

## **A Critical Review of Archival Sources Relating to the Intersection of West Indian Immigrants and the Anglican Church in Toronto, 1950-1985**

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Resolved, That the General Synod of the Church of England in Canada recognizing the vital need of maintaining our British Connection, our British ideals and our British institutions and believing that the preponderance of continental over British immigration to Canada is likely to lower seriously existing standards of wages and living conditions, the maintenance of which is in the best interest alike of the foreign born and of those of British stock, desires to urge upon the Government of Canada the adoption of a quota policy to limit the number of certain classes of foreign born immigrants admitted during any year to not more than 50 percent of the British born admitted during the preceding year.<sup>1</sup>

That, beginning in the 1960s, the Anglican Church of Canada, alongside other mainline Churches, experienced a precipitous decline in Sunday attendance and the participation of members in traditional rites of passage is a phenomenon well attested to by historians and sociologists of religion.<sup>2</sup> Among the factors commonly cited is that an influx of immigrants from non-traditional sources, that is countries outside of the British Isles and northern Europe, changed Canada's fundamental character, including its religious make-up, where in 1961 94% of the population identified as Christian.<sup>3</sup> Nowhere is this more evident than in Toronto where the racial minority population rose from less than 3% in

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1961 to 20.7% by 1986.<sup>4</sup> Of particular significance for the Anglican Church in Toronto was the growth of the West Indian community. Indeed, many West Indians arriving in Toronto already had an established connection to Anglican Christianity either through a parish church or school back home.<sup>5</sup> Beginning about 1965, the appearance of significant numbers of West Indians in several Toronto parishes disturbed long-established identities and patterns of worship.

How religious life and immigration informed each other in the post-World War II era has remained largely unexplored. Problems inviting further examination include what tensions did immigration bring to a Church already confronting significant demands for change, both external and internal? How did parishes welcome and incorporate immigrants in search of a new spiritual home and would that new spiritual home afford them an opportunity to maintain their traditional culture and identity? Did the process of interaction foster “Canadianization,” and if so, how? Research in these areas would add granularity to our understanding of the significant transition that the Anglican Church underwent in the latter half of the twentieth century and would also provide important contextualization for understanding the Church’s ministry to immigrants today.

In this essay I consider several important archival resources for anyone interested in exploring the intersection of the Anglican Church with the waves of newcomers to post-war Canada. Although the specific focus is the West Indian community and the Anglican Church in Toronto, the archival challenges that I identify – gaps, silences, and internal organization – have wide applicability for scholars. Thus, the collections examined are not intended to represent all the resources available but rather to illustrate key problems that a researcher is likely to encounter.<sup>6</sup>

The archives of the Anglican Church tell two stories. On a superficial level they document that over the course of a few decades in the mid-twentieth century the Church progressively moved away from its earlier support for racist and colonial immigration regulations toward non-discriminatory policies in which race and ethnicity were no longer factors in the admission of immigrants to Canada. Indeed, archival records show that the Church adopted a progressively activist stance, writing government officials concerning injustices in the present system, lobbying immigration ministers in person, and submitting briefs to Parliament in response to Green and White Papers circulated for public comment in addition to hands-on ministry to immigrants.

A more critical, contextualized reading of the same documents reveals remnants of the Church's racialized and colonial past and the resulting tension which disrupted established patterns and norms thus advancing the Anglican Church's transition toward being a less-closed, multi-ethnic community. The main collections consulted were the Anglican Church's General Synod Archives and the Diocese of Toronto Archives. I also turned to the City of Toronto Archives as well as the resources of the University of Toronto's Map and Data Collection Library and its Government Information Library to fill in the gaps.<sup>7</sup>

As Canada entered the second half of the twentieth century, Toronto's West Indian community was "infinitesimal."<sup>8</sup> Highly restrictive regulations, in place for a half-century, had largely excluded Black West Indians from immigrating to Canada. Most of those who were here in the 1950s – students, select labourers and female domestic servants – held some form of temporary visa.<sup>9</sup> Thus in the 1950s and early 1960s West Indians represented a small subaltern community whose voices from the margins were barely audible. As we shall see, census and immigration records relating to the nascent West Indian community are often thin and scattered, revealing gaps or silences indicative of colonial practices.

