



# ANGLICANS TOGETHER

## NEWSLETTER No.26 May 2005

ANGLICANS TOGETHER ONLINE: <[www.anglicanstogether.org](http://www.anglicanstogether.org)>

### Chairman's Column

The season of Easter comes to an unbelievable conclusion with the celebration of Pentecost. The followers of Jesus are given the power of God in different ways to go into all the world to tell the story to all who listen that Jesus is the Messiah of God. All who believe receive the forgiveness of their sins, acceptance by God and are commissioned to pass on the Good News of the Resurrected Christ. They are commissioned to go with their talents to do God's work. **The followers of Christ, the people of the Way, are all different. None of us is the same. We each have an unique story to tell of our encounter with the risen Lord.**

**The Anglican Church comprises people who are all different. None of us has the right to say to the other that their experience of God is invalid or incorrect.** No matter what tradition we may come from we need each other to get a clearer picture of the God of Pentecost who is beyond names and shapes. If any of us claims to know who God is, in an absolute way, and without any doubt, then *"We have followed too much the devices and desires of our own hearts"*. (**BCP Morning Prayer Confession**) Together, Calvinists, Catholics, Evangelicals, Charismatics, Liberals, and any other label we wish to attach to ourselves, all are members of the Anglican Church. The Anglican Church, Diocese of Sydney is not solely the domain of the Calvinists.

With this in mind, I encourage you to read the recently published book, *"The Chosen Ones, The Politics of Salvation in the Anglican Church"* by Chris McGillion, Allen and Unwin. McGillion is a Roman Catholic, a lecturer in Journalism and a sometime religious affairs writer for *the Sydney Morning Herald*. His book therefore can be seen to have been written without an agenda. The book contains a valuable overview of the political machinations that took place in recent times

resulting in the takeover of the Diocese by the extreme Calvinists, neo-Puritans. You may have seen a review of the book in a recent edition of *"Southern Cross"*, where it was damned. I suggest it was improper for the review to be published when it was a full month before the book was available. In so doing, it prohibited anyone else commenting on its content. In addition, to add insult to injury, the principal reviewer was the Reverend Canon Bruce Ballantine-Jones, one of the chief protagonists in the takeover. Neither, Dr Horsburgh nor I whose comments are noted in the book was asked to comment upon the book by the Editor of *"Southern Cross"*.

I note with pleasure that the *Right Reverend Brian Farran*, who grew up in Sydney, has been elected the Bishop of Newcastle.

In conclusion, I invite you to speak up in public when you have something to say about the Church and not allow the Anglican Church to be destroyed by the party in power. Do not be frightened by the powerful. As ordinary members of the Anglican Church, clergy and laity alike, we all have a right to our opinion. Calvin tried to run a church state that forbade difference. The Anglican Church is a church of diversity, not uniformity. What a dreadful world it would be if we all thought and spoke in the same manner and what a terrifying god we would be worshipping. The God of Easter and Pentecost is a God of surprises and a God who cannot be constrained by the *"devices and desires of our own hearts"*.

**John Cornish**  
Rector, St Alban's Anglican  
Church, Epping

# THE MINISTRY OF DEACON

## *A Personal Reflection*

*By Sandra Salmon*

**A deacon is an ordained minister in the Church who particularly takes on the servant ministry of Christ in the world.** All Christians are called to be servants, living like Jesus who came not to be served but to serve, (Matthew 20: 28). But the Deacon, in particular, reminds the whole Church that **service is the essence of the Christian life.**

This is not a type of service that is groveling or weak but one of dignity. The Ordinal puts it beautifully; (*A Prayer Book for Australia* p. 785) "You are to be an ambassador of Christ, serving God as you serve others in Jesus' name." I would encourage you to read this exhortation in the Ordinal. It sums up for me what it means to be a Deacon.

James Bamett's book *The Diaconate* published in 1979 was one of the first books I read, which helped me to understand the history of the diaconate as well as its renewal. **The idea that the diaconate is merely a steppingstone to the priesthood is changing.** There are many men and women serving as deacons in the Anglican Church and other Churches, in Australia and the world, whose prime vocation is the diaconate. Others, of course, are transitional and may be ordained to the priesthood.

I firmly believe though, that there is only one diaconate whether distinctive or transitional. **The distinctive (sometimes called permanent or vocational) diaconate is not a new order but part of the historic three-fold order of ministry in the Church.** Being a deacon for me is a lifelong vocation. It is something I am not just something that I do.

**There is a wonderful network of deacons throughout the Anglican Church in this country. Every two years we hold a conference, which is a great encouragement to all who attend.** The most recent conference held in the Diocese of Riverina, last year, helped us to make connections and opened our eyes to the varied ministries of deacons

working in the community and the Church across Australia. Amongst our number were deacons ministering in schools, hospitals, universities, parishes, theological colleges and welfare agencies in cities, regional towns, and rural areas. We even had a couple of "real Archdeacons" and, of course, the faithful deaconesses who continue to support the gathering and still have significant ministries in many areas.

