

# ***NEWSLETTER***

## ***No 35 MARCH 2008***

### ***President's Column***

#### ***James' Jottings***

Many people have worked themselves into a lather over the recent announcement by the Archbishop that none of the Sydney bishops would not be attending this year's Lambeth Conference.

Anglicans Together organised a letter to the Archbishop, asking him prayerfully to reconsider his decision, and requesting that at least one of the Sydney bishops attend. Many thanks to all who signed!

The Archbishop's decision has been complicated by his role in the so-called GAFCON: the Global Anglican Future Conference. This is to be held in Jerusalem in June, and is open to Evangelical and Anglo-Catholic conservative Anglicans. At least theoretically! I visited the GAFCON Home Page [[www.gafcon.org/index](http://www.gafcon.org/index)] on 20 February; the only occurrence of "Anglo-Catholic" in the text was on page 2 in an article from *Church Times* 11 January 2008 by Chris Sugden.

This is significant. If any Anglo-Catholic bishops do attend, some significant fault lines could emerge. For example, should Sydney wish to promote lay presidency once again, this will provoke Anglo-Catholic resistance (as well perhaps as resistance from some other conservative Evangelicals).

#### **But there will be more fault-lines anyway.**

Compare the Sydney and African contexts. I understand that homosexuality is socially taboo and rigorously marginalised in many African societies; African bishops from such contexts are simply asserting the obvious and maintaining the *status quo*.

The Sydney context is radically different. It is not a matter of maintaining the *status quo*, but returning to a previous understanding of homosexuality in spite of developments in Sydney's life. I do not argue for the legitimacy or desirability of such developments at this point. I do argue that mounting a cultural rearguard action in Sydney is very different from maintaining an unquestioned

*status quo* elsewhere. At some stage, the agendas and strategies must necessarily diverge.

The GAFCON project is, I am arguing, inherently politically unstable. Time will tell.

It is also inherently unstable theologically. Protestantism, by its very nature, invites dissent – thereby opening the gate to multiplying splinter groups. For most of these splinter groups, the need for schism is driven by "purity" [of one or more of: biblical interpretation, doctrine, worship, sacraments, discipline, governance]. Such schisms in the past have included the Novatianist, the Donatist, the East-West schism of 1054, and the Reformation – only the last two of which survived, although with multiple splintering.

Two features stand out. First: there will be no ideally pure church on earth before the Reign of God is consummated; until then, the wheat and tares will grow side by side - simply because sin is as ineradicable and all-pervasive in human institutions as it is in individuals. Second, all such schisms attempt to enthrone one interpretation of Christian faith over all the others, allegedly on the grounds of pure hermeneutic or pure apostolic tradition etc; which can easily become idolatrous on the one hand, and on the other covertly attempt to limit God's activity in the world and amongst the faithful.

**In remaining an Anglican, by conscience, I collude in the endurance of one such schism; I want no further such schism. I nevertheless note that the Anglican Church has retained something distinctive and in this context absolutely essential: the notion of such "catholic" inclusiveness that all Christians should give each other the benefit of the doubt as to *bona fides* (although neither uncritically nor naively), and confront each other forthrightly and graciously where appropriate. No withdrawing into the conventicles of the righteous!**

*Geoffrey Paul* was Anglican Bishop of Bradford, 1981-83. At his enthronement, he memorably summed up this catholic inclusiveness in a way which the Evangelical George Carey used to quote when Archbishop of Canterbury: "There is no way of belonging to Jesus Christ except by belonging gladly and irrevocably to the glorious ragbag of

saints and fatheads who make up the One, Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church."

**Sydney's bishops may choose to go to GAFCON; but they *all* should also go to Lambeth.**

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Many of you will have heard that I am leaving Granville to be Rector of St Paul's, Maryborough, in the Diocese of Brisbane. I must consequently resign as President of Anglicans Together. It has been an honour and a privilege to serve in this capacity! I have been blessed with many friends, who have prayed for me and supported me in as President as well as during my cancer treatment. I am very grateful to God and to you all. Please keep Marcia and me in your prayers, as we move back to Queensland; and keep the people of St Mark's Granville in your prayers also, as they seek a new Rector.

Grace and peace,

James

Rector, St Mark's Granville

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## *The Greeting of Peace*

*At the sign of peace, worshipers are invited to show their peace and love before receiving the Eucharist, which accomplishes their unity most perfectly. Most often worshipers will shake hands and say, "Peace be with you."*

Introduced in the 1960s to a bashful church unaccustomed to speaking to one another at worship, it broke the silent mood before communion. Now it has become a welcome expression of unity among those preparing for communion together in Christ. The placement of *the sign of peace* still confuses some who think it comes too late to say hello and too early to say goodbye.

**However, the purpose of the sign is not to extend a greeting. It is to express our love; it foreshadows our communion. □ *The sign of peace* has a purpose deeper than a greeting. It expresses the unity of those baptised in Christ. When extending *the sign of peace*, we should resist turning it into a "halftime" break. This is not the time to congratulate someone on their anniversary, to set up an appointment, or to exchange messages with the servers. It is the time to express peace and love.**

**It is given out as a revival of the ancient rite of the *Kiss of Peace*, as it was performed in the Early Church.** The great emphasis placed upon it indicates its importance. Together with the

Communion, it makes up what might be called the high point of the service.

The importance of this "ceremony" is that Christ is truly present in the hearts of all who have love for one another. "*Ubi caritas est. Deus ibi est*" ("**Where charity is, there God is**"). Through these warm touches and embraces true charity is being expressed and communicated. Communal spirit is not only being symbolized, but actually put into practice and learned in the doing. Christ said, "*first to be reconciled to your brother or sister*" (Mt. 5:24).