The cause of West Indian immigration, or to put it another way, the embarrassment of West Indian discrimination, was a concern championed by the Anglican Church beginning in the early 1950s. Before considering the holdings of the General Synod Archives, let us first locate the problem within the historiographical framework of colonialism and racialization. The historic relationship between Canada and the West Indies was a complex one grounded chiefly upon trading relationships going back at least to the eighteenth century. As British subjects, White West Indians moved freely between the islands and Canada, often forging commercial, familial, and professional relationships; the same was never true for Black West Indians. Blacks of West Indian origin, mostly attached to the households of British soldiers and government officials, were present in Toronto before the time of its founding in 1793. In the middle years of the nineteenth century the Black community in Toronto reached nearly one thousand, some of whom attained a substantial degree of wealth and prominence. In the latter half of the century, the community declined reaching a low of 408 in 1911.<sup>10</sup> The 1910 Immigration Act, followed by a clarifying Order-in-Council the next year, effectively banned all "Negro" immigration on the pretext of their supposed climatic unsuitability.

Although the order officially expired after one year, the precedent had been set and remained in practice until 1962.<sup>11</sup>

As Paula Hastings demonstrates in her article, “The Limits of ‘Brotherly Love’: Rethinking Canada-Caribbean Relationships in the Early Twentieth Century,” the connection between Canada and the British West Indies has been characterized by a “Big Brother” paternalism which transcended racial lines.<sup>12</sup> Although once a colony itself, Canada has often adopted an imperial air, especially in its “encounters with populations not part of Canada’s Anglo-Celtic majority.” This latent colonial-racist attitude continued to inform Canadian foreign relationships throughout the twentieth century.<sup>13</sup>

The relationship of the Anglican Church of Canada with her sister Church in the West Indies has also suffered from a deeply entwined racialization and imbalance of power. For example, in the 1970s and 1980s the practice of recruiting Black clergy to serve Canadian parishes, which West Indian bishops viewed as poaching their best priests, continued by some Canadian dioceses even after the Church was requested to stop.<sup>14</sup> Today, when the emphasis in missiology is on mutual giving and receiving between equal communities,<sup>15</sup> Canadian Anglicans continue to support West Indian missions through traditional fund-raising organizations such as Canadian Friends to West Indian Christians thus perpetuating a top-down relationship. Ironically, the Anglican Church in the Province of the West Indies came into being in 1883 – ten years before the unification of dioceses which formed the Anglican Church of Canada.

Although the Anglican Church enjoyed the legal status of an established state church only in parts of the Dominion and lost any such official claim to power by the middle of the nineteenth century, Anglicanism was still for many members in the 1950s and 1960s an imagined community associated with values, institutions, laws, and symbols suggestive of the British Empire in general and England in particular.<sup>16</sup> A study of Toronto Anglicans in 1986 by sociologist Reginald Bibby revealed that over 80% of Church members continued to associate Anglicanism with discursive phrases or symbols of Empire such as the English Church, the Book of Common Prayer, the Queen and the monarchy, the British Commonwealth and the military.<sup>17</sup> It is no accident that Toronto’s towering Anglican Cathedral is situated at the intersection of King and Church Streets.

The General Synod Archives is constituted along the lines of a state

archive, a *ius archivi* as described by Randolph Head, deriving its validity and authority from canon law.<sup>18</sup> Its mission as defined in Canon V is “To collect, arrange, describe, preserve and provide access to any documents, manuscripts, newspapers, books, graphic and audio-visual materials pertaining to the history and activities of The Anglican Church of Canada.” In giving birth to the Archive, the delegates to the 1927 General Synod of the Church of England in Canada, as it was then called, were undoubtedly conscious of the Church’s colonial past and the significant role it played in the nation’s history, past and present, as well as its place among sister churches throughout the empire. In appointing an Archives Committee “to assist in preserving data relative to the past of our Church in Canada” the Church prescribed boundaries which assured the reproduction of the imagined community.<sup>19</sup>

The website for the General Synod Archives provides access to two online databases, one is comprehensive of all holdings in the archives and the second specific to mandated records of General Synod. The website also includes finding aids, links to forms, policies, contacts, and a wealth of other information. The General Synod Archives serves as both the official repository of specified records and as a voluntary reception centre for materials donated by individuals, parish churches and other ecclesiastical entities deemed to be of significance to the national Church.