In 2001, Australia hosted the World Diaconal Conference in Brisbane where hundreds of deacons, deaconesses and diaconal workers gathered from all over the world. This year the conference will be held in the United Kingdom at Durham in July.

The ministry of the deacon is an exciting one of service in the world and in the Church. It involves proclamation of the Gospel in both word and deed and in particular, the deacon has the responsibility to encourage all Christians (bishops, priests and people) in this same ministry.

Like all Christians, we fall short in so many ways but the essence of our calling is • servant hood, the servant hood of Christ. Together we encourage our fellow Christians in the great challenge of living and exploring this life of service.

People have asked me what I think of the proposals within Sydney Diocese for the Diaconate. In the Australian situation, every Diocese, of course, is different. I am in contact with the deacons throughout Australia and they experience varying degrees of support from their Dioceses. Canberra/Goulburn and Brisbane, in particular, have been great leaders in support for the Diaconate. Other smaller Dioceses have also been very supportive of the diaconate. The Diocese of Sydney has a different theological understanding of the Diaconate (as it does of the Priesthood) to any I have ever experienced.

I am concerned about the report I read in the November 2004 edition of the "*Southern Cross*" which stated that through this proposal it would **"be easier for people to relinquish their holy orders when they are no longer licensed as a deacon, such as women who marry and fall pregnant."**

**Over the last 30 years or more, there has been a renewal in the Church's understanding of the diaconate as a full and equal order of ministry.**

In my theological understanding, one is ordained for life. **I believe God calls people to be deacons just as he calls others to be priests.** In my case, my vocation was tested by the Church through a long process of study, reflection, and training. Finally I was accepted and ordained. **It is not a job but a vocation to which I have dedicated my life as a servant of Christ and his Church.**

The tasks I perform as a deacon may well change; as they have done over 16 years of ordained ministry. However, the reality of being a deacon and serving God through this vocation does not change. It is a commitment for life. Marriage and family have, I believe, enhanced my ministry as a deacon rather than diminished it.

My view, I know, is a minority one in this Diocese but I live in hope that all these new deacons will come along to our National Conferences every two years and discover what the rest of us are learning about the wonderful renewal of the ministry of deacon.

If you wish to know more about 'deacons' visit the website, [www.aussiedeacons.org.au](http://www.aussiedeacons.org.au).

*Sandra Salmon, Parish Deacon  
St John's Anglican Church, Dee Why*



## **'GOD AND ME' Series**

*An Evening with John Bell*

Friday, May 6<sup>th</sup> 7.30 pm – 9.00 pm

Pitt Street Uniting Church, Pitt Street, Sydney

Fee: \$20/\$15 concession – includes supper

Contact: Willow Connection – 02 9948 3957

[info@willowconnection.com.au](mailto:info@willowconnection.com.au)

**John Bell is a member of the Iona Community and a minister of the Church of Scotland.**

John spends much time working in the areas of music and liturgy at conferences in different parts of the world.

With his colleagues in the *Wild Goose Worship and Resource Groups* he has produced over 15 collections of songs and hymns and a wide range of liturgical material.

**John Bell is an entertaining, challenging and inspiring speaker.**

**For information on other events with John Bell between 5th-12<sup>th</sup> May,**

**Contact Willow Connection – 02 9948 3957.**

## **ANGLICANS DINE OUT TOGETHER**

### **An Annual Event**

In October last year over 260 people sat down to dinner St Alban's Parish Church Hall, Epping and were efficiently and wonderfully catered for by St Alban's Parish Social Committee.

The very large hall (and stage) was filled with people. Old friends – new friends – gathered from all over Sydney, coming from more than twenty parishes. **This happy occasion saw people from different persuasions of Anglican thought and practice enjoying each others company, chatting, exchanging views on any number of topics – theological, pastoral, liturgical.**

The Guest Speaker was **Dr Muriel Porter**, formerly of Sydney and now a member (for Melbourne Diocese) of both General Synod and its Standing Committee.

Muriel's address titled "*Living on the Edge*" was received with great interest and appreciation. Questions and comments followed. The full text of her address is on the

**Anglicans Together Website:**  
[www.anglicanstogether.org/](http://www.anglicanstogether.org/)

## **ANGLICANS TOGETHER ANNUAL DINNER – 2005**

**Friday 14th October, 2005**

**7.00 for 7.30 pm**

**St Alban's Parish Church Hall,  
3 Pembroke Street, Epping**

Speaker: The Rev'd Dr Andrew McGowan,

Director, Trinity College  
Theological School,  
Melbourne.

