



ANGLICANS TOGETHER

NEWSLETTER No. 20 April 2003

The Chairman writes:

I am writing this at the beginning of Lent. Lent is a time of self examination and questioning. We examine our soul's health and allow ourselves to be scrutinised by the searching light of God. We do this so that we can celebrate the Easter Mysteries in presence of our mysterious, risen and glorified Lord Jesus Christ.

Of late, there has been a lot of soul searching concerning what it means to be an Anglican Christian, in the Diocese of Sydney.

Recently, the new Dean of Sydney the Very Reverend Phillip Jensen was "welcomed" to his new appointment. In his sermon Mr Jensen said that "Christians in Sydney are being pressured to preach at best a muted message of Christianity. Certainly not one that will deny falsehood". (Page 10) My concern is that Mr Jensen and others of his party believe that they are the arbiters of what is the truth, of what is the Gospel.

There is an absolute truth but none of us can claim to have it. **Ultimately God is the truth.** God is infinite and humans are finite and we cannot contain God in our feeble minds. Jesus is God yet he had to cover his true nature so that humans could comprehend him.

When Mr Jensen and all of us talk about the truth of Jesus and the truth of the Gospel, we are only bearing witness to the revelation of the truth that God has graciously given each of us. None of us will in this life ever have the capacity to know God's mind. If we think that we do we are sadly mistaken and deluded. We have made our wisdom a "golden calf" to worship. We have made a god in our own image. We were born into community and we need the other members of the community to gain a better understanding of life lived under the providence of God.

Bishop Keith Rayner, in a paper, 'The Future of the Anglican Church', *Common Theology, Vol 1 no 3 Lent 2003, p 9*, says very profoundly, **".. while we may confidently hold to the truth as we understand it, we rightly do so with humility and reticence. It also means that we should be open**

to learning from other's understanding of truth".

Traditional Anglicanism allows for learning from other's understanding of truth. As a result I respect Mr Jensen's freedom to hold his views. However, he and the party that supports him must understand that others may have a revelation of the truth from which, if they listen, they will benefit.

On a number of occasions I have been hectored on the phone and in the columns of the Sydney Morning

Herald for expressing a different point of view to that of the controlling party of the Diocese. This is not being humble and reticent. It is certainly not **"always treat(ing) others as you would like them to treat you; for that is the meaning of the law and the prophets"**. (Matt 7:12)

Let us rejoice that God is greater than any one of us, any one party, any one philosophy or culture. Our lives would be terribly boring if we knew everything about God and God's creation. That is why we must take special care to use Lent as a preparation for Easter.

Easter is the epitome of the unknown. God broke the bounds of the known and the expected. Jesus rose so that all may have life in abundance not in a limited and circumscribed way.

Christ is the Lord of the unexpected.

He is with us we know not how!

Christ is risen!

He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

This is the Gospel! This is the truth!

John Cornish

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Primate of the Anglican Church in Australia

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BOOKINGS ESSENTIAL FOR CATERING

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**HAVE YOU RENEWED
YOUR MEMBERSHIP?**

BOOK REVIEWS

Trinity and Subordinationism

by Kevin Giles

I suspect most Christians are suspicious of the 'doctrine of the Trinity' and have little confidence in it. It seems to defy all reason and logic to proclaim 'three in one and one in three'. Some take humorous refuge in the apparent desperation of the old Athanasian Creed:

***'The Father incomprehensible,
the Son incomprehensible, and
the Holy Spirit incomprehensible'.***

Yet the need for a comprehensible doctrine of the Trinity is all around us. Look at the Trinitarian questions raised in the shopping mall Christmas crib scene: How can God 'have' a 'Son', even by virgin birth, unless this Son is in some way inferior to the one true God?

Secular surveys of religious belief show the majority still believes in 'God' - so (they say) Christians ought to be encouraged by this. But is this the God Christians know as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit - or something merely generic, a paper-thin name for something vaguely transcendent like a cosmic architect?

We need an accessible and orthodox exposition of the doctrine of the Trinity. One, also, that precludes those modern developments whose agenda is less Trinitarian than polemic.

