

NEWSLETTER

No 36

July 2008

President's Reflections

With James McPherson's move to the Parish of Maryborough in Queensland, I find myself the new President of Anglicans Together, (at least until the A.G.M. in August).

As I write this column the GAFCON Conference in Jerusalem is coming to a close and the Lambeth Conference is just over two weeks away.

It is a rather significant moment in the history of the Anglican Communion. The pessimists are predicting the end of the Anglican Church as we know it but some of us are a little more hopeful. We believe it will survive this crisis as it has survived earlier crises.

With this current talk of schism I have been reflecting on my own journey as an Anglican Christian and what it is that I value about the Anglican Church.

My first real contact with Anglicans came in my years as an undergraduate at the University of NSW in the sixties. Coming from a strong Christian family I joined the Evangelical Union as soon as I started University and discovered it was full of Anglicans. My parents had attended Baptist churches for most of their married lives and this was the church where I had come to faith. However, the local Baptist church we attended was narrow and rigid in its thinking and personally I found it rather dull. By contrast, Anglicans appeared much more interesting; the fact that there were lots of young women among them also helped! Soon I started attending an Anglican Church (*St. Philip's Eastwood*) on Sunday nights. Two life changing things happened at *St. Philip's*; I fell in love with Anglican liturgy and a little later, I fell in love with Rosemary Shellard, the daughter of returned CMS missionaries.

By the time we were married I was determined to be an Anglican and I decided to be confirmed. In the first two years of marriage we attended *St. Matthew's West Pymble* where we enjoyed the thoughtful preaching of the Rector, *Maurice Lee*. As preparation for confirmation he made me read **Stephen Neill's Anglicanism**, which I still treasure, and a book about William Wilberforce.

In our third year of marriage we moved to Carlton and the *Parish of St. Cuthbert's South Carlton*. Here, the rector was *Laurence Pullen*. He and his wife Joyce had recently returned to Australia after 27 years working as CMS missionaries with the Church of South India. At this stage Laurie and Joyce were slowly rebuilding a fractured church community. We had thirteen happy years in that congregation and learnt about the importance of faithful pastoral ministry and warm welcoming hospitality.

Laurie was a very convinced evangelical but his experience in India had given him a breadth of vision and sensitivity to people that we appreciated. He was one of the significant influences in making me think about ordination. The other important influence moving me in that direction was the Healing Ministry at *St. Andrew's Cathedral*.

In 1979 Rosemary became ill and was diagnosed with a serious renal disease. It was a very worrying time and looking for support and guidance, Rosemary's mother suggested that she attend the Healing Service at *St. Andrew's* then led by Canon Jim Glennon. We started going and both found it a place of great help and encouragement. **We met many Christians whose faith had been renewed through the charismatic movement. We became aware in a new way of the reality of spiritual gifts and the ministry of the Holy Spirit in our own lives. We learnt to trust God in a more wholehearted way and started to think about training for full time Christian ministry.**

Somewhat to our surprise I was accepted as an ordination candidate for Sydney Diocese and entered Moore College in 1984. I was 35, Rosemary had a renal illness, we had four children, a house and a mortgage.

Moore College was a greater challenge than anticipated but we survived - actually we didn't just survive God provided for us in remarkable ways. We were encouraged by the parishes where I worked - as catechist at *St Aidan's Longueville* and *St. Matthew's Manly*. We had many friends who were wonderfully supportive.

One of the other things that sustained us during our three years at College was regular visits to the Community of St. Clare Monastery at Stroud.

Rosemary had heard *Sister Angela* interviewed on the radio and decided to go and visit. She eventually persuaded me to go with her and we both found that participating in the daily office services was spiritually refreshing. **It was our first encounter with a**

community dedicated to a life of prayer and our introduction to the Anglo Catholic tradition and we were enriched by it.

Our last year at college was the most challenging and we emerged from Moore College rather bruised. Much to my surprise in 1987, I was offered the position of Curate at *St. Mark's Church Darling Point* working with *Canon Jim Whild*.