Given the non-linear, relational structure of digitized records, databank searches can yield unexpected results as Jefferson Bailey describes in his article “Disrespect des Fonds.”<sup>20</sup> A search of official General Synod records using the keywords “West Indian immigration” yielded no results. A search using simply “immigration” produced 292 records. Since the stated temporal parameters for this paper are the middle decades of the twentieth century, I applied the filter “before 1975” which dropped the responses to sixty-seven. A review of those sixty-seven records included publications often with innocuous titles but with chapter names or divisions such as “Alien Immigration,” “Hong Kong Boys,” “British Immigration,” “Japanese Immigration,” “Non-Anglo-Saxon Ministry,” “Population Problems,” “Communism and Christianity,” “Bolshevism,” “Lenin and Lincoln,” “The Church of England and the Foreigner,” “The Control of Immigration,” “The Undesirable Immigrant,” “Strangers Within Our Gates,” “Immigrants and Criminality,” and “Juvenile Delinquency and Immigration.” Although a detailed review of these records was not undertaken, many of the titles are indicative of a

colonial and racialized worldview. Other titles point to the fear and fantasy combination which Ann Stoler describes as “disquieting for the colonial elite,” suggesting the need for control of the Other.<sup>21</sup>

Perhaps even more revealing was a search of the full database which, in addition to General Synod records, includes Church-related newspapers, web pages, and journal articles. Despite what has been an area of active concern for the Anglican Church for many years, a search using the phrases “West Indian immigration” and “Caribbean immigration” brought no relevant results when filtered by the qualifier “before 1975.” More surprising were the search results using just the keyword “immigration.” Here 837 records were returned with many dozens of them related to the Indian residential schools operated by the Anglican Church up to 1969.<sup>22</sup> What do residential schools and ministry to immigrants have in common? An immediate response might be nothing. But residential schools, as well as other ministries to Aboriginal peoples, were overseen by the same agency, the Missionary Society of the Church in Canada, which was also responsible for foreign missionary activity as well as domestic work among immigrants. While knowledge of this indiscriminate approach to mission does not directly shine any light on the relationship of the Church to the West Indian community, it nevertheless serves as a stark reminder of the deeply held colonial and racialized practices of the Church throughout the period, and at the very least, re-enforces the need for a critical attitude when assessing these archival records.

Canada’s low population in relation to its great size had long been a concern for the government, hence the need for pro-immigration policies – but policies which were racially discriminatory and nation-specific as evident in this review’s opening epigraph.

In an article titled “Population Problems: Immigration and Increase,” published in the October 1941 issue of the Church’s quarterly *Bulletin*, Claris Simcox strongly echoed the government’s long-standing exclusionary practices, viewing “with great concern the lessening proportion of the Anglo-Saxons to the non-Anglo-Saxons in the population of Canada” and urged that there should be continually “brought before our Anglo-Saxon people the privilege and opportunity to helping to preserve British ideals and influence in our country.”<sup>23</sup> While explicitly expressing a preference for British immigrants, Simcox conceded the unlikelihood of a mass migration from Britain sufficient to meet Canada’s labour needs. The answer to this conundrum lay in the recognition that the key point was

not that Canada remain ethnically British, but British in terms of its culture and political ideals. While positive in that race and ethnic origin are set aside as exclusionary factors in determining admissibility to Canada, the solution remains problematic in that it affirms an underlying hierarchical framework of colonial and racialized assumptions which continue to haunt us today.<sup>24</sup>

In December 1950, W.W. Judd, General Secretary of the powerful Council for Social Service, asserted in an article ironically titled “British Immigration”:

Likewise, the Church has fought the battle of minority groups – of the Chinese residents here in Canada, denied the entry of their wives and children, of the Jews, and their suffering people in Europe, of the East Indians and of Negro students and other individuals. There has been no racial discrimination in the Church’s approach to the problem of immigration.<sup>25</sup>

Rather than simply dismiss Judd’s assertion that the Church has shown no racial discrimination in its approach to immigration as selective amnesia, a blind spot or even a bald-faced lie, the remark can also be understood as representing the mindset of a type of individual that Canadian sociologist Sunera Thobani calls “the Exalted Subject,” a person set on White dominance.<sup>26</sup> David Meren has argued that paternalism was by no means limited to Canada’s colonial past but continued to inform the liberalism of the post-1945 period.<sup>27</sup> Dan Gorman adds, “Unlike in Britain, the arrival of non-white immigrants to Canada and the trauma of decolonization did not dramatically alter the domestic status quo in these [post-war] years. Canadians had not yet begun to interrogate their own history of internal colonialism.”<sup>28</sup>

