

ABOUT FR BRIAN BARTLEY

As a late entry vocation, I have considerable life experience, both in the workplace and in the mission field, that I bring to the practice of ministry. Strong communication, organizational, and administrative skills have been honed in senior levels of business management, in both line and staff positions in the Canadian Armed Forces (Reserve), and in lay and ordained ministry in Canada and abroad. In addition, I have gifts of leadership and financial management, and the ability to grow an organization. In doing so my practice has been to enable the leadership of others, and mentor effectively.

Having experienced both success and failure I have learned from each. My failures have radicalized me and led me to work with the separated and divorced, the unemployed and the marginalized.

My work as a financial counselor has enabled me to develop skills, in working with people dealing with emotional and personal issues, that transfer into the field of pastoral counseling.

I have a natural ability to work with children and youth, developed further as a father, Scouter, and being in loco parentis to 34 Sri Lankan children of Sinhala, Tamil, and Eurasian ancestry, from all four major religions.

Although I am Anglo-Catholic by preference, and personal spiritual practice, I am comfortable across the depth and breadth of Anglican experience – from low church to High – and with the Book of Alternative Services, the Book of Common Prayer, and The Book of Uncommon Prayer (Youth Specialties) which I use for youth ministry. I am also comfortable with Anglican Chant and Plainsong, and enjoy a wide variety of musical expression, from traditional hymnody and psalmody through Taizé, Jazz Mass and Vespers to U2charists and other contemporary musical accompaniment.

I made my Cursillo in 1994. I practice Christian Meditation after the method of John Main. I also enjoy and have led Taize worship with an ecumenical group of young adults.

I am an advocate of Serendipity small groups, and have experience with both small group discussions using the Serendipity Bible, and felt-needs small groups using specific- purpose Serendipity materials.

I appreciate the Fresh Expressions movement, and with Tex Sample, author of *The Spectacle of Worship in a Wired World*, believe that change need not be done at the expense of the existing congregation, liturgy and music, All that is necessary is that permission be given for something different at a different time, and perhaps in a different location. I mention this first of all because

change can be stressful; and secondly, because it can be difficult to authentically meet the worship needs of diverse groups within a single service.

My particular interest is church growth. Much of my academic work has been focused on that concern. In particular, my Church Plant - *Metanoia* - my thesis - *Does Parish Communion Inhibit Church Growth?* - and my paper - *Rethinking Confirmation* - speak to this issue. All of these are available on this website. I invite you to examine them.

Of particular interest to me is the opportunity for church growth afforded by Generations X, Y and the Millennials - the generations conspicuous by their absence in our churches. My research indicates that they seek spiritual experience, and are open to Christian worship; although it may not be in their direct experience. It also indicates that where they do embrace Christianity, they have an affinity for the more contemplative, liturgical forms of worship. Anglicanism should be particularly attractive to them. The magnitude of the opportunity presented is indicated by the demographer Reginald Bibby in his book, *Restless Churches*. Bibby indicates that 80% of adults and teens assert positive belief in God; and 75% of adults and 70% of teens believe in a God who cares about them personally. Moreover, 1 in 2 adults and 1 in 3 teens have acknowledged experiencing God's presence. Since nothing like the figures Bibby quotes are present in our churches, the opportunity for growth is huge if a church desires to reach out to those not currently members.

In seeking them, I believe that there are several general principles that would be foundational:

- Contextualization is important. The church must respond to the "culture" of the people it is trying to attract. Like Whoopi Goldberg found in the movie *Sister Act*, some change may be necessary to attract newcomers. Chapter 4 of my thesis, *Reaching the Unchurched*, speaks to that issue.
- Change, if necessary, must be done with sensitivity to the needs and concerns of those already members of the congregation. Change can be stressful and - to some - even threatening. The good news is that change can be accomplished, I believe, without altering the worship experience of those already attending the regular worship services. All that is necessary is for a congregation to give permission for something different to occur - perhaps a different service format, liturgy and music - at a different time; and perhaps in a different place (the parish hall for instance, rather than the church itself). The idea is to add portals of entry that increase the opportunity for newcomers to engage with the church in a way meaningful to them; that meets them where they are, as Whoopi did in *Sister Act*.

- The concept of *meta-church*, small group ministries supplementing community worship, may be an important element in satisfying the diverse needs of different age and preference groups; within the bounds of one Church population.

I believe that the Church cannot afford to concentrate on ministry to just those faithful members who show up for Sunday service. Of course we must do that; but we must also do our best to fulfill the Great Commission. We must do BOTH AND; not one or the other. The future of the Church depends on our ability to make Disciples, teach them, and send them forth as Apostles.