**Cost (incl): \$30.00 pp**

Cheques payable: **Anglicans Together**  
C/- PO Box 79, EPPING NSW 1710

Telephone: 02 9876 3362

Email: [office@eppinganglicans.org.au](mailto:office@eppinganglicans.org.au)

# "LOST CHRISTIANITIES"

by **Bart Ehrman**

Israeli politician **Abba Eban** observed in 1970, "History teaches us that men and nations behave wisely once they have exhausted all other alternatives". **Hegel** commented bleakly that "We learn from history that we do not learn from history". Either could have provided an epigraph for **Bart Ehrman's** book "**Lost Christianities**" [Oxford University Press, 2003].

The subtitle is provocative and revealing: *The Battles for Scripture and the Faiths We Never Knew*. What we today call "the canon of the New Testament" was the result of a long exploratory process of sifting, accepting, rejecting (and sometimes accepting again), that was never officially finalised. Bishop Athanasius of Alexandria, in his Easter Letter for the year 367, simply listed the books of our current New Testament as those to be accepted as teaching true godliness. That did not finish the debate, but effective consensus dates from then. So who were the losers? Why did they lose? What paths and byways were explored along the way? What would be different if some other variety of Christianity had carried the day?

**Ehrman's** book has three parts, titled: "**Forgeries and Discoveries**"; "**Heresies and Orthodoxies**"; and "**Winners and Losers**". The first part explores texts (genuine or forged?) and contains some intriguing material (the detective work of Chapter Four, for example, "**The Forgery of an Ancient Discovery?**" relating to *The Secret Gospel of Mark*).

The second part relates to the teaching these texts contained. Early Christians agonised over such theological questions as whether the Jewish Scriptures and Jewish religious laws had any continuing validity; whether Jesus was truly human or was only God packaged in a human shell; and how did Jesus relate to the Father and the Holy Spirit? By way of example, the Infancy Gospel of Thomas (early second century) provides "an entertaining account of the miraculous deeds of Jesus between the ages of five and twelve" (p *xii*).

It sounds harmless enough, even pleasantly entertaining ... until you wonder how Jesus' humanity related to his divinity during his childhood. And then his adulthood ...

Eventually, **Ehrman** shows in Part Three how a proto-orthodox consensus began to emerge, as the first stage of what later developed into Christian orthodoxy (as eventually enshrined in the Nicene Creed as we now know it). He discusses the need for a Christian canon; questions of tolerance and heresy; and what it meant for proto-orthodoxy and later orthodoxy to "win".

## BOOKS To Read and Ponder Reviewed

by  
\* **James McPherson**  
\* **John Bunyan**

**Ehrman's** approach is consistently eirenic, even though some of the early Christian factions and individuals behaved less than honourably.

While it is not a page-turner, this book will repay thoughtful reading, at the pace of your own choosing. It has left me with a strong

impression about conservative evangelicalism in its Sydney Anglican ideology: **that it requires significant faith in divine providence guiding the process of the early centuries towards a canon of the New Testament**. Such faith should not be assumed as a matter of dogma, but tested and informed by the actual history of the period. So in this instance, **Eban** was right, and **Hegel** was wrong.

**James McPherson**  
Rector, St Mark's, Granville

## BIBLE BASED?

In recent years I have been very impressed by the time devoted by many "Evangelical" Anglicans to the study of the Bible, and by the knowledge they have of its contents. Anglicans of *other* traditions probably need to learn from their example. **But understanding the character and nature of its writings remains limited among most of us, whatever our tradition.**

In *Matins* and *Evensong*, there is a lesson from the **Old Testament** (or from the Apocrypha), one or more **psalms**, and a **New Testament Lesson**. The three books reviewed below refer in turn to

each.

Recently, for the first time ever when reading a book on the Bible, I found it difficult to put down. It was **Robert Alter**'s translation of **Genesis** - more accurate than any I know - and with a beauty of language that comes close to that of the AV. It includes commentary seeking the exact meaning of the Hebrew text. That paperback has now been followed by "**The Five Books of Moses**" which has won much praise overseas. Paraphrases must have their place, but if we are concerned to know what the original actually says, we need to turn to **Alter**, or the **Revised Standard Version** (or the **English Standard Version**). On the whole NIV and NRSV are less close to the original, but something like "**The Message**" is very very far removed!

**The psalms were a major part of the Daily Services in theological colleges and are intended for regular use by the clergy.** Yet the Psalter in my day was never the set book for study. A new book that has helped make up for my lack of knowledge is the new *Epworth Commentary*, "**The Psalms**" by **Adrian Curtis**. Although this is in a series based on the **Revised English Bible**, it is a general commentary, with references throughout to the Hebrew original. Something like this should be an essential reference for those who sing or say the psalms.

The final bible reading at Communion and often the 2nd Lesson at the Offices is from one of the Gospels; the story of Jesus. Many in the pulpit (and in the pews) seem hardly to have caught up with the vast amount of modern research. In my *Colenso Library* there are over 200 books about Jesus, almost all of them representing fine scholarship. Where to begin - or begin again?