Although Judd’s statement concerning “Negro students” lacked a specific context, likely he was referring to West Indian students who at the time were seeking easier access to Canadian universities.<sup>29</sup> If so, it would be one of the first examples in General Synod records, if not the first, of advocacy for a lifting of the ban on Black immigration. A resolution passed in 1951 at a joint meeting of the Council for Social Service and the Executive Committee of General Synod urged the federal government to undertake “more liberal arrangements and regulations allowing for migration among all member states of the British Commonwealth” and expressed the opinion that “considerations of race or colour should not be

allowed to dominate . . . Canada's immigration policy."<sup>30</sup>

Beginning in 1952 and continuing thereafter at triennial meetings of General Synod, resolutions were passed which urged the federal government to adopt "a more generous policy" of immigration concerning the "people of the British West Indies and all other parts of the Commonwealth."<sup>31</sup> The resolution passed at the 1955 meeting of General Synod added two reasons as to why West Indians should be "encouraged and permitted" to immigrate to Canada: 1) it was their right as British subjects, and 2) "as an aid to the economy of the West Indies."<sup>32</sup> The comment concerning aiding the economy of the West Indies remains enigmatic. Just how would the economy be aided – through remittances sent back home by immigrants or through acting as a pressure valve to decrease internal tensions? Could it be that immigration would benefit the Canadian economy as well? Curiously, at no time, in this or other resolutions, was there a suggestion that there may be humanitarian, moral or ethical dimensions to consider.

Minutes of the Committee on Immigration and other General Synod records demonstrate a continuing interest throughout the 1950s in promoting West Indian immigration. There was also mention of the need to permit entry on humanitarian grounds to the wives and children of Chinese men already in Canada and Chinese refugees from Hong Kong. A 1955 General Synod resolution advocated removing restrictions on Japanese immigration. Nevertheless, it was immigrants from the West Indies who received regular, ongoing attention. It was not, however, until the significant changes in immigration regulations, made by the federal government in 1962 and 1967, that the West Indian population of Canada, and especially Toronto, began to boom.

Let us turn now to the issue of counting the West Indian population in Toronto and a brief consideration of two special collections within the University of Toronto library system, the Map and Data Library and the Government Information Library. As sophisticated as these collections are, they cannot answer a core question, just how many West Indians were there in Toronto in the 1950s and 1960s? The fault lies not with the libraries, the technology, or the staff, but in the silence of records themselves and the colonial practices which created them. Census records are the chief source of mega-data when it comes to questions of population. In addition to the inherent problems of accuracy associated with individuals completing a standardized form, the data is also shaped and

circumscribed by the questions asked and those who formulated them.<sup>33</sup>

The “place of birth” options available in the 1961 Census for a person from the West Indies are limited to three choices: West Indies Federation, Other Commonwealth, or Other. The West Indies Federation was a short-lived political union which lasted from 1958 to 1962. It included Trinidad and Tobago, Barbados, Jamaica, and the various isles of the Leeward and Windward Islands. It did not include other British territories such as the Bahamas, Bermuda, Belize, and Guyana. Immigrants from these latter countries could choose the option of “Other Commonwealth” adding them in with newcomers from political entities around the globe. For residents of French or Dutch territories or independent countries such as Haiti, Cuba, and the Dominican Republic there was no option except “Other.” By the time of the 1971 Census, the West Indies Federation no longer existed. The unhelpful categories of the 1961 Census were changed to different but equally unhelpful options, “West Indies and South America,” and, of course, “Other.”<sup>34</sup>

A possible work-around begins with immigration records, but here too one encounters categories indicative of the colonial era. The Canada Yearbook for 1950 includes the following options under immigrant birthplaces: West Indies (British); Continent of North America—U.S., Mexico, Central America, Other. For 1960 the qualifier “British” is removed from the category West Indies, and Central America is dropped. For 1965 the option West Indies does not appear at all! Possible choices for an immigrant born in the West Indies were: North America—U.S., Mexico, Other; South America; Other.<sup>35</sup> In other words, West Indians were not accorded the dignity and status of a nation-specific identity in the same way that Europeans were. As well as being insensitive to the island-specific cultural differences acknowledged by Caribbean people, the imprecise and changing language used by the Canadian government in its immigration and census reports make an accurate count of the West Indian population virtually impossible.