Kevin Giles has done us a great service in this book. **He has identified the main issues, the development of this doctrine, and outlined the key contributions made by figures like Athanasius, Augustine, Calvin and Barth.** For example, Giles shows that part of Athanasius' great

contribution was to find a new way consistent with Christian understanding, bypassing the futility of text warfare. Giles also discusses 'the women and slavery traditions' and how the Bible has been used/abused to defend the status quo for those in power. It deserves a wide reading on these grounds alone.

Giles charges that the Sydney Diocese 1999 Doctrine Commission Report on the Trinity is heretical, in introducing an innovation in an attempt to legitimate opposition to the ordination of women priests. He questions the validity of this innovation (and compares it with the classic heresy of subordinationism). The innovation is that the Son is eternally subordinate to the Father in ***will*** but not in ***being***. Therefore women can be permanently subordinate to men, without being inferior. It is the railway line to Auschwitz: any ethnic and/or religious group can be permanently subordinate to those in power, without being inferior, because that is what God is like. It is a track that morally I do not wish to take, let alone spiritually.

Giles' claim against the Doctrine Commission rests on their premise that permanent subordination in relationship does not imply inferiority of being - the fact that the Son is eternally obedient does not imply the Son is eternally inferior and subordinate. What about that Christmas baby in the shopping mall, again?

There is an exquisite irony in all this. Here the 'conservative evangelical' cause, so prompt and uncompromising to denounce others for innovations generating false doctrine, now finds itself under the microscope for innovation generating false doctrine. It should squirm.

*Reviewed by Canon James McPherson
St Mark's, Granville*

The Suicidal Church

by Caroline Miley

Here is a book which argues that if the Anglican Church in Australia is to survive it must rid itself of everything that stands in the way of its true mission. What is its true mission? In the author's words: **"spreading the good news of Christ is the reason for the existence of the church".** **You may think this sounds like a book that Archbishop Peter Jensen would be happy to endorse and make required reading in the diocese. But you would be wrong.** Caroline Miley does not come from the evangelical wing of the church and she has a rather different understanding of the Gospel's content than Sydney's Archbishop. This is what makes 'The Suicidal Church' an interesting and provocative read.

So why is the church in decline and numbers falling? Miley asserts its not the product but the way it is packaged and marketed that is the problem. The Church has become a large, cumbersome, outdated institution where 'mediocrity now rules in all areas' She examines every aspect of church life from the way our dioceses are organised to the food and drink we serve at morning tea. Nearly everything is weighed in the balances and found wanting. Many of her criticisms are valid and resonated with me. To give just one example. Miley argues that 'sexism is deeply embedded in the church's value structures' You don't have to go far to find examples of this even in those dioceses that ordain women as priests. Many of us know a significant number of women who have given up on the Anglican Church and worship elsewhere or nowhere because they have found it, at best patronising, or at worst, hostile to their ministry.

So what is Miley's solution? Nothing less than a total restructure of the organisation of the church from top to bottom. Away go dioceses, deaneries, synods, parish councils and parish boundaries and in comes a whole new infrastructure: a centralised authority which organises the whole church nationwide; determines stipends and pays the clergy, determines where the needs are greatest and distributes funds accordingly, publishes top quality literature for distribution to every parish and employs professional fund raisers to make sure the money keeps flowing in. Is such a solution practical ?

I suspect Miley has just abolished one bureaucracy and replaced it with another. She provides no statistics or costing to prove that the new one will be cheaper or more efficient. But the Miley solution has a more serious flaw in that it fails to address the most divisive issue currently facing our church. *That issue, which the book alludes to but doesn't seriously engage, is the debate over the nature of the product we are selling.* Miley's gospel is focussed on the love of God in Christ and his acceptance of all people irrespective of race, gender, sexual orientation and socio-economic status. This gospel differs from that proclaimed in the evangelical wing of the church and particularly its distinctive Sydney Diocese expression, which starts with human rebellion and our need to be rescued from God's punishment by believing in Christ's saving death on the cross. These gospels may intersect at some points but they can be profoundly different in their outcomes. Witness the difference between Miley's complete acceptance of gay people at every level of church life and the refusal of many Sydney clergy to admit

openly gay people to the Eucharist. Miley seems to assume that there is a broad consensus within the Anglican Church as to what is essentially Anglican and that only a sectarian minority holds differing views. Her solution is that the latter group should just do the decent thing and leave the Anglican fold. Life is not that simple. *The issue is essentially about how we interpret the Scriptures and until we can come to a common mind on this, or at least agree to differ on the issue, our internal warring and suspicion of one another will continue. It is that which, I believe, is making us a suicidal church.*

None the less, we should be grateful to Caroline Miley for writing this book because it gives us the clear and challenging perspective of someone new to the faith and new to that strange, irritating but sometimes lovable institution the Anglican Church of Australia. Above all, she reminds us that evangelism is not just a word for evangelicals but essential for the whole people of God.

