

NEWSLETTER No 34 OCTOBER 2007

President's Column *James' Jottings*

SEPTEMBER WAS A LANDMARK MONTH Collectively around the Anglican Communion, we held our breath waiting to see whether the US Episcopal Church would comply with the 30th September deadline set in the *Windsor Report*. Closer to home, we had the Sydney Synod, and some other participants' reflections are included elsewhere in this Newsletter.

The Appellate Tribunal, 28th September, released its ruling that under certain circumstances it would be consistent with our Church's Constitution to consecrate a woman bishop. This was a cause of great rejoicing for some (myself included) and great disappointment for others.

Finally, on the 30th, the House of Bishops of the Episcopal Church released its undertaking - albeit qualified - to comply.

All these are worthy of extended comment. I address some of the Episcopal Church issues, via a resolution passed by the Sydney Synod.

The Synod passed the following motion: *"The Synod of the Anglican Diocese of Sydney congratulates Bishop Martyn Minns on his installation as presiding bishop in the Convocation of Anglicans in North America on 5 May 2007 and assures him of our prayers as he, along with many other faithful men and women, seeks to encourage faithfulness to God and his word amongst American Anglicans."*

Personally, I had many misgivings about this motion and voted against it. To my mind, it is inherently schismatic. I had been prepared to speak against it. However, after Robert Tong's persuasive speech as mover (highlighting the difficulties the New Hampshire and New Westminster actions had brought to Anglican interfaith witness) I decided to save my comments for a different forum. **I have concluded that "alternative episcopal oversight" in whatever guise and for whatever purpose is inherently**

destabilising. It represents a regrettable development within our Communion, although it may sometimes be the "least worst" option. Nevertheless, Sydney Synod was not the place for me to broach that discussion.

Theoretically, alternative episcopal oversight aims at assisting dissident parishes who do not wish to receive the ministry of a woman bishop or a homosexual bishop of either gender, or who in some way wish to dissociate themselves on conscience grounds from decisions of their diocese (eg blessing homosexual unions in New Westminster; or lay presidency in Sydney). It is, at heart, a conscience measure, and that is its appeal.

Yet that is also its downfall. It degenerates into congregationalism, and allows a parish to opt out of the awkward realities of life in its geographic diocese if it can allege grounds of "dissent". In 2007, a parish may not like its bishop; five years later, there may be a new rector or a new bishop, some parishes return and others move out, presumably seeking the oversight of a different alternative bishop. Chaos ensues The practical difficulties are immense, complex, wide-ranging and far-reaching.

Esther Mombo is Academic Dean of St Paul's Theological College in Limuru, Kenya, and a member of the Inter-Anglican Theological and Doctrinal Commission. She has written:

"I have always been amused by those who are members of one province, but live in another province. For example, there are some members of the Episcopal Church who claim at the same time to be members of evangelical or orthodox provinces of the Global South, especially Africa. It must be wonderful to be in a category where people enjoy the best of both worlds: the comforts of the North, and the benefits of being accountable to bishops whom they see only when they want to, or when they bring them over. Such people are not subjected to the day-to-day workings of those same bishops, or the struggles of the Christian church in those provinces. It is good for bishops to answer what they claim to be the 'Macedonian Call'; but this does not mean they may take over Macedonia. One is bound to ask who benefits when leaders go to

other provinces to give spiritual oversight to the faithful. Some leaders in the Global South are not able to deal with issues in their own backyards; but they are able to answer Macedonian calls. Some bishops who are available to give oversight overseas will not allow other bishops to give similar oversight in their own dioceses. They appeal to the autonomy of the provinces while they violate the very autonomy they claim to support.

“Alignments of like-minded people make the issues in the Communion hard to deal with ...”

Her reflections can be read in the Winter 2007 issue of *Anglican Theological Review* in an article titled “**The Windsor Report. A paradigm shift for Anglicanism**”. It raises some significant questions about the realities of life in the Global South, Communion issues such as centralised authority versus provincial autonomy, and the model of “reconciliation” underlying the **Windsor Report** – “narrower than in Pauline theology” – as well as castigating the way some church leaders have approached issues of human sexuality.

All of which suggests that the issues at stake in Sydney’s Archbishop *Martyn Minns* resolution are less clear-cut than its proponents may acknowledge.

Part of the genius of *Chris Albany’s* motion(p.7) was to ask the Archbishop to explore creatively ways of reconciling our differences within our diocesan life and practice, in this instance re women’s ministry. It was clear from Chris’s speech as mover that this reconciliation was not to involve any cheap compromise to the deeply-held convictions of those concerned. This is the sort of way forward we need, in those polarising issues which result in definite but irreconcilable actions by the different parties. **I believe some deep thinking is going on in the Anglican Communion about this, and I pray for fruitful developments.**

In my next column, I wish to discuss the value of liturgy, arising from the Synod motion in response to the Archbishop’s charge, seeking a theology of Christian assembly.

I am honoured to have been elected President of Anglicans Together, in its next phase of development. I appreciate the trust placed in me and the other members of the Executive as we all seek your support through your prayers, your suggestions, and your ongoing participation in the life of AT.

Now that the Federal election date has been set and announced, it is incumbent upon us all to pray

for God’s overall guidance in the election process, so that we may be godly and wisely governed, for the good of all.



As we approach the Christmas season, we enter via Advent – a season which has been hijacked by commercial preparations for Christmas and the need to wind the year up and leave for the summer vacation. It is very difficult to keep the focus sharp!

May God guide you into clear perspective through the awkwardness of this time, and enable you to give credible witness to the deep truths of our faith, to the honour and glory of God’s name. May you appreciate more keenly all that the Incarnation means, and rejoice in the hope of Christ’s return.

James

James McPherson, President
Rector, St Mark’s Church, Granville

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ANGLICANS TOGETHER ANNUAL DINNER

Held in St Alban’s Parish Centre, Epping on Friday 19th October 2007, over 200 people were present from various parishes around Sydney and beyond. The guest speaker, *Christopher Roper* AM, spoke on Christian education for lay people, emphasising the need for ‘articulate Anglicans’.