Such silences in the official record, particularly in colonial settings, is nothing unusual.<sup>36</sup> The holdings of the Map and Data and Government Information Libraries, being comprised mainly of official government records, offer few clues to fill in the population gap. We turn now to the City of Toronto archives. Spatially and organizationally the City Archive resembles Joyce’s ideal public archive which helps to create an aware, knowledgeable public. At the same time, the City Archives derives its

mandate from civil authority and as the official repository for documents created by the city, it also functions to some degree as a *ius archivi*, advancing the purposes of the city.

Few, if any, documents relate specifically to the inter-relationship between the West Indian community and the Anglican Church. The archives' holdings do, however, provide a rich social and cultural context, and as we shall see, begin to fill in some of the gaps as to the size of the West Indian community. A search of the City of Toronto Archives database for categories related to "immigration" returned 380 entries. Somewhat surprisingly, the only ethnic-specific entries concerned Toronto's Portuguese immigrants. Searches using categories related to "West Indian" and "Caribbean" produced 127 items. Most results were associated with the word "Indian" signifying an Indigenous person or referred to a street in Toronto known as Indian Grove Road. Returns for "Caribbean" focused on food and cultural events such as Caribana. The database keyword categories thus, on the surface, lack the racialization and ethnic specificity that a contemporary researcher might expect in documents from the period as was evident in the General Synod Archives. A closer examination of the immigration-related documents reveals that only a handful of reports and studies relate specifically to the West Indian community. If mentioned at all, the community is usually discussed in a wider societal context alongside other immigrant groups.

A useful collection for providing a contextual framework for the West Indian community, particularly for the 1950s and 1960s, is an extensive set of documents related to Donald W. Moore. Born in 1895 in Barbados, Moore gained entry to Canada in 1911 to work as a railroad porter, one of the very few exemptions available to Black immigrants under the Negro ban. A community activist and organizer, Moore became the most prominent voice of the West Indian community in Toronto in this period. Although a member of the Methodist Episcopal Church, archival records reveal a close relationship with Anglican officials.

Included among Moore's fonds is a copy of a letter from W.W. Judd, General Secretary of the Council for Social Service, to the Minister of Immigration. The letter endorsed a historic meeting in 1954 at which a delegation of the Negro Citizenship Association, headed by Moore, presented the Minister with a brief drawing attention to Canada's discriminatory immigration regulations that denied equal status to non-White British subjects. After explaining that it was the established practice

of the Anglican Church not to join with other Churches in such delegations, Judd endorsed the “stand taken,” writing:

[B]ecause the British West Indies are part of the Commonwealth and Empire, they should be treated on the same basis as the more favoured units of that Commonwealth and Empire . . . On humanitarian and cultural grounds the Church believes a far greater number of coloured folk from the British West Indies might be absorbed into the Canadian population without danger or difficulty.<sup>37</sup>

Again, Judd’s language from a post-colonial perspective is problematic, exhibiting not only paternalism but a clearly racialized elitism. Perhaps out of a spirit of deference, Moore issued a warm letter of thanks for the Anglican Church’s support. Two subsequent anniversary celebrations of the historic meeting and Moore’s funeral were held at St. Anne’s Anglican Church in Toronto, attended by several prominent Diocesan officials.

Board of Education records provide some of the few population estimates available for the West Indian community. In a March 1973 Report to the East York Board of Education, authored by John Roth, he quoted a 1970 study prepared for the Toronto Board of Education titled *In the Course of Discovery: West Indian Immigrants in Toronto Schools*. The report estimated the West Indian population of Canada to be approximately 70,000 in 1969. “Of these, between 50 and 60 per cent indicated on entry they wished to settle in Toronto.”<sup>38</sup> Thus, Roth estimated the West Indian population of Toronto in 1969 to be between 35,000 and 42,000.