Philip Bradford
Rector, Anglican Parish of Hunters Hill

This is an abridged version of a longer review article soon to appear in the May edition of Eremos Magazine, published by the Eremos Institute. Website: www.eremos.org.au

JESUS SPEAKS TO HIS DISCIPLES

On Love

I give you a new commandment: love one another; as I have loved you, so you are to love one another. If there is this love among you, then everyone will know that you are my disciples. *John 13:34,35*

On Peace

Peace is my parting gift to you, my own peace, such as the world cannot give. Set your troubled hearts at rest, and banish your fears. *John 14:27*

"ANGLICANS TOGETHER ONLINE"

Visit our website: www.anglicanstogether.org
For information: email: johncorn@zipworld.com.au

THE PRAYER BOOK SOCIETY

The Prayer Book Society in Australia owes its origin to Dr Llew Wheeler. It began in 1979 with a meeting at St Thomas' North Sydney. Dr Wheeler and the then Rector of North Sydney, the Rev'd Harry Edwards remain NSW Patrons. There are other Australian branches and sister societies overseas.

The Society seeks to keep in "living use" the 1662 Prayer Book Services - not in any rigid, "fundamentalist" manner, but with appropriate flexibility and variation.

The Society does not want only Prayer Book Services. It recognises the place of variations to the Prayer Book provided "for use together with the BCP", "the standard of worship" for our Church. In 2002, the NSW branch published Henry Speagle's work, "The Conscience of the Church: an Essay", noting not all have honoured the original commitment to maintain the BCP services as a regular part of our Church's worship." The Society published in 2001 Bishop Robinson's "What is Liturgy?" with its special references to Australia.

English PBS provides scholarly, theological, linguistic and sociological defences of Prayer Book liturgy and its literally memorable, "familiar beauty". It needs *time* to become familiar as its riches are gradually revealed. There are signs that the case is now gaining stronger support. Paul Collins in Chris McGillion's recent book about the Roman Church quotes Thomas Berry's words: "*Religion is poetry or it is nothing*".

'Modern liturgy' can be poetic. AAPB and APBA often succeed better than England's alternative books. The new service book prepared for use in Sydney Diocese is criticised on other grounds - as being contrary to the BCP's doctrine of Communion and Ministry. It is increasingly difficult to find truly Anglican worship in Sydney Diocese - 'traditional' or 'modern' - God-centred, prayer-ful and reverent.

The Prayer Book Society, like Anglicans Together, the Anglican Historical Society, the Mothers' Union and SOMA, happily brings together all sorts of people - traditional conservative evangelicals, those of the broad church, those mildly High Church or Anglo-catholic. Members seek the opportunity to worship - in festive or frugal fashion - according to the BCP.

The Society's 2003 program: Quarterly Prayer Book Days - **May 3rd**, St Peter's Hornsby; **August 2nd**, St Peter's, Campbelltown (Sydney's oldest Anglican Church, 1823) - the theme appropriately - "God and architecture". **November 1st** All Saints, Woollahra. **24th May**, 2.00 pm Evensong, St Alban's Leura "The BCP: Empire relic?". **5th July**, 11 am Sung Matins, St Paul's Bankstown "Christmas in July" - a Christmas style lunch; **13th September** - 2.00 pm Evensong, St James' Turramurra "BCP and Caring for Creation"..

Dr John Bunyan

Member of the Australian Academy of Liturgy

***When the Going gets Tough,
Spirituality gets Going***

The year began for me with a student collapsing and dying of a rare disease on the first day of Orientation Week. His fellow students were aghast and disbelieving. Such a thing just does not happen. I had to ring his mother, and the next morning picked her up at the airport and took her to the city morgue. The tears made it hard to drive.

Our lives do not consist only of smooth rhythms. They are also violently disrupted by such tragedies. How do we get through things like this? How can we keep peace at the centre when the perimeter is in turmoil?