*The Greeting of Peace*, together with the with *the Penitential Rite, the Confession and Absolution*, in which all confess to their brothers and sisters, is that act of reconciliation with one's brothers or sisters, which we were directed by Christ so to undertake. **It is therefore a perfect preparation for the reception of Christ in the Eucharist.** By thus making peace with one's fellow Christians, we allow ourselves to be liberated; we find our selves in the community of the Church and manifesting both the personal and communal peace that Christ alone can give.

In order for this peace to be given in great abundance, all barriers that divide those present must be allowed to fall. This is the time when Paul's words are fulfilled: "*There is neither Jew nor Greek: there is neither bond nor free: there is neither male nor female. For you are all one in Christ Jesus.*" (Gal. 3:28) **What is important is that everyone present give themselves to their brothers and sisters and allow the natural communication of the peace of Christ to flow from each into all.** Everyone should cast aside his or her own timidity, self-consciousness and selfishness. We must, as it were, hand ourselves over to the community, allowing ourselves to become a part of it, make ourselves an ingredient in the communal blend.

John Cornish.

Rector, Epping

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# IN PRAISE OF LITURGY

**A** carefully crafted liturgy (order of service), used with a carefully crafted lectionary (comprehensive pattern of readings), both protects the church and nurtures it. It protects the church from the tyranny of the Rector's emphases and blind spots; and by drawing on the deepest expressions of prayerful discipleship, it provides words to inspire, to challenge, and to console today's disciples.

The one charged with devising the format and content of the parish worship will inevitably have emphases and blind spots. They may include never preaching on the Old Testament or about issues of poverty and injustice, or a perpetual diet of St Paul. The emphases may all be good, conscientiously and prayerfully chosen. But rehearsing favourite themes over the years – and excluding all others – effectively denies parishioners the balanced diet of Scripture, Christian spirituality, and authentic discipleship which is their right.

The blind spots present a more subtle problem. Various heresies creep in to fill the gaps. We are particularly prone to several - *Gnosticism, Pelagianism, Arianism, Docetism, and Marcionism*, to name a few.

These can all be nurtured and defended from "plain readings of Scripture", as their respective originators have all done. This is where the Creeds come into their own. Worship in the classical tradition of Christian orthodoxy is guided not only by Scripture but by the Creeds, which therefore play honoured roles in the Prayer Book and other orthodox worship formularies. To remove them from the parishioners' experience is therefore inherently dangerous.

As I understand it, these protections (from the tyranny of emphases, blind spots, and opportunities for heresy) have all been steadily eroded in Sydney Diocese over the years, particularly through the widespread jettisoning of common liturgical worship – no matter how well-intentioned and mission-driven that change has been.

Last year, Synod resolved to ask the Doctrine Commission to articulate a biblical theology of Christian assembly. This is a theologically necessary step towards formulating coherent liturgies: what does Christian worship entail?

The Archbishop wisely decided that discussion of the motion should be free-flowing rather than subject to the more restrictive formal rules of debate.

A number of clergy spoke highly of the liturgical heritage of the Book of Common Prayer, and its ongoing relevance. A number had had some very positive experience of liturgical services, and could see their potential value. I was surprised at the positive attitudes to liturgical templates, and found it a very encouraging discussion.

If I have understood *Archbishop Peter* correctly, his motivation in raising the issue was twofold: to foster the unity and mission of the Diocese [perhaps by providing what *Cranmer* called "a common order"]; and to protect the authentic Christian gospel from the perversions which easily creep in through human sinfulness and negligence, as well as through lack of attention to the full biblical witness as nuanced through the our doctrinal standards [Creeds, Articles, and BCP].

"A form of words is only a means to an act of worship", wrote *Bishop Gordon Arthur* (Chairman of

Australia's first Liturgical Commission) in 1973. Certainly; but it is vital for those leading and participating in worship to engage with the words fully, actively, and intelligently.

It is too easy to enact liturgy badly, where the words and actions have the rote feel of pre-schoolers singing their A-B-C or an adult being able to recite *Einstein's* most famous equation  $E = mc^2$  by rote, totally unaware of the meanings of the symbols or the significance of what the formula describes.

**Rote recitation is the enemy of true worship.**

**On the other hand, some of the prayers in our currently authorised liturgies are demanding to the point of terrifying. As in the Eucharist – the Prayer of Preparation; the Lord's Prayer; and the post-Communion prayer in which we offer ourselves to God as a living sacrifice [Romans 12.1].**

A well-constructed liturgy will pull no punches, and confront us regularly with the full range of what Christ demands of his followers; as well as with the full range of consolation needful for our wounded souls. Part of the liturgical treasury is a selection of the best and most powerful forms of words, to express these demands and consolations. We ignore them, to our loss.

Our natural inclination is to find ways to duck out from under some of the demands without foregoing

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the consolations; to this extent, liturgies help keep us honest.

**I encourage you to thoughtfully and prayerfully support the diocese in this as best you can; contribute with constructive criticism which is pastorally wise, theologically astute, and liturgically sensible; continue rigorously to review your own conduct of and participation in worship, for the sake of Christ and his mission.**

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

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*150 years of Christian Witness & Anglican Worship*

The 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the opening of the 1858 Tarban Chapel School house - now incorporated in St Mark's Church Fig Tree Road Hunters Hill was celebrated on Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> February 2008.

The building, a simple rectangular stone building originally on the corner of what became Church & Joubert Streets was a chapel-of ease of St Anne's Ryde until about 1870. It took on the traditional church shape by the addition of extensions in 1861, 1864 and 1874.