One might well begin with a Jewish scholar, **Professor Geza Vermes**. His small book, "**The Passion**" has just been published by Penguin. It seeks to get to some of the truth behind the Gospel stories. **Like many scholars, he argues that the Last Supper was not a Passover Meal (the 4th Gospel agrees), that there was no trial before the Sanhedrin or Herod, and that the Jerusalem crowd did not utter those words in St Matthew 27.25 (which have contributed to so much evil done against Jewish people). It was the chief priests and Pilate who were responsible for the execution of the Jewish Jesus who to me remains indeed God's "chief Prophet".**

Elsewhere, (like some others) **Vermes** believes Jesus did not tell his disciples to repeat what was

done at the Last Supper - the command being found only in a longer version of the Third Gospel and in a letter of St Paul (from which the Gospel has probably taken it). Unlike another Jewish scholar, **Professor Hyam Maccoby**, however, **Vermes** is less inclined to reject the story of Judas Iscariot or the Jesus Barabbas incident as unhistorical.

However, I recommend, **Vermes**' earlier and basic works, "**Jesus the Jew**", "**Jesus and the World of Judaism**", and "**The Religion of Jesus the Jew**".

Two other important books by **Vermes** are now in Penguin paperback. In the manner of an archaeological dig, **Vermes** in "**The Changing Faces of Jesus**". begins with the last Gospel to be written, named after St John, and goes back behind it to S.Paul, and the Acts, and in turn to the Synoptic Gospels. Then behind *them* to what he believes is "the real Jesus".

In "**The Authentic Gospel of Jesus**", he studies all the sayings of Jesus and sets out which he considers to be authentic, and what he considers 'editorial'. His conclusions are conservative and, I think, constructive, and far more closely based on knowledge of 1st century Judaism than, for example, those of the American "Jesus Seminar".

One will not agree with all his conclusions, but **reading his works will take us beyond our often un-examined assumptions, and indicate important ways in which Christian teaching, and forms of worship and of ministry might be more truly Bible-based and further reformed, - for the sake of "the good news of the kingdom of God".**

John Bunyan, Campbelltown

## **IMPORTANT ANGLICAN JOURNAL**

**Sage Publications has published a new Anglican Journal for international distribution called "Journal of Anglican Studies".** It is available by post from England. The Journal sets out to be a serious conversation across particular contexts; a focus on shared tradition and an openness to all aspects of Anglican faith and tradition, including history, theology, worship, ethics, scripture, canon law, aesthetics and education.

**The Journal of Anglican Studies** has been established in interesting and serious times for Anglicanism. It hopes to foster global scholarly conversation in the service of renewal of this tradition.

A number of Australians are on the editorial committee: Dr Bruce Kaye, Dr Mark Harding, Dr Charles Sherlock, Dr Anne O'Brien and Dr John Woodhouse.

**Online sample is available 'free' on Sage Journals Online: [hhtt://AST.sagepub.com](http://AST.sagepub.com)**

# **HYMNS TODAY - A Discussion Begins Readers Respond**

**Kay Thiel, Parishioner, St Peter's Cremorne writes:**

The article by **Clive H Norton**, headed 'VIRUS ALERT' was a bit of a shock. No doubt we all agree that **our task is to speak to each generation in words/symbols which are meaningful to them.** However, before we condemn words such as **king**, notions such as **the power of Jesus' name** and references to **Abraham, David, Israel and Jerusalem** as incomprehensible we should pause

Firstly, let us think about our young people: What stories are they reading these days? What films do they to see?

Secondly, let us examine ourselves: Should we believe that if a concept is hard for us to grasp, it will be too difficult for other people to understand? If we cut out from our services everything which cannot be expressed clearly in what we accept as the language of today, what will be left for the people of tomorrow?

Today, children still recognize *Winnie-the-Pooh*. and enjoy *The Lion King*, *Nemo* and *Chitty-Chitty-Bang-Bang*. Older children are intrigued by **J K Rowling's** series on *Harry Potter*.

Later teens and early twenties are immersed in **Tolkien's** *Lord of the Rings*. Children love stories of the far in place and time. They enjoy myths and legend: stories of kings and queens, heroes, sick who are healed, and poor people who become rich. They embrace the concept of magic, and extra-terrestrial power. They are delighted to find and use strange words and secret languages.

**Bearing all this in mind, dare we assume that the children and adults of today are incapable of understanding the idea of the power of the Holy Spirit, or the concept of Christ as King?**

**If we strike the word king out of our hymns, and abandon the use of it in teaching, how on earth can we translate chapters 18 and 19 of *St***

*John's Gospel?* The debate constantly returns to the question of kingship. For example, in chapter 18 v 33 "Pilate said to him, 'Are you the King of the Jews?'" and v 36 "Jesus answered, 'My kingdom does not belong to this world.'"

Hymns aid us in the understanding of what might have been meant by 'king' in those days. In the year Jesus was born, Consuls were still elected. About thirty years later, the chief priests declared, **"We have no king but Caesar!"**

It is true that today many people are not familiar with the Bible; but it was also true of the world into which the disciples of Jesus were sent to spread the Gospel.