If our lives, made up of such rhythms and disruptions, are to be thought of as works of art, how do we ensure that they are well composed? **How can we bring the story of our lives into line with God's story?**

How can we reinvent ourselves, recover motivation, and cope with aging?

How can we really listen to another person instead of being deafened by our own problems? When encountering many potential objects of love, how can we avoid idolatry and love God above all?

How can our Christian faith transform our workplace, home and everyday experiences, leading us into greener fields and enlarged spaces?

For me, these are pressing - even desperate - questions. ***I am seeking the grace which answers those questions in the rich resources of Christian spirituality.***

I am now in the fourth year of teaching a course on 'Christian Spirituality' for the Macquarie Christian Studies Institute, Macquarie University. ***'Knowing and Experiencing God'*** is an introductory course to the history of Christianity and to the practice of the spiritual disciplines. It is an opportunity to address the above issues.

In getting a grip, or allowing God to get a grip, on one's day and one's life, we have found that journaling and reflecting on and sharing our spiritual autobiographies helps some. I was intrigued to learn, in a recent seminar conducted by Tom and Christine Sime for the Macquarie Christian Studies Institute at Macquarie University, that courses on life preparation for graduates are now being offered in Seattle. It is no doubt foolishness to believe that we can plan our lives, but probably greater foolishness not to try. For many, the election of a way of living for Jesus, which is the object of an Ignatian retreat, has been the means of getting a grip on one's life for God.

As for allowing the Lord to get a grip on us daily, the old heart of the weary Christian struggles to maintain the discipline of daily Bible reading.

'Lectio divina,' a way of reading the Bible developed by the desert father, and which actually incorporates four of the spiritual disciplines, has proved a **nourishing discipline** for me in recent years.

As for 'remotivation' - the courage to get up and keep going and continuing to expect renewal of hope, refreshment of purpose, and timely redirection - there is unlimited inspiration to be found in the writings of those who have responded to God's initiative in Jesus, which is what Christian spirituality is. Consider *Hildegard of Bingen* who could not find a word sufficient to describe the refreshment she found in Christ. So she coined the Latin word '*viriditas*', the greening, and applied it to Christ.

As for the 'battle of loves', it is essential to be honest with ourselves about what it is that we love most. For what we love most fashions who we are. I cannot dislodge from my mind and heart the image of *Francis of Assisi* who not only took Christ as his compass, but also as his true north. **Christ is the destination as well as the direction.**

I could go on: the gems are plentiful. But why not consider doing such a course for yourself? It is a course which seems to work for many, perhaps because it is taken and taught by the tired and the desperate!!

"Knowing and Experiencing God" has been taken by almost equal numbers of credit and 'audit only' students, both Australian and international. Far more women have taken it than men. We meet for two and a half hours each week for a University

Session (13 weeks) and we have a Retreat focussing on the 'spirituality of transformation'.

Stuart Piggin
Macquarie Christian Studies Institute
Telephone 9936 6026

STUDENT EVALUATIONS OF THE COURSE

- * I can't even describe how cool it is to get credit for a subject you really love.
- * It is a very practical Course.
- * It allowed me to grow intellectually, personally and spiritually, all at the same time.
- * The Retreat we had would have to be the highlight of my year.
- * I thoroughly enjoyed the Course and feel enriched by all that I have learnt and the new friends made.
- * This Course has extended my own ability to seek answers to some of the deeper questions in life.

A DAY of QUIET and REFLECTION

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WHY I AM AN ANGLICAN

A 22 year old final year law student, Jennifer Anne writes about her reasons for being baptised in the Anglican Church.

As a pilgrim – or better yet – a refugee from typical Sydney Anglicanism, it has been most obvious for me to define my interest in 'High Anglicanism' in terms of opposition. I am a 'High' Anglican because I did not like my experience of 'Low' or 'Sydney' Anglicanism. But this is a glib answer – particularly when, like so many other young escapees from Sydney churches, I could have remained estranged entirely from the Church.

I use the term 'High Anglicanism' in opposition to what Archbishop Peter Jensen has most recently defined as 'Bible Believing Churches', but has in the past been known as 'low church', 'evangelicalism', 'fundamentalism' or even 'Reparism' (or even further back, 'puritanism'). 'High' Church should most

literally be used only to describe a dedication to a type of liturgical practice and theological positioning, but has come, at least in Sydney, to be in part also identified with a particular theo-political position. In Sydney, 'high' Anglicanism (incorporating what in other dioceses is termed 'middle Anglicanism') represents a political stance against a repressive, unjust and silencing regime embodied in a strict theology founded almost entirely upon a literalist interpretation of the Bible.