**It was never given an official name, but known locally as All Saints Chapel.**

The State Government resumed the chapel building in 1913 for construction of a fire station. There was strong local protest and the resumption order was rescinded.

In 1962 the new Fig Tree, Tarban Creek and Gladesville bridges were to be constructed. The chapel building was in the path of the roadworks and had to be removed. It was re-erected on a new site in Fig Tree Road and dedicated as St Mark's. This was probably one of the earliest projects in Sydney of dismantling a significant stone building and re-erecting it on another site

The chapel schoolhouse building is regarded as the oldest public building in Hunters Hill. **Apart from two short period for repair and the removal, it has been used continuously as a place of worship.** It has been classified by the National Trust.

On Sunday, 17<sup>th</sup> February 2008, over 200 people attended the Service of Thanksgiving and Choral Eucharist. Some travelled long distances to share in this significant celebration..

The Old Testament lesson was ready by *Mark Pearce*, a great, great, grandson of the Minister in the Parish in 1870. The New Testament lesson was read by *Val Chidgey*, the great granddaughter of the stone mason/builder of the 1858 Chapel Schoolhouse. The Service was followed by a celebration lunch. **The occasion was a great celebration of faith and the place of the Church in the community.**

*Margaret Spinks*,  
Parishioner, Parish of Hunters Hill.

## 2008 MOWATCH CONFERENCE

PERTH, WESTERN AUSTRALIA

25-29 AUGUST

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

**DR ESTHER MOMBO**

Dean of Studies

St Paul's Uniting Theological College'  
Near Nairobi

Theme:

**"Women of Faith in Action:  
Getting on With it!"**

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"Mary stood at the tomb outside weeping. As she wept, she peered into the tomb; and she saw two angels in white sitting there, one at the head, and one at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. They said to her, 'Why are you weeping?' She answered, 'They have taken my Lord away, and I do not know where they have laid him.' With these words she turned round and saw Jesus standing there, but did not recognize him. Jesus said to her, 'Why are you weeping? Who is it you are looking for?' Thinking it was the gardener, she said, 'If it is you, sir, who removed him tell me where you have laid, and I will take him away.'

Jesus said, 'Mary!' She turned to him and said, 'Rabbuni!') which is Hebrew for 'My Master'). Jesus said 'Do not cling to me for I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go to my brothers, and tell them that am now ascending to my Father and your Father, my God and your God'. Mary of Magdala went to the disciples with her news: 'I have seen the Lord!' she said, and gave them his message. (John 20:11-18).

# Federal Government's Intervention in Aboriginal Communities in the Northern Territory

In the October 2007 edition of *Anglicans Together Newsletter* there appeared an article by *Ruth Norton* "North East Arnhem Land - The Situation Since Intervention" in which Ms Norton heavily criticized the Federal Government's intervention in the Northern Territory.

The whole intervention programme poses almost impossible problems and issues and leaves the government as a "sitting duck" for criticism, but the protection of women and children is far, far, far more important than protecting the kava industry. (See Newsletter No. 34, p. 8)

The intervention was the culmination of many reports revealing the extent of the abuse against women and children and the incidents of violence, sexual abuse, and alcoholism in aboriginal communities. For around forty years the aboriginal community and governments have been in consultation. Numerous reports, conferences, and funding provided to them seem to have been ineffectual. Consider the following:-

Professor Bonnie Robertson in 1999 warning of violence in Queensland black communities and the problems of alcohol. (1) As had Noel Pearson in 1999.

Dr Sue Gordon's (magistrate with the Children's Court in Western Australia) "Inquiry into Response by Government Agencies to Complaints of Family Violence and Child Abuse in Aboriginal Communities" in July 2002 was presented to the WA Government. As the media became more aware of the problem, Dr Gordon's message was heard by the wider community. NSW has its own Report "Breaking the Silence" of 2006 but no extra money from the State budget was allocated to fund recommendations

Dr Nanette Rogers, Alice Springs Crown Prosecutor (formerly a defence barrister) on ABC's Lateline Programme on 15 May 2006 spoke out about her frustration with "case after case of murder and sexual violence against women, girls and, most shockingly, babies" and facts such as Central Australia has 10 times the national average murder rate. (2) This prompted NT Chief Minister Clare Martin to call for an "Inquiry into Aboriginal abuse along-side Customary Law". This report by Pat Anderson and Rex Wild, QC known as the "Little Children are Sacred," was released on 16 June 2007 and became one of the flash-points for the Commonwealth as the NT Government hesitated. (2)

Tania Major, the Young Australian of the Year, on Australia Day in 2007 spoke about sexual violence and rape in Aboriginal Communities and urged Prime Minister Howard to "lift the blanket of shame that was preventing such assaults being reported". Tania also asked for changes so that Aboriginals stopped being victims of welfare. (3)

Noel Pearson's ongoing campaign of pleading on behalf of his people to stop the alcohol and drug abuse, gambling, and the spread of pornography in Aboriginal Communities, as well as the practice of welfare support. The payments were often wasted as grandmothers were left to support the children when the children's parents were drunk! (4) With pregnant women drinking there is the ongoing problem of alcohol foetal syndrome with its lasting damage.

The momentum was growing and Noel Pearson was pushing Minister Mal Brough who was also very keen to change aboriginal circumstances. Pearson was reluctant to wait until after the forthcoming federal election. It was just too long and carried the risk that he may not get such a positive response from a new government and more time would be lost.

Many leaders in indigenous communities were upset that there had not been more consultation before the intervention was launched, but the women in the communities (2) and elsewhere were relieved. The intervention will be a hard to manage in the months ahead, but I urge everyone to pray that the Rudd government together with support from the Opposition heeds the arguments of Noel Pearson and read the reports so that the poor remote Aboriginals (particularly women and children) do not continue to suffer. (5) A new approach was and is still needed and that includes removing the permit system so that the Aboriginal communities are not isolated as a "secret world is not necessarily a sacred one" (6) Enough is enough.