Christopher Roper is responsible for the newly established St James’ Institute program. The program and activities is for the people of St James’, but also by St James for the wider Church community in Sydney. For information email <institute@sjks.org.au> or ring (02) 8227 1305.

My faith journey was not a planned, steady development from Sunday School to Youth Fellowship to mature faith through constant church involvement. There have been detours, even dead ends. There was a long period where church was a family activity at Christmas and Easter, and worldly concerns of study, work, entertainment and friendship filled all the other spaces in my life.

I returned to the Anglican Church by accident, as much as anything – an elderly uncle needing transport to church – there I found warm fellowship and challenging messages about a richer life with God that touched my heart and spirit. Regular church-going ensued, followed by participation in several small group Bible studies and Lenten courses. I felt an increasing yearning to travel further in the development of my faith – to find a way to integrate my evolving “Sunday” self with my “Monday to Saturday” self. And this integration needed the engagement of my mind, not just heart and spirit.

The leader of a Bible Study group I joined was completing the *Education for Ministry* course – *EfM* – and his example suggested that *EfM* might offer a way forward for me. So when a new course was offered, I enrolled.

What is EfM?

It is serious learning program to help lay people see and experience the connection between faith and daily life. A small group of 5 – 10, led by an accredited mentor, works together over four years, although members only sign up for one year at a time. **It involves a course of readings that present the story of the people of God from some 3,500 years ago until the present.**

That’s not all!

Systematic reading is useful, but not very different from books or regular courses. **Two things take EfM beyond this level** – ongoing shared development in the small group and the process of guided reflection to integrate the readings with our personal experience, beliefs and culture. These two aspects, for me, created deep learning and growth.

I learned to know more about God, but I also learned to know God more intimately. It wasn’t theoretical. It was real.

In the readings there were many highlights. I discovered new relevance in the Old Testament beyond the “ripping yarns”. The creation stories

were revealed not as embarrassingly naïve literal accounts but as deeply true expressions of a people’s understanding of sin and goodness for humans. The book of Job offered wisdom in the face of the suffering of the innocent. Familiar stories in the New Testament were brought into focus through looking at their context and translating their

import carefully into our own situation. I began to see the impact of human history as it interwove with the development of Christian thinking, and heard the thoughts of great

Christian thinkers, struggling with the same dilemmas that beset me.

The real explosion in understanding came from the reflective process that helped us to learn together in our small community. We examined our own personal stories and found God there.

This helped us gain insights into future possibilities and become more comfortable with accepting our ministry as baptized members of Christ’s church. The reflective process led us to be more intentional in our ministry, and often via extraordinary paths.

Who could expect to re-discover the revelatory nature of our God and reach personal conviction to be more willing to speak of God’s work in our lives by reflecting on the cultural phenomenon of the bare midriff?! Our slogan for this reflection – *Dare to Bare* – challenges me not to close up when friends and work colleagues wonder why a supposedly intelligent woman is actually “a Christian”. It helps me past the self-conscious embarrassment of speaking of the saving grace of a relationship with God in the face of illness or bereavement.

For me, *Education for Ministry* has been the spiritual equivalent of the adventure travel holiday which has become so popular. **I have bungee jumped into a metaphor drawn from a story of personal failure and found new hope; I have dived into dark and dangerous caverns of love for our enemies to find beauty; I have soared aloft above our Christian Tradition and seen the millennia of God’s saving love for humanity spread out in all its splendour. Life has not been the same since – that’s transformation !**

Barbara Booth

Parishioner, St Mark’s Anglican Church, South Hurstville

Barbara Booth is an accredited EfM mentor.

St Mark’s Sth Hurstville is offering an EfM course in 2008.

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REFLECTING ON SYDNEY SYNOD 2007

Lay and Diaconal administration of Holy Communion

What actually happened in Synod on these issues was simply a motion to defer discussion on the report concerning lay and diaconal presidency appearing in Standing Committee's annual report to Synod.

As it will be on the agenda next year, and as the recommendations of the report are to allow lay and diaconal presidency, I'll try to set out a brief summary of the issues addressed, which are essentially legal.

The concern that prompted Standing Committee to call for the report was whether Sydney Diocese has the right to introduce lay and diaconal administration without an enabling canon of General Synod. Whether or not this right exists is a matter of construction of the Constitution and Canons of General Synod and the Constitution of the Sydney Diocese. Submissions had been sought from members of Synod who were lawyers. Three of the four submissions received from lawyers maintained that Sydney Diocese does not have this right. This was also the majority opinion of the Appellate Tribunal in 1996. Not surprisingly, Standing Committee did not agree and considers that existing two Canons of General Synod give this right – *Lay Assistants at Holy Communion Canon 1973* and the *Canon Concerning Services 1992* give them the power they seek. Equally unsurprisingly, at least 2 of the lawyers who made their submissions (3rd wasn't available for comment), are not convinced. Next Synod might be interesting!

Fellowship meal for the proclamation of the Lord's death

Dr Barry Newman successfully moved the following motion: *Synod requests the Diocesan Doctrine Commission to consider the appropriateness, with respect to the teaching of Scripture and the Anglican formularies, of Anglican churches having a fellowship meal for the proclamation of the Lord's death, and to bring a report to Synod at a convenient time.* We opposed this motion to no avail. Just what the outcome will be remains to be seen.

National Register Canon

Mr Garth Blake SC successfully moved a procedural motion to defer the listed motion seeking to impose limitations on the National Register Canon, until that Canon had been debated in General Synod. Mr Blake's motion made good sense as the final drafts of the National Register Canon had not yet been finalised.

Diocesan Policy Statement on Education

Despite opposition arguing that the statements of faith required to be signed by Anglican School principals and council members was a reintroduction of the Test Act, the Policy Statement was approved by Synod.

Susan Hooke, St Luke's, Cremorne

The Biblical Pattern of Marriage

Diocese of Sydney Synod September 2007

Motion 6.3

- a) affirms that the relationship of loving, sacrificial leadership of a husband and the intelligent, voluntary submission of a wife is the Biblical pattern of marriage and
- b) totally rejects the use of this Biblical pattern to justify any form of domestic abuse
- c) totally rejects all forms of domestic abuse
- d) expresses its concern for those children, women and men who are victims of domestic abuse
- e) calls on Christian husbands and wives to use their God given responsibilities for the good of their families and
- f) calls on ministers to teach their congregations the Biblical model for marriage and also to teach against domestic abuse.

