



# TUXIS Parliamentary Alumni Society Newsletter

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Start of a New Year



## 90 Years of TUXIS!

In December, the TUXIS Parliament of Alberta celebrated its 90th Session, something of a milestone. On such occasions, I find myself reflecting on the changes that our Parliament has undergone over the years, big and small. The organization began as a model parliament for boys, as part of the TUXIS/Trail Ranger program, organized by the Boys Work Board. Its primary function was to debate legislation relating to the TUXIS and Trail Ranger programs. Over the years, both the composition and focus of the Parliament changed, but the Parliament, as an institution, has continued. In our 90th year, we are now a model parliament for all Alberta youth, with no affiliation to any particular church or denomination. The only prerequisite for membership is an interest in the programs of the Parliament.

The 90th Session was one to celebrate. After years of declining membership, we finally had a session in which membership actually increased from 23 members at the Lloydminster session to 45 in Edmonton. There is no one reason for the increase; rather, there was a concerted effort made by many people in both the Parliament and the Alumni Society to get more people into the Parliament. Particular thanks must be paid to Katie Kelly, Ben McKay and Bill Wright for their efforts.

However, we have to build on the success of the 90th Session. We may have finally "got the ball rolling" in terms of membership, but we must remember that we are rolling that ball uphill, not down. We must continue and expand our recruitment efforts for the 91st Session. In particular, we have to expand our efforts in southern Alberta; the overwhelming majority of our members are still from the northern half of the province, the Edmonton area in particular. We need to see more members from Calgary and Lethbridge, and hopefully some of the rural communities in the south.

In this anniversary year, we can look back with pride at our 90 years of accomplishment, and look forward with hope to the celebration of our centennial in ten years.

David C. Marriott  
Executive Director

## Perception, Social Conservatives, Sin, and Love – Oh What a Paradoxical Faith!

Special thanks to Murray Speer and Adam Park for your Facebook inspiration on this matter.

I find it more than a little funny that we often spend all this time worrying about framing an issue in its relative context only to use a subjective and monolithic categorization whenever we speak of social conservatives. Often, when the public encounters such self-categorized individuals, the public is primarily presented with, and offended by, those social conservatives who understand but only a shadow of the Word of God, relying instead upon the religious conditioning of their churches and communities, which is in direct opposition to God's Word. In such a case, I too am highly offended by their abject ignorance and blind obedience when we are called to examine our faith and seek truth through the duality of tension in that truth. We tend to see things that are in dichotomous opposition to be enemies, and/or mutually exclusive to one another, rather than a lens to seek the existential, and infinite, possibilities that are reached through understanding both sides of the issue, as correct, at the same time. (Ecclesiastes 7:15-19)

True social conservatives and evangelists would hold themselves up to be the mirror of the two commandments of Jesus, using them as the guiding light of their lives, and be prepared to actually be freed from the Mosaic Law. The same Law that such so called social conservatives, that offend you and I, cling to in order to simplify their faith. Such a simplification is not only outside of the Word, but outside of Christian faith (save for those who have been "religiously" conditioned to believe such things). May we all be saved from such dangerous ignorance! And yet, if I hold myself to Jesus' second commandment, must I not also accept all who sin? From those who are pridefully ignorant, to those who may lead a life that could offend me because of what some have said are the laws of the Word, to my own abhorrently sinful existence?

You may ask why such individuals would attack "homosexual acts" (a particularly hot button issue the last two decades) - because that is how it

is literally laid out for them. As such they proof-texting in order to make themselves feel righteous about committing sin themselves in judging such people. Such a reductionist view of faith, by both those who claim to be in the Word, and by those who are abhorred by the actions of such individuals and then seek to be reductionist in their generalized conclusions about those groups, is equally unjust. While we may express the Word as set out for us, we may not place ourselves into God's role of judging sin and sinners, for we must all hold ourselves up to the same mirror and recognize that none are without sin. Thus I pose a question: If we tolerate intolerance, do we not condone intolerance, and yet if we do not tolerate intolerance, are we not just as intolerant as those we condemn? Thus, for these reasons, I choose to love God and all of humanity as I love myself.

Sin tends to be addressed as a series of rules being broken, but this is not really the case. Essentially anything that can be classified as self-centered or selfish in some way is a sin; however, the only unforgivable sin is the constant denunciation and/or action that deny the existence of God and his supremacy. This means that I could deny God all of my life, breaking all of the rules and sinning my life away, and yet still be saved by His grace if I recanted such things prior to my death. Jesus even goes so far as to say that to lust in the mind is to commit adultery, and to hate is to have committed murder - an impossible standard for imperfect beings living in a fallen world. It is only through the sacrifice of Jesus, upon which he took all of the power of sin and the Mosaic laws, lived and died a perfect human life, is our life even remotely redeemable.