Robin Lewarne  
Neutral Bay

## INTERNET REFERENCES.

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2. Nanette Rogers *Crown Prosecutor, speaks out about abuse in Central Australia* 15/05/2006  
<<http://www.abc.net.au/lateline/content/2006/s1639127.htm>>\*\*\*  
Nanette Rogers talks about her dossier, titled *Child sexual assault and some cultural issues in the Northern Territory* given to senior NT police  
<<http://www.abc.net.au/lateline/content/2006/s1639133.htm>> 15/05/2006 \*\*\*  
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3. Tania Major with Andrew Denton Enough Rope episode 145 28/07/2007  
<http://www.abc.net.au/tv/enoughrope/transcripts/s2016257.htm>
4. Noel Pearson *Noel Pearson discusses the issues faced by Indigenous communities* with Leigh Sales 26/06/2007  
 <<http://www.abc.net.au/lateline/content/2007/s1962844.htm>> \*\*\*
5. Professor Marcia Langton Charles Perkins Memorial Oration. 10/01/03 *A New Deal? Indigenous development and the politics of recovery*  
 <<http://www.abc.net.au/message/radio/away/langton-transcript.htm>> and  
 Marcia Langton 26/01/2008 *Real change for real people.* Edited extract from *Trapped in the Aboriginal reality show* <<http://www.theaustralian.news.com.au/>>
6. Paul Toohey 2-3/02/2008 story *Standing on secret ground* \*\*\* <<http://www.theaustralia.news.com.au/>>  
 Economist Helen Hughes' "Land of Shame" was published in May 2007. This book documented problems in the Aboriginal community as well as focussing on poor standards of education, noting that even in Yirrkala the education for Aboriginal children is well below mainstream schools.

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### PRAYER FOR RECONCILIATION

*Lord God, bring us together as one,  
 reconciled with you and  
 reconciled with each other.  
 You made us in your likeness,  
 you gave us your Son, Jesus  
 Christ.  
 He has given us forgiveness from  
 sin.  
 Lord God bring us together as one,  
 different in culture, but given  
 new life in Jesus Christ,  
 together as your body, your  
 Church your people.  
 Lord God bring us together as one,  
 reconciled, healed, forgiven,  
 sharing you with others as you  
 have called us to do.  
 In Jesus Christ let us be together  
 as one.*

**Amen**

**APBA Page. 203**

## **THE FEDERAL PARLIAMENT'S APOLOGY TO THE STOLEN GENERATIONS**

"Today we honour the Indigenous peoples of this land, the oldest continuing cultures in human history. We reflect on their past mistreatment. We reflect in particular on the mistreatment of those who were Stolen Generations – this blemished chapter in our nation's history. The time has now come for the nation to turn a new page in Australia's history by righting the wrongs of the past and so moving forward with confidence to the future.

We apologise for the laws and policies of successive Parliaments and governments that have inflicted profound grief, suffering and loss on these our fellow Australians.

We apologise especially for the removal of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from their families, their communities and their country. For the pain, suffering and hurt of these Stolen Generations, their descendants and for their families left behind, we say sorry.

To the mothers and the fathers, the brothers and the sisters, for the breaking up of families and communities, we say sorry.

And for the indignity and degradation thus inflicted on a proud people and a proud culture, we say sorry.

We the Parliament of Australia respectfully request that this apology be received in the spirit in which it is offered as part of the healing of the nation.

For the future we take heart; resolving that this new page in the history of our great continent can now be written.

We today take this first step by acknowledging the past and laying claim to a future that embraces all Australians. A future where this Parliament resolves that the injustices of the past must never, never happen again. A future where we harness the determination of all Australians, Indigenous and non-Indigenous, to close the gap that lies between us in life expectancy, educational achievement and economic opportunity.

A future where we embrace the possibility of new solutions to enduring problems where old approaches have failed.

A future based on mutual respect, mutual resolve and mutual responsibility.

A future where all Australians, whatever their origins, are truly equal partners, with equal opportunities and with an equal stake in shaping the next chapter in the history of this great country, Australia."

# LOOKING BACK - *LOOKING FORWARD*

## *How Women can be Silenced*

### ***A Jihad Sheila***

On 5th February this year a programme called *Jihad Shiela* went to air on the ABC. It featured two women who grew up in country NSW and were separately converted to Islam. Since they subscribe to Wahhabism, the strand of Islam followed by Osama bin Laden, the programme raised possible connection between two Australian mothers and Middle East terrorism. Rabiah Hutchinson was the more articulate. Her clear gaze through a small rectangular opening in her burqa was both compelling and disturbing; as was the force of her words from behind the veil. Her beliefs associated with the woman's role and her 'intelligent submission'<sup>1</sup> placed her squarely in *Equal but Different*.<sup>2</sup> On the other hand her passion for theology and polemic, her sharp self referenced outspokenness and her defiant presence in a culture patently hostile to her views, would cast her as an ideal candidate for the Movement for the Ordination of Women. ***Point being that despite the burqa she could not be silenced!***

In fact the covering of the female body, is not exclusive to Islam or religion. The nun, the bride, the nurse, the grieving widow, even Anglican female confirmees wore veils; as does the stripper in another context. Veiling represents a contradictory mix of modesty, shame and voyeurism, and also the relationship of humans to the holy - a strange coalescence of gender and religion.<sup>3</sup> **The real affront to a woman's being and destiny lies not in covering her, but in silencing her.** "I permit no woman to teach or to have authority over men; she is to keep silent"<sup>4</sup> While women are by no means *silent* in the Sydney Church, (!) they cannot teach males as ones 'having authority'.