I noted this motion on the business paper of synod with considerable interest because for a long time now I have been aware that there is a particular view of marriage being taught within our diocese which asserts that the husband's role in marriage is loving leadership and the wife's role is submission. The framers of the synod motion attempted to soften this view a little by adding the word 'sacrificial' to the husband's role and the words, 'intelligent' and 'voluntary' to the wife's role. The motion had two objects: the first being to affirm that this particular view of marriage is **the** Biblical pattern. The Vice Principal of Moore College, Dr. Bill Salier, argued the biblical case for this position- no other view was even canvassed. The second object was to reject any attempt to use this teaching to justify domestic violence or abuse and Mrs Leslie Ramsay spoke for that part of the motion.

While I would have been happy to support any motion condemning domestic abuse I was very unhappy with the first part of this motion, believing the supposed Biblical pattern of marriage to be a distortion of Biblical teaching and to almost inevitably lead to abuse. What follows is a slightly amended version of the speech I gave against the motion.

"Friends, it is with some hesitation that I stand to speak against this motion because domestic abuse is a very serious issue in the community and we should declare our total opposition to it. However, I am troubled by the premise on which the motion is based namely that the relationship of "loving sacrificial leadership of a husband and the intelligent, voluntary submission of a wife" is the Biblical pattern of marriage. I want to suggest that while this is the view taught by many in the diocese, this is not an accurate summary of the Biblical pattern of marriage. Paul's teaching on the Christian household is expressed in several places but perhaps most fully in Ephesians 5.21- 6.9. The passage commences in 21 with the statement 'be subject to one another out of reverence for Christ' and the respective duties of husbands and wives, children, parents and slaves then flow from that great exhortation. In my experience often when Ephesians 5 is read at weddings this opening verse is omitted which in my view changes

the understanding of the verses that follow. (Dr. Salier, in his speech when referring to this passage also omitted verses 21.) That verse 21 is linked with what follows is clear from the Greek text where the participle translated 'be subject' or 'submit' is only found in that verse and is merely understood in verse 22. In a Christian marriage, submission is a mutual activity, part of the 'give and take' of the relationship.

A member of my family attended a wedding in this diocese some 18 months ago where the Minister praised the fact that the bridegroom was giving to his bride a wedding ring on which was inscribed the word 'submit' while she was giving to her husband a ring with the word 'love' inscribed. You may think that is an appropriate symbol of Christian marriage but I do not and I suspect I am not alone in that view. To separate 'submission' and 'love' in the context of marriage is a distortion of Paul's teaching. It is at odds with our Lord's teaching in the Gospels about the nature of the servant relationships in his community. ("The greatest among you must become like the youngest and the leader like one who serves." Luke 22.26)

I thank God that I was raised in a loving Christian home where my parents modelled partnership in marriage –they submitted to one another out of reverence for Christ and I cannot remember one occasion in their 60 years of marriage where my father had to say to my mother 'This is my decision and you will have to live with it.' They lived out the spirit of Ephesians without the need to use the language of headship and submission. Every decision of importance was discussed, prayed about and a common mind was found.

To tell young men that they must have authority over their wives and that wives will have to submit is misguided and unhelpful. This sort of teaching is having sad consequences in the lives of young people in some of our churches- of that I have personal knowledge and experience.

If we are serious about addressing the issue of domestic abuse it is time that we re-examined our theology of marriage and of gender relationships and for that reason I ask you to reject this motion."

*The Reverend Philip Bradford,
Parish of Hunters' Hill*

Synod – Theology of Christian Assembly

One matter at synod with potential to drive a further wedge between the Sydney diocese and the rest of Anglicanism a motion "That this Synod ... (a) asks the Doctrine Commission to prepare a report for the next Synod presenting a theology of Christian assembly which can help shape authentic, biblical and Anglican orders of service suitable for the contemporary church, and (b) asks the Archbishop's Liturgical Panel to review its Sunday Services in consultation with the Doctrine Commission and the Diocese as a whole.

"The motion invited members to submit written comments to the Diocesan Secretary by 31 December 2007.

My concern is that this could lead to more substantial revision of liturgy than has been the case with earlier revisions, with our diocese being locked into forms of worship reflecting a particular narrow theology of Christian assembly. What we might see is a more aggressive departure from recognisably Anglican worship, towards codifying uncompromising patterns of "assembly" already found in some parishes.

Our diocese contains a variety of thinking on worship and Christian celebration. At one extreme however is the view, expressed by the Dean, prevalent in some quarters within the diocese. Here is an extract from a conference address given by the Dean:

"Worship ... is the wrong word when Christians gather together as the church. We look at our current practice and see one thing, we look at the NT and see another ... Our gatherings on earth are not about drawing near to God. The point of meeting together is for the purpose of encouragement and mutual help ... The shift that took place in church life was from that of the fellowship model to that of the liturgical model. We can trace a direct line from Clement and Cyprian and all the rest to the ongoing practice of Catholicism and High Anglicanism today. It's an alternative gospel which we must not get tired of opposing. Little wonder that evangelicals have often been considered deficient in their worship, rightly wary of mysticism in all its forms, having stripped away the gaudy baubles of sacramentalism, with all its theatre and colour and movement."

Thankfully, many of our low-church colleagues would not share this view. Many would agree that the bible sees worship taking place in a special way when God's people gather together, and liturgy, music, a sense of mystery are valid aids to understanding and encouragement.

What is the Dean's attitude to such things? "Feelings of epiphany (transcendence) occur when certain human activities are undertaken, especially music, symbolic acts, drama, certain architecture. And these things induce feelings of transcendence regardless of the content or even the religious context. We need to help people see that nice feelings are nice. They're desirable. But they don't represent contact with God." However, from my reading of scripture and from my own experience I am sure that when such gifts are applied in Christian worship, they provide encouragement and uplift, in a way quite different from our reaction to those activities in a secular context. In times of Christian worship the gift is married to the revelation of Christ in God. Jehoshaphat met and overcame the multitudes from the east not by fighting in battle, but by song and praise to the Lord (2 Chronicles 20:16-23).