Jim was a great mentor and a superb pastor. He was an old fashioned evangelical Churchman who loved the Prayer book but was happy to accommodate different traditions. After two years at *St. Mark's* we moved to the *Parish of East Sydney* where *John McKnight* was rector and I was given responsibility for the congregation of *St. Peter's Woolloomooloo*. Here we met a wonderfully diverse group of people including local residents both young and old - refugees from a number of parishes. Some of the latter had a keen interest in liturgy. Despite the diversity there was a strong sense of community and we were sorry when our time at *St. Peter's* ended.

It has been my privilege to have worked with Christian men and women of many different traditions and theological perspectives. I have been fortunate in having mentors who were open hearted and accepting of difference while being deeply committed to the truth of the Gospel as they understood it.

The Anglican Church in Sydney today is barely recognizable from the one I joined 37 years ago. Liturgy and lectionary have been lost from most churches and too often this has led to the Gospel being reduced to a simplistic formula, which is no longer credible to many women and men.

I believe that the richness of the good news of Christ cannot be confined to one narrow expression. We worship the God who refuses to be confined by our definitions. That is why I am a member of *Anglicans Together*.

Philip Bradford
Parish of Hunter's Hill

A NEW PUBLICATION

"The Content and Setting of the Gospel Tradition"

Several years ago *Alanna Nobbs*, Professor of Ancient History at Macquarie University, and I began thinking about proposing a book to be written by academic staff associated with Macquarie University and staff employed by colleges affiliated with the Australian College of Theology (ACT).

We envisaged a book that would combine the early Christian historical and social focus of the Macquarie researchers with an emphasis on the content of the Gospels to be provided by New Testament scholars across the ACT network. The project has arisen

naturally out of the strong connections that have been forged over the years between the Department and the College, many of whose academic staff are graduates of the Ancient History Department at Macquarie and retain links as honoraries.

We were able to secure a contract from the well-known US publisher Eerdmans

The Ancient History Department at Macquarie has long had a focus on the Graeco-Roman background of the New Testament. Its Ancient History Documentary Research Centre series, *New Documents Illustrating Early Christianity* (nine volumes to date), now published by Eerdmans, discusses evidence for the background of the New Testament in published inscriptions and papyri. The Society for the Study of Early Christianity, also based in the Research Centre, funds annual conferences, seminar series and an international Visiting Scholar in the field. The Centre has had a long term interest too in the papyri from Egypt which bear on the history of Christianity.

The ACT, a major provider of theological education since its establishment by the General Synod of the Anglican Church of Australia in 1891, operates nationally as a network of affiliated colleges. Each college has its own well-qualified faculty teaching a range of disciplines, including the New Testament and its Greco-Roman and Jewish background. Eight of the 16 contributors to the volume are ACT academic staff members.

Whereas many introductory books on the New Testament and its background continue to be written, they tend to concentrate almost exclusively on the content of the books of the New Testament, and deal with issues such as authorship, date and provenance.

The Content and Setting* is a serious scholarly attempt to tackle the archaeology, social setting and textual tradition of the New Testament, in a way that provides a distinctly Australian contribution and shows the degree of scholarship in this area.** It is aimed as a resource primarily for undergraduates in theology or history but the bibliographies and wider setting of the issues will we hope make it useful to scholars beyond those years. A Macquarie PhD graduate and current principal of an ACT affiliated college (the Queensland Theological College), *Dr Bruce Winter*, edited a pioneering six volume series on the ***Book of Acts in its First Century Setting, which serves as something of a model for the present volume.

The 18 chapter, 400 page manuscript was submitted to the publishers Eerdmans in May. The book promises to be a major contribution to scholarship, especially as a volume seeking to integrate the content of the Gospels and their Graeco-Roman and Jewish backgrounds.

