series was working with a number of individuals whose assistance made it possible. Canon Thorne asked me to take on the job and co-operated in every way, not least in providing an excellent final lecture. The 200 in 2000 Committee, under the leadership of Senior Warden Jan Connors, was supportive throughout; Jan met my every request with unfailing good humour. Two of the lectures were given in conjunction with other organizations. Nina Konczacki of the Heritage Trust embraced enthusiastically the idea of the Trust's jointly sponsoring that by Elizabeth Pacey, and, on the basis of her experience of organizing lecture series for that organization, gave me much helpful advice. Allan Marble, programme convenor for the Royal Nova Scotia Historical Society, arranged for the Society to meet at St. George's for Brian Cuthbertson's lecture and I am grateful to him and to Robert Harvey, President of the RNSHS, for their co-operation. Debra Burleson undertook the task of preparing the lectures for this booklet. And lastly, of course, I must thank my fellow lecturers, who rose so splendidly to the occasion.

Henry Roper
parish historian

Cover photograph:
Saint George's Round Church with water cart, c. 1886.
Courtesy Nova Scotia Archives and Records Management

Church and Community: Saint George's, 1756-1827

Henry Roper

This is a lecture and not a sermon. It is, however, being delivered in a church and something of the atmosphere of the building must touch not only the listeners, but also the speaker. One of the things it inspires in me as I stand here in my capacity as parish historian is the need for confession, which, as we all know, is good for the soul, if not necessarily for the reputation. My confession is both personal and professional. When Canon Thorne asked me to become parish historian of St. George's in November, 1998, I knew next to nothing about its history, although it has always been present in the background of my life. My grandmother Caroline McLelan Hawkins was a life-long parishioner until her death in 1944 at the age of eighty. Her youngest daughter, my mother Mary Caroline (Carol), taught Sunday school and was married here in 1929 before following my father to St. Andrew's United Church. Despite this apostasy, she had my sister and me baptized in St. George's by Canon Henry Ward Cunningham, rector from 1900-1937, who in my case was brought out of retirement for the occasion. So, although I grew up in another tradition, I think of myself as having a connection with this place, where two of my uncles continued to be active parishioners, both serving on parish council and one as a warden. This no doubt was a factor in my agreeing to take the position. My decision was made easier in that the rector did not ask me to write a parish history, as that is being undertaken by Elizabeth Pacey. But I have tried to learn what I can about the history of St. George's, while, like all of us, awaiting the appearance of Dr. Pacey's book.

One of the things Canon Thorne asked me to do as parish historian was to organize a lecture series on St. George's as part of the bicentennial of the round church. A church building, like any structure, is an expression of those who inhabit it. As they change, so does the building itself which becomes something alive and in turn exercises a real if intangible effect upon its occupiers. This building illustrates the point. Although round churches have a long history in both Latin and Orthodox Christianity, St George's was built as an assertion of a tradition that emphasized the primacy of the Word in contrast to, for example, the splendid neo-gothic structure across the street, St. Patrick's. The focus of the round church was initially the pulpit rather than what the Rev'd. Robert Fitzgerald Uniacke would have called the table and his successor Canon Thorne the altar. The anglo-Catholic practices in St. George's today would certainly come as a shock to Uniacke. Yet liturgies intended to be performed in a building like St. Patrick's, perhaps surprisingly, seem natural and fitting here, as a house assumes a new life from quite different owners. And beyond this, is it entirely far-fetched to think that the strong preaching tradition of St. George's is not somehow imposed, again intangibly, by the demands of this edifice itself?

To understand the history of St. George's, we must study the evolution of the congregation that gave, and continues to give, life to this magnificent structure, and in turn has been shaped by it. Even during my short time here, it has changed through death or departure, a process that has been happening year by year, even week by week over the past two hundred and fifty years. My task this evening is to indicate how St. George's was gradually transformed from one type of church in 1756 into something quite different in 1827, the year it finally became a parish. My focus will be the German "Foreign Protestants" who first gave life to this church; I will attempt to explain how their evolution combined with changes in the larger community resulted in a church quite different from what they had envisaged..

Much remains to be learned about the early history and development of St. George's, as was shown by the archeological excavations under the Little Dutch Church in 1996 and 1998. The mass grave disclosed there was dug before the church was built and probably contains the remains of immigrants

who died of fever shortly after their arrival in 1750. This grave was probably the first to be opened in the three lots assigned to the " foreign Protestants" for "a Burying Ground and Dutch Church."[1] Recent research has thus illuminated a question raised by Winthrop Bell as long ago as 1961; in his magisterial volume *The "Foreign Protestants" and the Settlement of Nova Scotia* he comments that "just when the first use of this burying ground was made one cannot say."[2] Furthermore, our new knowledge makes us look differently at the erection of the Little Dutch Church itself, which may have been positioned not simply to take advantage of a corner location, but, in covering this grave, as an act of piety towards those who died in the terrible winter of 1750-51.

The obscurity that envelops a good deal of the history of both the first and second St. George's is also true of the little community of " foreign Protestants" which built two such different structures within a period of forty-four years. They had remained behind in Halifax when most of their fellows departed in 1753 for Lunenburg county. It is unclear how many families decided not to move. Bell suggests that those who stayed were early arrivals, immigrating for the most part in 1749 and 1750; they had been successful in obtaining lots allotted in the " north suburbs,"an area bounded by the present Gerrish, North, Gottingen and the former Water Street, to the " foreign Protestants" in 1750-51.[3] A significant number of the immigrants had been tradesmen in their homelands; presumably they had managed to establish themselves in the new town in non-farming occupations, like the furrier Otto Schwartz and the baker Georg Beyer. The German community in Halifax was augmented by returnees from Lunenburg when economic conditions improved during the Seven Years War from 1756 to 1763. Its size is uncertain, but in 1763 it was probably about 250 people, or perhaps sixty-odd families.[4] We do not know how many attended or supported the little church, originally a small house, which was moved to its present site "by the united effort of voluntary hands" in 1756.[5] Three years later, the Rev'd. John Breynton and his assistant James Wood came from St. Pauls's to administer communion to approximately 60. Enlarged and given a spire, with assistance from the province, the church was consecrated by Breynton in the name of St. George on Easter Monday, 23 March, 1761. At the service, Breynton spoke in both English and German, and perhaps in French as well. Despite his use of the latter language, the church was an undertaking of the Germans, who called it from its inception "the German Church of St. George."[6]

The minute- book of the church begins on the 23 March, 1761, and was kept in German until 1800; elections of church wardens continued to be recorded in that language until 1807. The little church the Germans had built must have been seen by them not only as a profession of faith, but as the centre of their community. Prior to the erection of the Little Dutch Church, a small group had created their own private "Funeral Fees and Burial Society," to provide themselves with proper burials. This organization was dissolved in October, 1761 and its funds, amounting to 11 pounds, 10 shillings and 10 pence, given to the church for the purchase of a pall, on condition that the seven members of the society, be allowed free use of it when they died.[7] This suggests that the existence of the church had made a private self-help society redundant, for through it congregational needs could be met. It is also likely that the Germans saw the church as a bulwark for cultural as well as religious integrity. Their linguistic and cultural isolation is indicated by the use of the inaccurate designation "Dutch" as early as 1750. Apart from a very few persons, such as Dr. Breynton and the Rev. James Wood, hardly anyone in Halifax had the slightest notion of their language, or place of origin. If they were to communicate, they had to use English on an everyday basis. Accordingly, services in German, following evangelical Lutheran rites, as well as the school established in connection with the church, must have been crucial to their continuing sense of identity.

St. George's was, technically, a chapel within the St. Paul's parish. Twice a year, in spring and autumn, Dr. Breynton or an assistant visited to celebrate the Eucharist, but apart from these occasions the Germans were on their own, free

to conduct their services according to their own traditions. On the 9 December, 1761 the congregation met to draw up rules by which they would govern themselves. These followed German rather than English practice. The congregation agreed to appoint one or more elders, who would chair meetings even if a clergyman were present. The elder was responsible for convening quarterly meetings of the church wardens, equivalent to vestrymen, who were elected each year during the season of Christmas from among the congregation. The original intention was for half of the wardens to be chosen from the north suburb and half from the town and south suburb, but they all had to be "men of good report."[8] The elder and wardens supervised every aspect of the life of the church, such as Sunday collections and the conducting of services. It was also their job "to take into account any divisions and settle them to the best of their ability."[9] The first elder, Otto Wilhelm Schwartz, was selected at this meeting. The unquestioned leader of the German community, he was appointed "as long as it may please him."[10]

The rules drawn up in December, 1761 reveal both shrewdness and wisdom. Despite the primacy of the elder, they specified that the senior warden was to be responsible for accounts ensuring that no one person had too much authority. Furthermore, the elder and wardens were instructed not to abuse their office. "The congregation is not to suppose that the elder and church wardens are bound to enter into all manner of disputes. They may do so as a friend or neighbour but not in their official capacity."[11]

From this time onward, on New Year's day, new church wardens were appointed by a vote of the congregation as a whole. Initially, all four church wardens were replaced, until the introduction in 1773 of the custom of having two new and two continuing wardens.[12] The office of church warden between 1761 and 1807 was held not simply by a small group, although a few individuals were chosen several times, but by many different people.[13] I am quite sure, therefore, that although some were more active and influential than others there was a high level of participation in the running of the church by members of the German community.

Despite their connection with the Church of England, they continued to think of themselves as evangelical Lutherans. In 1761 they held their first confirmation, conducted by the schoolmaster Johann Turpel. The 33 questions, with their proper responses are recorded. Question 17 was as follows:

> Beloved children, do you subscribe to the Evangelical Creed with heart and mouth? Will you maintain it, order your whole life according to it, and because in these countries so many sects and heresies exist, will you renounce them all, and rather abide by the pure meaning of the word of God, and stand by it for life and death?[14]

Four years later, the minute- book records that "the elders and church wardens of the German Lutheran Evangelical Church have found it expedient that no confirmations shall be held but in the German evangelical doctrine and not in the English language."[15] This theme dominated the history of St. George's for the next fifty years. It is probable that the German community intended from the beginning to obtain their own Lutheran pastor, and saw their reliance upon the clergy at St. Paul's as a more or less temporary arrangement. As late as the 18 March, 1799, after the death of the Rev'd. Bernard Houseal, a meeting of the elders, church wardens and congregation of "the German Church of St. George" agreed that "a German minister should be sent for," and established a committee to raise funds for the purpose; they also prepared a petition to the Lieutenant-Governor, Sir John Wentworth, stating their desire for another German minister.[16] It is unclear whether this petition was sent, for after a further meeting of the congregation on the 31 March, "the greater part" of the congregation approved the appointment of the Rev'd George Wright, an Irishmen. Accordingly, a modified petition was drawn up and sent to Wentworth on the 10 April informing him of their invitation to Wright to move from St. Paul's, where he was curate, to St. George's.[17]

Although this sequence of events may

seem puzzling, it seems to suggest that for the first time the non-Germans in the congregation asserted themselves. In 1799 the affairs of the church continued to be controlled by Germans, through congregational meetings conducted in their first language or at least the first language of the older generation. Only Germans were elected church wardens, or chosen to be elders. The meeting of the 18 March, 1799, the first at which the names of those in attendance were recorded, was attended only by those of German origin. However, the non- Germans in the congregation, although willing to accept German governance, were unwilling to accept a German minister. The need to take their views into account must have been a factor in the calling of a second meeting on the 31 March which reversed the decision taken less than two weeks earlier.

The question of a German minister was not simply a conflict between Germans and non-Germans. A struggle also took place within the German community between hard-liners who held out for a German minister and the majority who were willing to compromise. This conflict was apparently resolved by the production of a new body of "Rules and Regulations for the better government of the German Church of St. George," which were approved by the German congregation and then sent to Wright, the incoming minister, who accepted them.[18] They reaffirmed that the government of the church would continue according to the Lutheran practice of having elders and church wardens stating that "all church wardens and elders shall be Germans or descended from Germans, so long as any can be found among the congregation worthy of the office."[19] Although not stated, it was understood that only members of the "German congregation" would participate in these elections. Obviously, through the medium of these rules, the Germans hoped to keep control over a congregation containing a number of non-Germans. But their wording suggests that the Germans as a group were losing their distinctiveness and were disappearing through absorption into the English-speaking community. The actual preparation of the "Rules" was, accordingly a rear-guard action. Another of the rules suggests that the hope of a German St. George's had not died, at least for some, for it asserted that "whereas it is not convenient at present to send for a German minister, the Rev'd George Wright is to be requested to officiate in this Church upon the same terms as their late minister..."[20] A further rule also left the door open to this possibility:

> Divine service shall be continued in the same manner as has been done heretofore accepting that as long as the Rev'd. Mr. Wright ontinues to officiate, the Prayers and Sermons shall be in English. And should the Congregation at any time hereafter think it proper to have a regular ordained German minister, then shall the hours of his officiating be settled in such a manner by the Elders and Church wardens as they shall find it convenient. [21]

These rules express the understandable reaction of the Germans to the transformation of their church into something quite different from anything they had imagined in the forty-four years from 1756 to 1800. The population of the north suburbs grew rapidly, particularly after 1775 with the expansion of the dockyard as a result of naval activity during the American Revolution. St. George's was obviously more convenient as a place of worship than St. Paul's for dockyard employees, as well as other residents of the area. I think that the appointment of the Rev. Bernard Houseal may have accelerated this trend. A German who immigrated to the Thirteen Colonies as a young man, he had been pastor of the most prominent evangelical Lutheran Church in New York City before fleeing the Revolution. Houseal was an exceptional person, gentlemanly, well educated and of imposing physical presence.[22] The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts (SPG), which paid the stipends of the Church of England clergy in Nova Scotia, agreed to support Houseal as missionary to the German church, on condition that he travel to England to be ordained, this being two years before the appointment of Charles Inglis as first bishop in British North America.[23]

Houseal's period as minister from 1786 until his death in 1799 satisfied the long-standing

desire of the Germans for one of their own. But it is possible that this gain was offset by losses. Although the psalms were said or sung in German, members of the congregation no longer conducted services according to their own tradition, but followed the Church of England prayer book. This would have made St. George's more attractive as a place of worship to the growing population of the north suburb; perhaps too, non-Germans were drawn by Houseal's personal qualities. From the point of view of the Germans, however, I surmise that the ensuing changes must have created feelings of deep ambivalence. During the period from the mid 1770s to the mid 1790s they must have been aware that their own rites and practices were slipping into disuse. Nevertheless, until the construction of the round church, the church records refer to it as "the German Church of St. George," and there is no indication that its German members thought of themselves as part of the Church of England. During this period of transition, it is perhaps the case that such a sensitive subject remained clouded by ambiguity for fear of creating divisions.