'High' Anglicanism, experienced through my church, St Alban's Epping, has become my spiritual home – not (only) because of what I am opposed to, but also because of what it positively is in my life.

Within the context of a "bible believing" theology, faith is a product and expression of rationality and reason and therefore must be understood as rational and reasonable. Faith which is not expressed within the terms of this 'bible believing' theology is either incorrect (poorly rationalised) or emotive (irrational). Leading on from this, Sydney theology relies upon a Cartesian dualism: Christianity is seen as a capacity exclusively of the mind, in opposition to the body. These two oppositions: rational/emotive and mind/body serve to render the non-rational and the bodily response to God inferior and suspect. Establishing such oppositions also serves to ensure that the emotive can never be rational, that faith experienced in ways other than cognitive can never be reasonable. At St Alban's I have found all these aspects of faith validated.

'High Anglicanism' expresses a theological context where many competing theologies, ontologies, epistemologies and philosophies can be and are discussed, in a critical and inclusive way. My own interests, in feminism, sexual ethics, queer theory and postmodernism are at least engaged with – which is an experience not granted by the seemingly unitary 'bible believing' theological context of Sydney Diocese.

Additionally, through the style of worship in the 'High Church', *I find I am encouraged to experience my faith and God not purely in a cognitive sense but with my body in all her senses, my mind, spirit, and heart.* Liturgy in my church engages my physical body – I kneel, I genuflect, bow, sign the cross, touch holy water, taste wafer and wine, smell incense, feel the heat of candles, see light, observe icons, hear and sing music. When I consciously and unconsciously respond to God, my body is immediately and integrally part of that. In my church my faith is not in my head alone, but also in every part of me. *There is beauty for me in my faith, even as I hold my faith.*

My love affair for this style of worship was gradual – and awakened a deep ardour for God, a romantic, even erotic kind of faith where my Christianity is allowed to be in every part of my life like a pulse.

The more aware of how I experience God – that I experience God at all, despite being labelled as 'back sliding' by my former church – *the more I came to revere the idea that God is a mystery. The more mysterious I found God, the more I realised that St Alban's, her liturgy, her people, her priests, also revered God as mystery. God was not determined only and absolutely by clear and strict biblical analysis. Even as my Church pursues intelligence and wisdom, she preserves a wonder and awe at an ultimately unknowable deity.*

This Church, strongly proud and confident in her theology(s), liturgical practice, commitment to social justice, community and to me as an individual, nurtured my faith, which little by little has bloomed. I was mind and body, Christian and woman, capable of wisdom and young, intelligent and seeking learning, committed, serious and fun and frivolous. And the more secure I felt in all of this, the more I realised that my body needed to be part of this new and beautiful experience of God.

So for all these reasons I decided to be baptised – an event I perceived (and experienced) not merely as a symbolic or dead and meaningless act still provided for by tradition – but a passionate consummation of a deep and inarticulatable desire.

Although later the same year I was also confirmed, my baptism at the Easter Sunday Dawn Service, 2002, remains the single most exciting and terrifying moment in my life.

In "The Potter God", Graeme Rutherford writes: (p.37) "Christians ought to have a **high view of baptism**. It was instituted by Jesus and it is an integral part of the great commission. Baptism has been universally practised in the church. The writers of the New Testament letters took it for granted that their readers had been baptised."

The New Testament writers see baptism and justification by faith as the *outside* and the *inside* of the same things. "You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were **baptised into Christ** have clothed yourselves with Christ."

(Galatians 3:26,27)

"Baptism now saves you".

(1 Peter 3:21)

A question for reflection or discussion: **Do you or your church have a tendency to devalue this sacrament?**

PARTY POLITICS

The Anglican Church League and the Standing Committee of Sydney Synod: which has more influence within the Diocese?