If true Anglican services are important to you in winning life's battles and in entering into transcendent wonder, if you value balanced, meditative, biblical worship then dash out your email to the Diocesan Secretary without delay.

Alan Melrose, Parishioner, St Paul's Burwood

PONDERING THE POLICIES

An Archbishop's annual Synod Address is probably his most important speech "ex cathedra" and deserves our careful attention and appreciation. All would welcome this year Archbishop Peter Jensen's challenge to **sacrifice** (a matter for churches as well as individuals?); his encouragement of **small groups** in churches; the **call to prayer**; news of **growing numbers** of clergy and lay-workers and – in some places – of church-attenders; (he has now explained elsewhere what is meant by the 10% goal.); and the **concern to connect** with the community and those not attending (although I think the proposed costly distribution of Scriptures neither wise nor practical).

On other matters, however, some of our differences would be *deep* but as in Parliament "loyal" opposition should be allowed.

1. For many, such as the Archbishop, the Graham Crusade was *life-transforming*. However, **the experience of many other Christians has been different**. I see no exact correlation between one particular kind of Christian experience and the fruit of the Spirit. Dr John Stott recently said in his final address that what matters in the end is **Christ-like** character– a sharp challenge to all of us (also, as Dr Keith Mascord has firmly but eirenicly reminded our Diocese, a challenge to our Church as well). **In the great saints, that Christ-likeness is expressed in many different ways but "every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God."** (1 Jn 4.7).

2. **The New Testament**, although dominated by Pauline Christianity, provides evidence of a similar **diversity of experience** in the earliest Christian churches - and also of **doctrinal diversity**. Increasingly, scholars such as the Jewish Geza Vermes, RC Hans Kung and our own John Painter point to the importance of the messianic Judaisms of our Lord's family and the earliest disciples, and *their* successors.

3. As for the death of Jesus in particular, it is not only later Christians who have understand his death (and "atonement") in different ways. St Paul shows *one* way in which **meaning was found in the Roman execution of Jesus**, for some the *only* true interpretation, but not all Christians now or then have agreed.

Some Evangelical Anglican scholars now reject as un-Scriptural the idea of "penal substitution" – Jesus dying in our place to assuage the wrath of God, undergoing the punishment we deserve. Bishop David Sheppard said he had come to faith through such a preaching of the cross yet came to believe it was neither adequate nor true.

There are other, more helpful interpretations, although I myself see the death of Jesus as the culmination of his *life* of sacrifice or self-giving, **an offering made perfect once for all upon the cross** (Hebrews 5.9) – (rather than a sacrifice made only in his death as our fortunately *not* infallible prayer books and articles declare). That life *lived*, and laid down, for his friends and for the Kingdom

shows "*love so amazing, so divine*" that has indeed has been used by God to turn the hearts of many to repentance, and that demands indeed "my soul, my life, my all",

Nonetheless, the Bible itself shows that **God's forgiveness does not depend on that death** or even on that unique life. In *Old Testament* times, people are assured that God "forgiveth all thy sin and healeth all thine infirmities" (Psalm 103.3) The baptism of John (received by Jesus) is for *the remission of sins*. Jesus in his ministry *before* Calvary brings God's forgiveness. When in the Lord's Prayer itself we ask for pardon, the prayer is not even offered "through Jesus Christ". And the *com-passionate* father asks for no propitiation when the son who was lost is "found".

4. Richard Turnbull, Principal of the now very troubled Wycliffe Hall, Oxford, said *recently* "*I believe 95% of people will burn in hell unless the message of the gospel is brought to them*". Does the Archbishop agree? It is a message often heard but I do not believe in such a God nor such a "Gospel" – although God must be a holy God "in whom there is no darkness at all". (1Jn 1.5). I cannot understand a seeming obsession with everlasting life beyond, whatever "everlasting" can mean in the light of the knowledge brought us by modern physics, chemistry and genetics. **To me "the lost" are not that supposed 95% but those lost now in anxiety and mental distress, those with intractable pain, those falsely gaoled, those homeless or hungry, those drug-addicted, all who, like us, need to be found.**

5. *Many* lives have been *enriched* spiritually by Conservative Evangelical beliefs. **We cannot do without the best in our Church's Evangelical - and Catholic and Liberal traditions.** Yet we know only "*in part*" and "*see through a glass darkly*". Whatever complementary wisdom we hear in the Scriptures (with imperfect hearing), the heart of Judaism and Christianity seems to me very simple - if all-demanding. I think that even if there were no resurrection life beyond, we would still need **to love kindness, to do justice, and to walk humbly with our God**. (Micah 6.6). Jesus says "**If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments**" (Mt 19.17). The story of the *non-Jewish, non-Christian* Samaritan shows that this *is* possible. As for judgment (Mt 25) - it depends not on acceptance of some celestial calculation but on visiting the sick and the prisoner and clothe the poor and feed the hungry.

Some who leave our Anglican Church join another denomination. Others find **God in natural beauty** or some form of **service in the Kingdom**. Some drift away from the things of God. **All, including many who have hardly ever been in church still belong - to a God who is like the woman who seeks "diligently" until her silver piece is restored, and like the shepherd who searches for the lost sheep "until he find it".**

The Reverend Dr John Bunyan

A New Chapter for MOWatch

At the beginning of October, MOWatch and MOW Sydney received some welcome and unexpected news. **The Appellate Tribunal, the church's highest legal body, has 'decided that there is no constitutional impediment to women priests becoming bishops in Australia in dioceses that have passed the legislation for women priests.** The constitution in defining "canonical fitness" refers to "persons" which, the tribunal has decided, includes women! Sydney Diocese had argued that "person" in this context actually meant "men only" (1).