Not only were the Germans in danger of being submerged by outsiders in their own church; they must have been conscious, as I have already suggested, that they were losing their distinctive identity. This is shown in the records of the church itself where names were increasingly anglicized. In 1799, the newly appointed minister George Wright reported to the SPG: "The Congregation were originally all Germans; but now so intermixed and intermarried with the other inhabitants, and so much used to English manners and language that very few of them retain their own, at least they all speak English much better than they do German." He then added that "they are industrious, abstemious, honest and persevering, and very loyal subjects."[24]

The construction of the new St. George's must be understood in the light of the changing nature of the German community combined with the transformation of the north suburbs into a predominantly non-German area. There is remarkably little in the records concerning the construction of the new building. The first mention of it occurs in January, 1800, six months after Wright became minister. The project seems to have originated with a donation of 200 pounds from the Crown, which gave the colonial administration the opportunity to take a dominating role. At the quarterly congregational meeting on the 1 January, a number of names recommended by Lieutenant-Governor Wentworth to serve as commissioners "to superintend the Building," were brought forward.[25] Clearly the commissioners had been at work before the meeting for they had already prepared a plan for the new church and proposed the opening of a subscription to complete it, "under the sanction of the His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor."[26] The congregational meeting duly approved the names of the commissioners, all of whom were members of St. George's of German origin.[27]

The congregation's acceptance of Wentworth's initiative reflected the Germans' unquestioning loyalty and obedience to the Crown, probably intensified by the involvement of the duke of Kent, fourth son of George III, an amateur architect and lover of circular structures. The duke, commander of the forces in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick from 1794 to 1800, was in Halifax until August, 1800, when the plans for St. George's were being made, although who actually prepared them is not clear.[28] What we do know, is that with the support of the congregation, the commissioners decided to build a structure that both exceeded the needs of the German community and even required the purchase of a new site.[29] Having been content for forty years with what was essentially an enlarged house, it is remarkable that these frugal Germans approved an audacious Palladian design so large and difficult to erect that it took over twenty years to complete. That they embarked on this undertaking apparently without debate is particularly striking in the light of the congregational disagreement only a few months before over a German as opposed to an English-speaking minster. Many of the Germans must have recognized that the scale of the new St. George's meant that it was intended to serve a community far larger than their own, and that

sooner or later the "German Congregation of St. George's" would disappear in the new church. My conjecture is that the German tradition of obedience and loyalty to the wishes of established authority overrode all other considerations. There must have been debate over the wisdom of the course they had agreed to follow, but these did not interfere with the congregation's commitment to what was begun in 1800.

By July, 1801 the round church, although far from complete, was ready for use. On the 19 July the Rev'd George Wright, assisted by the Revd. Robert Stanser, rector of St. Paul's and later second bishop of Nova Scotia, conducted the first service in the presence of Lieutenant- Governor Wentworth, the commander of the forces and other dignitaries. There must have been a choir, for "several German Hymns and Anthems were sung and masterly performed to the satisfaction of a numerous Congregation. "[30]

From the perspective of finances, a significant event took place two days before this grand occasion. Costs had already outstripped available funds, and it must have been imperative to raise money quickly. The principal source of revenue for the new St. George's was through the sale and rental of pews, a practice which had not been followed at the Little Dutch Church. By the summer of 1801 sixty pews in the main body of the church were ready for occupancy. On the 17 July, forty of these were sold at auction.[31] The remaining twenty were set aside "for the German members of this Congregation, " and it was left to the Germans to decide how they wished to dispose of them.[32] They also opted for an auction, in which only Germans could participate. These purchasers, however, paid lower annual pew rents than owners in the non-German section.[33] At first glance, the allotment of pews to non-Germans and Germans in a ratio of 2 to 1 would seem to indicate that by 1801 the former had assumed a numeral preponderance. I am not sure that this was the case. A number of the forty pews sold in the first, or non-German auction, perhaps as many as ten, were actually bought by Germans, and many Germans did not purchase pews at all, preferring instead to maintain their place in the congregation by paying a subscription on an annual basis. At this point, it is my guess that the two groups comprising the St. George's congregation were more or less numerically in balance.[34]

As an aside, I should mention that there is no evidence concerning the internal arrangements of the church, such as the arrangement of pews, when it was built. Originally it was an unbroken circle, for the chancel and porch were added later in 1822. Had these always been in the plans, or were they designed in response to the experience of worship in such an unusual building? The original structure must have presented challenges from the point of view of the location of the pulpit, the communion table and the arrangement of the pews. We know nothing of how these issues were resolved. Many years ago, D.A. Storey argued that the pews followed the circular form of the church, surrounding a large pulpit located in the centre, immediately under the dome. Marina Cavanaugh , in her conservation report on St. George's prepared in 1992, points to the existence of evidence indicating that the pulpit was not in fact in the centre of the building, which in turn makes unlikely a circular arrangement of the pews.[35] So I cannot tell you where the pews purchased by the Germans and non Germans were located, or, indeed, the situation of the pulpit and the communion table at the time of the building of the church.

Despite the significant presence of non-Germans in the congregation, German control over St. George's continued until 1819 through the medium of the form of government established in 1761 and elaborated in the "Rules" of 1799. They had to cope with a double burden - that of debt imposed by initial construction costs and the need for funds to complete the building. The magnitude of the debt is evident in the financial statement presented at the quarterly meeting of "the German congregation" on the 1 January, 1802. Expenditures on the new building had to that time reached 2,356 pounds six shillings and twopence resulting in a debt of 900 and 19 pounds, five shillings and ninepence.[36] Three months earlier, on the 6 October, 1801, it had been decided to levy an additional tax on the pew holders, as "the Church is greatly in debt and it becomes absolutely necessary to raise a

sufficient sum to be applied as a sinking Fund to pay off some part of the said debt every year."[37]

These pressures helped to bring St. George's completely into the Church of England fold. In 1807, the SPG was asked to provide assistance towards completing the church and agreed to the request, "provided that they were secure that no other Divine Service be performed therein but that of the Established Church of England."[38] In response, the elders and church wardens presented a "Declaration and Resolution" to Bishop Charles Inglis, dated the 31 May, 1808. The declaration asserted that:

> ...this Chapel was Originally built with the Intent that Divine Service shall be Celebrated therein Conformable to the Rites and Ceremonies of the Church of England...they are hereby authorized and directed to Execute a ...Declaration ...that the said Chapel is and at all times hereafter shall be held by them and their successors as a Church of the Established Religion...[39]

Having accepted in unambiguous terms that St. George's was part of the Church of England, the elders and wardens went on to assert their determination to keep their unique form of government, appending, for the information of the bishop and the SPG, a copy of the rules restricting the positions of elder and warden to Germans or their descendants.[40]

Neither the bishop nor the SPG were satisfied with this declaration. From their perspective, the organization of St. George's was anomalous and unacceptable. When St. Paul's, for example, had been created a parish in 1759, it had been given the traditional form of parochial government, under which the parishioners elected twelve vestrymen and two church wardens.[41] At St. George's as we have seen, the most important figures, the elders, had no Anglican equivalent in that they were selected from among the church wardens for an undefined period of time, while the so-called "church wardens" were akin to Church of England vestrymen. The biggest anomaly was, of course, the exclusion of non-Germans from the running of the church. Bishop Charles Inglis would not approve assistance to St. George's either from the province or the SPG. until it conformed to orthodox Anglican practice. In 1811, at the instigation of the governor, Sir George Prevost, the sum of 500 pounds was set aside for St. George's, pending Inglis' consent.[42] The German congregation responded to this offer the following year by unanimously approving a second Declaration acknowledging that "the internal government ...since the first period of opening the said Chapel ...has been at utter and irreconcilable variance with the Usage Forms Rules Regulations and Requisites prescribed by the Law for the due and decent Government of the Church of England as by Law established..."[43] Although willing to change to the type of government established by statute at St. Paul's in 1759, the German congregation insisted that the Germans should have a veto over any non-German elected to office. On the 20 February, 1812 the bishop wrote a stern letter to the elders:

> it is ...out of my power in the present state of things to take any steps towards the appropriation of those sums as you desire. For the grant or promise of the sums alluded to was made on the supposition & on the Express condition that St. George's Chapel would bona fide & in Reality be a Chapel or Church of the Established Religion without any partial distinction whatever in favour of some members of the Congregation to the Degradation & Injury of others. [44]

Inglis also stated that it was impossible for him to consecrate the church in its unfinished condition. The German congregation refused to capitulate, responding in May, 1812 "that as they have as much money as will repair the Chapel from leaking they will compleat [sic] that part as soon as the season will permit it."[45]

However, this stalemate could not

last. In 1818, the Rev'd Benjamin Gerrish Gray succeeded George Wright as minister. The SPG., which had paid the greater part of the minister's stipend at St. George's since Houseal's appointment in 1786, made their continued support dependent upon the elimination of German privilege. For the same reason, bishop Robert Stanser, Inglis' successor, continued to block St. George's receiving the 500 pounds already appropriated at Prevost's instigation in1810 making impossible the completion of the church. Under these circumstances, the German congregation accepted the inevitable. On the 31 May, 1819, the old form of government was abolished to make way for elections of vestrymen and church wardens according to the normal pattern.[46] Four months later, on the 14 September, 1819, the German congregation transferred all its assets to the new church wardens and vestrymen. As St. George's was now in every respect fully Anglican, the bishop was "humbly requested to certify to His Excellency the Governor, that the Congregation are entitled to receive the Donation of His Excellency the late Sir George Prevost and to request that the five hundred pounds now lying in the Provincial Treasury be applied to the use of this Church..."[47]

The way was now open for St. George's to become the second parish in Halifax. Throughout its history the German congregation had not been interested in becoming a parish, knowing that such a change would have ended the degree of independence they had managed to preserve as a chapel of St. Paul's. That spirit of independence led both bishop Charles Inglis and his son John, to harbour doubts about the depth of German loyalty to the Established Church. John Inglis seems to have persisted in this attitude as late as 1818, when the German congregation finally petitioned to be allowed to become a parish.[48] As Commissary of the Diocese in the absence of Bishop Stanser, he wrote a strong dissent on a variety of grounds, although he did concede that the petition meant that the Germans were finally willing to conform:

> ...it must be unequivocally acknowledged, that when so numerous & respectable a body as the German congregation ...declare their assent to the doctrines and Discipline of the Established Church and desire to be received into its Bosom, it is incumbent upon the Church gladly to open its arms to their reception. This was for many years the anxious wish of the late Bishop [Inglis]...But this desirable object has hitherto been prevented by the difficulty of inducing so numerous a body to concur with unanimity in their wishes for its attainment, and by various regulations of their own enactment, which were, till very lately, directly opposed to such a measure.[49]

John Inglis seems to be suggesting that in his opinion the Germans had only recently accepted that they were part of the Church of England. Happily for him, if not necessarily for all the Germans at St. George's, the reforms of 1819 meant that within a year they were well and truly in the fold. When St. George's became a parish in 1827, Inglis, who had succeeded Stanser as third bishop of Nova Scotia in 1825, raised no objection, and with the church at long last finished he consecrated it on the 17 April of that year.

The early history of St. George's church is unlike that of any other in the province, or perhaps elsewhere. It is that of an Anglican church whose founders were not Anglican, and whose descendants perhaps continued to hope that they would return to their original Lutheran faith. But their determination to build and sustain both the first and second St. George's led them inevitably to their destination as an Anglican parish. Originally driven by their need to worship as a community, their willingness to accept others in worship with them meant that, eventually, they lost their own particular qualities. Nevertheless through consistent faith, they created something greater than they could have imagined. Perhaps, and now I am being fanciful, the idea of a round

church appealed to the Germans precisely because it was different, anomalous, not quite Anglican, but a unique expression of Christian belief - a gift, from a highly distinctive community that had the courage to undertake a work that would contribute to its own disappearance, leaving in this building a memento, its circular form a symbol of the eternal.

1.Winthrop Pickard Bell, *The "Foreign Protestants" and the Settlement of Nova Scotia* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1961), p. 352. Hereafter cited as Bell.

2. Bell, p. 352.

3.Bell, pp. 351-354.

4.Bell, p. 618.

5.Bell, p. 625.

6. Minute-books, MG 4, Vol. 317 #1, pp. 1-2, St. George's Anglican Parish Church, Nova Scotia Archives and Records Management (NSARM). Hereafter cited as Minute-book #1. See also Bell, p. 626.

7.Minute-book #1, pp. 3-4. See also Bell, p. 616.

8.Minute-book #1, p. 22.

9.Minute-book #1, p. 24.

10.Minute-book #1, p. 22. For a brief biography of Schwartz see Catherine Pross, "Otto Wilhelm Schwartz," *Dictionary of Canadian Biography,* Vol. IV (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1979), pp. 703-704.

11.Minute-book #1, p. 27.

12.Minute-book #1, p. 40.

13. By my count, 91 different individuals served as warden.

14.See Minute-book #1, pp. 5-15 for the names of the ten boys and seven girls confirmed, the questions they were asked and the prayer said at the end of the service of confirmation. See also Francis Partridge, "Notes on the Early History of St. George's Church, Halifax," Nova Scotia Historical Society *Collections,* VI (1888), 151-154.

15.Minute-book #1, p. 33.

16.Minute-book #2, 18 March, 1799 (unpaginated) MG 4, Vol. 317 # 2, St. George's Anglican Church Records, NSARM. Hereafter cited as Minute-book #2. A copy of the petition requesting Wentworth's support for a German minister can be found in MG 4, Vol 327 #3f, NSARM. The congregation in this and the subsequent petition of the 10 April asked Wentworth to support their application to the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel [SPG], which had paid Houseal's stipend, and whose financial aid they needed for their new minister.

17.Minute-book #2, 31 March, 1799. For the petition to Wentworth requesting his support for Wright as minister, see MG 4, Vol. 327 # 3a, NSARM.

18.Minute-book #2, 7 April, 1799.

19.*Ibid.*

20.*Ibid.*

21.*Ibid.* See also the petition of the 10 April to Wentworth, where the words " ...have invited the Reverend George Wright ...to become their Minister...are followed by the interpolation "untill [sic] they may have it in their Power to send for a German Pastor." MG 4, Vol. 327 #3a, NSARM.

22.See Reginald V. Harris, *A Brief History of St. George's Church, 1800 -1975* (Halifax: St. George's Church, n.d.), pp. 20-23, and Bell, p. 627-633.

23.See Collection of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel [SPG], reel 16, MICRO, p. 53, letters 74-80, NSARM. The congregation of St. George's petitioned the SPG to provide an allowance for Houseal on the 30 October, 1784; this was forwarded with the support of the Lieutenant-Governor, Edward Fanning, who emphasized the scanty resources of the Germans, and their great increase in numbers. Houseal himself wrote on the 16th November emphasizing his willingness to go to London should this be required. It is clear that the SPG was not willing to provide support to a Lutheran minister, but the Society agreed to provide the sum of 40 pounds to make Houseal's journey to England possible. He left Halifax for London in 1785, returning to take up his post at St. George's the following year. See also Bell, pp. 627-628.

24. Quoted in Bell, p. 622.

25.Minute-book #2, 1 January, 1800.

26.*Ibid.*

27.*Ibid.* The seven recommended by Wentworth as commissioners were the three elders (Peter Smith, Adolphus Vieth, Nicholas Smith), Henry Flieger, Anthony Henry, Philip Foss and Christian Brehm, all German members of the congregation of St. George's.

28.For the duke of Kent, see W.S. MacNutt *et. al.*, "Edward Augustus, duke of Kent and Strathearn," *Dictionary of Canadian Biography* , Vol. V (Toronto: University of Toronto Presss, 1983), pp. 296-298. The question of the design of the round church is discussed in Commonwealth Historic Resource Management Ltd *et. al.*, *Saint George's Church National Historic Site, Halifax, Nova Scotia: Conservation Report* (1994), pp. 26-27.