Some churchmen and women in Sydney talk with baited breath about the 'sinister' influence of the Anglican Church League. A recent article in *The Good Weekend* (29-30 March 2003) even suggested that it could teach the party machine of the NSW Labor Right a thing or two about pre-selection and factionalism. **What is the Anglican Church League and what does it do?**

Its current website describes the League as 'an association of evangelical Australian Anglican Christians who desire to maintain the reformed, protestant and evangelical character of the Anglican Church. This character is based on Scripture and is expressed in the Book of Common Prayer and the Thirty Nine Articles of Religion.' The membership form on the website requires prospective members to declare that they belong to the Anglican Church of Australia and that they accept the authority of Holy Scripture and the teaching of the Thirty Nine Articles. (There is no mention on the membership form of the Book of Common Prayer, and since the writer is honorary secretary of the NSW branch of the Prayer Book Society she knows that none of the listed office-bearers of the ACL is an active member of that body.) However the important qualification is that one must be sponsored by an existing member of the League. ***Joining the ACL is like joining a gentlemen's club or a masonic lodge: one could be blackballed.***

What does the League do? The website tells us that 'The ACL is active in Sydney Synod affairs. It offers advice to Synod members about people suitable for election to committees and other bodies which influence the quality and direction of Church life. The Council, through its members, nominates people for positions on committees within Sydney Diocese.' In other words, it pre-selects candidates and issues how-to-vote tickets.

Who is on the Council of the League? Once it was dominated by the clergy and the list of vice-presidents emeritus (13 clergy and 2 laymen) reflects this. The current Council favours the laity slightly. It consists of 20 clergymen and 22 lay persons, of whom two are women. The present Archbishop's staunchest and most outspoken supporters are all on it.

The Standing Committee of Sydney Synod meets monthly and the minutes of its meetings, chaired by the Archbishop, appear on the diocesan website. It functions as the executive arm of the Synod but it is not overtly polemical. **Since however the Synod meets for only a few days in the year, the**

Standing Committee is in control of the ongoing affairs of the Diocese and its finances. The Archbishop, the Regional Bishops, the Archdeacons, the Chancellor, the Registrar, the Diocesan Secretary and the Dean are all *ex-officio* members. The five regions of the Diocese each elect two clerical representatives and four lay persons. The Synod as a whole elects four clerical representatives and eight lay persons. The current membership (at 7 March 2003) is 26 clergy, 31 lay persons and one vacancy. Archdeacon Narelle Jarrett belongs and there are three other women regional and Synod representatives. **The regional lay representatives are the ones who add variety to its membership.** None of the current archdeacons is on the council of the ACL; however the replacement for Archdeacon Trevor Edwards, Deryck Howell, has been assistant minister of St Matthias' Centennial Park for the past 20 years. Neither is the regional bishop of South Sydney on the ACL Council. However 20 male ACL office-bearers are also members of the Standing Committee. One can expect that this number will increase in the future.

* * * *

Party political organisations within the Church of England have been with us for 150 years.

Fitted out with their own print journals, they are a product of divisions over churchmanship in the mid nineteenth century. The first was the English Church Union, founded in 1860 to promote the cause of the Oxford Movement. Its journal (which still appears) is *The Church Times*. Its rival was the Church Association, founded in 1865 to campaign against ritualism. Those two Associations clashed violently, in prosecutions (and imprisonments) under the (English) Public Worship Regulation Act of 1874 and in evidence before the Royal Commission into Ecclesiastical Discipline (1904). The performance was not edifying.

No such legal battles were possible in the Australian colonies, where the Church was not established. However local branches of both the ECU and the CA were formed in Sydney and Melbourne. Again, the ECU was first in the field - its Sydney branch began in 1880 and in the early 1890s it published briefly *The Banner and Anglo-Catholic Review*. A branch of the CA was formed in Sydney in 1886 as a lay organisation, and took over the existing *Church of England Record* as its publication. Their battlefields tended to be the occasional episcopal election or **specific causes, like the new reredos at St Andrew's Cathedral in the late 1880s and the vestiarian controversies at St James, King Street and Christ Church St Laurence in 1910-11.** However bishops, like

Saumarez Smith (Sydney 1890-1909), who favoured a consensus approach, limited their influence. Their other limitation was their tendency to splinter.