Already *the Archbishop of Sydney* is calling on the national church 'to look for some means of taking care of minority groups who are disenfranchised by this development.' (2). A question immediately comes to mind. What is he doing for the minority in his own diocese who are in favour of the ordination of women to the priesthood and who would benefit from having the ministry of women priests and in the future women bishops? **Sydney Diocese has consistently refused even hospitality to visiting women priests and also a woman bishop.** This certainly makes us feel that our views are of no consequence. For over 10 years now we have felt hurt and disenfranchised over this issue

2007 Sydney Diocese synod concluded a few days before this announcement was made. The very last agenda item discussed was the motion presented by the *Reverend Chris Albany's asking the Archbishop to explore ways in which the differing views about women's leadership in the church can be creatively lived out in the life and practice of the Diocese.* I understand there was an attempt by *Robert Tong* to disembowel the motion by substituting the words General Synod for Archbishop, and that the Archbishop obviously supported him. I cannot see how this is taking care of us! However as this issue was not resolved before the close of synod, it will be the first motion to be discussed in 2008. We pray that this will prove to be a blessing.

1. Personal Communication from Muriel Porter.

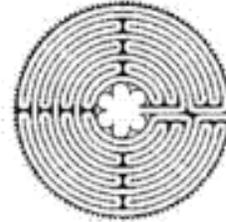
2. SMH September 29. Reported by Linda Morris.

Christine Middleton

A Comment from Chris Albany

The decision by Sydney Synod, to refer, to next year's Synod, the issue of how the differing views on leadership by women might be lived out in this Diocese may prove to have been providential. That the referral motion was moved by Bishop Glenn Davies is in itself encouraging. I am also encouraged by the comments of Archbishop Peter Jensen, after the Appellate Tribunal decision, about the need for consideration of those in a minority. I am hopeful that ongoing conversations with people opposed 'in principle' to women's ordination, but sensitive to the need expressed by the Archbishop may result in a bi-partisan approach to this issue next year. I hope we will be able to present a motion to Synod moved and seconded by persons having opposing views on the

underlying issue of women's leadership and therefore Ordination. Optimistic? - maybe unrealistic? - but worth striving for.



HIGHLY RECOMMENDED BOOKS

YES : A POSITIVE FAITH, David L. Edwards,
D.L.T. 2006 rrp \$39.95

This is the latest of the more than 20 books written by a priest who has served the Church of England so well. **It presents a Christian faith than can be believed in today**

MINISTRY WITH SENIORS, Alan Langdon 2007

The author, a former Sydney Diocesan Director of Education, then Executive Chairman of its Education Commission., gives us a small book important for all involved in the life of our Church. \$8 from Youthworks, St Andrew's House (postage \$5 for 1 or 2 copies) – sales@youthworks.net, or Dss Joan Hartley, joanh1@bigpond.com, 8/30-32 Wilsons Rd., Bardwell Valley 2207.

Many other new books in the Colenso Library are listed on the *non-blog* site :

www.prayerbookfellowship.blogspot.com

OPERATION EYE OPENER

A catalogue of about 400 new and 2nd hand books (mostly Christian) is prepared. These will be on sale very cheaply, most for \$5 and \$10, with proceeds going to help the work of **Christian Blind Mission International** and the **Fred Hollows Foundation** (which is responsible for removing cataracts suffered by aboriginal Australians and poor people overseas. Let me know if you would like a catalogue (or like to visit and see the books). "While we have time, let us do good to all"!

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NORTH EAST ARNHAM LAND

THE SITUATION SINCE ‘INTERVENTION’

Misinformation seems to be the order of the day in the Arnhem Land communities. I feel I can make such a claim because I have not long returned from Yirrkala, a community not far from Gove Airport and the Alcan mining town of Nhulunbuy.

Yirrkala was visited on Friday 24 August, by Major-General Chalmers, who spoke to a gathering of Yolgnu people and others, about his understanding of the hundreds of pages of legislation that had been steamrollered through Federal Parliament.

Major General Chalmers assured the community that the Government was only acquiring their land for 5 year leases and that the dealings would be transparent. But now it appears the government is really planning to turn these into 99-year leases. This seems to be the reason for the recent secret meetings of *Minister Mal Brough* accompanied by very senior Canberra public servants, and *Noel Pearson* from Cape York, with *Galarrwuy Yunupingu*.

It is outrageous that *Minister Brough* should refuse to meet with Yirrkala Elders yet hold these secret discussions with *Mr Yunupingu*, as if he has some right to speak for all Yolgnu people. It was apparently expected that *Mr Yunupingu* would either sell out his countrymen or bully or cajole them into submission. *Noel Pearson* is well “off country” in Arnhem Land. Is he now in the direct employ of government, accompanying ministers and officials as they meet to persuade leaders?

Mr Yunupingu is a wealthy individual with legal advice at his beck and call. He has connections with other powerful and wealthy people, such as his new business partner *Shane Stone* (the former Country Liberal Party chief minister of N.T.). It can not be assumed that *Yunupingu's* interests reflect those of the Yolgnu community. What opportunity is the government giving to other local leaders to get independent expert legal and financial advice? I fear the local Traditional Owners will be pressured into signing 99-year leases, thus surrendering their land rights.

Uncertainty and insecurity are affecting all organisations in this community.

Yirrkala is home to the largest and most exciting Aboriginal Art and Craft Gallery in Australia – Buku Larrngay. The current managers are virtually hamstrung in their planning and decision-making. They have the prospect of a federal government appointed Business Manager moving into the community and so do not know whether their ideas will be overridden by someone who cannot possibly have a real grasp of their operation.

An early casualty of the “intervention” is the future economic independence of the Laynhapuy Homelands Association. Their current economic basis was severely

undermined by the peremptory cancellation on 25 June 2007 of the Association’s kava import licence which enabled them to run a carefully supervised business. They were licensed to import kava and to resell it to other communities which in turn were licensed to retail it. It was retailed in rationed packages of 400 grams per person per week.

The kava business provided jobs and training for indigenous people, and produced a profit of approximately \$1.2 million per year. Under the N.T. Kava Management Act, all profits from kava sales have to be used for community benefit. At Laynhapuy, kava profits have been used to: build a Rangers’ Centre and a school basketball court; do maintenance and improvements on some Homelands’ houses; build and operate Homelands’ offices; provide a new boat for the coastal Rangers; and fund heavy plant and equipment for maintaining homeland roads, rubbish tips and airstrips, amongst other projects.