Roth’s estimate is supported by the results of a quantitative study in the Toronto Archives authored by University of Windsor sociologist Subhas Ramcharan and later published in *The Canadian Review of Sociology* under the title “The Economic Adaption of West Indians in Toronto, Canada.”<sup>39</sup> In it Ramcharan estimated the West Indian population of Metro Toronto in 1971 to be 49,118.<sup>40</sup> Both Roth and Ramcharan pointed out that the number of West Indian immigrants arriving annually began increasing dramatically starting in 1966. Roth stated that the number of West Indians in Canada more than doubled in the years from 1966 to 1968 and and Ramcharan estimated Toronto’s numbers quadrupled between 1966 and 1971.<sup>41</sup>

At first, the date of 1966 for a spike in numbers seems unusual since the ban on Black immigration was lifted in 1962 and no further reforms were instituted until 1967. A possible explanation is found in the minutes

of the Church's Immigration Committee. Although the immigration policy changes were initiated in late 1962, during the following thirty-six months the Immigration portfolio was held by four individuals, not to mention a change of government from Conservative to Liberal. As well, committee members voiced complaints about the difficulty of gaining access to government ministers.

Minutes of the Immigration Committee also reflected complaints from the West Indian community that nothing was happening on the ground due to a lack of consular staff familiar with the policy changes.<sup>42</sup> While some lag time in implementation might be forgiven, the hard reality is that the Canadian government did not open any immigration offices in the West Indies until 1968,<sup>43</sup> and in overseas offices where applications from West Indians were received, Canadian immigration officials continued to employ their wide discretionary powers in refusing or blocking qualified applicants. Michael Molloy, a career immigration official, relates the case of a "well-qualified" Jamaican tool-and-die maker living in England who applied for the standard relocation loan to assist with his passage to Canada. When the loan was denied by the officer-in-charge, the junior official who initially approved the application asked why. The answer given by the senior officer, according to Molloy, was that everyone knew the regulations didn't apply to coloured people.<sup>44</sup>

Finally, I will turn attention to the Archives of the Diocese of Toronto which I expected to yield the richest collection of documents relating to the intersection of the West Indian community and the Anglican Church. But, as we shall see, these Archives presented several problems.

Much of what was said previously concerning how the General Synod Archives are constituted applies also to the Diocesan Archives. That is, the Archives operate under the authority of canon law (Diocesan Canon 38) primarily to serve the needs of the Diocese. Its collection policy mirrors that of the national Church except that in addition to diocesan records there is in place a retention policy which mandates what parish records must be forwarded to the Diocese for preservation.

Unlike the General Synod Archives, virtually no records are digitized. There is no database, finding aids, or card catalogue. The only open-access records available for searching are the annual synod journals. The researcher is therefore almost totally reliant upon the institutional knowledge and goodwill of staff for the retrieval of information. An archivist who held the position for over thirty-five years retired in March

2019. A new archivist and assistant archivist are now in place and an updating process is underway. The top priority for the staff is the assessment of parish records and the development of a retention policy for Diocesan records in preparation for producing finding aids. Digitization of records remains a long way off.<sup>45</sup>

A thorough review of committee minutes and annual reports for the period 1947-1965 revealed very little interest in immigrant ministry, except for British immigrants. Deaconesses assigned to downtown parishes regularly called on newly arrived immigrants but only made note of those who were Anglican. Typical is the notation made by the deaconess from St. Bartholomew's, "Visited 400 new families in Regent Park, except for 2 high rise buildings. 98 Anglican families."<sup>46</sup> More common were reports of declining urban Churches, "No longer is the church full; no longer do offerings cover expenses. The buildings are in disrepair." These changes were deemed to be "a result of the change from a predominantly home-owning Anglo-Saxon population to an increasingly cosmopolitan, shifting population."<sup>47</sup> A motion brought before Synod in 1957 by the Parkdale Anglican churches noted "the increasing numbers of non-Anglo-Saxon people . . . and that if necessary a Commission should be set up to find ways and means of effectively dealing with this problem."<sup>48</sup> Certainly the term "problem" is open to multiple interpretations, but however understood, the presence of non-Anglo-Saxon immigrants in large numbers clearly disrupted established social, economic and religious patterns resulting in a sense of malaise.

