

Debate snub built momentum, says PC candidate Baxter



By Brock Weir

For Dorian Baxter, it is never about the size of the dog in the fight. Rather, it is about the size of the fight in the dog.

This is a philosophy that has served Mr. Baxter well as he sets himself the ambitious challenge to be Newmarket-Aurora's next Member of Parliament, representing the small Progressive Canadian Party, founded by former Federal cabinet minister Sinclair Stevens in response to the merger of the former Progressive Conservative Party of Canada and the Canadian Alliance well over a decade ago.

"It is my intention to run until I get in," says Mr. Baxter, founder of Newmarket's Christ The King Graceland Independent Anglican Church, a place of worship that melds Anglican teachings and the gospel of Elvis Presley. "I know people say to be realistic, but each time I run I run to win.

"I boxed in Africa and I never entered a boxing match expecting to lose. That doesn't mean I didn't lose some, but I will continue to run until I get in. I am 65 now and I have given myself until I am 100. That's 35 more years, so what's the hurry?"

It might take a while, but one of his main goals in running, he says, is to "protect the democratic process," something he argues was significantly underscored for him recently after not being invited to participate in the recent Newmarket-Aurora all-candidates' debate hosted by the Newmarket Chamber of Commerce.

It didn't keep him down; he organized a debate of his own at the Newmarket Legion — the home of his church — and was joined by Green Party candidate Vanessa Long in the process. Some might have seen this snub as a setback — and, indeed, Mr. Baxter did so at the time — but he now says it has been something of a boon to him and the party.

"Canadians cannot stand bullies," he says. "My phone has been ringing off the hook and I have never had more families call up for signs on their lawns. I am getting ready for a very exciting run for the finish. This has been the most exciting campaign I have ever been involved in. I have never had more people proactively contacting me and telling me they had never had any intention of voting for me, but now they are because of the assault on democracy by the Chamber. They did me the biggest favour they ever could have."

Also adding to the excitement this time around is the recognition. You can't mistake Mr. Baxter's look, but the recognition level in Newmarket-Aurora at the door has significantly increased. When he does go door to door, he brings with them a 10 point party platform. One of the most significant planks in the PC plan is to "awaken the current government out of its slumber" on trade.

The recently announced Trans-Pacific Partnership might give Canada access to some countries in Asia, but through Canada's ties with the Commonwealth and Francophonie, we have access to 40 per cent of world trade, ties which Mr. Baxter says are not being capitalized on.

It is also important to note that the Progressive Canadians "Are the only party with two wings" and is, essentially, "all four of the other parties rolled into one."

"We are the Red Tories, we are the Blue Liberals, and we're greener than the greens," he says. "We can match Green policies and go beyond. With the NDP, the big differential is we can match them program for program, but with our right ring we want to aim the money at the cause of social ills like poverty, and not the symptoms."

Funding post-secondary education remains a key tenet of the plan. Mr. Baxter's vision includes a Canada that removes barriers for academic students attending their post-secondary institutions with their first three years of education paid for by the government through "going after big banks and huge, profit-making real estate people" that would be mandated to help pay for it.

"We can do it," he says. "We literally are in a position to be able to take over the faltering leadership of the United States. The United States, unfortunately, is staggering and the torch is falling out of their hands. Canada has the opportunity not only to catch that torch, but to brandish it higher than it ever was brandished and return to the peacekeeping nation we are fully intended to be and the leader we need to be in climate change and recognizing this can be one of the most prosperous industries when we deal with solar energy, when we deal with wind energy and it is just waiting for us to create more and more jobs."