Replacing alcohol with kava has been an excellent harm-minimisation policy, though alcohol was the preference of the younger guys. Kava relaxes people and does not increase aggression as alcohol does. Since the banning of kava from Yirrkala, which is a “dry community”, more locals now go to the liquor outlets in Nhulunbuy and either drink in town or on the way home.

The 400 gram weekly ration was the amount of kava that could be legally purchased and did not exceed what is currently regarded as a safe level of kava consumption. Any side effects it causes are reversible if its use becomes occasional or is stopped altogether. On the other hand, excessive amounts of alcohol can be legally purchased and, when drunk regularly, can cause liver damage and cognitive impairment. Heavy consumption of even soft drink does significant damage to health, for example increasing the incidence of diabetes.

Due to the peremptory nature of the cancellation of permits for commercial importation of kava, the Laynhapuy Homelands Association has lost several hundred thousand dollars in recent investments in the business and in kava-related research. A contract had been made with the Northern Territory Government to undertake a Kava Health Monitoring Project across all kava using communities, but that had to be cancelled just as it was getting under way.

In addition, about \$1.68 million of current and planned community projects are now at risk because of the Australian Government’s kava ban. These 14 projects cover such things as: the purchase of a Mitsubishi Canter Truck to support expansion of Indigenous Building Team; the installation of the ARDS Yolgnu language public radio service in six homelands and ABC Radio National in one homeland; a contribution for the provision of Night Patrol Services to Yirrkala and Nhulunbuy; scoping of a reticulated 240VV power

system for Wandawuy Homeland; further basketball courts; a cyclone shelter; housing; and investment in other business ventures.

The Laynhapuy Homelands' Association has been told by the federal government that NO COMPENSATION for these losses will be provided.

The homelands are also being greatly disadvantaged by the Federal Government's decision to abolish the Community Development Employment Program (CDEP). As reported in the *Sydney Morning Herald* 17.9.07 [edited version of quote]:

"The Federal Government's intervention in remote indigenous communities in the Northern Territory could devastate a lucrative industry and leave artists open to exploitation by carpet-baggers, leading indigenous art academics and artists' representatives say.

"The industry depends on CDEP to support art centres and workers who do not earn enough to live on from art sales. As part of the intervention in Northern Territory remote communities, indigenous people will have up to half of their welfare payments quarantined by the Federal Government. But CDEP payments cannot be quarantined because they are technically income. People receiving these payments will be moved to the lower unemployment payments, which are subject to quarantining."

"Professor Jon Altman of ANU has said that ending CDEP is likely to jeopardise this most successful indigenous industry which has enormous spin off benefits for the nation."

Doing away with the permit system opens the door to shonky art dealers – the carpet baggers.

The Rangers who patrol the coast and tend the land through bush regeneration and controlled burning have fulfilled their responsibilities with enthusiasm. But these jobs, which combined well with a traditional life-style in remote areas, are now gone!

What a short sighted policy this is, to replace dedicated CDEP workers in the communities! I saw an ad in the *Northern Territory News* 8/9/07:

"Employment Brokers on \$114,920 to \$159,470 pa with potential for 'performance bonus' ... plus an incentive package which includes regular negotiated reunion visits to your home state. These are non-ongoing positions for the period up to 30 June 2008."

Will these large salaries for outsiders be included via 'creative accounting' as money spent on Aboriginal employment? And what happens after June 2008? How many *real* jobs will have been created for the Indigenous people in the remote homelands? Not many I suspect.

Another concern is that there will be no police stationed at Yirrkala because it is considered too close to Nhulunbuy – even though it can take over an hour for police to respond to an incident. The new police for Galiwinku Island and Gapuwiyak community, several

hundred kilometres away, are also based in Nhulunbuy because there is no available housing in those communities.

We need to hold the Federal Government and Opposition to account – not just in relation to child protection. Indigenous land rights and culture must not be eroded, and the promises of proper services and infrastructure must be honoured.

Ruth Norton, Sydney
Email: ruth.nor@bigpond.net.au

THAI CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY AT ST LUKE'S ANGLICAN CHURCH ENMORE



The Thai Community at St Luke's church Enmore has announced a Thai Christian Retreat, from Saturday 27th October to Sunday 4th November

The retreat has been planned to: raise awareness of the St Luke's Christian Thai Community; to encourage the growth of the Christian Thai Community and to reach out to other members of the Thai community in Sydney with the good news of Jesus Christ

The inspiration behind this initiative comes from Mr Worawit Takham (Wit) from the region of Chiang Mai in Thailand. Wit is a passionate Christian and a staunch member of St Luke's Church. Through his business, *Eden Education and Migration*, Wit has been able to contact Thai students coming to Australia and encourage them to be part of the worshipping community at St Luke's.

On Sundays, St Luke's has one only worship service –the celebration of the Holy Eucharist. At this Service there are 16 different nationalities and languages in the congregation. We have deliberately chosen to worship together to express our unity in Christ.

The Thai Christian Retreat Leader will be, Dr Boonratna Boayen recently retired Moderator of the Churches of Christ in Thailand. This is the largest Protestant denomination in Thailand. Dr Boayen will be accompanied by his wife and two experienced pastoral workers.



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RECENT BOOKS REVIEWED

IN SEARCH OF THE LOST

'The death and life of seven peacemakers of the Melanesian Brotherhood'

Richard Anthony Carter (Canterbury Press 2006)
\$30.00 from ABM, Australia Tele: (02) 9264 1021

Review by Robert Wheeler Rector, St Peter's Cremorne

This book is riveting and moving. *Richard Carter* (now on the staff of St Martin-in-the-Fields) went in 1987, as a gifted young priest from Bournemouth, UK to the island of Guadalcanal in the Solomon Islands. He would eventually himself take vows as a brother.

Here at *Tabalia* is the headquarters of the Brotherhood, that remarkable community begun in 1925. Its brothers take temporary vows of poverty, chastity and obedience. By 2000 there would be about 450 of them as well as 180 novices. They had established three regions in Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu.

This book gives something of the history of the Brotherhood and its ideals. It focuses on the political events leading up to the deaths of seven brothers in 2003. Ethnic conflict and near civil war had broken out in 1999, and the brothers imbued with Christian faith and apostolic courage sought to bring reconciliation.