I have never had any doubt that both veiling and silencing are directly connected to the dilemma that female sexuality poses for the religious, and more particularly the conservative hetero sexual male.

### ***Anglicans and diversity***

Sexuality is high on the agenda for the next Lambeth conference. Schismatic initiatives like the consecration of an openly gay bishop in the USA and the maverick GAFCON<sup>5</sup>, find the Arch bishop of Canterbury calling for unity by appealing to diversity. He says "*The strength of the Anglicanism lies in maintaining a*

*balance between the absolute priority of the bible, a catholic loyalty to the sacraments and a habit of cultural sensitivity and intellectual flexibility, adding that 'enthusiasts for each aspect have to be prepared to live with certain tensions or even sacrifices'.*<sup>6</sup>

**While Rowan Williams identifies Anglicanism as embracing both the reformed tradition with its high view of scripture, and the catholic tradition with its commitment to precedent, in practise these are often held in balance because they are held apart.** Some 'enthusiasts' or rather 'absolutists' stay in communion, not to hold their own position in diversity, but genuinely to convert others to 'the Truth', either basing it on the inerrancy of Scripture and its self evident meaning or the received traditions of the Church as handed down intact. The 'unconverted' Church is then treated as a mission field while still threatened with schism.

The issue of women's equality in the 1970s was initially dismissed by the Sydney 'enthusiasts' and ecclesiastical leadership as a secular feminist distraction from the preaching of the gospel. But as the debate came to occupy synod after synod, it provided a useful platform on which biblical inerrancy could be promoted through the emergence of groups like REPA<sup>7</sup>. Sydney MOW was to witness the eventual deal that allowed the rest of the church, now weary of well doing in 1992, to ordain women, diocese by diocese. This was at the cost of returning women to Sydney and a repressive theology comparable to the constraints placed on women and men in Islam.

Twenty-five years have passed and still the Sydney Diocese keeps women and gays outside the priesthood. It promotes *Equal but Different*, the female anti feminist arm of Sydney leadership, which is noted for its derivative theology in conformity with the doctrine of male headship

The prophet has no such mandate. She or he acts in their day because they believe 'a great wrong is being done to people in the name of God' and are in fact a critical part of the work in progress. To speak out as a mere individual is to put his or her life on the line with little concern over personal safety, reputation or even co-lateral damage. Such a person incarnates or 'fleshes out' matters of injustice and the records show that their time to do so is usually limited, often by their own side.

**I am extremely grateful I took up the offer to write. It forced me to wrestle with my own faith and face up to how one becomes silenced.** Not so much by those who oppose ones view but rather by those who agree with them in principle, but who place high value

<sup>1</sup> Anglicans Together Newsletter 34, p.4

<sup>2</sup> An organisation founded in the early 1990s by Sydney clergy wives who saw the ordination of women and gays representing "an unambiguous rejection of Biblical authority and truth"

<sup>3</sup> "For a man ought not to cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God; but woman is the glory of man" (1 Cor, 11:7)

<sup>4</sup> 1 Tim 2: 11,12). Paul's authorship of the letters to Timothy is now seriously contested.

<sup>5</sup> Global Anglican Future Conference

<sup>6</sup> Rowan Williams

<sup>7</sup> Reformed Evangelical Protestant Association

on peace and concord. In the final analysis we can only be silenced by ourselves and our own vested interests.

When I was discouraged in MOW, which was often, I used to remind myself that in 1912 suffragettes, many of them Church of England stalwarts, from respectable families and therefore educated, were counted among the militant women who smashed nearly 400 shop windows in the West End of London, including Harrods, shocking retailers and journalists alike. In the words of the official statement, 'liberated women had turned against the shrines at which they worship'. **Similarly in the 1980's perfectly good women: - Anglicans, theologically educated and professional, threw metaphorical bricks through windows of the shrines they worshipped at, but would no longer be force fed by.**

As with suffrage, the movement to ordain women was related to the plight of many women, which matter women priests address by their very existence. Across the planet the ideology of the submission of the female to the male is the forerunner to the violation of their bodies. It contributes to low self-esteem and the cycle of abuse. **My knowledge of this kept me going as a**

**missionary doctor, as a GP in Sydney and as now a forensic physician, where I deal with the victims of many kinds of abuse, including that of gay-bashing.**

Many supporters in MOW preferred prayer and 'education' to prophetic activity which they saw as unnecessarily confrontational. Meantime the notion that the doctrine of headship has nothing to do with male domination of the female, existential, sexual, political or physical meets little real opposition in the diocese of Sydney. Power used to silence others by depriving them of an open forum, or worse, refusing to dignify their position with an argued case, is far from what love requires.