29.Minute-book #2, 20 April, 1800. It interesting that the commissioners responsible for building the new church purchased a new lot for the sum of 120 pounds, for which they had paid twenty pounds down, giving a bond for the remainder over the next eight years, before having the purchase approved by the quarterly congregational meeting. Clearly the commissioners had been given a great deal of discretion. The fact that Lieutenant-Governor Wentworth laid the cornerstone for the new building ten days before the meeting, suggests that the commissioners were working in close association with him.

30.Minute-book #2, 19 July, 1801.

31.Minute-book #2, 17 July, 1801.

32.Minute-book #2, 20 July, 1801.

33.Minute-book #2, 6 October, 1801. The difference was substantial. The annual rent for the pews made available to non-Germans was 20 shillings; for those auctioned to Germans seven shillings and sixpence.

34.See the petition to Sir John Wentworth, 10 April, 1799, MG 4, Vol. 327 # 3a, NSARM, which asserts "...that the German Congregation whom your petitioners represent, consists of about fifty families, who generally attend Divine Service, every Sunday..." Does this mean the entire congregation, or simply the German element? The same words occur in the petition, written shortly before, requesting Wentworth's support for a German pastor. It is probable that "fifty families"is an accurate estimate of the number of German families in the congregation.

35.Marina B. Cavanaugh, *St. George's Church Halifax Nova Scotia: Considerations Prior to the Conservation of St. George's Church* (Halifax: Department of Tourism and Culture, Province of Nova Scotia, 1992), pp. 34-37.

36.Minute-book #2, 1 January, 1802.

37.Minute-book #2, 6 October, 1801. This tax was levied on a graduated scale ranging from 20 shillings per annum for the most expensive pews down to two shillings and sixpence for the cheapest.

38.Minute-book #2, 29 August, 1807.

39.Minute-book #2, 31 March, 1808. Declaration and Resolution "To the Right Reverend Charles Inglis, D.D., Bishop of Nova Scotia..." dated 31 May, 1808 and signed by Nicholas Smith, Jacob Merkle and Christian Brehm with the consent of the church wardens. It would seem that the Declaration was recorded in the minute-book after the elders met with Inglis on the 31 May, two months after the Declaration had received congregational approval. This seems the most probable explanation for the dating of the Declaration two months after the meeting of the 31 March.

40.*Ibid.*

41.Reginald V. Harris, *The Church of St. Paul in Halifax, N.S., 1749-1949* (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1949), pp. 29-31.

42.These were funds taken from the surplus revenue in the Arms and Accoutrement Fund which had resulted from a duty on distilled liquors in Nova Scotia. Bishop Inglis persuaded Lieutenant-Governor George Prevost to obtain approval of the Colonial Office for the use of a proportion of the money in the Arms Fund for "...the maintenance of the established Religion, by aiding the Parishioners of remote and poor parishes to complete in some instances and repair in others, their Churches..." See Judith Fingard, *The Anglican Design in Loyalist Nova Scotia* (London: S.P.C.K., 1972), pp. 80-81. Bishop Charles Inglis' position in relation to St. George's is expressed in a memorandum he wrote to Prevost, probably in 1811, a fragment of which is preserved in the Church's records: "The Chapel of St. George the property of a German congregation in the Town of Halifax, but at present employed in the Service of the Established Church, is encumbered with a debt of more than 500 pounds, which the congregation is unable to pay; and will require at least 1200 pounds to repair and furnish it. It is however, doubtful, whether this building can be secured to the perpetual use of the Church of England, as this measure is opposed by many of the Germans. I submit to your Excellency's consideration the propriety of granting five hundred pounds, for the Chapel of St. George, if it can be secured to the Established Church, and if not, to assist the Parish of St. Paul in building a chapel in the neighbourhood of St. George's." St. George's Church Records, MG 4, Vol. 327 #10a, NSARM.

43.Minute-book #2, 7 May, 11. Declaration of the Elders, Churchwardens and Pewholders of the German Congregation of St. George's Chapel..., 7 May, 1811.

44.Bishop Charles Inglis to Christian Brehm *et. al.* of St. George's [copy], St. George's Church Records, MG 4, Vol. 323, #3b, NSARM.

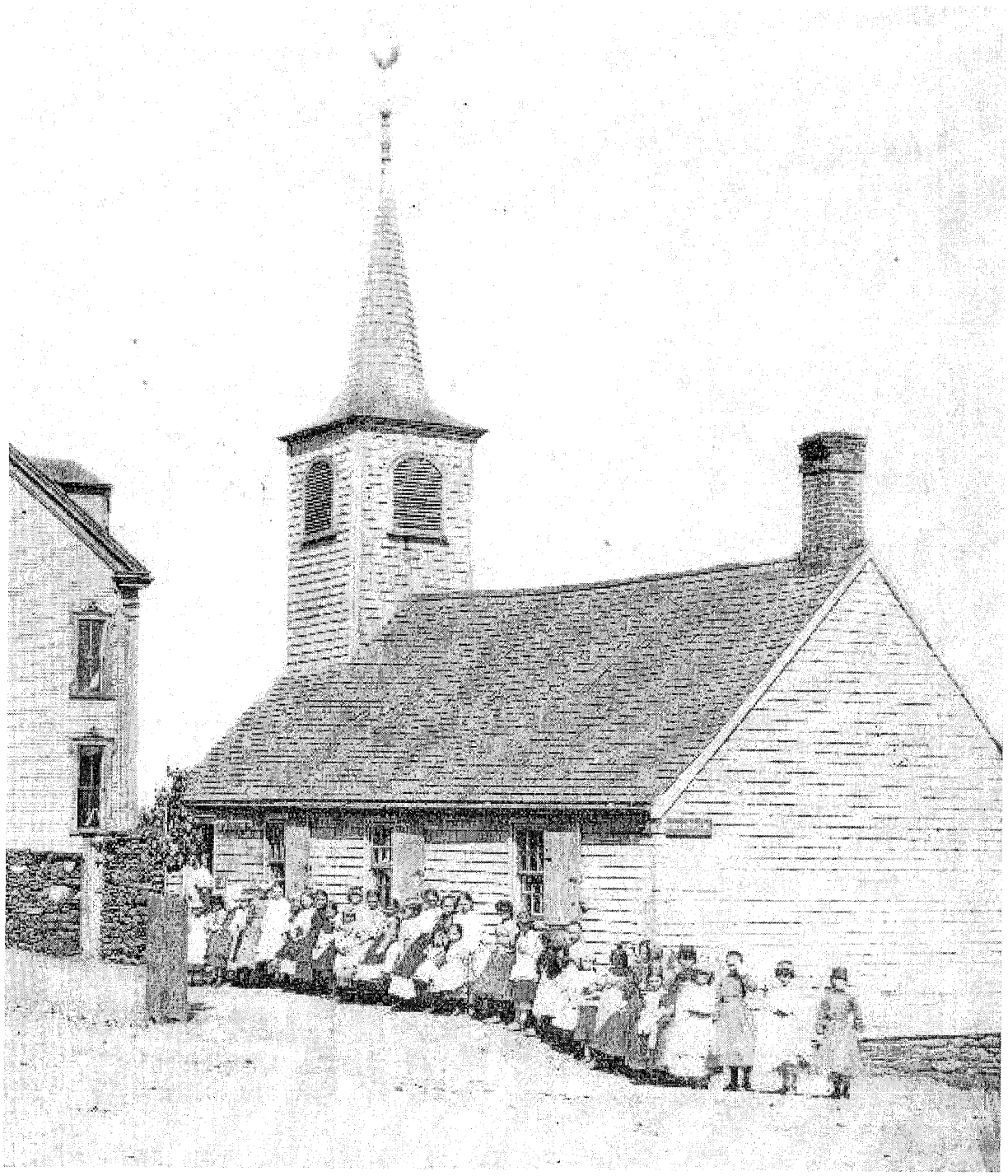
45.Minute-book #2, 20 March, 1812.

46.St. George's Anglican Parish Church, Minute- book #4, MG 4, Vol. 317, #4, p. 9. Hereafter cited as Minute-book #4.

47.Minute-book #4, p. 21.

48.Minute-book #4, pp. 1-3.

49.John Inglis to the Earl of Dalhousie [copy], 10 March, 1818, Minute-book # 4, p. 40.



Saint George's Charity School in the Little Dutch Church, c 1870
Image courtesy Nova Scotia Archives and Records Management

Robert Fitzgerald and Elizabeth Uniacke at St. George's Church: Evangelical Fervour and Good Works, 1825-1870

Brian Cuthbertson

On his birth in November 1797, Robert Fitzgerald Uniacke became the tenth child of Richard John Uniacke and Martha Maria his wife of twenty-two years. They had married when she was not yet thirteen. Although Robert Fitzgerald was baptized at St. Paul's in Halifax on 24 December, his father was still an active member of St. Matthew's (a union of Congregationalists and Presbyterians). As a young man growing up in Ireland of the Protestant ascendancy, Uniacke had become "so disgusted with the Hypocrisy and selfish rapacity" of ministers in the established Church of England and Ireland that he formed an early antipathy to the Uniacke family church.[1] Not until 1801 would Uniacke purchase a pew at St. Paul's and become a staunch upholder of the Church of England as the established church.

Uniacke's conversion and deepening Christian faith derived from his horror at the excesses of the French Revolution and its rational disbelievers; the "Impious and Dissolute who vainly wish to believe that there is no God."[2] As he told his eldest son Norman a year later, who was leaving to study law in London, they were the "wretches" whose "very breath carries with it the seeds of Contagion and their Abode is the Habitation of filth and Corruption." His advice to Norman was to shun these "vipers" and be a "Modest Religious man," who would find the discharge of his religious duties attended with pleasure and would open his mind to "scenes of future existence far beyond the present life."[3]

In 1800 Martha Maria gave Robert Fitzgerald a brother, named James Boyle. In 1803, she died leaving her husband responsible for eleven children, three of whom were under ten years of age. Richard John had been absolutely devoted to her and ever after he reserved the day of her death for the consideration of "affairs little connected with this world."[4] Still at home were three adult daughters who would have cared for Robert Fitzgerald, James Boyle and another sister Eleanor. But in 1805 all three sisters married and Uniacke, now having full responsibility for his youngest children, decided to re-marry in 1808. Although he knew "the general opinion of the world respecting step mothers," the duty he owed himself and to his children was the motive which influenced him in contracting a second marriage.[5] In the first year of their marriage, Eliza Newton bore him a son, named Andrew Mitchell.

Until the construction of Mount Uniacke, the family resided in Halifax, living in a house on Argyle Street, the present site of the Halifax *Herald* building. Young Robert Fitzgerald and James Boyle attended the Halifax Grammar School, the headmaster of which was the Reverend George Wright, who had become rector of St. George's in 1799 and would remain so until his death in 1819. At the Grammar School, the Uniacke boys would have received a sound education to prepare them for the professions of the day.

Once the Uniacke family moved to Mount Uniacke, their father sent both boys in 1814 to King's Collegiate School to prepare them for entrance into King's College. Not for the first, and certainly not for the last time, King's was going through a difficult period with only around seventeen students in the college. There was much feuding between the president Charles Porter and the only other professor, William Cochran, who held the vice-presidency. The college building was in a deplorable condition. Both professors were ordained clergymen. Students disliked Porter because he was a strict disciplinarian, while being much taken with Cochran. Lord Dalhousie described Cochran as "a man of singularly mild & amiable manner, with a talent for instructing & captivating the disposition of his pupils by easy & relaxed discipline."[6] We know from the letters of the Bliss brothers, King's College students at the same time as the Uniacke brothers, that a good number of the students

could be aptly described as regency bucks. When James Boyle fell ill at the college, only his married sisters were despatched from Mount Uniacke and Halifax to nurse him. As his eldest sister Mary reputedly remarked: "it would not answer to let any of her unmarried sisters to come to the College."[7]

Cochran seems to have planted in Robert Fitzgerald some religious feelings. Although he decided to study law in his father's office, Robert Fitzgerald came under the influence of the Reverend Isaac Temple, private chaplain to Lord Dalhousie and tutor to the Dalhousie children. Robert Fitzgerald joined the group around Temple and his associate Hibbert Binney, which met for Bible study and for devotional services. They were intensely evangelical with Binney visiting the young ladies of Halifax to enquire: "if they have felt no symptoms of conversion, no inspirations or sudden calls to reform; if they believed dancing sinful, and if they ever think of dying during the dance."[8] According to William Blowers Bliss, who napped through Binney's sermons, his doctrine was that all who dance and played cards would be damned. Others in the group were James Cochran, John William Twining, Edmund Crawley, John Pryor, James William Johnston and J.W. Nutting. James Cochran, a son of William, vice president of King's, had gone into business in Halifax, but would shortly enter King's College and later be ordained. John William Twining, another King's graduate, was curate to John Inglis at St. Paul's. Crawley, Nutting and Pryor were all King's graduates and practising at the bar in Halifax. James William Johnston had not gone to King's, but was a rising young lawyer.

Within the Church of England, the evangelicals rejected the formalism of the 18th century church, which they believed had produced forms of worship and religious profession without real devotion or deep conviction. Evangelicals traced their spiritual ancestry to the Reformation, but within their own time they were followers of John Wesley and George Whitefield. Just as Wesley and Whitefield had not gone over to the Methodists, the evangelicals also rejected Methodism and remained in the Church of England. Evangelicals were noted for their firm belief in God and in the saving power of the Gospel of Christ, and for their intense earnestness. They took their theology from doctrines of the Reformers—the Trinity, the guilt of man and sanctification of the Holy Spirit. They accepted the Thirty-nine Articles as the perfect summary of their faith. They sought moral improvement of society and used the Sunday school movement as one way to effect change. William Wilberforce, a staunch evangelical, who prayed three hours a day, led the anti-slavery movement.

This group around Isaac Temple was very much a minority at St. Paul's, where Sunday morning service was the social event of the week. Preceded by brass bands, regiments marched to the church, amid the ringing of bells. According to Thomas Beamish Akins, the lieutenant governor with aides arrived in full uniform, wearing his sword and spurs. Members of His Majesty's Council drove up in their four horse carriages with coachmen. Livered servants carried pans of burning charcoal to keep their ladies's feet warm. Among the pew holders all was fashion. Service began with a peal of the organ. The beadle wearing gold lace, carrying a large silver-headed mace, preceded John Inglis and other clergy from the vestry up the east aisle to the pulpit. Clergy wore surplice and hood, unless they preached when they dressed in a black gown. Usually John Inglis preached while John William Twining performed the service. Apparently Inglis had a most melodious voice and delivered excellent sermons. After service the troops marched back to barracks. At three in the afternoon the lieutenant governor held a Grand Review of the troops on the Common.[9]

At the same time as fashion flocked to view the Grand Review, Isaac Temple held his afternoon services at St. Paul's. His preaching at one such service so affected Robert Fitzgerald that afterwards he retired to his room for reflection and prayer. "There separated from the outer world, having entered his closet and shut his door and prayed to his Father which seeth in secret, his Father rewarded him openly. There the Lord opened his heart and he

believed."[10] So strong and abiding was the influence of these new-born feelings over his own soul that he now determined to abandon the study of law and devote himself to the ministry of the Church of Christ.