Mark Harding
Dean, Australian College of Theology

Archbishop of Canterbury responds to GAFCON Statement

Posted: June 30, 2008 By: Webmaster

ACNS:

<http://www.anglicancommunion.org/acns/news.cfm/2008/6/30/ACNS4417>

Extracts from the Statement

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Rowan Williams, has responded to the final declaration of the Global Anglican Future Conference with the following statement:

The Final Statement from the GAFCON meeting in Jordan and Jerusalem contains much that is positive and encouraging about the priorities of those who met for prayer and pilgrimage in the last week. The 'tenets of orthodoxy' spelled out in the document will be acceptable to and shared by the vast majority of Anglicans in every province,.....

However, GAFCON's proposals for the way ahead are problematic in all sorts of ways, and I urge those who have outlined these to think very carefully about the risks entailed.....

Two questions arise at once about what has been proposed. By what authority are Primates deemed acceptable or unacceptable members of any new primatial council? And how is effective discipline to be maintained in a situation of overlapping and competing jurisdictions?....

It is not enough to dismiss the existing structures of the Communion. If they are not working effectively, the challenge is to renew them rather than to improvise solutions that may seem to be effective for some in the short term but will continue to create more problems than they solve. This challenge is one of the most significant focuses for the forthcoming Lambeth Conference.....

I have in the past quoted to some in the Communion who would call themselves radical the words of the Apostle in *I Cor. 11.33: 'wait for one another'*. I would say the same to those in whose name this statement has been issued.

The GAFCON Final Statement called 'The Jerusalem Declaration' can be found on the website: www.gafcon.org/

INTERVENTION NORTHERN TERRITORY

The Rev'd Dr Mike Nixon, who works with the Health Service in the Northern Territory, wrote recently: I am increasingly disliking the intervention. It's original intention was good and it raised the nation's awareness of the terrible plight of Aboriginal well being.

However anxiety levels have risen - depression has increased, unemployment has become the norm now that the work for the dole scheme has been scrapped - as there is NO meaningful employment in the bush for everyone - 90% of the people are so called 'unemployed' now - of course they still do some hunting and fishing for their bush tucker!!

The quarantining of half the people's dole money has treated them like children. *What would we think if our super or pension or wages could only be spent at certain stores and only on certain goods?* Many of the little stores in the communities formerly used their profits to pay for the funerals etc - because the small stores don't have the necessary computer monitoring accounts and tills they are ineligible for being part of the scheme - so they go broke and Woolworths etc get richer.

Although the original intention was good, the method is abysmal. There was no consultation with those on the ground and with those who have been working with Aboriginal people for years - let alone asking the grass roots Aboriginal people - (the so-called 'Aboriginal spokespersons' are often loud-mouthed opinionated and feathering their own beds).

Something has to be done – the programme should be providing meaningful industry in the communities - employing many on full wages as rangers; coast watchers waterway scouts; carers of the aged; home visitors; meals on wheels services; nutritious meals for school kids. In some communities less than 40% of the kids go to school - many can't read and write - (but know how to count money!).

There needs to be better housing - at present 17 people per 3 bedroom house is the norm - often rising to 35.

How does one have a morning shower - go to the toilet - cook on a three or four burner stove, let alone put up with the smokers, those with chronic disease like scabies, respiratory disease, diarrhea etc?

The people's knowledge of health measures is abysmal

Much of my time with patients is about education - life style and cleanliness.

The Reverend Dr Mike Nixon, Darwin NT

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TWO WOMEN IN PURPLE

PERTH 22nd May 2008

The excitement in Perth was palpable on May 22nd 2008 – the feast of Corpus Christi, as *Archbishop Roger Herft* prepared to consecrate the *Venerable Kay Goldsworthy* as Australia's first woman bishop – the twenty third in the Anglican Communion.



A small contingent of Sydney MOW members journeyed to Perth for the historic occasion. Everyone we met – bus drivers, taxi drivers, shop assistants and waiters excitedly asked “*Are you here for the big event?*”

Many people unconnected with the church spoke of their admiration for Kay Goldsworthy and their support for her consecration as bishop.