**In time the priesting of women will come to Sydney, probably not with a bang but with a whimper through culture contact and population exchange across diverse Anglican dioceses. Meantime I have over my desk a small card which reads "Others can stop you temporarily; only you can do it permanently".**

*Dr Patricia Brennan AM MBBS PhD M Forensic  
Med □ Staff Specialist, RPAH □ Medical Director,  
Sexual Assault Units, SSWAHS*

| Original                                                                                                     | Translation                                                                                             |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Als die Nazis die Kommunisten holten, •<br>habe ich geschwiegen;<br>ich war ja kein Kommunist. ••            | When the Nazis came for the communists,<br>I remained silent; □<br>I was not a communist. □             |
| Als sie die Sozialdemokraten einsperrten, •<br>habe ich geschwiegen; •<br>ich war ja kein Sozialdemokrat. •• | When they locked up the social democrats, □<br>I remained silent; □<br>I was not a social democrat. □ □ |
| Als sie die Gewerkschafter holten, •<br>habe ich nicht protestiert; •<br>ich war ja kein Gewerkschafter. ••  | When they came for the trade unionists, □<br>I did not speak out; □<br>I was not a trade unionist. □    |
| Als sie die Juden holten, •<br>habe ich geschwiegen; ••<br>ich war ja kein Jude. ••                          | When they came for the Jews, □<br>I remained silent; □<br>I wasn't a Jew. □ □                           |
| Als sie mich holten, •<br>gab es keinen mehr, der protestieren konnte.                                       | When they came for me, □<br>there was no one left to speak out.                                         |

*Martin Niemoller* (1892 – 1984) was a German protestant pastor who initially supported Hitler but by 1934 came to openly oppose the Nazis and was imprisoned after 1937 in Sachsenhausen and Dachau concentration camps. He survived to become a leading voice for penance and reparation by the German people after World War II. The poem was attributed to a speech he made in the 1940's and has been used in many different versions depending on the context.

**LAMBETH CONFERENCE LAUNCHED BY ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY**

“I'd like to start by putting this year's Lambeth Conference in some kind of context by saying a brief word or two about how it got started. The first Lambeth Conference was called by *Archbishop Charles Longley* in 1867 - partly, as it happens, in response to a crisis about the limits of diversity allowed in the Anglican churches around the world; so there's nothing so very new about a Lambeth Conference meeting in a climate of some controversy. But the important new fact about the Anglican family of churches at that point was that it was a time when non-English and indeed non-white influences were for the first time making a real impact in the Communion, and needed to be celebrated and affirmed. Not only did the Canadian Church contribute strongly to the thinking around the Conference; it was also attended by the first black Anglican bishop, *Samuel Crowther* from Nigeria, who had been made a bishop just three years earlier. It was a moment when there was a real acknowledgement that a worldwide Church had to find ways of sharing its challenges and its triumphs - and some aspects of its decision-making. The Conference has never been a lawmaking body in the strict sense and it wasn't designed to be one: every local Anglican province around the world has its own independent system of church law and there is no supreme court.

**For full text see: <http://www.anglicancommunion.org/acns/news.cfm/2008/1/21/ACNS4361>**

# THUMBS UP

## Comments on New Books

The first Lambeth Conference came to be held because of the “frenzy” as *Bishop John Colenso* called it, caused by his allegedly heretical views on the authorship of the first five books of the Bible and the interpretation of Romans. Yet the very South African Church which once excommunicated him and sought (unsuccessfully) to expel him from his See is now likely to place the name of this truly great missionary in its Calendar. His wife and daughters, also Christians of great intelligence and courage, should also be added for they shared, for example, in his long struggle to defend the rights of the Zulu people.

**Our Church and Communion – and indeed other religious communities - are still plagued by fearful frenzies (on both sides) but fortunately there are sober and moderate voices.** One is that of *Bishop Geoffrey Robinson*, Roman Catholic Auxiliary Bishop in Sydney until his retirement. I would highly commend his book, *Confronting Power and Sex in the Catholic Church: Reclaiming the Spirit of Jesus* (johngarrettpublishing, 2007). Here is a quiet, honest, well-informed, undogmatic, never one-sided, unafraid *exploration* not only of some of the present controversial issues but of what it would mean for the Church to be truly renewed and reformed – and I’d add that includes not least our own Church. Together with that book one might ponder the attempt of *Dr Keith Mascord* to bring about repentance and conversion in our own Diocese. At least seeds have been sown and [www.openletterupdates.org](http://www.openletterupdates.org) provides the letters and reports - now made public.

**Thumbs up** also for the first two volumes of the *Collected Works of Bishop Donald Robinson*, edited by *Peter G. Bolt* and *Mark D. Thompson* and published by the Australian Church Record and Moore College, \$50 each. (A third volume of assessments of his work by others is also available and further volumes of his writings are planned.) Volumes 1 and 2 contain papers and addresses given over many years on Jews and Gentiles, the Church, the Scriptures, “charismatic” Christianity, Baptism, Confirmation, Communion and Ordination, &c. One can read, for example, what *Bishop Donald Robinson* originally taught about the local Church and his much later assessment. His scholarship is deep and quite wide and clearly

expressed, but he would not expect all to agree with his views. Some, I think, have been put into practice by others in a narrow, wooden, pastorally insensitive, manner. He certainly should be read and pondered, but also sometimes questioned, not only by scholars but by any Anglicans interested in the important subjects with which he deals.

**Thumbs up also to:**

*Bishop Tom Frame*, *Anglicans in Australia*  
*Margaret Thornton*, *I heard him call: the Story of Neville Langford* (Sydney missionary bishop in Africa)

**THUMBS DOWN**, however, to *Anglican and Evangelical?* by *Richard Turnbull*. The author is Principal of Wycliffe Hall, Oxford, troubled by recent staff dismissals and resignations, the call for him to resign from three former Principals (including *Alister McGrath*), and the criticism of his allegedly very narrow form of Evangelicalism. As for his book, I did not find it easy to follow its rather complex circling about the issues. There are the all too common basic assumptions, and begging of important questions relating to Scripture and the Church. **Does**, eg, Evangelical belief alone have “life-saving power to transform” (and is such power only demonstrated in one way)? **Is** the Evangelical tradition the most truly “historic Anglican” one? **Are** the main roots of “Anglicanism” (awful word!) found only in *one* part (however important) of the Edwardian and Elizabethan Church, and very much less so in the pre-Reformation Church of England and in the ancient Fathers?