Were they wrong to speak of *Israel, Zion, Jerusalem, Abraham, the Lord Sabaoth, David's royal Son, the Lamb that died?* Can we really equate the use of those names with the practice of

*glossolalia*, which St Paul warned about in *1 Corinthians 14.23?*

People like to ask questions and solve puzzles. If, in the name of clarification, we remove from our hymns every word or symbol which is not easily understood, we will make the hymns less interesting to inquiring minds, and prevent people asking questions and seeking answers.

**If we cut out all reference to history,**

**we will be taking our religion out of context, and distorting the true account of the life and teaching of Jesus and his disciples.**

**Anthony A. Moon, Cherrybrook writes:**

It is my contention that you appear to have jumped on the simplification bandwagon currently in vogue in our society. With respect, I am far from convinced by the arguments you put forward concerning the validity of the lyrics of many of our much loved hymns simply because some may find their meaning obscure. I contend that by their obscurity they form part of the wonderful fabric of deep mysticism which goes towards the makeup of our church's liturgy, particularly that of churches in the Anglo- Catholic tradition.

**Music and song resonates  
deeply  
with the essential  
experience of one's faith  
and beliefs.**

**This is evidenced in the  
strong reaction of two  
readers to Clive Norton's  
provocative article "Virus  
Alert- Hymns Attacked".  
Extracts from their  
letters, together with  
further comment from Clive  
Norton are printed here.**

As is currently popular in this and all things, it seems from what you have written the lowest common denominator in our community must be pandered to in this case to the detriment of beautiful verse and fine tradition.

As for your opinion that many find Lord Christ to be wrongly alluded to as 'Royal', does not the title 'King' convey now and as it has always done that our Lord is of the highest.

Suggesting that because of them, hymns be excluded from our church's hymnal ..is to commit an act bordering on vandalism."

#### ***Further comments from Clive H Norton***

Every life-giving stream begins with a trickle. My aim was to encourage thought. The Great Command is that we love God with all our heart, souls, mind and strength. Just because many of us have become accustomed to, and even love, certain words and cultural forms does not excuse us from querying them.

I cannot help being a child of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and a person of "the Third Age" in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Using analogies or metaphors referring to kings and queens and "kingship" is no longer helpful. Therefore in expressing in song or prayer our adoration or commitment to Christ, they are as dead as a dodo to me – and I believe to the younger generations.

**I was not arguing for the removal of every historical reference from our hymns. But without careful pruning we experience overload:** hymns and prayers with obscure words or past cultural references that only the initiated can decipher. Beware elitism! Also beware of going to the opposite extreme, what Anthony Moon rightly warned against, the "lowest common denominator" that discards beautiful verse and fine tradition.

I doubt what seems to be a central premise of Kay Thiel's response: that because eg children love stories, and there has been ecstatic response to Tolkien's "Lord of the Rings" and J K Rowling's "Harry Potter", that this invalidates my argument. Captivating fantasies and stories of magic have a role in nurturing imagination and creativity. **They may or may not help people understand (to use her words), "the idea of the power of the Holy Spirit, or the concept of Christ as King".** I suspect that like Santa Claus / Father Christmas, they become barriers to faith. Magic in particular has nothing to do with our Christian understanding of God. As young adults mature, they jettison such

fantasies which cannot be a basis for meaningful faith in Christ.

## **CANTICLE ROAD AND CELESTIAL CITY**

**Seventy-two Hymns and Songs by John Bunyan**

Broad Churchman Series AD 2005

\$35 (All proceeds to Save the Children Fund)

**Review by Michael Deasey**

***Director, St Andrew's Cathedral Choir***

**Early in his preface, the author John Bunyan points out that this is not a hymn book, but a collection of hymns written by one person.** His hope is that some from this collection may be of value to any local church. There is no music attached, but at the end of each hymn are suggested tunes, most of them well-known.

These hymns have been written over a long period, mostly when the author was Rector of the Sydney parish of Chester Hill, others have been written since his retirement. In the appendices can be found notes on each hymn, how and why it was written and some personal reflections. **There are hymns on unusual subjects, including women of the bible, sport and Father's Day; there are hymns for festivals and others written specially for the Australasian year.**

Therefore, appropriately we have an Easter hymns entitled in Easter in Autumn (No.33), which can be sung to the tune '*Hymn to Joy*'.