As Bishop Donald Robinson has shown authoritatively in the second Moore College Library Lecture, the Anglican Church League was formed out of other evangelical organisations sometime during 1909. The See of Sydney was vacant at the time and the ACL's founder, the then Canon F. B. Boyce promoted the successful candidature of Archbishop J. C. Wright. (The other candidate, the Rev'd. W. H. Griffith Jones, was said to be *too* 'Low Church' - the only available photo of him showed him in collar and tie!) With constitutional links to the National Church League in England rather than the Church Association, **the ACL in Sydney initially comprehended many shades of evangelical opinion.** It was a 'centre-unity' Evangelical party; the only Evangelical organisation in Australia dominated by the clergy.

The climate of the 1920s, however, encouraged the strengthening of allegiances and the adoption of pre-selection at Synod elections. The example of political parties in secular politics, the increasing power the Standing Committee (which was no longer merely an Advisory Council) and Archbishop Wright's declining health, all contributed to the need for a more tightly knit structure in the Diocese. Constitutional and other connections beyond Sydney were quietly dropped and so too was the League's patronage of selected 'High Churchmen', who previously had been allocated a proportion of elected positions.

The ACL came into its own in 1933, when it secured the election of Archbishop Howard Mowll. At this point it finally lost its comprehensiveness. Two of its most respected members, the Dean (the Very Rev'd. A. E. Talbot) and the Principal of Moore Theological College (the Ven. D. J. Davies) were at the time president and a vice president of the ACL. They were liberal as distinct from conservative Evangelicals; both supported another candidate and both disapproved of the methods used to secure Mowll's election. They resigned from the ACL and formed their own grouping, the 'Anglican Fellowship'. With their deaths in 1936 and 1935 respectively, the Fellowship dissolved. The League gave Mowll every support.

At the end of Mowll's episcopate, however, the ACL was split on two significant issues. At the Synod of 1959, called to elect Mowll's successor, the ACL divided its support among the three coadjutor bishops, Kerle, Hilliard and Loane, with the result that an outsider from England, Hugh

Rowlands Gough, was elected. In the Diocesan Synod in 1960, the ACL unsuccessfully opposed the adoption of a new constitution for the Anglican Church in Australia, although its president, the Rev'd. T. C. Hammond, Principal of Moore College, voted in favour.

Gough's short episcopate saw a period of detente within the Diocese, with considerable restructuring and centralisation of its administration (and a consequent increase in the power of the Standing Committee). A form of proportional representation on Standing Committee was adopted, whereby two lay and two clerical 'Central Churchmen' were elected. However with the unexpected departure of Archbishop Gough in 1966, **the ACL successfully supported the nomination of Marcus Loane as Archbishop.**

Proportional representation on Standing Committee has survived in the form of elected regional representatives. **The Diocese remains highly centralised in administration.** Any attempt on the floor of Synod to subdivide the See is strongly opposed by Standing Committee and the ACL, on the grounds that it would be difficult to divide the Church's financial resources equitably and that subdivision might weaken the evangelical character of the whole. In the day-to-day management of the Diocese, the Standing Committee is very much in control.

On the other hand, the ACL exerts its greatest influence when Synod is in session. These days no candidate for any committee succeeds without ACL endorsement. Clergymen who seek promotion in the Diocese join the League. With all the significant posts - the bishopric, the deanery, Moore College and most regional bishoprics now in the hands of one faction, the influence of both bodies may be said to have been consolidated. The consensus approach of former times has been lost. **It is for such a consensus that Anglicans Together contends.**

Websites for the Diocese of Sydney and the ACL:

<www.sydney.anglican.asn.au>

<www.acl.asn.au>;

Stephen Judd & Kenneth Cable, *Sydney Anglicans* (Sydney, 1987); Donald Robinson, **The Origins of the Anglican Church League** (lecture delivered 9 April 1976; typescript copy, Moore College Library).

Ruth Frappell

Senior Vice President, Anglican Historical Society, Diocese of Sydney; Past President, Royal Australian Historical Society.

New Archdeacon for South Sydney Region

The Rev'd Deryck Howell, presently on the staff of St Matthias' Centennial Park has been appointed Archdeacon of South Sydney, following the Rev'd Trevor Edwards' departure

to be Rector of the parish of Wanniasa and Archdeacon in the Diocese of Canberra & Goulburn.
Mr Howell will take up his appointment on 12th May 2003.