**Books added recently to the Colenso Library:** listed on: [prayerbookfellowship.blogspot.com](http://prayerbookfellowship.blogspot.com). include *many* good books on **God, science, and religion**.

My own 148 pp book, *In Heart and Mind : Psalms Restoring*, (\$15 plus \$5 p.& p.) has the BCP psalms *unchanged*, but only 97 - to provide a rather smaller “diet”, newly arranged for each morning and evening of the month. However, they are unobtrusively *annotated* to provide corrections and explanations. **The book seeks to help restore the Psalms in daily prayer, in Sunday worship, and in preaching so that in turn they might help restore us.** Additions include suggestions regarding easier Parish Psalter chants, a list of metrical paraphrases old and new, comments on Coverdale and his translation, and an extensive bibliography.

*John Bunyan*  
Campbelltown

## **CHRISTIAN/MUSLIM INTERFAITH DIALOGUE IN DEE WHY**

**During 2007 a number of people from St John's Church, Dee Why were involved with a programme of inter-faith dialogue between Muslims and Christians. It has been a time of learning, sharing and gaining new friends.**

It started early in the year when the clergy from St John's and some other local churches agreed to be part of a group consisting of Anglicans, Roman Catholics and Uniting Church members in the area to discuss the possibility of beginning a "Home Encounters" Programme with the Muslim community.

This programme has been developed by *Affinity Intercultural Foundation* and has been trialled in other areas of Sydney. So we began planning, meeting regularly with *Mehmet Saral* from *Affinity* and some of the local Muslim community.

The three denominations involved were all keen to go ahead and use the approach put forward by *Affinity* while adapting it to our local situation.

We started in a small way with four groups. Each consists of nine people, four Christians, four Muslims and a facilitator who could be either Christian or Muslim but who takes no part in the actual dialogue. This has meant that only a small number of people from each church could participate. **We had five in from St John's.**

The group of which I was a part had two Anglicans, one from the Uniting Church and one Roman Catholic, meeting with four Muslims, some from the local Mosque and others from *Affinity*. Our group had equal numbers of men and women and at each meeting one of us presented a paper on our faith on a particular topic. When a Christian spoke, a Muslim member would take notes and then present a summary. This would be followed by a break with refreshments and then questions. **The main idea was to help break down barriers, not to debate, or evangelise.**

The dialogue was most interesting and it was a great privilege to be involved. We have made some wonderful new friends and gained an appreciation of the many differences as well as some similarities with our faiths.

**This was not a programme of evangelism but one of understanding and reaching out to fellow human beings, in love. Not all Christians or indeed Muslims would see its benefits but for me it was a fantastic experience.**

I had the privilege to preach on Christmas Day at our 8 am Eucharist in the presence of eight of our Muslim friends. It was a very moving experience to welcome them amongst our Christian congregation. Over the six months of our dialogue we have become used to stating our beliefs clearly without being either aggressive or on the other hand embarrassed about the very clear differences in our faiths. **So on Christmas Day I preached the Gospel of the saving Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the Good News that he came in love for the whole world.** Our Muslim friends respect *Jesus* greatly as a prophet. Christians, as we know, proclaim him as God.

And yet, despite our differences in understanding, we have come together with great love and respect of one another. It is a tremendous step: overcoming fear and misunderstanding, whilst helping to clarify one's own faith.

As I mentioned, we have only started in a small way with a limited group of people being involved. **I would recommend it to others as a great opportunity. It is not, I feel, for every parishioner.**

**Those involved need to have a good understanding of the Christian faith and be prepared to speak about it. But most importantly they need to be prepared to listen with respect to others whether they be Muslims or other Christians, and not to interrupt or comment when others are speaking.**

We have a social gathering planned for the group members and their families. This is something I know we are all looking forward to.

Also the Planning Committee will meet to evaluate the past year and see where we go from here.

As we look at the world, and even closer to home, there is so much hate and distrust to be seen. In contrast, what a privilege it has been to be part of a group of people involved in dialogue not argument, in breaking down not creating barriers.

**Participation in the Affinity "Home Encounter" Group has strengthened my Christian faith while giving me insight into the faith of my newly-found Muslim friends. I hope others involved in Interfaith Dialogue have found the experience equally rewarding.**

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

# A SYDNEY ANGLICAN AND THE INTERFAITH WORLD

**Interfaith relationships do not loom high on the radar in Sydney Diocese. To many, involvement in interfaith groups and activities would be a betrayal of the Gospel. To others, it would be valid only as an opportunity for evangelism. I suspect that for most, it would be a low priority: surely there are more important things demanding our time and attention.**

After five years as Rector of Woollahra, I had never got round to any active contact with the Temple Emanuel up the road, or with the Jewish community in the area. We had not actively sought out Jewish people for evangelistic activity either, and I suspect we loomed fairly low on the Jewish radar.

But in 2002 I was asked to represent Sydney Diocese on the *Council of Christians and Jews*, of which the Diocese is a sponsoring body. Why I was chosen I am not sure, but looking back I can see it as an appropriate step in my ministry. Through much of my ministry, I had rubbed shoulders with Anglicans and others who came out of a different theological background from my own, particularly as a young Assistant in Epping Parish, and nearly 10 years at the Cathedral. I had for some years represented the Diocese on the NSW Ecumenical Council. Out of my experience I had observed a commitment to Christ and genuine spiritual insights in those who did not share my understanding of the authority of scripture, and those who did not express the Gospel in terms I would use. I am a reasonably good listener (very helpful in my current ministry as a hospital chaplain, where I am in regular contact with Moslem, Jewish and Buddhist chaplains, as well as Christians), and I make it my aim to understand people before I respond to what they say.

