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## **OttawaWatch 163: West heads east ... maybe**

**By Lloyd Mackey**

*Those conservative and conserving trends reflected on Vancouver's west side remain fairly embedded but with some slippage, 14 years after this was written. My prime illustration, St. John's (Shaughnessy) Anglican was actually split not too long after this was written, with the old mother church remaining part of the Anglican Church in Canada and the larger and more conservative (Southern Cone) having to move out. They remain affiliated with the Anglican Network in Canada (ANiC) and meet in a Seventh Day Adventist Church about 20 blocks south of their old home. The congregation is known as St. John's Vancouver Anglican Church and its people look forward, some day, to having a building of their own, once more.*

*Just to reinforce the point I was intending to make in this piece: There remains a tendency for conservative and conserving influences in Canada -- both religious and political -- to come up from south of the Canada-US border, implant themselves in the west and eventually move eastward.*

This week's four federal by-elections are worth pondering in terms of their relative effects on future governance in Ottawa.

The two in the Toronto area held few surprises, in that the Liberals took them both with similar percentages to what they garnered in 2006. The Conservatives have not seemingly been able to get their breakthrough in the heart of the Big Tomato -- perhaps because they have not been able to find the right DNA for generating winning urban candidates.

Less so is the case in Vancouver Quadra, where the Conservative came within 150 votes of knocking off the Liberal, who, herself, was a former cabinet minister in the Gordon Campbell's right-leaning BC Liberal provincial government.

(We may well talk about another set of influences in the northern Saskatchewan by-election, which went to the Conservatives, in a future *OttawaWatch*.)

The differing Vancouver and Toronto election results gave tentative satisfaction to my theory with respect to things both religious and political. The nub of that premise is that interesting ideas and movements often start out in California, skitter up the west coast to Vancouver and begin their "Canadianizing" process before hopping over the mountains and prairies to begin to take hold in Toronto.

The results in Quadra are a counterbalancing of a firm Liberal hold on that riding that goes back at least 20 years. That is when it was the western political home of John Turner, during his short stint as prime minister and longer stay as opposition leader.

During most of the Chretien and Martin years of Liberal rule, Quadra was held by Stephen Owen, cousin to former Vancouver mayor Philip Owen. The Owen clan was a firmly established west side Vancouver family which, although generally identified as leaning Liberal, were definitely more centre or slightly right than left.

One interesting recent faith-based development highlights the kind of mixed-bag lib-con scenario of which I speak.

St. John's (Shaughnessy) Anglican Church, with a constituency of over 2,000, is the largest in its communion in Canada. Or, at least it was. It recently led the way for a couple of dozen Anglican churches across Canada, mostly reflecting conservative or orthodox ways of doing theology and church, to leave the Canadian communion. They voted to bring themselves under the authority of what is called the "Southern Cone."

I am not sure that I have used the exact terminology that Anglican leaders would, to describe what has been taking place. My point is that St. John's-type orthodoxy and west side Vancouver political conservatism is pretty deeply imbedded. But it will take a while to migrate east.

True, a number of Ontario Anglican congregations have moved to identify with the Southern Cone, as well. But the big St. Paul's (Bloor Street) – perhaps the closest Toronto equivalent to St. John's, has chosen, for now, not to make that move.

(Just a couple of parenthetic notes: Firstly, St. John's is not quite in Vancouver Quadra. That riding's eastern boundary is a few blocks to the west, but certainly Quadra is an important part of its congregational catchment area. And secondly, the Southern Cone, for non-Anglican readers, refers to a South American archdiocese, much more conservative in nature than the Canadian church, which has agreed to provide oversight to the "dissenting" congregations.)

All of which is to say that it might not be a bad idea to look at Vancouver for the kinds of conservative and conserving trends, in both faith and politics, that, with some geographic Canadianizing, might ultimate reshape large parts of the nation.

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