

Bishop Gerhard Preibisch

This Christmas we will once again be privileged to hear the good news. “ – *a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.*” (Isaiah 9:6) With great joy we will join the heavenly host and praise God saying, “*Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!*” (Luke 2:13-14)

Yet, sadly, many in our world and perhaps even in our own homes will not hear the good news of the birth of Jesus – at least not in a language which they understand. It prompts me to ask the question which St. Paul asked long ago: “ – *how are they to hear (the good news) without someone to proclaim him (Jesus Christ)?*” Romans 10:14

I first heard this good news in the language of my youth – German. After immigrating to Canada I heard the Good News proclaimed, not in the language which I was learning in school but rather in the language of seventeenth-century English. It was the language of the King James Bible – a beautiful language yet difficult for the youth of the day to understand. Fortunately, by the time I graduated from seminary the Bible was readily available in versions of English which were being used in the homes of the nation.

While attending the national youth gathering “Travel Light” this summer in Whitehorse, God showed me the importance of learning yet another language. The Bishops were each asked to address a plenary session during the gathering.

For one of my presentations the drama team helped me write a homily using text messaging, which is the cell language of our youth. I began the homily by expressing my excitement and anxiety with being on stage facing over one thousand youth by shouting “**OMG**”. I described the death of Jesus by saying: “**In defeating death Jesus pwned the devil like a n00b!**” I suggested that today Jesus might say something like this from the cross: “**B R B**” and “**T T Y L!**”

Following the Youth Gathering I received an e-mail from a youth who said this about my sermon: “*This was the first time that I heard the whole gospel of Jesus Christ in a language I could understand.*”

I read that e-mail and I said: “**WOW**”! I realized again how language continues to change and how we need to change in order to share God’s good news today.

The youth who attended “Travel Light” affirmed that God is not yet finished with this Evangelical Lutheran Church of ours. Those who think otherwise should plan to attend the next national youth gathering in London, Ontario in 2010. The excitement – the enthusiasm – the attentiveness and the response of the youth to the message of the gospel was invigorating.

I look forward to the celebration of the birth of Christ. May we, who have heard the good news of God’s love for all people becoming flesh in Jesus Christ **TILII** because this is good news for everyone! **TNT**

YIC Bishop Gerhard Preibisch

For the uninitiated, this glossary:

OMG - Oh my God

In defeating death Jesus pwned the devil like a n00b! - Jesus utterly destroyed or whopped that loser, the devil!

B R B - . Be right back

T T Y L - Talk to you later.

TILII - Tell it like it is

TNT - Till Next Time

YIC - Yours in Christ