It begins:

***Let us sing a song of Easter, summer heat and  
Red Sea passed,  
Celebrate the Resurrection after Lent and Friday  
fast;  
feared defeat becomes a victory on an autumn  
harvest day;  
from the Tree, leaves red and yellow lie upon the  
Shepherd's way.***

Other hymns are not afraid to ask questions: to journey from doubt into faith, and so to the gentle tune of '*Jesus loves me*', we have this poignant little verse (No.7):

***Does God love me? Do we know when we see  
earth's pain and woe,  
Man's injustice, evil strong, brutish life all ages  
long?  
Does God still love me? As others love me?  
Is God our Father? Sometimes I answer no.***



After several verses, we are led into the affirmation of the last stanza:

*Justice, truth, and kindness stay, journey with us  
on our way joy and beauty do not wane,  
something of God's care explain.  
Thus God can love me, in Jesus call me;  
God's Spirit guides me; the Bible tells me so.*

And to the suggested tune of *Bunessan* (Morning has broken) we are reminded that Christ is for the weak as well as the strong (No.10)

*Father of Jesus, and of all living,  
Source of all goodness, Spirit of peace;  
Angry at evil, friend of the failure,  
Sharing our sorrow, bringing release.*

**Permeating the collection of hymns is the idea that the chief duty and joy of the Church of God is to worship. All other Christian activity can only flow from worship, because long after every activity ceases, worship continues for all eternity".**

*Michael Deasey*

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#### **NEW HEAD FOR GENERAL SYNOD'S DOCTRINE COMMISSION**

The Archbishop of Sydney, *Dr Peter Jensen* has been appointed Chairman of the Anglican Church in Australia General Synod's Doctrine Commission.

Commenting in *Southern Cross* (April 2004 issue), *Bishop Glen Davies* (North Sydney) said "There has been a minority evangelical voice in the commission for many years, so to have a clear and articulate evangelical leader as its chairman is a vote of confidence in the Archbishop."

In the same edition of *Southern Cross* (p.9) Archbishop Jensen writes on 'this gospel sacrament, under the heading: "*Feed by faith, and not works – It is a grave mistake to allow fears about abuse of the Lord's Supper to rob us of the joy of receiving God's word*".

Here is an interesting and telling insight into the articulate evangelical voice of the Commission's new Chairman.

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#### **ANGLICAN BOARD OF MISSIONS APPOINTS MRS LINDA KURTI AS NATIONAL DIRECTOR**

*Linda Kurti* is well known to ABM. From 1998 to 2001 she was a lay member of the Board from Western Australia and then elected to the Standing Committee. She is currently completing a PhD thesis on faith-based international development agencies.

**Linda was born in the USA. She has worked in the area of development and evaluation of health care services both in the UK and Australia.**

Linda is a parishioner at St James Church, King Street, Sydney, where her husband is the Rector. She will take up her position on 1 June 2005.

## **'WINDSOR' and AFTER**

**It seems an age since the editor asked me to write about the *Windsor Report*. This is the Report of the Commission set up under Archbishop Robin Eames to consider the conflict in the Anglican Communion over decisions in the Episcopal Church of the USA and the Anglican Church of Canada relating to blessing same sex relationships and the consecration of Bishop Gene Robinson.** The report reflected on the nature of the Anglican Communion and the ways in which it is held together. Its principal recommendation was the creation of a 'covenant' to regulate the way in which changes happen in the Communion's various members.

**Overall, the Report received a very critical reception locally. The Sydney Standing Committee didn't like it one bit.** It was too episcopal for the congregational Sydney ecclesiology. **Its critique, adopted by the diocesan standing committee on 7 February, 2005 complains that the Report 'over-theologises' the *Anglican Communion* 'by applying to it categories and notions that the New Testament applies to the church, i.e. the local congregation.'** This is wrong because it 'shifts the centre away from the local congregation to what is—when working at its best—a support structure for the local congregations.' 'By privileging the notion of 'communion' which is actually more sentimental than real, and which focuses upon the structures of the 'amorphous' end of the *Anglican Communion*, rather than the congregations of Christ's people at the 'concrete' end, the [report's] recommendations fall a long way short of what is required.' **Underlying this criticism is the realisation that the proposed covenant would restrict lay presidency and cross diocesan church planting as much as it would the gay matters.** A powerful diocese in the loosely federated Australian Church would not welcome the establishment of any form of *Anglican 'magisterium'*.

**But all that is in the past.** The Primates of the Communion met in Ireland in February 2005. Many rumours abound about the actual behaviour

behind the unified outcome that the Primates presented. **They made two principal recommendations: that the Americans and Canadians voluntarily withdraw from the Anglican Consultative Council's next meeting but that that meeting allow those churches to 'explain themselves' and that there be no more incursions into other Provinces by foreign bishops.**

In response *ECUSA* apologised for the hurt that its actions had done to others, but not for the actions themselves. *ECUSA* resolved not to consecrate any more bishops until its next General Convention in 2006. The formal response from ACC is unclear as yet.

**Meanwhile the Primate of Nigeria has denounced the ECUSA response as 'disingenuous' and 'duplicitous'.** He also announced the creation of an outpost of *the Church of Nigeria* in the USA to care for Nigerians unhappy in *ECUSA*. So it seems that nobody is happy about the outcomes. Everyone believes that they have acted correctly. In formal terms, both *ECUSA* and *ACC* have acted within their own constitutional structures. Their critics are the ones who have acted outside the legal frameworks. On the other hand, their critics claim the moral and theological high ground.