The wariness concerning the growing numbers of non-British immigrants and the paucity of resources, human and financial, invested in them needs to be contrasted with the investment in British immigrants. Chaplains at the main Canadian ports of entry welcomed British arrivals, and if Anglican, collected information which was then forwarded to local parish clergy about the immigrant's intended home in Canada. Beginning in the spring of 1957, British immigrants arriving at Union Station and Malton (now Pearson) Airport in Toronto were greeted by Church representatives. Later in 1957, an Anglican Information Centre for British Immigrants was also opened in Toronto, by now Canada's major receiving city for new immigrants.<sup>49</sup>

As noted above, the West Indian community in Toronto prior to the immigration reforms of the 1960s was very small. The only likely reference in the published diocesan records occurred in 1944 in the Report

of a Special Commission on Downtown Parishes:

Mr. Walker of St. George's was present and told of some of the difficulties presented by the influx of a considerable group of coloured folk to his parish. He went on to say that perhaps a coloured deaconess could be commissioned for special work among the coloured Anglican families, centering her work at St. George's where the largest group seems to have settled down.<sup>50</sup>

No further mention of this "considerable group of coloured folk" or the "difficulties" they presented is to be found. Indeed, it is not until the early 1970s with the arrival of West Indians in large numbers in the city, and in parish churches, that the Diocese began to take a serious look at how to meet the needs of this burgeoning community, estimated to be approximately 2000 "regular church-going Anglicans" annually. Indeed, a 1972 study emphatically stated "More immigrants of the Anglican Church come from the West Indies than from any other country."<sup>51</sup>

The move away from the Church's Anglo-Saxon roots toward a more ethnically diverse community did not go unchallenged. In an undated memo, the then Bishop of Toronto, George Snell, recorded "some of the facts that came out" during a small gathering of clergy that he had convened. Among the "facts" was a warning that "black power has already appeared in Toronto and would continue to grow and we must expect trouble in the future."<sup>52</sup> The moderately racialized language and the general tenor of the memo was not uncharacteristic of Snell's generation. I submitted the memo, along with other documents, to be scanned and sent to me. The next day I received an email from the then, now retired, archivist declining my request for a copy of the memo, saying, "I feel an unease about copying this as while reflective perhaps of the thinking at the time it might be more inflammatory today."<sup>53</sup>

This incident reflects the critical role played by the archivist in the preservation and dissemination of data. Far from being a neutral, objective figure in the research process as is classically asserted, the archivist in this situation became a person of great power.<sup>54</sup> Here we find the archives creator, the institutional Church, asserting control over the master narrative to protect the reputation of the Church and its representatives, thus taking precedence over the public's right to gain a fuller understanding of an important transition in the making. Thus, we have an example of the archive asserting control over the master narrative to protect the reputation

of the Church and its representatives. Standing in stark contrast to Joyce's image of the archive as an open centre of learning,<sup>55</sup> one must reasonably ask what other secrets, however benign, does this archive hold and what other requests for information have been denied? As Patrick Geary reminds us, in deciding "what is to be hauled to the landfill and what is to be preserved, and, perhaps, as importantly, how it is to be preserved" – or in this case, what is to be buried so as not to be revealed to prying eyes – the archivist participates in the authorship of the document and the telling of history.<sup>56</sup>

I conclude this essay with a consideration of three documents from the early 1970s stored in the Diocesan Archives. Each document is worthy of consideration based on its own merit, but because of length and similarities of substance, they will be discussed as a whole. Taken together, they illustrate a significant shift away from the colonial and often racist thinking of the previous decades and point to a new approach toward immigrants in general and the West Indian community in particular. The documents are: 1) Brief Prepared From the Deliberations of a Committee of Clergy and Laity From Parishes With Numerous West Indians (1970), 2) Proposal for the Continuation of the West Indian Project Beyond July 1, 1972, and 3) The Anglican Ministry Among the Black Population of Toronto: A Study Prepared for The Incorporated Synod of the Diocese of Toronto (1973).

By 1970 three West Toronto parishes – St. Michael and All Angels, St. Stephen's-in-the-Fields, and St. Mark's, Parkdale – had become the major reception sites for West Indian Anglicans seeking a spiritual home. Together the parishes petitioned Bishop George Snell to take "special and unusual steps to make the fact of the Church's welcome to West Indians visible immediately." These were: 1) to procure Black clergy for parish ministry either through domestic ordinations or from other countries, 2) to send representatives of the Black community to the upcoming meeting of General Synod as special delegates, and 3) to encourage the election or appointment of Blacks to positions of responsibility within parishes and on diocesan committees.<sup>57</sup> The bishop to whom this brief was directed was the same person whose memo was deemed too sensitive to release. The archives do not give any indication concerning follow-up action. The salient point, however, is the recognition on the part of these three parish leaders of the pressing need for the Church's hierarchy to make significant accommodation if the Church were to meet the spiritual, pastoral and

social needs of these Anglicans. Also noteworthy was the distinctly different tone and approach evident throughout the document which recognized the dignity, worth, and contributions of West Indians, and the ongoing racial discrimination and injustices they faced.

