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Guest minister marks church's 150th anniversary

Sesqui-centennial celebrations at St. John's Anglican Church are continuing with a special service this Sunday.

On June 28, (Memorial Sunday), Canon Ralph Spence, rector of St. Luke's Church, Burlington, will be the guest preacher. His subject will be "remembering the past" at the 9:30 a.m. service. The visitor will also officiate at the dedication of new stained glass windows in the narthex, donated by Michael and Mary Black of Campbellville.

Canon Spence is a world authority on heraldry and a noted historian of the Anglican Church in Canada.

It was in 1842 that a few rural families gathered together to form an Anglican congregation in the north Halton County community of Nassagaweya. Two years later, a simple white frame church was built at the northeast comer of the Guelph Line and No. 10 Sideroad.

It was replaced in 1870 by a stone edifice which still servies as the congregation's place of worship. The church cemetery is the resting place of many of the original families which comprised the early congregations.

Youth PERSPECTIVE with CONNIE RUSSELL

Deaf and hearing: the barriers

For as long as I can remember, I've lived in two worlds: one deaf, one hearing. The barriers are so strong, it's like they formed a thick bricked wall on each side, not allowing anyone to see what's on the other side. What about people like me, stuck in between? Where do we fit in? We struggle to find our identity, but we are rejected by both worlds.

was born and raised in a deaf world. Signing was my first language. When I was a young girl, I was thrust into a totally different society, one that was new to me: the hearing world. Integration, they called it, where deaf and hearing are brought together into a whole. An existence of togetherness, being together in spite of recognized differences.

I was so intimidated. I was afraid to talk, afraid to open myself, to run wild and free. What was I to think? All I could see were mouths moving, and I could barely hear a sound. Aliens, I thought. "Why can't I talk with my own hands? Oh where are my mummy and daddy?" I cried in my heart.

I became withdrawn, I refused to co-operate with a society that was so strange and unreal. I did not cry, I did not scream, I did not talk. I sat there and let them mould and transform me into a hearing person.

They fit me with a hearing aid, then spent hours talking into it. They put me in a room filled with mirrors. They taught me to speak, over and over again with the pah's and the bah's. Frustrated and tired, they wouldn't give up until I could utter a sound, then they'd leave me alone. I felt as though I were an experiment in a science lab.

Over the years, I learned to speak and hear. The hearing society, so proud of their success, said I was normal now.

"Normal," I thought angrily. "I am normal now."

Wearing hearing aids behind my ears, making me look like Dumbo. Talking through my nose, sounding like a robot. I was normal? I was treated differently. They looked at me differently. They don't accept me as a hearing person.

In the deaf world, they identify me as "hard of hearing". They don't accept me because I am partly-hearing. The deaf society loathes the hearing. They feel oppressed by the hearing society. They feel they are treated like puppets on a string: whatever the hearing say or do, the deaf must follow. They look at me as partly-hearing, so a side of them does not accept me.

The deaf society encourages me to be like them. I can't do that. I'm not going to stop talking and plug my ears for them. I feel like there is a noose tied around my neck, the hearing society pulling one end, the deaf, the other. They fight over me, the noose gets tighter and tighter . . am almost choking. I can hardly breathe.

Who am I? Why can't you accept me the way I am? Why can't you love me and cherish me because I'm different? I can live in two worlds and handle it. I am special, why can't you accept that? Please, let me

☐ Connie Russell is a Grade 11 student at E.C. Drury High School.

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