**Can we make sense of this?** Not unless we lay aside the apparent biblical and theological posturing and consider the cultural and political contexts. Actions from North American churches cannot be divorced from the place of the USA in world affairs and the rejection of their perceived cultural imperialism. Thus *ECUSA* in particular suffers from the sins of its nation, while Canada suffers by association.

**On the other hand, modernism is having a strong impact in the more traditional cultures of Asia and Africa.** Quite apart from the role of the West, the social change associated with such large movements provokes reactions. This is particularly the case with respect to sexuality and in places where *Christians* compete with *Islam*. It is in these contexts that the events in the *Anglican Communion* must be placed. **The conclusion to be drawn from this is that there is no easily foreseeable resolution of the situation. Only time will tell.**

Michael Horsburgh  
*St James Anglican Church,  
King Street, Sydney*

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## **THE ANGLICAN CONSULTATIVE COUNCIL**

**The role of the Anglican Consultative Council (ACC) is to facilitate the co-operative work of the churches of the Anglican Communion, exchange information between the Provinces and churches, and help to co-ordinate common action.**

It advises on the organisation and structures of the Communion, and seeks to develop common policies with respect to the world mission of the Church, including ecumenical matters. The ACC membership includes from one to three persons from each province. Where there are three members, there is a bishop, a priest and a lay person. Where fewer members are appointed, preference is given to lay membership.

The ACC is one of the **4 Instruments of Unity** that serve the world wide family of Anglican/Episcopal churches.

They are:

**The Archbishop of Canterbury** in his international role as *primus inter pares*, the senior bishop in the Anglican Communion:

**The Lambeth Conference** (which meets every 10 years, for the bishops of the Anglican Communion. It held its first meeting in 1867)

**The Primates Meetings** (which are regular meetings for the senior archbishops and bishops of the 38 Provinces, who first met in 1979)

**The Anglican Consultative Council** (which meets every 3 years or so, and includes bishops, clergy and laity, as members appointed by the 38 provinces of the Communion. It first met in 1971)

### **AUSTRALIAN ANGLICAN APPOINTED MANAGER LAMBETH CONFERENCE 2008**

*Sue Parks*, formerly of the Diocese of Sydney, is to become the Lambeth Conference 2008 Manager. She will work with the Lambeth Design Group and have overall responsibility for the conference's planning and organization. The Chair is the Most Rev'd Sir Ellison Pogo, Archbishop of Melanesia. Sue has been in the UK 20 years. She was Director of SPCK Worldwide, has worked with CMS and been a member of the

steering committee of *Theological Education for the Anglican Communion (TEAC)*.

*The Rev'd Canon Kenneth Kearon*, Secretary General of the Anglican Communion said: "I am very grateful that such an important event will benefit from Sue's abilities and talents.

14<sup>th</sup> April 2005

**A letter to the Rt Rev'd John C. Paterson, Chair of the Anglican Consultative Council, from the Most Rev'd Frank T. Griswold and the Very Rev'd George L.W. Werner on behalf of the Executive Council of the Episcopal Church.**

The Executive Council met in special session at the University of St Mary of the Lake in Mundelein, Illinois, to consider the request of the Primates to "voluntarily withdraw" our members for a time from participation in the Anglican Consultative Council (ACC). This is a weighty matter for the Episcopal Church since the ACC is the primary instrument of communion in which the fullness of the Body of Christ is represented. Representative consultation is an essential component of our life as a church. We struggled to discern how best to respond to the request.

We are acutely aware that we meet in a time of great distress and need in the wider world. War, famine and disease stalk the earth. We express our passionate commitment to the mission of the church and especially to the United Nations Millennium Development Goals endorsed by our General Convention.

We are unanimous in our desire to do all that we can to preserve and further the bonds of affection in the "new humanity" created by Christ Jesus (Eph. 2:15). This in our view constitutes the very essence of our life together as Anglican Christians. We firmly believe that the only way to address the things that divide us is for "Christians of good will ... to engage honestly and frankly with each other" (Windsor Report, paragraph 146). We are therefore heartened by the decision of the Chair of the ACC, responding to the Primates' communiqué to include in the program for the upcoming meeting in Nottingham an opportunity for a consultation at which major contributions will come from the Episcopal Church and the Anglican Church of Canada.

We are mindful that Christ has made us members of one body, and that no part can say to any other "I have no need of you." At the same time we wish to express our openness to the concerns and beliefs of others. In the spirit of the Covenant Statement recently adopted by our House of Bishops, we voluntarily withdraw our members from official participation in the ACC as it meets in Nottingham. As an expression of our desire "to bear one another's burdens" (Galatians 6:2), we are asking our members to be present at the meeting to listen to reports on the life and ministry we share across the Communion and to be available for conversation and consultation.

Please be assured of our prayers and continuing support for the mission we share in the Risen Christ.