The aftermath of their deaths is described in terms of the trauma and the challenge to faith the remaining brothers experienced, and their movement forward in witness. The very high regard in which they were already held in Melanesian society has been immeasurably enhanced by the martyrdoms.

Early in 2004 some eighteen Brother plus two Sisters of the Church, two Sisters of Melanesia and two Franciscan Friars went with the Brothers' chaplain, *Richard Carter*, to England on mission for over three months. **Through drama and in conversation they revealed the joy and bravery of their faith.** Some from English parishes asked them "How do you find the Church of England?" *Novice Kevin* answered;

"It is very special. We have seen such beautiful buildings. We have been welcomed with great kindness by many people and it is wonderful. We have much to learn from you, especially the elderly. It was your ancestors who brought us the gospel of peace and now we have returned to thank you.

But one thing is lacking; a family consists of the grandparents, the parents, young people and children, but we have not found many young ones of our age in your Church. God is their God too and we must bring them back."

The story of the seven Melanesian martyrs belongs with those of the first century Christian martyrs, with *Polycarp* and *Perpetua* and other victims of the Roman emperors, with all who gave their lives for Christ in the centuries that followed up to and including the twentieth century martyrs represented in statue on the west front of Westminster Abbey.

Archbishop Rowan Williams who in July 2004 visited the tombs of the martyrs at *Tabalia*, writes in a preface to *Carter's* book: *"It is one of the most truly evangelical books I have read for a long time; Good News for all of us, a testimony to the fidelity of Jesus Christ in his people and to his people, the world over."*

Knocking on Heaven's Door: A New Testament Theology of Petitionary Prayer

David Crump Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2006. Pp. 345.

Review by Mark Harding, Dean, Australian College of Theology

David Crump is a professor in the Department of Religion at Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

***Knocking on Heaven's Door* is a New Testament theology of petitionary prayer, beginning with the synoptic Gospels, the Lords' Prayer, and the Johannine corpus before turning to the Acts, the Pauline corpus, the General Letters and the book of Revelation.**

***Crump* combines exegetical comment on the key NT passages with insights offered from his personal life, his pastoral experience and concise theological analyses.** He is particularly concerned to integrate theology and, to borrow a phrase from *Rudolf Bultmann*, "the act of living" (p. 18). This methodology underscores the keen pastoral thrust of the book and lends some urgency to his robust critique of those contemporary theologies of prayer encountered the world over that essentially blame the pray-er's lack of faith or failure to persist or failure to "surrender" completely as the reason for the phenomenon of unanswered prayer. Such theologies, *Crump* implies, are more akin to magic and cultic manipulation of the divine, and certainly induce unhealthy guilt in the pray-er when the prayed for outcome does not eventuate.

The biblical, and especially the NT data, lead to other conclusions which are the particular province of the first four chapters on the synoptic Gospels, namely, that the frequency of prayer, the earnestness of the pray-er and the immensity of the faith of the pray-er are neither scripturally-based guarantees of answers to our prayers nor quantifiable commodities. **But there is another insidious enemy of prayer, namely, the view that God has decreed all that will happen such that prayer becomes an exercise in conforming our will to God's.** Prayer only changes the pray-er since God has immutably fore-ordained all that is to come to pass. Consequently prayer can only serve to change us insofar as we come to the realisation that he gives us only those things that are in his will to grant and not always those things for which we pray.

***Crump* is insistent that the NT supports the view that God can be influenced by prayer, that his mind can**

be changed and his decree does not extend to all events of history. God does not micromanage all events of human history (pp. 290–91) but has left room for the prayers of his people to form his mind and direct his action. God, writes *Crump*, “has sovereignly determined some things, especially the gift of a beginning and a final hope, but the greater remainder is left for us to negotiate by faith . . .” (p. 295). There can be no other way to account for the assumption across the NT corpus that people pray because they believe that God can be influenced by prayer. *Crump* calls this impetratory prayer—prayer that affects God “and makes a difference in the way things happen, moving God to do something he otherwise may not have done” (p. 219).

But if God is a God who can be affected by our prayers, what do we make of unanswered prayer? This is a particular concern of the final chapter of the book. There is much that happens to us and to those we love, despite our prayers on their behalf, that calls into question any confidence we have in his providential ordering of the creation. The thrust of the *Crump’s* argument is that praying can move God to act, yet he readily admits that he is free to respond negatively to our requests, as in the case of Jesus’ probing the “flexibility” of the Father’s plan in Gethsemane or Paul requesting the Roman church that he be spared from his enemies in Jerusalem. The God of the Bible does hide his good purposes, nowhere better (we now see) in the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus. While great evils do happen for which we will never have an answer this side of the full realization of the Kingdom of God, faith consoles us. God’s saving intention for his creation will not fail and even great evil can be used by him to bring about his good purposes.

There is no doubting the essential soundness of his conclusions and the pastoral sense that shines through the book, especially its final chapter. This is a book I can highly recommend to the theological college student, university student or church member wrestling with prayer and finding much that dissatisfies among the many contemporary voices on the subject.

Those interested in a biblical theology of prayer that is more attuned to the Old Testament would do well to read **Patrick D. Miller’s, *They Cried to the Lord: The Form and Theology of Biblical Prayer* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1994).**

***The Significance of Salvation: A Study of Salvation Language in the Pastoral Epistles* George M. Wieland,** (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2006), xxii + 344. ISBN 1-84227-257-8.

Review by Mark Harding, Dean, Australian College of Theology
George Wieland completed the research on which this book is based as a doctoral candidate at the University of Aberdeen under the supervision of the well-known New Testament scholar I. *Howard Marshall*. The author

teaches New Testament at Carey Baptist College in Auckland, New Zealand.