In 1972 and 1973 studies concerning the West Indian community were presented to a newly consecrated diocesan bishop, Lewis Garnsworthy. The first study, produced by the Rev. Carl Major, was an outgrowth of Major's work with the Canadian Urban Training Centre. While an intern at the Centre, Major had secured government and diocesan funding to set-up a community social service centre located at St. Mark's Church, Parkdale, to serve the West Indian community. As part of a funding proposal to continue the program, Major authored a report focused on the difficulties experienced by West Indians as they sought to integrate into neighbourhood Anglican churches. The report was based primarily on personal experience and oral interviews of community centre clients. The second study by Maduka Nwakwesi, a Nigerian post-graduate student with a PhD in political science from McGill, also analyzed the incorporation process. His research methodology yielded a richer, more granular report. Although very different in style and format, both studies underscored the systemic racism experienced by West Indians on a daily basis at work, in schools, the market place, and in local churches. Both reports made specific recommendations for action by the Bishop. Nwakwesi ended his assessment with these cautionary words:

Unless the Anglican Church can creatively help the Black man to resolve his identity crisis, unless it can be more sensitive to the special handicaps of the Black man in Canada, I dare say that the Black man's involvement in church activities will remain at best segmental, at worst non-existent.<sup>58</sup>

The last three documents that I have considered illustrate that by the early 1970s the Anglican Church in Toronto and its leadership had begun the process of confronting past policies of neglect, imperialism, and racialization with respect to the now significant West Indian community in Toronto. Following the new government policy of multiculturalism announced in 1971, the Church began to shift its focus away from immigration to a broader consideration of the role of the Church in a pluralistic society. Within the next few years Bishop Garnsworthy appointed a Multiculturalism Committee, required clergy to attend a three-

day residential conference on multiculturalism, and took the lead in sponsoring three national conferences on ministry in a multicultural context. In November 1980 Arthur D. Brown, the priest who a decade earlier had authored the petition to make special accommodation for West Indians, was elected a suffragan bishop along with a Barbadian priest, Basil Tonks. By the end of the 1980s when the Diocese celebrated its sesquicentennial, the Anglican Church in Toronto had made significant progress toward becoming a multicultural community. By that point, Garnsworthy, now assisted by West Indian and Chinese suffragan bishops, had been diocesan bishop for seventeen years and had firmly put his stamp upon the Diocese. Many Anglicans did not remember or perhaps even know that only a few decades earlier the Anglican Church in Toronto had been a highly Anglo-centric institution, firmly wed to its colonial past.

In this essay I have illustrated how the several archival collections consulted have both helped and hindered the quest to understand the interplay of the Anglican Church and the West Indian community in Toronto during the four decades following World War II. Despite gaps and silences in the official record, one point is clear: West Indians were regularly the objects of discriminatory policies which served to sustain traditional dominance. These prejudicial practices were sanctioned, implicitly and explicitly, by the Anglican Church, the federal government, as well as Canadian society in general. The removal of racial barriers to immigration in the 1960s enabled the growth of the West Indian community in Toronto, which in turn significantly impacted the established norms of the Anglican Church.

A half-century later, elements of Canada's colonial and racialized past remain embedded in society including the fabric of the Church community. If nothing else, post-colonial studies have taught us that decolonization is not an event but an on-going process. Nevertheless, progress can be claimed. Today, in many parishes across the Greater Toronto Area, West Indians exercise significant leadership roles and in some parishes constitute a plurality of the membership. The full, and sometimes difficult, story of the Anglican Church's evolution from being "the English Church," as it was often called, to being a multicultural community where today, on any given Sunday in Toronto, Anglican worship is conducted in more than a dozen languages,<sup>59</sup> is an important lesson for Anglicans to remember as they continue to welcome newcomers and work to incorporate them into the life of the community.

**Endnotes**

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