Sydney Movement for the Ordination of Women

20th Anniversary Celebration Dinner



Friday 16 May - 7.00 pm for 7.30 pm

Special Guests - Four National Presidents

*Patricia Brennan, Janet Scarfe,
Patricia Hayward and Val Gaydon*

Meriden School (Wallis Hall) Redmyre Rd
Strathfield (Parking in Redmyre Rd)

Cost: \$45 - 2 course meal - BYO

RSVP (with cheque) by Thursday 8th May 2003

Enquiries: Elaine 02 9747 3276; Carol 02 9949
4561

Published by Anglicans Together

Opinions expressed in the Newsletter are those of
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Editor: Moya Holle, PO Box 429 Glebe NSW 2037

ART AND THE CHURCH *A Personal Comment*

One of the things I find most disturbing about the Anglican Church, particularly in Sydney, is its lack of commitment to the cultural life of the community. *Sydney has a great heritage of churches from the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (mostly build for Tractarian worship), but we have developed very little over the last few decades to hand on to future generations.*

This lack of interest in the arts, as an expression of our Christian faith, is lamentable. At the basis of this lack is a theological attitude as to what the church building, and its interior, represents. If it is just a 'meeting house' where worship is reduced to long sermons and banal songs, then any place is appropriate. It is interesting to note that in some churches in Sydney these days, meetings (not services) are conducted preferably in the parish hall rather than in the church itself.

However, if the church building is a symbol of the transcendent, *the place which inspires prayer,*

where God's word is expressed and where the sacraments are celebrated within the Christian community, then a different attitude must apply. It is sadly evident that, with few exceptions, little encouragement is given, in the Sydney diocese, to the arts: arts such as painting, sculpture, the crafts, fine music and contemporary 'liturgical' architecture that express the Anglican heritage.

There is a Calvinistic fear of symbolism and even 'beauty'. It is interesting to note that Protestant traditions are not all Calvinistic. For example the German and Scandinavian Lutheran churches retained their medieval art - the use of the crucifix and candles on their altars and many of the old Christian customs associated with the Church's liturgical year. This is unlike the devastating iconoclasm of the British Puritans.

One could question whether art is necessary in society at all, but a community in which the arts are ignored or rejected hardly has any claim to be civilised. All genuine art has a spiritual dimension. It can lead one to a sense of awe and deep emotion. Not all art is necessarily religious in the sense that it is appropriate for the church.

So what is to be looked for in a painting, sculpture, stained glass or craft which makes it a religious work and suitable as an expression of Christian spirituality in a church building?

Firstly, it should be liturgical; a visual expression; an aid to the Church's faith and worship. It is not merely a decoration.

- * It should proclaim the Christian message.
- * It should encourage prayer and meditation.
- * It should be theologically appropriate.
- * It should be accessible and comprehensible to all.
- * It should relate to the architecture.
- * It should be professional and well designed.
- * It should not encourage art which is shallow or sentimental.

Once these requirements have been acknowledged by the artist, he or she should be left unimpeded in the work; although ongoing discussion may be required.

The Christian church has a great tradition as a patron of the arts as part of its message; from the art of the catacombs, the splendid art of Byzantium, the art of the medieval and renaissance periods, to much contemporary art in Europe and the Americas. Sadly, iconoclasm has had a profound and devastating influence in different periods of the history of the church; the iconoclast movement in the eastern church and the appalling destruction during the reformation and the commonwealth in England and Scotland.

In England little remains of the wealth of painting, sculpture, stained glass and the crafts, destroyed indiscriminately by many of the reformers in what was in reality a 'cultural revolution'. Within the Anglican tradition a positive attitude to sacred art has generally been retained, even though there is little evidence of it in the diocese of Sydney.

In an age when the media occupies such a significant part of our lives, and when the importance of visual experience is acknowledged - as can be seen by the influence of advertising, television, and constant visual and sensory

bombardment - it is curious that some sections of the church have taken such a negative attitude to the arts.

The visual arts, fine church architecture, music and good liturgy (however simple) can do much to inspire devotion, expound the Bible and educate the people in the Faith.

Earle Backen is a Sydney artist.

Until his retirement, he was the Director of the B.F.A. Programme in the City Art Institute (now the College of Fine Arts, University of NSW). This year Earle Backen was awarded the A.M. for his services to contemporary art, and for his contribution to tertiary art education.

APPLICATION FOR NEW OR RENEWED MEMBERSHIP

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