The Pastoral Epistles (PE) have been the subject of a significant number of monographs and commentaries published in the last couple of decades. This marks a turning point in their reception during the last 150 years in which they had tended to languish, assessed by many scholars as scarcely worthy of Paul, derivative and uncreative in their theology and ethical stance, and meeting challenges from false teachers by vituperation and the imposition of dogmatic assertion. **This monograph furthers the work of scholars who seek to interpret these three letters (1 Timothy, 2 Timothy and Titus) on their own terms (rather than as pale reflections of Pauline theological insight and argumentative strategy) and as creative and timely engagements with teaching considered false and subversive.**

The bulk of the book comprises tight exegetical comment on all those passages in the Greek text of the PE that explicitly bear on the language of salvation. Throughout *Dr Wieland* judiciously moderates a dialogue between the scholars and his own insights into the text. The book is marked by exhaustive and thorough exegetical analysis hand in hand with a mastery of the available secondary literature.

However, readers of the Newsletter might be interested in the way in which *Dr Wieland* interprets the surprising statement in 1 Tim 2:15 which declares that women “will be saved through childbearing, provided they continue in faith and love and holiness, with modesty” (NRSV). This reads most naturally as a statement that women will be saved by fulfilling the role dictated by conventional social expectations. This is a view of salvation that the apostle Paul, who in my opinion did not write the PE, could not have countenanced given his insistence that we are saved by grace through faith. *Wieland* cannot bring himself to accept that the writer of 1 Timothy could have meant anything so remote from Pauline thought and instead argues that the childbearing the author has in mind is that mentioned in Gen 3:15 which foreshadows the bearing of one who will strike the serpent’s head. I, for one, am not at all persuaded.

Nevertheless, this book is a worthy addition to the scholarly output on the PE and fills a lacuna. Readers will be particularly grateful that the author has laboured so intensely and carefully to open up those passages which are the most telling for constructing the letters’ theology of salvation, even if readers might be far from persuaded about his readings of some. **In particular *Wieland’s* contention that the three letters are individually distinctive, insofar as each addresses different occasions, is an important insight.** Moreover his reminder that the moral injunctions of the PE are cast in a strong eschatological expectation of the saving purposes of God should not be lost on readers.

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THE LORD'S SUPPER

Recently, the Archbishop wrote in the *Southern Cross* (Archbishop Writes, July 2007, P6):

"The Lord's Supper is a marvelous gift to his people. But it is not constitutive of his people; it does not form us into his people. His presence by word and Spirit does that (meaning Bible and preaching). We ... begin to think that somehow the bread and the wine in themselves convey God's body. Attention is then focused on bread and wine, instead of the fellowship act of eating bread and wine together to express our deep unity in the death of Christ and to proclaim his death until he comes. But we need to also ask these additional questions: Is Jesus actually present in our meetings? Are we meeting "in his name"?"

The philosophical and theological position the Archbishop promotes, is one held by the followers of the Swiss reformer Zwingli. Zwingli said that the bread and wine in the Eucharist were nothing more than mere symbols. His position stood against the Roman Catholic theory of Transubstantiation, the Lutheran theory of Consubstantiation, and what I believe what the Anglican Church has fostered it ever since the Reformation, a theology of the Eucharist holding in tension both Protestant and Catholic understandings, the theory of the Real Presence. Real presence is expressed in the "Book of Common Prayer" and in both recent revisions, the "An Australia Prayer Book" and our current book the "A Prayer Book for Australia" (APBA). It is to be found in the "Prayer of Humble Access" or as it is called in the APBA the "Prayer of Approach".

"We do not presume to come to your table, merciful Lord, trusting in our own righteousness, but in your manifold and great mercies. We are not worthy so much as to gather up the crumbs under your table. But you are the same Lord whose nature is always to have mercy. Grant us, therefore, gracious Lord, so to eat the flesh of your dear Son Jesus Christ, and to drink his blood, that we may evermore dwell in him, and he in us. Amen."

Jesus said that whenever we meet together we should eat the bread and drink the wine of the Eucharist as if we were doing it in his presence. Not re-enacting the Last Supper but being actually a participant of the original meal. This is more than remembering. He did not tell his followers to say Morning or Evening Prayer or attend a prayer meeting, as good as such may be. Each time we gather we are to celebrate the Lord's Death until he comes. It is reassuring to be partaking of the Eucharist. It is the New Covenant's manna from heaven. It strengthens us with the very presence of Jesus so that we can remain faithful and committed until he returns or we go to be with him at the end of our age.

In *John Macquarrie's* book, "Path's in Spirituality" he wrote of going into a Anglo-Catholic church in London on the eve of being sent off to war and he happened upon a service of Evensong that was followed by

"Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament". He had never been to Benediction before. At Benediction the Sacrament is exposed and the congregation gaze upon it. While he was uncertain of the ceremony, he said,

"While I did not know what lay ahead of me or when I might come back to these shores again, but (by Benediction) I had been reassured of our Lord's presence and had received a sacramental blessing, ... I had been made aware of God's presence among his people, gathered to worship him" (P 95)

It was this statement that really cemented in my understanding that Jesus is "really present" in the Eucharistic elements, present to reassure all of us. It does not exclude the concept of God being with us at other times and in the words of Scripture and the words of the preacher. Word and Sacrament must be held in tension. Both are important. None-the-less, I am truly fed and reassured by the eating and drinking of the elements. It assures me that as the mana fed the wandering Israelites, the Eucharist, the Holy Communion, the Lord's Supper, the Mass, the Holy Mysteries, whatever the name you give the Sacrament, it feeds me for my daily wanderings in the uncharted regions of my life pilgrimage. I thank God for the life of *John Macquarrie*, saint, and his faithful service.

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

14th GENERAL SYNOD MET IN CANBERRA from 20th – 26th October

The Synod Service was held in St Saviour's Cathedral Goulburn. Guest preacher was Archdeacon Bob Jackson from the UK

In his Presidential Address to the General Synod, *Dr Phillip Aspinall* highlighted the significant work carried out over the past few years on mission and church attendance and forecast further efforts under a revised form of 'marks of mission.'

The Archbishop also used the address to offer support for a process to produce a covenant for the Anglican Communion. It would spell out the responsibilities and obligations of belonging to the Anglican Communion and how member churches would relate to each other in times of conflict.

The Anglican General Synod consists of 247 members – 25 bishops and 222 clergy and laypeople from all over Australia.

Dr Aspinall will face an election next year. The present synod will decide the role of the primate after a committee was set up in 2004 to investigate the possibility of a full-time national Anglican leader based in Canberra.