There is every reason to believe that Robert Fitzgerald's decision to enter the church met with the full approbation of his father. When, in 1828, Robert Fitzgerald's half brother, Andrew Mitchell, thought of following him into orders, Uniacke wrote Andrew Mitchell:

> devoting yourself to service of the church will meet my full approbation[,] were it submitted to my choice to have named an occupation for you, I should without hesitation have said a minister of the Church of England... [he then proceeded to advise his son that] I like a religion that makes a man content with his lot in life and fits him to participate in those rational enjoyments which do not contaminate the mind or prejudice the understanding. I dislike the affectation of holiness, leave that to appear from your actions and exemplary mode of life and not to depend on the external appearance of your person. Labour to desire the love and respect of those committed to your charge and you will not fail to receive it. Prove by your cheerful enjoyment of innocent pleasures of society that peace and happiness dwell within you.[11]

Uniacke assured Andrew Mitchell if he went into the Church, that he would provide him with a house and farm as well as with a small income, sufficient to procure the comfortable necessaries of life. Andrew Mitchell, however, decided instead to follow his other brothers and go into law.

Just when Robert Fitzgerald made his decision to enter the ministry remains uncertain, but it had to be before Dalhousie and Temple departed for Quebec where Dalhousie assumed the governor-generalship in 1820. Just where and under what circumstances, Robert Fitzgerald studied for ordination also remains uncertain. Bishop Stanser, who had succeeded to the Nova Scotia bishopric on Charles Inglis' death in 1816, afterwards had left Nova Scotia for England because of ill health. Because there was no bishop in Nova Scotia to conduct the ordination, Robert Fitzgerald had to travel to England.

On 22 June 1822 the Bishop of London admitted Robert Fitzgerald to deacon's orders at the Chapel Royal, St. James' Palace, so it is possible he had gone earlier to study for orders. His ordination as priest by the Bishop of Chester took place on 23 March 1823.[12] He then accepted a curacy in the Diocese of Chichester, officiating at the Churches of Fishbourne and Mid Lavent, little villages in Sussex about a mile from Chichester. His father no doubt advanced the funds for Robert Fitzgerald to travel to England and to keep himself until obtaining the curacy.

Why Robert Fitzgerald did not immediately return to Nova Scotia upon his ordination is also unknown, but it was likely connected with the increasing pressure on Stanser to resign so Nova Scotia would again have a resident bishop. There was never any doubt on either side of the Atlantic that John Inglis would be the next bishop. It was the intention of Earl Bathurst at the Colonial Office to have the rectorship of St. Paul's go to the senior clergyman in the Diocese, Robert Willis, rector of Trinity Church in Saint John. In doing so he overrode the wishes of St. Paul's congregation, who wanted the evangelical, and perhaps mildly Calvinistic, John Twining. As the consequent Great Disruption at St. Paul's has been dealt with elsewhere, I shall confine my self as to how I suspect Robert Fitzgerald became rector of St. George's. In short, if Willis came to St. Paul's, there was a good likelihood that Benjamin Gray at St. George's would get Trinity in Saint John.[13] St. George's would then be open for Robert Fitzgerald.

Although Richard John Uniacke was probably not privy to Bathurst's decision to insist on the right of the Crown to appoint the next rector for St. Paul's, it was Uniacke's ruthlessness and the use of his position of attorney general that engendered so much bitterness among the congregation so that St.

Paul's, in the words of R.V. Harris, was left a "mere wreck of its former self."[14] It is claimed that some sixty percent of the congregation left, with a high number of those going to St. George's,[15] and others led by Crawley, Nutting and Johnston of Isaac Temple's circle leaving to form what became Granville Street Baptist Church.

It was not unobserved by his contemporaries that Uniacke may have in part been motivated by family interest in the controversy. When accused that the reason for his opposition to the clear wishes of St. Paul's congregation related to having Robert Fitzgerald succeed at St. George's, Uniacke was stung to reply that he would rather see his son "doomed to beg his daily bread in our streets for the residue of his life than see him enjoying the highest stations in the church, if obtained in opposition to the will of the King who on earth is the supreme Head of the Church of England."[16]

St. George's history went back to the arrival in 1751 of Germans and Swiss settlers, known as the Foreign Protestants, many of whom were Evangelical Lutherans, whose form of worship closely resembled that of the Church of England. They formed a small congregation and opened a church, commonly referred to as the Little Dutch Church. Over the years, the congregation began using the Church of England liturgy. With the construction of St. George's Church between 1799 and 1801 and the acceptance as their rector of the Reverend George Wright, the congregation adopted the usages and liturgy of the Church of England. On Wright's death in 1819, the congregation called on Benjamin Gray to be their rector.

In November 1824, John Inglis had written from London the wardens and vestry of St. George's that Benjamin Gray had been appointed to Saint John and that the SPG was prepared to appoint Robert Fitzgerald to be "their missionary to the Germans."[17] Gray, however, did not make up his mind to accept until June 1825. Within days, Robert Fitzgerald wrote the wardens, enclosing a letter from Inglis on his appointment by the SPG, stating that: "I am fully prepared to take immediate charge of your congregation, and trust I shall receive that invitation which I now most humbly solicit."[18] Two days after receipt of this letter, a General Meeting of Pew Holders unanimously resolved:

> to adopt the measures pursued on former occasions it appeared that the Reverend Mr. Houseal was appointed upon petition of Pewholders, at his decease that the late Rev'd Mr. Wright had been elected & chosen and that the Rev'd Mr. Gray had been petitioned for.[19]

Then the "Rev'd Mr. Uniacke was proposed and unanimously chosen/ there not being a dissenting voice/ to fill the said vacancy."[20] Clearly much had been arranged beforehand.

From the beginning Robert Fitzgerald exercised a degree of leadership that belied his youthful twenty-seven years of age. He would chair all congregational and vestry meetings without arousing any hostility. Although St. George's was £700 in debt, he volunteered his services to raise the money to have the inside of the church painted. He personally advanced £30 of the £138 raised by subscription to undertake the task. Next he had pews built either side of the organ loft for the accommodation of poor children and personally paid for pews in the gallery for the Sunday school children. The vestry approved of their construction, "sensible of the interest which the Rev. Mr. Uniacke had always evinced for the welfare of the Congregation." It unanimously approved that Robert Fitzgerald be reimbursed for "we are perfectly satisfied as to the liberal and partial conduct of Mr. Uniacke in the measure."[21]

In 1818, St. George's had failed to overcome opposition, chiefly from John Inglis, then as the rector of St. Paul's and Ecclesiastical Commissary, to its separation from St. Paul's and incorporation as a separate parish. With the influx of new parishioners from St. Paul's and St. George's fully adhering to the Church of England, Inglis, now as bishop, dropped his

earlier opposition. In its petition for incorporation the parish noted that the church was now complete and would hold 1,000 people, contained 120 pews, a gallery with sufficient accommodation for 200 soldiers, and space with seats for at least 200 poor persons unable to rent pews. Every pew was occupied. St. George's now had a congregation as numerous as any in the province.[22]

At a congregation meeting in April 1827, Robert Fitzgerald read the bill for incorporation, stating that he could not support it if there was any part objectionable to church members.[23] The only part that appeared objectionable related to the appointment of rectors. St. George's had always viewed as their right to chose their own rector. The bill's clause read that when a vacancy should occur, the lieutenant governor would first receive representations from the congregation and then nominate a name. Fourteen days were allowed the congregation to assemble and signify their wishes to the lieutenant governor. Although the bill gave the lieutenant governor the authority to present another person, the congregation accepted the clause.

Inglis had insisted on inserting in the bill an "endowment clause," which was designed to provide some income to the incumbent. This greatly upset Robert Fitzgerald and at the meeting he tabled a letter declining during his incumbency, any acceptance of the emoluments to be derived.[24] No such clause appeared in the final act, which passed in 1827, so Uniacke's opposition to Inglis' wishes must have resulted in its removal from the bill. Under the act, St. George's parish boundaries included the North Suburbs, extended out to the North West Arm via Chebucto Road and all the territory north to the Halifax Township line, encompassing the shores of Bedford Basin and Halifax Harbour. On 17 April 1827 Inglis consecrated St. George's.

By 1830, Robert Fitzgerald could report favourably to the SPG on the improved and improving state of the parish. His congregation was daily increasing in number and "visibly advancing in godliness and piety."[25] There were daily applications for more pews. St. George's was generally crowded every Sabbath. He conducted full services in the morning and afternoon. Around 1834, he began holding an evening service in the parish school house for the benefit of those who could not be accommodated in the church.

As the colonial American church had no resident bishops before 1783, few in any congregation had been confirmed. Although the rubrics allowed clergy to administer Holy Communion to those who, though not confirmed, believed they "were ready and desirous," Holy Communion remained in practice an unused sacrament. Since Charles Inglis' bishopric, clergy had been admonished to undertake thorough preparation of both adults and children for confirmation. Although Inglis had held numerous confirmations, there remained many within the church who would not seek confirmation or, if confirmed, not come forward regularly for communion. When Robert Fitzgerald reported that the regular communicants averaged 140 to 150, this was a most impressive figure; it could only be attributed to his preaching and growing stature within his congregation.

Equally impressive and again directly attributable to him were the 200 children from the poorer classes who attended Sunday school, twice on each Sabbath. Many were children of dissenters and Roman Catholics.[26] Teachers, who would soon number over twenty, met the children before the morning and after the evening services. Robert Fitzgerald had the sole superintendence and direction of the school, catechizing and examining the classes himself in rotation. Each Sunday he led the procession from the parish school house at the foot of Uniacke Street (named after him) to the church for the service.

Within the community at large, probably no aspect of Robert Fitzgerald's ministry stood out more than the boys, and girls, schools he organized. These schools provided free education to children of the poorest class on the Madras or monitorial system, whereby the older children acted as monitors to the younger under the direction of a teacher. Initially, Robert Fitzgerald received

sufficient voluntary contributions from the congregation and this sum, with a provincial legislature grant of £50, allowed him to build a "commodious" school room, fifty feet by thirty, at an expense of £250.[27] The Province also provided an annual grant of £100 to pay teachers and for supplies. Although daily attendance at the boys school averaged ninety to a hundred, only one teacher was employed at a annual salary of £60. Some pupils were also fee-paying, which supplemented this meagre salary occasionally by another £30, though payments were very irregular.

In the case of the girls school, held in the Little Dutch Church, daily attendance numbered eighty of which sixty were free scholars "of the poorest description." As with the boys, there was a single teacher, Miss Brehm, the daughter of a late church warden Christian Brehm, who had served St. George's faithfully probably for longer than any other warden in its history. She received for her efforts £25 a year. Robert Fitzgerald involved himself intimately in the operation of the schools. Although he believed the teachers were "indifferently paid," he reported to the legislature that both schools were in excellent order, "affording a useful education to a large number of poor children while providing the moral and religious improvement of many who might otherwise have grown up in idleness and sin."[28] In his annual reports to the legislature, Robert Fitzgerald stressed his conviction for the necessity of providing education for all classes, especially those who were destitute. His schools, he held, were diffusing the benefits of a useful education to a large proportion of the poor in the parish of every sect and persuasion.

As rector, Robert Fitzgerald had to deal with the parish debt of some £700 while its income was only sufficient to pay current expenses. As he told the vestry, it was evident that some measures should be adopted to liquidate the debt. He considered that this should be done sooner rather than later, and the present, he believed, the most suitable time when "the congregation was numerous and the greatest harmony happily existed among them."[29] Vestry agreed to a general assessment and by 1831 the debt was down to £475.

In 1830 Richard John Uniacke died. He requested his sons to decide among themselves which son would accept Mount Uniacke, and thereby give up any further demands on his estate. As two of his elder brothers were not in Nova Scotia and apparently Richard John Junior did not wish the Mount, Robert Fitzgerald, as the fourth son, inherited. He, however, sold a half share to his younger brother, James Boyle. Robert Fitzgerald had apparently already received from his father when he entered the ministry sufficient funds that when invested gave him a yearly income of £52.[30] This may have been a factor in his accepting the Mount and foregoing any further inheritance.

Richard John Uniacke had lived long enough to seen Robert Fitzgerald marry Elizabeth Gould Francklin in 1830, grand-daughter of the former lieutenant governor Michael Francklin and daughter of James Boutineau Francklin, clerk of the House of Assembly. They may have met each other through the Saint George's Ladies Benevolent Society, founded two years previous to mitigate the sufferings of mothers in their confinements, and to provide clothing and food to the poor of the parish. On their marriage, if not before, she almost certainly became secretary, or what we would call the executive director of the Society, a position she would hold for next thirty or so years. They were to be childless and she became a full partner in his ministry. She assumed the title of patroness to the girls school and with a number of younger women of the congregation regularly, if not daily, assisted at the school.[31]

In 1834 cholera arrived in Halifax. Although there was rigid medical inspection and quarantine for all emigrant ships, the dreaded illness spread ashore. Soon the death toll reached seventeen or eighteen a day. Those who could fled into the country and the garrison removed to Bedford. Robert Fitzgerald and Elizabeth, in the words of George W. Hill, who would become his curate, converted their house and stable into an hospital:

> ... the one became the resort for medicinal relief of those attacked with the dreadful sickness, and the other the common receptacle for every article of clothing and bedding needful to the comfort of the poor and friendless as they lay ill and suffering. At once he [Robert Fitzgerald] rose equal to the emergency of being a physician and nurse, as well as minister in holy things—to learn, as by instinct, how to minister to the body as well as to the soul. Fearless and tireless he went up and down the streets, entering this house and that; by the light of his lantern, penetrating into garret, cellar and courtyard—administering under the physician's directions the needful medicine, and then pointing the sufferer to the "Lamb of God..."[32]

It was a miracle that neither Robert Fitzgerald nor Elizabeth, who went with him on their visits, contracted cholera. Robert Fitzgerald, however, in 1838 developed such a severe case of bronchitis that it became nearly impossible for him to speak. He went to England to consult with the noted surgeon Sir James Clark. The congregation refused his offer to resign and they remained in contact by letter. Before his departure the congregation wrote him a farewell letter in which they expressed:

> the great interest you have taken in our spiritual and eternal welfare, the improvement and completing of our house of prayer, the increase in membership, and the encouraging of harmony therein—the attention to the spiritual and temporal wants of the poor—and the establishment and progress of the schools.[33]

No sermon by Robert Fitzgerald has been found, though he preached around 150 a year. Apparently he preached a little too long for at least two of his parishioners, for in 1836 they placed a clock facing the pulpit as a reminder of the passage of time. In a letter from London to be read to the congregation we can gain a sense of his preaching style. He hoped the congregation would remember:

> the spiritual privileges they enjoy and the means of Grace they profess and the affectionate invitations and warnings they have received, and how awful their account will be if they shall hereafter be found to have "received the Grace of God in vain." I hope they recollect how affectionately I warned them "that the wages of sin is death" and urged upon them the necessity of repentance and amendment of life and that new heart which the Lord can alone give, and placed before them Jesus Christ as their only refuge and hope. The privileges my congregation have been and still are great indeed, and solemn will be their account at the last great day, some will then bitterly lament that they have not attended to the things which belong to their everlasting peace, whilst others will rejoice that they knew and welcomed "the day of their visitation," Oh let me then though distant from those I love in the Lord and for those souls I still watch as one that must give an account, urge these solemn truths upon your recollections and affectionately invite you all "to flee from the wrath to come" and be reconciled to God whilst the day of Grace and salvation lasts.[34]