**Note:**

***The Rt Rev'd John Paterson, Bishop of Auckland, New Zealand, is the chair of the Anglican Consultative Council***

The day of Pentecost had come, and they were all together in one place. Suddenly there came from the sky what sounded like a strong, driving wind, a noise which filled the whole house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them flames like tongues of fire distributed among them and coming to rest on each one. They were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to talk in other tongues, as the Spirit gave them power of utterance.

*Acts 2:1-4*

## “The Go Between God”

Published 1972. SCM Press Lond.

“What is this force which causes me to see in a way in which I have not seen? What makes a landscape or a person or an idea come to life for me and become a presence towards which I surrender myself? I recognise, I respond, I fall in love, I worship – yet it was not I who took the first step.

In every encounter there has been an anonymous third party who makes the introduction, acts as a go-between; makes two beings aware of each other; sets up a current of communication between them.

What is more, this invisible go-between does not simply stand between us but is activating each of us from inside – Christians find it quite natural to give a personal name to this current of communication, this invisible go-between. They call him, the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of God.

They say that this was the Spirit which possessed and dominated the man, Jesus Christ, making him the most aware and sensitive and open human being who has ever lived – ceaselessly aware of God so that he called him, almost casually, Father, and fantastically aware of every person who crossed his path, especially the one no one else noticed.

That is the Spirit which he promised to send to his friends, and on the day of Pentecost that is the Spirit which came and possessed them just as he had possessed Jesus. And what was the first immediate result of his coming? Communication - Awareness.

They preached and everyone in that cosmopolitan crowd heard them speaking in his own language.

Every time I am given this unexpected awareness towards some other creature, I feel this current of communication between us, I am touched and activated by something that comes from the fiery heart of the divine love, the eternal gaze of the Father towards the Son, of the Son towards the Father.”

**John V. Taylor**  
formerly General Secretary Church Missionary Socy,  
England.

Almighty God, who taught the hearts of your faithful people by sending to them the light of your Holy Spirit: grant to us by the same Spirit to have a right judgment in all things and always to rejoice in his holy comfort: through the merits of Christ Jesus our Saviour, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

Amen.

*BCP Whit Sunday*



*Come down O Love divine,  
Seek now this soul of mine,  
and visit it with your own  
ardour glowing;  
O Comforter, draw near,  
Within my heart appear  
and kindle it, your holy  
flame bestowing.*

*There let it freely burn,  
Till earthly passions turn  
To dust and ashes, in its  
heat consuming;  
And let your glorious light  
Shine ever on my sight*

*And clothe me round, the while my path  
illuming*

*And so the yearning strong  
With which the soul will long  
Shall far outpass the power of human telling;  
For none can guess its grace  
Till we become the place  
In which the Holy Spirit makes his dwelling.*

*Bianco de Siena d 143*

# *Memoirs of a Loose Canon*

*By Stuart Barton Babbage,*

(Acorn Press, 2004)

Some of those who bought this eagerly awaited autobiography at its launch at New College (UNSW) last December were interested to know what the 89 year old author had to say about controversial ecclesiastical developments that are underway in the Diocese of Sydney. **And while Stuart Babbage provides a brief commentary on these and a perceptive assessment of the influences that have shaped the Diocese, it would be a mistake to value the book for these insights only.**

*Stuart Babbage's* almost legendary life has indeed been far reaching in the scope of its private experience and professional activity. **The richness and integrity of that life lived for Christ can hardly be doubted.** The book, I feel, exhorts its readers to follow Christ as Master and Lord without peer, to take an intelligible, civil, Christian stance in a world that still listens (just), and to be open to be changed and renewed by engagement with theological currents that are consistent with foundational Christian truths.

Those who know *Stuart Babbage* will be unsurprised by the supreme importance he attaches to the relationships to which this book is oriented and which are its constant theme. Readers will warm to the essential and transparent goodness of the man, his creative busyness and perseverance in

ministry, his selfless generosity and delight in entertaining, and the affirming way he has maintained an openness to those of other ethnicities and other Christian traditions. Those who value, as I most assuredly do, his labour for the Australian College of Theology and celebrate its current health and its present diverse institutional and confessional scope have *Stuart Babbage* to thank.

**Stuart, an avowed evangelical, is at ease with his own convictions and with the generous spirit that has marked his own interactions with others in the church. But he is decidedly uneasy with the defensive postures now ascendant in the Diocese after a generation that has seen the unrelenting marginalisation and eclipse of the very openness he represents.**

*Memoirs of a Loose Canon* rattles along at a riveting speed. It is not a record of personal satisfactions and professional triumphs: tragedies, disappointments and hardships are chronicled and honestly revealed, though not dwelt upon. It is a confrontingly frank book from time to time. Life, we confess, is agonisingly complex and ragged for most of us. **If the test of a good autobiography is that it should be honest, and that the writer should relate a life that commends itself to the reader as grounded in reality, then *Memoirs of a Loose Canon* is an excellent example of the genre.**

Reverend Dr Mark Harding  
Dean, Australian College of Theology

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