All sin is death, and all humans sin, but through grace alone (in the fulfillment of the prophesy by Jesus Christ), and not through good works, are we truly saved. Believing that you are essentially a good person gets you nowhere, only through humility, and the recognition and repentance of our inherently sinful nature, put us on a path with God. That and the logic of Pascal's Wager:

*If I choose to believe in God and there is no God then I have gained nothing. If I choose to believe that there is no God and there is no God then I lose nothing. If I choose to believe in God and there is a God then I have gained everything. If I choose to believe that there is no God and there is a God then I lose everything. Thus I believe in God.*

If a person believes in the basics: the death and resurrection, the trinity, to love God, and to love you neighbour as yourself then they would (by grace) be received and their sins forgiven. This all being said it is highly desirable to live a moral life

within the guidelines of the law so as to seek the face of God and know him better. Thus nothing is thrown out, but our depth of understanding of God, and His nature, is added to the Old Testament. It is this fine distinction that eludes many; as they are willing to break the second of Jesus' two commandments (love your neighbour) in order to enforce a law in regards to sin. In doing so they sin three-fold: first many judge (if not hate outright), second they are then often proud of their own moral superiority, and third, as Christians, they know that they are committing sin in doing so, and thus are committing a bigger sin than the non-Christian who sins in ignorance. While this does not mean that a loving God cannot discipline his children, as a father does a child, but that in not loving one another we are not in Christ (as he is one with - and is - love).

Yours in Christ,  
Michael Robertson  
Premier 84<sup>th</sup>, DP 85<sup>th</sup>, Speaker 87<sup>th</sup>

## The Christian Element

In the November issue of the Newsletter, I read about an important debate that would take place at the upcoming Session about the Christian content in the organization. When I visited the legislature on the afternoon of December 30<sup>th</sup>, I was informed that the debate had already taken place and the proposed changes had been rejected.

I am sad to have missed the debate because I recall during my years as a member that the very best debates were always the ones about the future of the Parliament.

My first Session passed legislation that made it possible for candidates for the positions of Deputy Premier and Alternate Leader of the Opposition to be nominated in an open process rather than appointed by the Premier-elect and Leader-elect of the Opposition. My last Session passed legislation that made the elections use preferential ballots rather than agonizing and time-consuming run-off ballots. Other great debates involved the minimum age of membership in the organization and whether the elected leaders were entitled to a bonus year of membership unavailable to others. Surely the greatest change to the organization in its storied history was the debates over whether to admit women.

I am sad to have missed the debate because I am told that in the great legacy of these debates on the destiny of the organization, the discussion was contentious, emotional and hard-fought. I am told that in rejecting change, the organization simply wasn't ready for this particular change at this particular time.

But most of all, I am sad to have missed the debate because I wasn't the only one who missed it.

Countless numbers of Alberta's youth missed the debate because they are excluded from attending.

When you ask people inside TUXIS about religion, they'll tell you it's non-denominational and that it's open to people of all faiths or no faith at all. When you ask people on the outside why they're not applying to TUXIS, despite having time and interest, they cite concerns with religion.

We can talk about openness and accommodations, but at the end of the day, if a Sikh boy isn't comfortable signing the Oath of Allegiance or if a Muslim, atheist or agnostic girl isn't comfortable with TUXIS' devotional programming, then that's the ball game—they're not going to come. We can tell them that we'll make special arrangements for them or that they can sit out if they like, but that's just another way of making them feel different and like outsiders in an organization that's prides itself on making outsiders feel welcome.

If people value this particular tradition of the organization too much to let it go, that's fine. People can't be wrong about their values. But it should come as no surprise to them when organizations like the British Columbia Youth Parliament and the Youth Parliament of Manitoba have no problem filling their legislatures, while organizations like TUXIS and the Ontario Youth Parliament face serious membership problems—in the OYP case, even to the point of occasionally cancelling a session.

There are many Albertans who could benefit from the Parliament and who could be a great benefit to it. Closing our eyes to the application barriers they face does us as much a disservice as it does them.

Gavin Hoekstra  
80<sup>th</sup> to 85<sup>th</sup> Sessions

## TUXIS History

I recently stumbled upon a piece of TUXIS history, from the Alberta C.G.I.T. Archives. As some of you know, C.G.I.T. was the sister organization to TUXIS, back in the days when TUXIS was a boys-only parliament. The C.G.I.T. archives had a program for a "Civic Banquet" held on Friday December 28, 1951. The banquet was for both the 32nd Session of the "Alberta TUXIS Parliament" and the Annual Conference of the Alberta C.G.I.T.

Audrey Allison, the President of the Alberta C.G.I.T. gave a toast to TUXIS, and the Premier of TUXIS, Stu Munro, gave a toast to C.G.I.T. Both groups were then addressed by the Mayor of Calgary, Don Mackay, who was an alumnus of the 12th Session of TUXIS, held in 1931. Many of you will know Stud Munro for his years of service on the TUXIS Alumni Council.