Robert Fitzgerald did recover from his illness, but it had raised the question of his needing a curate, especially with the opening of a chapel of ease in 1841 for parish members who lived on Dutch Village Road at Fairview.[35] Moreover, there had been a steady increase in numbers at St. George's with the congregation now at 700 in a parish that had 5-6,000 people of whom one half were Anglicans.[36] There was a need for more accommodation for the poor, and to the great inconvenience of the congregation, the children sat on chairs placed in the aisles. A solution to this problem was to have girls sit in galleries over the choir loft and

have the boys in the upper gallery, but it proved impossible to keep order among them. In 1841, the vestry agreed to extend the gallery round to the chancel opening as it is today, thus providing room for several hundred more people. These new seats were soon rented and helped to defray the £500 the construction cost. Robert Fitzgerald personally oversaw all the work, including the provision of more accommodation for the poor.[37]

Robert Fitzgerald's concern for the poor of the parish led to the formation in 1840 of St. George's District Visiting Committee of which he would be secretary until his death.[38] Under the Visiting Committee, the parish was divided into ten districts, each under the superintendence of at least two visitors drawn from the congregation. Instead of indiscriminate charity giving, these parish visitors investigated every application for relief. They met every month at the rectory to decide on the distribution of funds. In addition, those within the parish wanting relief could come to the rectory on Mondays and Thursdays and be directed to the visitor for the ward in which they resided. In its first year alone, visits were made to 530 families and food, fuel and clothing provided to 144 of them. Visitors also dropped off printed copies of the annual reports at the residences of possible donors and then returned to collect a subscription. Each annual report contained a message from Robert Fitzgerald urging donations.
For the 1858 *Annual Report*, he exhorted that "Poverty and wretchedness are permitted to exist around us, that we might be laid under the necessity of relieving them *for our own good.*"[39]

The Ladies Benevolent Society under the direction of Elizabeth Gould worked in tandem with the Visiting Committee in affording relief to "the Poor of every Sect, Denomination, Country and Colour," while seeking "to mitigate the sufferings of the Mother in her confinement, to supply the naked with a garment, the hungry with food, and the industrious poor with employment," especially in winter.[40] In 1865 the Ladies Society and the District Visiting Committee would unite to make best use of the funds available. As well, the ladies around this time established soup kitchens during the winter months

The need for a curate was becoming an imperative, but it was not until 1847 that the parish had sufficient funds to pay a yearly salary to the Reverend George W. Hill. Robert Fitzgerald offered to contribute £50 and so did the Colonial Church Society, which brought him into direct conflict with Bishop John Inglis. An extension of the evangelical movement within the church, the Society's objectives were to evangelize in the colonies and to support schools. In short, supporters of the Society believed, while it should maintain ecclesiastical authority, that evangelical truth was first and ecclesiastical authority second. During his time in England, seeking a cure for his bronchitis, Robert Fitzgerald had first become acquainted with the Society. He became enthusiastic in his support for its sending schoolmasters and catechists to Newfoundland, Nova Scotia and elsewhere.

To Bishop John Inglis, the Colonial Church Society was an anathema, a society of "fanatical character" and Calvinistic, his euphemism for its being staunchly evangelical. He threatened to have the stipends from the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel withdrawn from any of his clergy who had anything to do with the Society.[41] Such was his opposition that when Robert Fitzgerald and James Cogswell, curate at St. Paul's, formed with others a Corresponding Committee of the Society, their two names were omitted the list of committee members "because of the delicacy and difficulty of their present position with regard to their diocesan."[42] In fairness to Inglis, he saw the Society as drawing off support from the work of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in the diocese and especially from the Diocesan Church Society with all the financial demands being made on it to support King's College and many country parishes.

After Inglis addressed a circular to his clergy opposing the Society, Robert Fitzgerald on his "own individual responsibility" prepared a paper entitled "Objections and Replies" and submitted it to Inglis.[43] Although a copy had not been found, its contents likely followed his

remarks to the founding meeting of the Halifax Association in Aid of the Colonial Church Society and which he chaired. From the chair Robert Fitzgerald expressed his "warm and undiminished attachment to the Colonial Church Society... it was in the purest sense, a church institution composed of Churchmen only, and calculated to impart lasting benefits to the poor and destitute inhabitants of the Province."[44]

Robert Fitzgerald also noted with satisfaction that for the past eight years the Society had spent £400 to £500 a year for schoolmasters and catechists. One such school master was Thomas Wilson, who Robert Fitzgerald put in charge of the school connected to village chapel at Fairview.[45] Such public acts likely did not find approval with his bishop. Inglis and Robert Fitzgerald remained in an uneasy relationship, especially as Robert Fitzgerald became a firm supporter of the more ecumenical British and Foreign Bible Society, which Inglis openly opposed, seeing it as a competitor to the purely Anglican Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge. For many years Robert Fitzgerald was to be its president.

Inglis was also the staunch upholder of the Church of England being the established church of Nova Scotia. With the coming of responsible government in 1848, this became no longer acceptable, and in 1851 the Nova Scotia Assembly passed an act of disestablishment. Whatever the privileges the Church had enjoyed were no more. Inglis had died a year earlier and his death marked an end to an era in the life of the Nova Scotia church. He was succeeded by Hibbert Binney who arrived in 1851 to assume his office. On most matters, including the Church of England as a state church, which he considered a besetting evil, Binney would differ from his predecessor.

Although the scion of an old and established Nova Scotia family and born in the province, Binney had lived since a boy in England. As a student and fellow of Worcester College, he had come under the influence of the Oxford Movement. Those of the Oxford Movement, commonly called tractarians, emphasized the church's authority to be independent of the state and based on Catholic order and tradition, as it had been preserved in the writings of the early fathers of the church. At age thirty-one, Binney entered into a diocese largely rural, low church, and in the case especially of St. Paul's and St. George's, with parishes having considerable congregational control over church affairs.[46]

John Inglis had opposed a growing movement within the Anglican church for the formation of synods composed of clergy and laity to govern its affairs. He had believed attempts to create a synod in Nova Scotia would be divisive and in this he was prescient. Binney, however, believed very strongly that the only proper authority ordained of God for governing the church was the bishop, who, as father in God, ordered the affairs of the church. Curbing the power of local parishes was one among a number of reasons that led Binney to seek through legislation the incorporation of a synod for the diocese. Binney called together clergy and lay delegates from the parishes to met in Halifax on 12 October 1854 to begin the process of introducing synodical government. Opposition was immediate from St. Paul's and St. George's, who saw a synod as strengthening the power of the bishop and concurrently that also of rural parishes.

At St. George's on 18 September there was parishioners' meeting in the Parochial School House. After Binney's circular was read, Napean Clarke moved, and Thomas Beamish Akins seconded, a motion that "this meeting is of opinion that the establishment of parochial assemblies in the Diocese at the present time is both inexpedient and unadvisable."[47] Another resolution passed stated that the parish did not approve of "a Bishop possessing the power to nullify the deliberate action of so large and influential body as the Clergy and Laity."[48] In the meeting's view obtaining a bishop's veto was Binney's sole purpose in establishing a synod. It foresaw, as did St. Paul's, Binney's setting up himself as a rival force to two wealthiest parishes, with the probable support of poor rural parishes. As delegates to the forthcoming assembly of clergy and laity, the meeting decided to send Thomas Beamish

Akins and Nepean Clark with instructions "to oppose formation of a church synod."[49] St. Paul's passed a similar resolution and sent as delegates, Chief Justice Brenton Halliburton and H.H. Cogswell, a member of the Legislative Council.

Robert Fitzgerald did not attend the 12 October meeting at which a motion was proposed for the establishment of a synod. Halliburton moved an amendment and Napean Clark seconded it, which stated that it was "not judicious... to establish synods or periodical assemblies or a deliberative body in... the diocese."[50] The amendment was defeated and the original resolution passed by a large majority. After a much heated discussion, St. Paul's congregation passed a resolution against being represented at any future meeting. St. George's went one step further and presented a memorial or remonstrance to Queen Victoria against a synod. In "consequence of the informality" and the mode of forwarding it, the Queen returned it to the parish.[51]

The impasse between Binney and the two Halifax parishes continued with St. Paul's and St. George's boycotting diocesan meetings. Then, on 23 February 1863, Binney had an incorporation bill tabled in the Assembly. On 2 March, the Rector, Wardens and Vestry of St. George's petitioned that St. Paul's and St. George's, their property and privileges, be exempted from any control by any church assembly or synod. Among the privileges they wished protected was a right to nominate and present their own ministers. As well, the petition strongly objected to the bishop having veto power over the proceedings of such an assembly or synod.[52]

When the Legislative Council referred the bill to a select committee, St. George's engaged James W. Ritchie, a noted lawyer and St. Paul's parishioner, to argue its case against the bill. Binney did not employ counsel, but appeared in person to argue for the bill. He also prepared a *Statement of Facts in Favor of the Synod Incorporation Act.* In it, Binney stressed that the objections of St. George's could be briefly answered because the bill now exempted the parish. Nonetheless, a reply to Binney's *Statement of Facts* appeared unsigned and entitled *Remarks upon the Statement of Facts in Favor of the Synod Incorporation Act.*[53] Before the select committee, Binney called the reply, "a curious document" with no name on it. At that point, Robert Fitzgerald spoke up with "I acknowledge it, my Lord."[54] Robert Fitzgerald's reply reiterated the arguments already made against synod, stressing that St. George's parishioners had no desire to interfere so long as any synod remained a voluntary assembly, but protested against its acts being made binding over all whom this bill would give power.

Because a majority on the select committee held the bill would create divisions within the church, they voted against it. Not to be outdone, Binney then introduced another incorporation bill, which specifically would not apply to "the rights and privileges" of those not belonging to the synod. This bill passed and Binney got his synod, which eventually both St. Paul's and St. George's would join in 1878.

St. George's opposition to Binney's plans for a synod certainly did not affect the church's growth, for by the 1860s it had 3,500 parishioners of whom 300 were regular communicants, by far the largest number in the diocese. This figure can be compared to Christ Church in Dartmouth with 2100 and St. Paul's with 1700 parishioners. But St. Paul's was clearly the wealthier of the two for it contributed £8,500 to the Church Endowment Fund compared to St. George's £1,266, out of the diocesan total of £21,000.[55]

Some 300 children now came to St. George's Sunday School, whose summer picnic proved to be a great event. For the 1848 picnic held in August, *The Church Times* reported that the children gathered at the School House where, after Robert Fitzgerald sang a hymn and offered up a prayer, the children, with their rector at the head, processed along Kempt Road to Fairview and the Uniacke estate lands, which bordered on those of the village chapel. Once there, the children engaged in various games until two o'clock when they sat down to a most excellent dinner. After the meal, some went walking or played games. One *Church Times* correspondent wrote of how:

> happy little girls seated on the ground with their long-resident and much-loved clergyman in their midst indulging himself in the agreeable occupation of leading them in singing, and relating to them missionary anecdotes.[56]

Finally came the cake, and after it had been demolished, there were three cheers for the Queen and Robert Fitzgerald, and then the children made their way back home.

Of all the comparable schools in Halifax, those operated by St. George's had proportionally the least number of paying students and therefore the highest number of those whose parents could not afford any fees.[57] In 1850, Halifax's Board of School Commissioners commented, as the boys school, which taught grammar, geography, book-keeping and mathematics, had so many students free of fees that it exhibited "some of the features of irregularity which may be explained" by this fact. It did not further comment that a single teacher, Joseph Clarke, had responsibility for over one hundred boys of varying ages. Of the girls school, the commissioners found it had many pleasing characteristics—neatness, kindness, industry and good morals appeared to prevail. They praised Miss Brehm, the teacher, and the Lady Patroness, Elizabeth Uniacke, and her assistant friends.[58]

Once the Halifax to Windsor railway became operational in 1854, Robert Fitzgerald and Elizabeth used to take all the Sunday school and day school children, probably around 400 all told, for an day-long outing to Mount Uniacke.[59]

With the passage of the 1864 free school act, the two St. George's schools were absorbed into the new city system. In their nearly forty years of operation, these two schools had provided the poor children of the north end with virtually the only opportunity for education, as even St. Mary's Boys School had more fee paying students than it had free.

In 1857, a committee of members from the different Protestant churches in the city established the Protestant Orphans Home, for which they obtained incorporation two years later. On the committee there was only a single clergyman, Robert Fitzgerald, who would remain on the board until his death. Of Robert Fitzgerald's role, the Committee said on his death of "Evangelical principles unflinchingly maintained—Ernest work honestly performed—and the burning tears and sorrowing wail of the Orphan—have reared over this good man a monument far nobler and more enduring than the most elaborately sculptured."[60] Elizabeth headed the Ladies' Committee and it was said that her name became entwined and identified with the early history of the home, with its strengths and successes. On their deaths in 1874, the *Annual Report* wrote of both Elizabeth and Isabella Cogswell, who devoted her life and sizable fortune to philanthropic causes: "That their removal has made a void not easily to be supplied, all must own who saw how full of grace and rich in goodness these two humble workers were."[61]

Elizabeth and Robert Fitzgerald were great friends of Isabella Cogswell. Together they played formative roles in the 1861 establishing and operating of a Home for the Aged. It was a home for men and women who were above the necessity of receiving direct charity, yet unable from their limited means to live as they had been accustomed in their early and better days.[62]

Robert Fitzgerald was also instrumental in the construction of St. John's at Fairview and in the building two years later in 1844 of the Church of the Holy Spirit at Lakelands near Mount Uniacke. One of Robert Fitzgerald's last and most enduring projects became the building of St. Mark's, a chapel of ease in Richmond, consecrated in 1866. His curate at the time, James Boyle Uniacke, a nephew, took over the pastoral care of the new church. James Boyle would become St. George's rector on his uncle's death.

In the spring of 1870 Robert Fitzgerald became increasingly ill, aggravated by his chronic bronchitis. He preached his last

sermon in the Round Church on Sunday, May 1st, from one of those texts which he so delighted to dwell, "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life." So overcome, however, was he by the effort that he could hardly make his way from the vestry to the rectory. On May 14th, when all knew death was approaching, his parishioners wrote to him:

> Many of us have been born and baptized during the period of your long rectorship (upwards of 45 years); others have been married and have brought up families, while many, near and dear to our hearts, who have listened to your faithful preaching of the Gospel of Christ, who were brought to the saving knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus, to whom you have broken the bread of life, and been comforted by you in the hour of sorrow and sickness, have passed from time into a glorious eternity. These are things, Reverend and dear Sir, which strongly endear you to us all, with the deep and tender emotions of children to a father, and draw our warmest feelings towards you in this hour of your sickness and trial.[63]

Around mid-day on June 1st Robert Fitzgerald Uniacke died in his 73rd year. His former curate and now rector at St. Paul's, George W. Hill, preached his funeral sermon before his burial in the Uniacke lot, just below the chancel window of the "village church" at Fairview. The Round Church was filled to capacity by people of all classes and denominations to testify in the words of William Roche, a faithful parishioner, "their esteem and respect for a good Citizen and an exemplary Christian Minister."[64] Parish children sang two special hymns and the bells of St. George's and St. Mark's were tolled as he was laid to rest.