For the past six years I have represented the Diocese on the *Council of Christians and Jews* in New South Wales. This is part of a worldwide organization whose objects are:

- to educate Christians and Jews to appreciate each other's distinctive history, beliefs and practices, and their common ground;
- to promote study and research into various issues of conflict;
- to promote education in the wider community concerning fundamentals of Christianity and Judaism.

The Executive on which I serve meets monthly, and arranges a number of events each year. These include a service in *St. Mary's Cathedral* to mark *Holocaust Remembrance Week*, and a public service in *Martin Place* to mark *Kristallnacht*, the night of Broken Glass, when the power of Germany was unleashed against the

Jewish people. Other activities include a Luncheon Club at the Great Synagogue, usually with Jewish and Christian speakers addressing the same topic from their different perspectives; and various events with addresses, poetry and story readings, and music. Passover meals have also taken place where Christians are invited and informed about Jewish customs and their significance. The Council on occasions links up with other events involving representatives of the Moslem community, and acknowledges a common link and a need to relate in a positive way with Moslems.

There are members of the Council who are passionate about interfaith relationships: to be honest, I am not. But I do see them as important and significant. The church has a checkered, and in many ways shameful, history in its dealings with Jewish people. And of course, within the past century there was the Holocaust (Jewish people use the word "Shoah"): while many Christians acted heroically in defence of the Jewish people, the institutional church largely failed them. We do need to work to understand each other, and to ensure that as Christians we act in a more godly way towards the ancient people of God.

Why spend time and effort on such an activity? Firstly, Jews are our neighbours in this country and in the world: if we are to act towards them in love, this involves an obligation to relate and to seek to understand them better. Secondly, we have a shared spiritual heritage and shared scriptures: God's love and concern for the Jewish people are reinforced in the New Testament, as well as the Old. Thirdly, we Christians need to set an example of reaching across barriers in a society in which people are increasingly isolated, and where hatred and misunderstanding are far too common.

What about evangelism? Jewish leaders are offended by the idea that they need to turn to Jesus to find salvation. The Roman Catholic church seems to be in a bind on this issue. On the one hand, Catholics have been officially told that it is inappropriate to proselytize Jews, for they are already people of the covenant. And yet recently there has been an uproar about the rewording of an official prayer which asks that Jewish people may turn to Christ.

**I find it impossible to ignore the New Testament's teaching that Jesus is the hoped-for Messiah, indeed the Lord God incarnate, who came to open up the way to salvation for all people, Jews and Gentiles.** My ultimate desire is that the Jewish people with whom I meet will come to trust and follow Jesus. Amongst those who represent the Christian churches on the Council, I would be in the minority in having this understanding: interfaith activity is certainly more

comfortable if you believe that all faiths have equal validity!

**How then do I honour Christ in the context of an interfaith group such as the CCJ? I need to act with integrity, acknowledging the constraints placed on me in that context. My willingness to listen and understand gains me credibility when I have the opportunity to speak on vital matters. From time to time I have been able to explain particular aspects of the Gospel in our meetings and informal gatherings: often this has been in response to controversies which have hit the headlines. I trust that I have been able to commend Jesus in what I have contributed, but I am not given the opportunity for evangelistic sermons.**

There is a good deal of anger about evangelism of Jews amongst those I meet. Some of this is due to a failure to understand that the Christian faith, unlike the Jewish faith, is at heart a missionary faith, and that Christ's claims are directed to all people everywhere. However, much of the anger springs from evangelistic efforts which are crass, manipulative, offensive or ignorant. **Genuine dialogue is vital if we are to understand those we wish to point to Jesus: but dialogue is valuable and important even when it does not lead directly to evangelism.**

What about interfaith prayer and worship? We do share together in Old Testament readings at CCJ: in fact, I believe that there is much in the New Testament that

may be acceptable and instructive to the Jewish members. But there is a real problem in trying to worship and pray with people of other religions when we have very different understandings of the one to whom we pray, and what it is all about. **Some years ago, soon after the terrible tsunami, an interfaith gathering took place at Sydney Town Hall, organized by the NSW Ecumenical Council. Prayers were offered by representatives of different faiths, but there was no attempt to include an all-encompassing prayer for everyone. I think this showed both wisdom and integrity, and suggests a helpful way of handling a sensitive issue, which is also a matter of principle and faithfulness.** There is often a tension between the desire to break down barriers and to show love, support and understanding, and the call to be faithful to the truth as it is in Christ.

**While membership of the CCJ has its frustrations and misunderstandings, I believe it is a valuable and godly thing to be involved in. I encourage interested readers to become involved in CCJ or other groups seeking to reach across barriers of faith to increase mutual understanding. To find out more about CCJ, check their website at ccjaustralia.org, or write to the Secretary at 2 Devine St, Erskineville NSW 2043.**

*Paul Weaver*  
Anglican Chaplain, Concord Hospital

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**APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP OF ANGLICANS TOGETHER INC**

*(incorporated under the Associations Incorporation Act 1984)*

Please return form to: **11 Park Road Marrickville NSW 2204**

I, ----- (*full name of applicant*)  
of (*address*) -----  
-----

hereby apply to become a member of the above named incorporated association, Anglicans Together Inc. In the event of my admission as a member, I agree to be bound by the rules and statement of objects of the Association for the time being in force.

----- I enclose payment of \$20  
(Signature of Applicant) (Date)

**Please provide the following information for administrative purposes.**

Telephone no/s (h) ----- (w) -----

Mobile ----- Email -----

If resident in the Diocese of Sydney –

Parish ----- Member of Synod Yes/No

If resident elsewhere – Diocese ----- Parish -----