Reproduced below is a copy of the program:

**CANADIAN GIRLS IN TRAINING (C.G.I.T.)**

In 1916 a committee in Toronto, representing the Methodist, Presbyterian, Anglican and Baptist Churches, the Y.W.C.A. and the Sunday School Associations were responsible for bringing into being the Canadian Girls in Training movement.

The text around which the movement grew is Luke 2:52: "Jesus increased in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and man." The purpose formulated then is, "As a Canadian Girl in Training, under the leadership of Jesus, it is my purpose to cherish health, seek truth, know God and serve others, and thus, with His help, become the girl God would have me to be." In 1927 the four-fold programme followed today was developed from that purpose.

The organization is headed by the National Girls' Work Board, in Toronto. There are eight Provincial Girls' Work Boards, each with its own travelling secretary.

Ballies and conferences are held locally and provincially for leaders and similarly for girls.

The great bulk of C.G.I.T. work is done by voluntary leaders, who have caught a vision of what a God-centred program can do for youth.

**THE ALBERTA TUXIS PARLIAMENT**

The first Parliament was held in Alberta in 1920. Annual sittings have been held since that time. Alberta is the only Province in Canada that has met every year.

The twenty-fifth, "Silver Jubilee" session was held in Calgary in 1944 and now tonight we hold our thirty-second year celebration.

The Tuxis Movement and Tuxis Parliament have grown together. Across our country there are 10,000 boys enjoying a broad "four-fold" training program in Trail Ranger and Tuxis Groups.

Across Canada this week, older boys are meeting in Parliaments in the Maritimes, Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia. Parliament is proving an opportunity to develop young men for citizenship. Looking over the list of former Parliamentarians, we find them in leading posts in government, the professions, the church, farming and in business.

The Tuxis Movement owes much to this Parliament in developing the spirit of Tuxis, which is, stated briefly, "Life is not a goblet to be drained but a measure to be filled."

"TUXIS", a coined word, is made up as follows: "TUXIS for service—you and I on either side and no one but Christ between us."

**DINNER PROGRAM**

Chairman—J. Roger Flumerfelt

"O CANADA"

GRACE

DINNER

**PROGRAM**

COMMUNITY SINGING, led by Mr. Douglas Thornton  
Piano Accompanist, Mrs. J. Banister

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

VOCAL SOLO—June Forsey Rance.

TOAST TO TUXIS—Audrey Allison, President,  
Provincial C.G.I.T.

TOAST TO C.G.I.T.—Stuart Munro, Premier,  
Tuxis Parliament.

VIOLIN SOLO—Kenneth Perkins.

ADDRESS—His Worship Mayor Don H. Mackay,  
Calgary.  
(Former Member, 12th Tuxis Parliament of Alberta, 1931)

GOD SAVE THE KING

## **TUXIS Alumni Retreat Red Deer, March 20**

The annual Alumni Retreat will be held in Red Deer this year, at Gaetz Memorial United Church which is located at the intersection of 48 Avenue and 50 Street (Ross Street). We hope that the central location will allow alumni from Calgary to attend, without too much inconvenience. The Retreat will begin at 10:00 a.m., and should wrap up around 4:30 p.m.

The theme will be "2020 Vision", a look ahead to the next ten years. We need to consider the direction that the Parliament will take in the coming decade. Do we need to expand or update our programs? Should we consider a shorter session, or have "mini-sessions" throughout the year? What role will spirituality play in the Parliament? What will be our relationship with other model parliaments across Canada? These are all questions we need to address. Come to Red Deer and join in the discussion.

Directions: Gaetz Memorial United Church is located in the centre of Red Deer. Take any exit into Red Deer, and head toward the downtown. Get onto 48th Avenue. The Church is on the corner of 48 Avenue and Ross Street, opposite the Courthouse. There is parking behind the Church. Please note that Ross Street is a one-way street westbound.



## **TUXIS Alumni AGM Red Deer, March 21**

The Annual General Meeting of the TUXIS Parliamentary Alumni Society of Alberta will be held in Red Deer this year, at Gaetz Memorial United Church on Sunday, March 21, beginning at 2:30 p.m.

At the A.G.M., consideration will be given to adding the following Special Resolution:

THAT the Objects of the TUXIS Parliament of Alberta Alumni Society be amended by renumbering the present clause 3(c) as clause 3(d), renumbering the present clause 3(d) as clause 3(e), and adding the following as clause 3(c):

(c) to educate young people by working with members of the Western Canada Youth Parliament by organizing a session in Alberta from time to time.

### **My Journey to Rwanda**

**7:00pm**

**March 21st, 2010**

**Foothills United Church  
3803 69th Street Northwest  
Calgary, AB T3B 2J9**

Christine Magill will discuss her experiences from her two week visit to Rwanda in July. She will recount stories from genocide survivors, and both the horrors and the strength of humanity she witnessed.