The *Acadian Recorder* called him:

> a link with past times of this man of eminent and genuine piety, and one whose religion was not confined to the preaching and teachings of the pulpit. The poor will miss in him a constant benefactor; the widow and the fatherless a true friend and comforters. Of a noble and dignified appearance and manners of the most winning simplicity, the late Rector was one of those men who seem marked by nature for reverence and respect.[65]

On the Sunday following Robert Fitzgerald's death, George W. Hill preached at St. George's an eloquent tribute in which he spoke of his mentor's memorable sense of humour, his wonderful way with children and his visitations to his parishioners. Apparently Robert Fitzgerald loved trees and planted them almost everywhere. Hill ended with: "May each of the thousands that he planted on earth be an emblem of a tree of the Lord's right hand planting through him in the Paradise above!"[66]

In November of 1870, Nepean Clarke, a member of the congregation for the whole of Robert Fitzgerald's ministry at St. George's, presented a portrait of him to the church. In the same month the congregation placed a tablet on the south wall of the chancel:

> This tablet is erected by the congregation to record their affection and respect for a true and fatherly Pastor, a faithful Preacher, a loyal minister of the Church of England, an unflinching defender of the doctrines of the Reformers and one who was wise to win the souls to Christ. Other foundation can no man lay then that is laid which is Jesus Christ – I Cor. III.II.

The Reverend Francis Partridge, rector from 1882-1895, in his sermon given at the Centennial Commemoration of 1900 for the opening of St. George's, best sums up the 45 year ministry of Robert Fitzgerald and Elizabeth:

> The devotion with which he and his beloved wife gave themselves and their means to the benefit of the bodies and

> souls of their people; how they went in and out among them, ministering to their physical and spiritual necessities; how in the awful visitation of Cholera in 1834, when it became the desire of most people to get away from the plague infested city, Mr. & Mrs. Uniacke remained at their post, nursing, giving medicine, soothing the sick and comforting dying, is a matter which can never be forgotten. Their love of children, and their care of the lambs of the flock, are an inspiration still. And although many changes have been brought about by the inevitable hand of time and progress, yet the fragrance of the work of the Reverend R.F. Uniacke will linger about this church.[67]

1. Richard John Uniacke to "My Dear Andrew," 10 January 1828, MG1, vol. 1769, no. 44c, NSARM.

2. Richard John Uniacke to Norman Uniacke, 1 November 1798, MG1, vol. 926, no. 99, NSARM. See also Brian Cuthbertson, "Fatherly Advice in Post-Loyalist Nova Scotia: Richard John Uniacke to his son Norman," *Acadiensis*, IX, (Spring 1980), 78-91.

3.*Ibid.*

4. Richard John Uniacke to Lord Dalhousie, 9 February 1818, Dalhousie Papers, A 527, NAC.

5. Richard John Uniacke to "My Dear Children," 12 November 1823, MG1, vol. 1769, no. 44a. NSARM.

6. As quoted in *The Dalhousie Journals*, edited by Marjory Whitelaw (Oberon Press, 1978), p. 63.

7. W.B. Bliss to Henry Bliss, 1 October 1817, Bliss Family Papers, MG1, vol. 1604, file 33, letter 22, NSARM.

8. W.B. Bliss to Henry Bliss, MG1, vol. 1604, file 34, no. 28, NSARM.

9. Thomas Beamish Akins, "History of Halifax City," *Collections*, Nova Scotia Historical Society, 8 (1895), pp. 205-06.

10.George W. Hill, *In Memory of Robert Fitzgerald Uniacke... A Tribute of Respect and Love... preached at St. George's Church, Sunday, June 5, 1870*, p. 9.

11. Richard John Uniacke to "My Dear Andrew," 10 January 1828, MG1, vol. 1769, no. 44c, NSARM.

12. Judith Fingard, "Robert Fitzgerald Uniacke," *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, XI, p. 801. Other than a chapter in R.V. Harris' *History of George's* (Halifax, 1950), Fingard's is the only modern biography of Robert Fitzgerald.

13. For the Disruption at St. Paul's, see Reginald V. Harris, *The Church of Saint Paul in Halifax, Nova Scotia: 1749-1949* (Toronto, 1949), pp. 164-73 and Rev. George W. Hill, "History of St. Paul's Church, Halifax, Nova Scotia," No. IV, *Collections*, Nova Scotia Historical Society, vol. 3, pp. 13-70.

14. Reginald V. Harris, *The Church of Saint Paul in Halifax*, p. 171.

15. C.E. Thomas, "St. George's Church, Halifax: From Lutheran to Anglican," manuscript, MG5, History of St. George's, p. 16, Diocesan Archives of Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island.

16. Richard John Uniacke to the Church Wardens, 6 January 1825, Twining-Willis Controversy, St. Paul's, NSARM, as quoted in Brian Cuthbertson, *The Old Attorney General: A Biography of Richard John Uniacke* (Halifax, 1980), p. 101.

17. John Inglis to Wardens and Vestry of St. George's, 6 November 1824, MG4, vol. 317, no.4, pp. 122-23, NSARM.

18. Robert Fitzgerald Uniacke to Church Wardens, 22 June 1825, MG4, vol. 317, no. 4, pp. 120-21, NSARM.

19. General Meeting of Pew Holders, 24 June 1825, MG4, vol. 317, no. 4, pp. 124-25, NSARM.

20. *Ibid.*

21. Vestry Meeting, 7 July 1828, MG4, vol. 317, no. 4, pp. 26-27, NSARM.

22. Petition for Incorporation, MG4, vol. 317, no. 4, pp. 150-51, NSARM.

23. Congregational Meeting, 8 April 1827, MG4, vol. 317, no. 4, pp. 150-51, NSARM.

24. *Ibid.*

25. *Society of the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, Report of Proceedings*, 1830, Rev. R.F. Uniacke, 4 February 1830, pp. 93-96.

26. *Ibid.*, p. 95.

27. *Ibid.*, p. 94.

28. Assembly Petitions, RG5, vol. 72, no. 13, 13 February 1832, NSARM.

29. Congregational Meeting, 12 April 1830, MG4, vol. 317, no. 4, pp. 49-50, NSARM.

30. Robert Fitzgerald Uniacke to Church Wardens, 10 September 1838, MG4, vol. 317, no. 5, pp. 11-15, NSARM. In it Uniacke remarks that "my private fortune which has on some occasions been referred to as great, does not exceed £52 per ann." I assume this income came from funds invested on Robert Fitzgerald's behalf by his father. Robert Fitzgerald would die in 1870 and Elizabeth in 1874. On her death, as agreed beforehand with her husband, she left £3,100 in bequests mostly to Uniackes in the ministry. Such a sum invested in say British Consols at 4 per cent would have yielded an income of £124. An explanation may be that Elizabeth inherited some money on the death of her parents.

31. Report of the Board of Commissioners of Schools for the City of Halifax, 1851, RG14, vol. 29, NSARM. It speaks of "The Lady Patroness and her assistant friends".

32. George W. Hill, *In Memory of Robert Fitzgerald Uniacke*, pp. 12-13.

33. Wardens, Vestry and Congregation to Robert Fitzgerald Uniacke, 3 February 1838, MG4, vol. 317, no. 4, pp. 200-01, NSARM.

34. Robert Fitzgerald Uniacke to Church Wardens, 10 September 1838, MG4, vol. 317, no. 5, pp. 10-15, NSARM.

35. The bell from the Little Dutch Church, which originally had been in a convent at Fortress Louisbourg, was removed and hung in the small steeple of the chapel. According to R.V. Harris, George Bayer purchased the bell in 1760. The bell had on it a Latin cross and over it the inscription *Bazin me fait.* In 1895 the Chateau de Ramezay in Montreal purchased it (presumably from St. John's chapel) and put it on exhibit. See "History of St. George's Church Halifax 1750-1950" by Reginald V. Harris, manuscript draft with notes, MG5/H, Halifax, St. George's, Diocesan Archives of Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island.

36. Special Meeting, 4 April 1842, Memorial to Lord Bishop of Nova Scotia, 26 March 1842, MG4, vol. 317, no. 5, pp. 93-96, NSARM.

37. *Ibid.*

38. *First Annual Report of St. George's District Visiting Society, January 1st, 1841*, NSARM.

39. *Eighteenth Annual Report of St. George's District Visiting Society*, 1858, NSARM.

40. *Report of the St. George's Ladies Benevolent Society for 1843 & 1844*, NSARM. This society came into being in 1828. See *The Tenth Annual Report of Saint George's Ladies Benevolent Society, 1838*, NSARM. It lists the amounts given out for food, employment and clothing. During the winter poor women and children of the Parish made 105 striped shirts which raised £31.

41. Minutes of the Colonial Church Society, meeting, 19 January 1841 as in H.A. Seegmiller, "The Colonial Church Society in the Atlantic Provinces," 1967, bound typed manuscript/thesis, p. 145, Diocesan Archives of Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island.

42. Minutes of the Colonial Church Society, meeting, 17 August 1841, in H.A. Seegmiller, "The Colonial Church Society," p. 148.

43. *Formation and Proceedings of the Halifax Association in Aid of the Colonial Church Society*, 1847, p. 11, NSARM.

44. *Ibid.*, p. 6.

45. John Inglis to the Society of the Propagation of the Gospel, 3 March 1842, p. 149 in H.A. Seegmiller, "The Colonial Church Society in the Atlantic Provinces," p. 149.

46. For a biography of Binney, see Vernon Glen Kent, "The Right Reverend Hibbert Binney, Colonial Tractarian Bishop of Nova Scotia, 1851-1887" (unpublished M.A. thesis, University of New Brunswick, 1969). See also V. Glen Kent, "Hibbert Binney," *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, XI, 73-76.

47. *Church Times* (Halifax), 23 September 1854.

48. *Ibid.*

49. *Ibid.*

50. *Church Times* (Halifax) 14 October 1854.

51. *Church Times* (Halifax) 19 May 1855. No other reference has been found to this memorial.

52. William T. Townsend, ed., *Proceedings and Discussions Connected with the Introduction of a bill into the Legislature of this Province, by Bishop Binney, for the Establishment of the Church of England Synod in the Diocese of Nova Scotia, and other papers Relating thereto* (Halifax, 1864), NSARM.

53. Both are bound with *ibid.*

54. *Ibid.* See The Bishop's Second Speech, p. 36.

55. *Church Record* (Halifax) 6 September 1861 and *Twenty-Fourth Report of the Executive Committee of the Diocesan Church Society of Nova-Scotia*, 1861 (Halifax, 1862), p. 32.Although clearly based on the same set of figures, the amounts do not entirely agree and those of Church Record are in pounds while those of the *Report* in dollars.

56. *Church Times* (Halifax) 18 August 1848.

57. Robert Fitzgerald Uniacke's Petition to the Legislative Council, received 15 February 1849, RG14, vol. 30, no. 324 and no. 325, Return of Schools... Provincial Grant, year ending 31 December 1850, NSARM.

58. Report of the Board of Commissioners of Schools for the City of Halifax, 1851, RG14, vol. 29, NSARM.

59. Notes on the Life and Work of Rev. Robert Fitzgerald Uniacke by Senator Roche for a Rector's Sermon on Centennial of Uniacke's coming as Rector, June 24, 1925, file Robert Fitzgerald Uniacke, MG4, vol. 339, no. 20, NSARM.

60. *Thirteenth Annual Report Protestant Orphans Home*, 1870, NSARM.

61. *Eighteenth Annual Report of the Protestant Orphans' Home*, 1875, NSARM.

62. In 1923 Isabella Cogswell's niece wrote the *Acadian Recorder* to correct an earlier statement that Robert Fitzgerald had started the Home of the Aged. She said her aunt had done so, collecting funds and giving liberally herself. On the Uniackes' role she said: "Mr. and Mrs Uniacke were her great friends & helped in her work" *Acadian Recorder* (Halifax), 18 August 1923, Occasional's column. For Isabella Cogswell, see Susan Buggey, *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. X, p. 182. For Home for the Aged, see also George E. Morton Diary, MG1, vol. 315, NSARM.

63. Parishioners to Robert Fitzgerald Uniacke, 14 May 1870, MG4, vol. 317, no. 6, p. 94, NSARM.

64. Notes on the Life and Work of Rev. Robert Fitzgerald Uniacke by Senator Roche...

65. *Acadian Recorder* (Halifax), 1 June 1870.

66. George W. Hill, *In Memory of Robert Fitzgerald Uniacke*, p. 20.

67. Rev. Francis Partridge, *Centennial Commemoration of Opening of St. George's*, 19 July 1901.

Church and Community:
St. George's at the beginning of the 21st century

Gary W. A. Thorne

Introduction

My talk this evening will not be historical, but a looking forward to the future relation of the parish to its surrounding community. I am pleased that it has been prefaced by four splendid, entertaining and informative historical presentations, for as Marx said, "it is out of our old history that our new history must be made." This summer we employed a carpenter around our home who does a lot of renovation and restoration work in old houses around Halifax. He was speaking of a home built around the turn of the century which uncharacteristically had a large walk-in closet. Of the original carpenter who built that house, our carpenter commented: "Whoever did that was a visionary. He had great hindsight!" I hope what I say this evening is not simply idle speculation, but is based upon an understanding of the social history of our parish and a proper discernment of its present character.

Finally, before I begin, I want to acknowledge that our consideration this evening of the emerging relation of church and community is in a year which has been proclaimed a year of Jubilee by churches throughout the world. In this Jubilee year and in the context of this evening's theme, we remember the words of Christ in Luke 4: 18, 19

> The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
> Because he anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor:
> He hath sent me to proclaim release to the captives,
> And recovering of sight to the blind,
> To set at liberty them that are bruised,
> To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.

Initial Profile of Both Church and Community

a. Church: a sketch of Saint George's parish today.

The history of St. George's parish in the 20th century is typical of many North American mainline denomination "downtown" churches. The first half of the 20th century was a busy time for many such churches: large congregations and Sunday Schools, established choirs, and sometimes extensive ministries. During the course of the second half of the 20th century the situation changed dramatically. Population shifts and the gutting of established institutions in downtown areas meant that the traditionally white "old line" urban congregations had lost most of their former members.

A flavour of the first 40 years of the 20th century might be gleaned through the memorial given to the Reverend Henry Ward Cunningham at the end of his ministry at St. George's, 1900-37. I shall read the first part only:

> Beloved Rector. For nearly four decades you have been our Pastor and Rector. During the years from 1900 to 1937, you have ministered to the spiritual needs and, in large measure also, to the social needs of a congregation by no means parochial. Yet you have held in your flock even the third and fourth generation of families who were members of St. George's Congregation when you became Rector thirty-seven years ago.
>
> At the turn of the Century our City of Halifax, which had from its foundation been a military and naval outpost of the British Empire, was casting off the old and putting on the new. So too St. George's! Although in large measure it had retained its pristine appearance architecturally yet the ranks of the parishioners were moving to houses in the newer parts of the City. And whereas Victorian peace and quiet had prevailed during the times of your predecessors, you, dear Rector, have been called upon to guide and direct your congregation through a period of strain and stress unprecedented.

The trials and vicissitudes following upon

> the cessation of the military capitation, the desolation and devastation at the time of the Great Explosion, 1917, had their counterpart in the triumph of the Laymen's Missionary Movement and in the Thanksgiving at the Rededication of Church and Organ to the Service of God. Through these incidents, you led us, transcendent!

The population shift is noted already, yet within the context of a thriving and healthy congregation. A second wave of Newfoundlanders made its way to Halifax and St. George's around the war years 1938-1945 and the history of the parish from that time until now is still living memory for a few parishioners.

The population shift away from this neighbourhood gained momentum from 1950-1980. Saint George's survived, but just barely. This segment of our recent history is part of a broader trend of many churches throughout North America which found themselves no longer "downtown", but in the "inner city" or "urban core". Many were forced to close and the buildings sold to house restaurants or other businesses. Some mainline church buildings were purchased by independent urban congregations that lacked the economic base to build a church building. Many were merely boarded up and left to crumble for lack of anyone to pay the bills. Some remained open, serving a small, elite membership, by the philanthropy of wealthy members. St. George's fell into the category of those churches who struggled on through a strategy of deferred building maintenance, low salaries, and financial support from the denomination.

In the early 1980's the parish came to the point that it had significant oil bills that had not been paid, all its buildings were old and in poor repair, and it was indebted to the diocese in the order of $75,000. We must note that our parish survived these difficult years only through the determined leadership of its Rector, The Reverend Hayward Hodder, the untiring work of the Ladies' Gabriel Guild, and the countless hours of labour volunteered by an aging congregation which was skilled in carpentry and innovative in all manner of trades.

The 1980's saw the character of the parish change significantly. Father Robert Petite had been university chaplain at Dalhousie-King's in the mid-seventies before becoming rector of the Anglican parish in Antigonish. In 1980 he returned to Halifax and came to St. George's upon the retirement of Father Hodder. I want to note two important shifts in the character of the parish during his ten year leadership. First, his university connections attracted students and faculty to the parish even as Father Petite was easing the parish towards a richer ritual and musical tradition. A five year plan was developed and published in 1987 to give stability and direction to these liturgical and musical changes. Second, Father Petite boldly took the parish into the community with his passionate and courageous chaplaincy with the community of HIV infected and persons with AIDS.

By the end of the nineteen eighties the viability of the parish was more promising than it had been ten years before. The debt to the diocese had been forgiven. The oil bills were paid. But at the same time, it had accrued new mortgage and other debt of $185,000, mostly for improvements and repairs to the round church. And Father Petite's chaplaincy to the AIDS community was not without controversy within the parish. After he resigned to undertake further study in Chicago, the decade closed with a search for a new rector in the hope of building on his vision for this parish.

Today, in 2000, the parish profile might read as follows:

Traditional Anglican parish; 80 active families/individuals; exclusive BCP worship; award winning liturgical choir; full choral worship on major Saints days; church designated as a national Historic Site in 1994; restored church awaiting delivery of Letourneau tracker organ; mission focused congregation including weekly Soup Kitchen and Community Youth Outreach.

It would be the phrase "80 active families/individuals" that might catch the eye of an astute reader. Not many. And significant buildings to repair and maintain. Viability remains an urgent issue for this parish.

Community: a sketch of our neighbourhood today.

The title of my lecture this evening leaves me some freedom as to define "community" It is possible that the question to be addressed is St. George's relation to society generally, or to the world wherever it might be in need, or to the Metro area, or to this specific "inner city" area bounded by Cogswell St., the commons, North Street, and the harbour. This parish has a relation to each of these communities. The wider needs of the world community shape our praying and we contribute resources through The Primate's World Relief and Development Fund, special appeals, and the northern missions through our allotment monies sent to General Synod. Our relation to the wider Metro area is varied and, I hope, positive and significant. But it is the relation of our parish to the present neighbourhood and community in which the church is situated that I wish to explore this evening.

I have already alluded to the changing demographic of these streets during the second half of the 20th century. In 1945 the Halifax Civic Planning Commission issued a report titled The Master Plan for the City of Halifax, but the actual blueprint for action was contained in in the influential 1957 follow-up report, authored by an "outside expert"': Gordon Stephenson, Professor of Town and Regional Planning at the University of Toronto.[1] This led to "urban renewal" through the demolition of the working-class residential area between Cogswell and Duke Streets, and its replacement by Scotia Square. At the time of the Report (1957) Gottingen Street was still a thriving commercial strip, second only to Barrington Street in the City. At the same time a pocket of poverty in Halifax was concentrated around the Creighton and Maynard Street areas. Of the 13,000 people who lived in the area, 2000 were African Nova Scotians. The average wage/salary was less than 2/3 of the average wage/salary in Halifax. In 1965, Miss Marjorie Cook, director of special services for the Halifax School Board, explained that school attendance was adversely affected because of that poverty. "Unskilled jobs are less available than they were, and the money they bring in has not kept pace with rising costs of living. As a result, there is little food in the house, and often no money for clothing. Again and again we find that little children have no shoes."[2]

By the mid-seventies the programme of urban renewal had taken its toll. Even with the construction of several large senior high rises, and the influx of many African Nova Scotians into public housing in Uniacke Square and Mulgrave Park, the population of the North End was reduced by a whopping 42% between 1961 and 1976. Enrolment at North End Schools fell by as much as 75%, and several closed.

The decline of both Gottingen and Barrington Streets began soon after the beginning of the 1957 urban renewal. Eaton's, for example, moved its downtown store to the new shopping centres in the West End. The concentration of low income families in the area and the development of new shopping centres elsewhere in the city, meant less money to spend at neighbourhood stores. Social stigma attached to public housing kept people with money away from the north end. The opening of Scotia Square adversely affected Gottingen Street shops. All of the bank branches, as well as the local supermarket, closed. Every supermarket and bank pulled out of the community. Even telephone booths were removed from the area because of repeated vandalism. Gottingen Street was transformed from one which provided a full range of services to one dominated by social service agencies made necessary because of what this neighbourhood has been allowed, or some would say, encouraged to become.

But apart from the general drift into becoming one of the most disadvantaged economic urban cores east of Montreal, the character of our neighbourhood can only be

understood if we are sensitive to the specific history of African Nova Scotians. Their identity with this neighbourhood was strengthened by the public housing which was erected after the shame of the expropriation of the homes in Africville. Theirs is a long and sometimes bitter history in this province, going back at least as far as the arrival of the loyalists. Between 1782 and 1785, 2,300 black loyalists, along with 1,200 black slaves of white loyalists, arrived in N.S. They often were denied the most basic dignity, respect, employment and education. Those historic injustices cannot be undone, but they must be acknowledged. Our differences, including our unique histories, must be affirmed, shared and celebrated, whenever appropriate. The systemic racism of the past is part of the heritage of all caucasian Nova Scotians, especially those with deep roots in the province. Part of knowing our neighbourhood is knowing the history of African Canadians with whom we are neighbours.

This neighbourhood also belongs to the homeless - not as "the homeless", but as persons who at one time or other might have found a welcome place in a nursing home or a mental institution; or who find themselves homeless because of borderline personality traits or lifestyles; or who find themselves homeless because of a combination of lost jobs, marriage breakdowns, welfare benefit cuts, chronic depression, drug addictions, wrong choices, lack of personal support; or those who have a room in a boarding house somewhere but are really without a stable place to live because they cannot afford a reasonable apartment. This is a city where the vacancy rate is so low that with the economy steadily improving with oil and gas development, landlords can ask what they want and the homeless remain homeless. Part of knowing our neighbourhood is knowing those who live on welfare benefits, with children, who have to make tough decisions in the winter months of "meat or heat."

There are two half way houses in our neighbourhood, whose short term residents are making every effort to successfully bridge the tremendous societal gap prison to society.

The working poor live in our neighbourhood. There are many single moms and fewer single dads who work themselves to exhaustion at their jobs and at home, trying to keep their children interested in school so they can escape the poverty cycle. These parents do everything they can to involve their children in all the right programmes for their social development. Living on this edge is often just barely possible until their school aged son or daughter gets sick and has to stay home and there is no one else to be with them and the mom's employer could care less that she has a personal crisis at home and insists that she show up or her job is gone.

Young families and creative couples with financial stability are moving to this neighbourhood to fix up some of the properties and to live in a culturally diverse community.

This neighbourhood is also about residents who regularly hear gunfire which reminds them that drug dealers sometimes make the streets unsafe. Sometimes the most promising young people are enticed into the drug world. Residents are both angered and saddened that their children and grandchildren lie in their beds at night and hear the sound of gunfire.

This is also an accepting and comfortable neighbourhood for those addicted to street drugs, or those who feel caught up in the sex trade in a lifestyle which they realize is destroying them and which they despise with every fibre and nerve of their body and soul.

This is also neighbourhood to many folk who live elsewhere but who spend much of their daily life here, either because it is here they find the care and resources they need, or because they come to gather in communities of choice (church congregations, for example) or because they come everyday to offer some type of care, service or solidarity with those who hurt in some way or other.

Finally, the character of this neighbourhood is enriched by the many

community leaders who are taking serious positive steps to a renewal and redevelopment of this neighbourhood (clearly seen in the proposed Creighton-Gerrish Street development).

This neighbourhood is not static. It is on the move. It's character has shifted dramatically in the last fifty years and the next decades promise to be equally dynamic. It is a culturally rich and diverse neighbourhood of many communities moving in relation to one another.

Our Present Vision

Since 1990 the following statement has appeared in our bulletin almost every week:

> In response to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Parish of Saint George offers a combination of traditional Anglican Worship and a commitment to Inner-City Ministry. Open to the community which surrounds it, Saint George's dares to be shaped by the Inner City, yet seek to transform our neighbourhood by preaching, in Word and action, the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Come join us in worship, fellowship and outreach ministry.

Our 200 in 2000 anniversary theme is that of Loving God and Loving Neighbour. Indeed, this biblical two-fold focus, recited as the summary of the law at the beginning of the service of Holy Communion in the Book of Common Prayer, has defined the worshipping congregation here for the past decade.

After the fire of June 1994 which caused six million dollars damage to the church building, the congregation was given six months to prepare a plan for the future of the parish, to be presented to the Bishop and his committee for consideration in the second week of January 1995. Advent, 1994, was a concentrated time of praying, group discussion, sharing and plenary sessions in the parish, focusing on the question, "What is God calling us to do? " Many options were considered. Many parishioners took the opportunity to speak to the issue at the final public session before we voted as a congregation whether or not to propose restoration to the Bishop. Almost all spoke in favour of restoration, but many of these parishioners shared how they had been convinced, at one stage or another, that restoration was not the best decision. What brought most of them eventually to prefer restoration, as I recall, was the simple recognition that this parish had been part of this neighbourhood for two hundred and forty eight years at that time, and it would be a terrible judgment for the Anglican Church and Saint George's Parish to be seen to fold up its tents and walk away from our neighbours. We had been here since 1756 and were convinced that our presence in this neighbourhood has a purpose. Not to rebuild was seen to be the real decision that the parish was considering - to abandon a neighbourhood after growing with it since its very inception. To restore and stay here was the natural, though seemingly impossible, thing to attempt because of our rootedness in this community.

The Bishop did grant his permission for the congregation to attempt to raise the funds for the restoration, but only on condition that the ministry of the parish not suffer because of the emphasis on the restoration of the building. In his press release announcing the permission to restore, Bishop Peters counselled that Saint George's must continue to be a "responsible parish whose primary ministry is to people."

From the time of the fire we have had part time and then full time community youth outreach workers. And there seemed to be more and more interest on the part of parishioners in working in the community, with the community. Part of our fundraising case to the general public was our commitment to the people of this neighbourhood and our willingness to contribute to positive community development.

The 1997 Annual Meeting encouraged the Pastoral Ministry Committee to formulate a strategy which would truly help the congregation become more fully integrated in the neighbourhood. We were determined to be

positive and thoughtful about our relationship to the neighbourhood, avoiding stereotypical and destructive attitudes of "do-goodery." We were enthusiastic about the whole notion of "capacity building" (i.e. seeing our congregation and our neighbourhood not in terms of "needs" but of "potentials"), and coming alongside our neighbours to enable and facilitate all our gifts and potentials. We knew we had as much to receive as we had to give, and that the development of relationships of mutual joy and support was the only way truly to contribute to the health of our neighbourhood. We were also excited that a sustainable parish support team might evolve which would pray for one another's ministries in the neighbourhood. It was hoped that this community integration team would help the whole parish to reflect on proposed neighbourhood initiatives so that we did not unintentionally fall into the trap of ministering to the "needs" of others rather than establishing offers of friendships to persons.

But we cannot talk about our vision of the relation of church and neighbourhood without acknowledging the centrality of worship for our parish, even in our "outreach" or "inreach". For better or for worse, our relation to one another and to the neighbourhood must be a natural and urgent extension of our worship and praying together. If we do not meet our neighbour in our worship and in our praying, somehow our worship and praying is too facile and must go deeper. The Christian religion reveals a compassionate God who comes alongside us in His humility as incarnate Son, and who is born in us. The exaltation of our human nature to become sons and daughters of God depends first upon recognizing His humility and allowing His divinity to draw us to the Father. In our worship we recognize the poverty of Christ which reaches down to us. In worship, we meet our neighbour who is in any type of poverty and we become one in solidarity with him or her. If our lives are centred in Christian worship, when we meet our neighbour who is in any type of poverty we recognize in that person both Christ and our own self.

Our vision of "church and community" is grounded in the simple commandment to Love God and neighbour. But more must be said about our present historical situation and context before concluding with some personal thoughts about the future of St. George's in this neighbourhood.

<u>Current Obstacles and Challenges to achieving our Vision.</u>

a. Obstacles and Challenges to achieving our Vision: from within Church.

First, we are a small parish. Of the eighty or so active families/individuals, not all are able or prepared to give time, energy or resources to community outreach here in this neighbourhood. There are many different types of people who join our parish for equally different reasons. Some join the congregation because their lives are already overly busy with work, family commitments and volunteer activities. These people discover at St. George's a spiritual life which is able to refocus and sustain them. These parishioners pray deeply for our neighbourhood, but are already overly committed to a life-style of service to others in their work place, with their friends, and in volunteer work. The opportunities for service are countless and our numbers are so small.

Second, for many reasons, some historical, few neighbourhood persons worship here regularly. This in itself is an obstacle to our getting to know our neighbours.

Third, sometimes our worship is seen to be self-indulgent and an obstacle in itself to outreach. Seen in this way, the rich liturgy, the archaic language of the Prayer Book, culturally foreign liturgical music and a cathedral-style worship which demands great concentration on the part of the worshipper while the choir offers the music and choral praise, combine to make our worship an aesthetic experience which carries no impulse to befriend our neighbours, and may be inaccessible to the neighbour who walks into our worship. So often I hear from parishioners who

are outreach minded that our worship is a form of escapism, an irresponsibile pursuit of a private and solitary spirituality of self-care and quietism. And we do seem ashamed of our liturgical choral music when we come together to share worship with our neighbourhood congregations, perhaps revealing that we think that a Magnificat by the contemporary composer John Taverner, or the traditional Palm Sunday antiphons, are for our "private" and "enclosed" worship, inappropriate to be shared with others, or even able to be appreciated by others.

Fourth, our church building is locked during the day. True, we have services at least three times every day, Morning Prayer, Noonday prayers, Evening Prayer, and Holy Communion on many weekdays. But, again, few of our neighbours come to these times of prayer. And the rest of the time neighbours cannot enter our beautiful church for quiet, prayer, reflection.

Fifth. We have no staff other than the rector. YouthNet has had a full time director for more than a year now, but that work is funded by sources external to the parish and his work is specific to youth. This means that when folk in need, or folk just wanting information, or folk wanting to help, come along, there are no "open hours" that they know they can speak to someone. We cannot afford an office employee. A number of parish groups meet in the hall during the week, but these groups cannot be expected to respond to visitors coming to the door, on behalf of the parish. We have attempted to find people in the parish to volunteer, but it is very hard to find people who are capable of relating appropriately to the many types and profiles of persons who come knocking on our door. Thus, for the neighbourhood persons in need, or even for the neighbour who is curious, we are a closed church building and a vacant, unresponsive large parish hall.

Sixth. Our small congregation is striving for bottom line sustainability. I am speaking only of just keeping the doors of the church open so worship can take place, maintaining the hall where parish and community events take place, and keeping up the other two buildings, the rectory and the sexton's cottage, which are now rented out. The rector is the only staff person at present. It is clear that we cannot maintain even our present level of ministry unless our congregation grows. A quick comparison with other churches in the neighbourhood.

St. Patrick's Roman Catholic church has a small congregation, but its relationship to the archdiocese is less autonomous than is our relationship to the diocese. As well, the St. Vincent de Paul Society located on site has substantial endowments and other financial resources. The St. Vincent de Paul Society sponsors the work of Hope Cottage, including its full time paid staff; the publishing and staffing of the newspaper Street Feat, written and sold by those who are homeless or unemployed; it maintains a full time fieldworker and provide her an office at Turning Point; and it has the financial resources to assist those who are needy in different ways.

Brunswick Street United Church is another church which is entirely different in how its community work is sponsored. It is the best example of an attempt to grow a "community church" in the neighbourhood. In a description of work in the 1960's it is interesting to learn that even then it was open to the community daily from 9 am to 9 pm. There was a large staff providing services to the community. A Christian education and community worker was responsible for seven camps each summer at their own facility, Camp Brunswick, with a total of 170 campers and 60 leaders. A full time staff deaconess was responsible, among other things, for 100 teenage youths who would gather each Friday evening from the neighbourhood. The clothing centre was up and running then, with four staff and many volunteers. Brunswick Street United continues to identify itself as a community church, but as in the 1960's, perhaps even more so today, most of the money and resources that pay for staff, support programmes etc. come from United Church mission funds and other external grants.

St. George's is very different from these two neighbouring churches in that all of the funding for the maintenance of building, worship

and outreach, (with the exception of YouthNet), comes from its small congregation. Indeed, the congregational offerings are taxed fully 22% by the diocese of Nova Scotia to support the work of the diocesan and national church .

We have a parish hall which requires in excess of one half million dollars to put it in good repair, a rectory building which requires major and expensive work, another building in poor shape, and a restored church which is a national historic site requiring regular and heritage-standard maintenance. All of these buildings must be maintained and operated. Then there is the stipend of the rector to provide for priestly ministry of worship, chaplaincy and pastoral care. Our small parish is overburdened even before any thought is given to hiring staff or expanding outreach programmes.

b. Obstacles and Challenges to achieving our vision, from the community.

There are also significant factors from the community which must honestly be acknowledged if we are to achieve our vision.

The first, is the burden of place - we worship in a beautiful church building. Those in the neighbourhood who know us can see beyond the eloquent building but to the many who do not know us, and even to many who do, and I know even to some of the pastors in our neighbourhood churches, we look for all the world still to be the "Church of England" - powerful, rich, privileged, snobbish, independent and stand-offish. Today, none of these things may be true, but they are still perceived to be true.

And it is not only issues of money, social status and prestige. During the restoration often the question of the "slave gallery" would be mentioned. The tradespeople involved in the restoration would often use the term. During the time of the restoration, it was only when I was asked about it at a Cornwallis Street Baptist church function that I realized that the supposed "slave gallery" was still a very powerful reality for some in this community. This happened to be the second time I had been at that church within three or four months and at the previous visit I had also been asked about it. At that time I explained that we were not replacing the "slave gallery" because there had never been one. I thought nothing more about it until this second visit to the Cornwallis Baptist church when two of the elders of the church, in a very friendly manner, asked me about it again. It was more along the lines of an incredulous "You're not putting that 'slave gallery' back are you?" They were quite serious and even perhaps passionate about the question. They had heard about the shackles and chains which were still to be found up there before the fire. This time I was disturbed, for it seemed that the myth of the "slave gallery" was about the present as well as the past.

And this is not a myth only in the African Nova Scotian community. I can remember that soon after the fire a parishioner was speaking to a bishop in a large city not in the Atlantic region. The one bit of information about the round church known by the bishop was that it had a slave gallery. Indeed, when the Primate preached here at a regional Evensong (before the fire) he mentioned it. And at a recent parish council meeting this past year, one of the members of parish council and a long standing parishioner, spoke of the slave gallery and the shackles which could still be seen there within living memory.

I go on about this myth because it does tell us something about how we are perceived by the outside community, and especially is it significant for the perception of at least some in the African Nova Scotian community. We are seen as having not left behind and separated ourselves from our imperialist, racist and privileged past. These are hard words, and difficult to speak, but we can contribute to changing this perception only by acknowledging its existence. I shall address the overcoming of this perception in a few moments in the last section of this talk. For now, I want to point out that this myth fits in with the broader perception of our community profile as a privileged congregation. From the standpoint of our neighbours taking the initiative to befriend us and come to be with us, our apparent wealth, education and success make us appear "unapproachable." From the standpoint of our pastoral outreach to them and our attempts to

befriend them, their perception of us often makes it difficult to proceed from "sympathy to solidarity."

In all this, I make no judgment about the source or accuracy of any these perceptions, but only wish to make the point that our relation to community and our potential to achieve our vision of neighbourliness is affected by how we are perceived by the wider community, by our neighbourhood, and by groups within our neighbourhood.

All of the above points to a tremendous opportunity for Saint George's to play a positive and significant role in the nourishing of an exciting, healthy, creative and culturally diverse neighbourhood.

The way forward: Overcoming obstacles; meeting challenges; living our vision.

Thus far this lecture is too much a challenge to parishioners and not at all an objective description of the parish such that an outsider might gain a thorough and fair picture of its present character. From this evening's presentation someone unfamiliar with Saint George's today would not know of the many truly heartwarming positive indications that this parish has made significant steps towards solidarity and neighbourliness. The Shining Lights neighbourhood street choir recently sang here for the congregation, then recorded their CD here which will be released from the round church on 15 December; we were thrilled when we were asked if Black History Month 2001 might have its opening event here in February; the parish is preparing to host its fourth annual Stepping Stone Christmas Dinner for programme users, children and families; YouthNet has touched the lives of many neighbourhood children who have, in turn, touched our lives even more deeply; and so on.

But I shall not change horses now. For we, as congregation, must not be distracted from the real and urgent challenge which presents itself to us at this moment in our history. This exciting opportunity to live the Gospel must be grasped.

But how?

First, we must be alert and thoughtful about our relation to our neighbourhood, such that whatever direction it make take, its future development remain humane and positive.

As in other cities throughout North America, our inner city neighbourhood will become a more popular and attractive place to live for middle class individuals and families. The recent changes to the bridge approaches should significantly encourage the residential development of Brunswick Street and Gottingen Street in this direction. The proposed changes to the Cogswell Street interchange will further encourage this move.

Saint George's should take its place with other churches in facilitating a responsible and continuing dialogue and consultation with all the stakeholders in the development of this area. There already been considerable reflection about the economic and social future of this neighbourhood, but I fear the conversations have been too limited in scope. There are many highly organized and focused groups such as the Gottingen Street Business Association and the Downtown Halifax Business Commission; the Waterfront Development Corporation; several African Nova Scotia community groups; the First Nations presence in the Friendship Centre; and organized residential groups in Brunswick Street, Uniacke Square and Mulgrave Park areas. But the dialogue and development planning should also include groups which represent those who are most marginalized and politically powerless, such as the Community Advocates Network, Anti-Poverty network, Child-care providers, etc. This broad-based discussion must be led by a non-partisan group and I can see no better potential leader in this than the North End Council of Churches which is committed to the well-being of all the present and future residents of this neighbourhood. The gentrification of similar neighbourhoods throughout the western world has much to teach us about how not to proceed. We still have time to do things properly and to build up this neighbourhood with a healthy balance of

residential, commercial and institutional development. We have many things in our favour including the measured pace at which our neighbourhood is likely to evolve, and the abundance of space to accommodate all levels of social stratification as well as our culturally rich ethnic communities. We need housing for all sorts of people and we need more homeowners. But there is every reason to be confident that if we are both careful and bold, this neighbourhood will achieve social and economic renewal for all its residents in the coming decades.

Second, Saint George's must become more aware of its potential for upstream ministry. I do not know the real etymology of this term, but I have in my mind the image of the missionary who started to receive wounded persons down river, and would care for them. She became more fatigued as time went on because the wounded continually increased in number. Finally, one day she decided to go upstream and find out what was causing the wounds: when she saw what was happening she pitched her tent and remained upstream, determined to work to stop the cause of the injuries. Of course there is a need for caring persons both upstream and downstream, each doing good in different ways. At Saint George's we shall always be privileged to assist in the actual healing of whoever comes to us, and several parishioners are deeply involved in coal-face downstream ministry, but our parish is ill-suited to make downstream bandaging our primary focus. On the other hand, our present congregational profile makes us well-suited for important upstream ministry. One of the simple ways to exercise this type of ministry is by serving as a board or committee member of one of many significant organizations here.

As well, parishioners often know decision-makers in the broader region who sometimes make decisions which adversely affects disadvantaged groups here. Thus parishioners can be an effective advocate for this community by explaining the issues which face people here. I remember when HRDC made the harsh decision to close the Canada Employment Centre on Gottingen Street, and the ensuing difficult months of the sit-in by community members. We we involved in the ongoing care and encouragement of the demonstrators and participated in the demonstrations, but our real contribution was to be the funnel through which the federal government officials through Mary Clancy, MP, felt comfortable enough to speak informally with me about how the situation could most quickly be resolved in a manner fair to the people here.

Upstream ministry also means becoming articulate about the issues on the street and advocating for fair and just government policy. Last month there was a perfect opportunity missed when the government was holding hearings on the then proposed Employment Support and Income Assistance Act (Bill 62). The members of the panel hearing the presentations expected to hear first voice persons directly affected by the social assistance cuts and other implications of the bill, and they equally expected the usual sincere, mostly professional, advocates for those who find themselves on social assistance or various types of disability assistance. Stephen Blackwood made such a presentation. But think if lawyers, engineers, fund-raisers, historians, administrators and college professors and other professionals of this parish had appeared as individuals before the panel, to reason that the bill was inadequate in several crucial ways and that critical amendments should be made before the bill was passed. It will make a difference in the setting of public policy in this city and province if people of influence begin to speak out and show that they too are taking notice of how government cares for the most vulnerable in our society.

We are well suited at Saint George's to engage in upstream ministry on behalf of this neighbourhood in the first quarter of this new century. We must become more aware and involved in the setting of public policy which is fair to those who have little influence in the political process.

Third, the way forward for this

particular parish is to be ourselves and let our neighbours come to know us in all our uniqueness and peculiarities. We are an odd bunch and ought not to hide it. Our parish is committed to a very specific type of spiritual life which we might call "classical Anglicanism". It is not to be found in very many places in the Christian world anywhere. Those who attend this parish are convinced that it is a faithful way to live the Gospel of Jesus Christ. This specific spirituality leads us to a form of worship which is primarily poetic and contemplative in a manner quite foreign to most other Anglican churches today.

We must beware of a condescending assumption that persons in poverty, on the street or working class cannot find deep meaning in poetry, liturgical language or in music which is centuries old, sung devoutly by a choir. I believe that persons who find themselves in poverty are very capable of a holy imaginative life which is nourished by exposure to beauty, art, music, poetry and vision.

Dr. Margaret Casey tried to teach us this in the simple note she sent the day after the fire. Margaret Casey was a champion for those who found themselves most vulnerable and dispossessed in this neighbourhood - director of the North End Health Clinic for its first twenty years. She encouraged us to do everything we could to restore the round church because of the necessity for roses as well as bread in all our lives. I saw her two and a half years later at a graveside. In our chatting I started to list some of the things Saint George's was beginning to do in the neighbourhood, probably thinking that that would please her. In a kind way she reminded me that the very beauty of this church and the loveliness of our worship helps create the goodness which IS this neighbourhood.

Fourth, although we are struggling financially to survive as a parish, because we are debt free (though just barely) and not reliant upon external church, corporate or government funding, we are free to remain non-competitive in our relation with neighbouring churches. In essence this freedom means that we can give ourselves entirely to strengthening our neighbourhood through existing community programmes and initiatives. Although our hall is used for youth activities each weekday, we are not required to create programmes and recruit numbers of "programme users" to justify the continued receiving of grants for programmes. Indeed, even our youth mentoring initiative (the sole parish activity dependent upon external funding) is committed to the "capacity building" of this neighbourhood. Our most successful efforts have been to enhance the music and choral programmes at our two neighbourhood schools, and to provide volunteers for the North Branch Library Tutoring Programme - neither programme is based on site.

Fifth, we do worship in a beautiful building for which we are responsible for its care and maintenance. But this building does not belong to us - it belongs to the community. When the dome was being built out here on the parking parking lot we encouraged neighbourhood children to draw and paint pictures on the timber legs, and to sign their names so that they might always think that this church bears a bit of their imagination. All the alterations made to the round church during restoration were to make it more available and useful for community recitals, concerts, rehearsals, neighbourhood and school drama, etc. Every form of artistic and creative expression is God-given and appropriate for this God-centred sanctuary. We must encourage in every way the use of this building by this neighbourhood and the wider community until it is seen not only to be a community gathering place, but also a place where community is created and neighbours come to know one other better. We currently provide ten free tickets for distribution within the neighbourhood for every event that takes place here, symbolic of our desire that this neighbourhood never be nor feel excluded from what goes on here.

I had hopes for something more concrete from this talk, but I arrive at the end quite 'empty handed'. But empty handed is perhaps the way forward in the living of our

vision. Empty handed and eager to receive from the other, rather than be quick to give. Empty handed because we've come to recognize our own poverty. Thus we are not the élite trying to decide how best to give to our neighbour, but rather how best to receive from our neighbour. As Jean Vanier tells those who come to work at his L'Arche homes for people with developmental disabilities:

> You come to L'Arche because you wanted to serve the poor; but you will stay in L'Arche if you discover you are poor. You're not an élite; you're a human person with all the fragility and beauty of a human person, no better then people with disabilities. You're bonded together. The good news is not given to those who serve the poor; it is given to those who discover they are poor.
>
> It's not just doing things for people but discovering we are changed when we come close to them. If we enter into a friendship with them, they change us. Here we touch a mystery that the person we reject because of prejudice [or fear] is the one who heals us.[3]

The future relation of Saint George's to its community in the first decades of the twenty-first century will be be determined by our devotion to God and neighbour. In this devotion we shall know our own happiness.

1 Gordon Stephenson, A Redevelopment Study of Halifax, Nova Scotia (Halifax, NS: City of Halifax, 1957)

2 Negroes, Whites and Churches in Halifax, published by the United Church of Canada

3 Jean Vanier as quoted in the Anglican Journal, December, 2000