St George's Cathedral was packed for the occasion. Twenty one bishops were present. One of them was *Victoria Matthews*, former Bishop of Edmonton Canada and Bishop-Elect of Christchurch New Zealand. It was wonderful for those of us from Sydney to see so many ordained women taking their places in the clerical procession.

The Consecration service was a wonderful example of Anglican Worship - formal but inclusive, grand and beautiful, with colour and movement and wonderful music but with room for everyone to participate and join in the prayers and singing.

Worshippers were greeted as they arrived by a group of Aboriginal elders, playing the didgeridoo and presiding over a traditional Aboriginal Smoking Ceremony. The service commenced with a ‘Welcome to Country’ and the Lord's Prayer in the Noongar Language by *Mr Ben Taylor*, *Ms Vivienne Sahanna* and *Ms Olive Woods*. Mr Taylor expressed the great joy of the Aboriginal people at being a part of the ceremony and of their great respect for Kay - “She's a nice lady!”

The Primate of Australia, *Dr Phillip Aspinall* was the preacher. He pointed out that the Feast Day was the Celebration of the Institution of the Holy Communion, saying, “*There could be no better Holy Day on which to consecrate a bishop than this, because the heart of the Episcopal office is to serve this Holy Communion. The essence of the charism of Episcopal ordination is maintaining, nurturing and extending communion as God's gift.*”

Archbishop Aspinall also said the fact that the person chosen to be a bishop is a woman is a significant cause for celebration. “*It points to the ongoing overcoming of barriers in the ever widening embrace of God. That is the real cause for celebration tonight and the deep source of the joy we feel.*”

After the Sermon and the Creed, *Kay Goldsworthy* was presented to *Archbishop Roger Herft* who called her to assent to the Catholic Faith.

Each stage of the rite was followed with care and solemnity, emphasising the importance of the role of a Bishop as a witness to the resurrection of Christ, protector of the purity of the Gospel and proclaimer of the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

Following the examination, when Kay prostrated herself before the Altar she seemed very small and fragile; an exposed and vulnerable figure in the white of her alb. There is no doubt that all the consecrating bishops believed Kay to be truly called to the office and work of a bishop in the church of God and their endorsement and support affirmed this even as it laid the weight of responsibility upon her.

Bishop Kay was presented with her Pectoral Cross, Episcopal Ring, Mitre and Pastoral Staff - each in its way a symbol of the office and work of a bishop. The cross was presented by her family (husband Jeri and twin sons Tom and Ben), whose joy as they greeted the new bishop was very moving.

The service booklet instructed us to greet the newly ordained bishop with applause, a rubric obeyed with great enthusiasm, joy and thanksgiving to God. **The feelings of joy and thanksgiving continued in the Peace and the Eucharist which followed. A new bishop was consecrated, the first woman to be consecrated in Australia, and the people rejoiced**

After the Service the crowd streamed across the road to the Government House Ballroom where they were able to greet their new bishop in an informal and relaxed atmosphere.

Sue & Gwilym Henry Edwards
St Luke's Church, Enmore NSW

It was a misty, overcast day as we entered St Paul's cathedral, Melbourne to find our reserved seats and witness the consecration of *Canon Barbara Darling*.



We were seated near many women from all over Australia, who had been involved at various times and to varying degrees in the 30 year struggle for the equality of women in all the ministries of the Anglican Church.

The atmosphere was one of joyous anticipation. The procession was long and colourful, recalling processions of a similar nature that have been a feature of liturgical rites for centuries, however this one was refreshed by a newer inclusiveness of gender and race.

The Chapter Procession entered to *Widor's* toccata. The crucifer lead, followed by the taperers, the cathedral choir, the servers and theological students. Then followed the clergy. Here I recognised people I had known in Sydney.

The Archbishop's Procession began as we sang a hymn, (words by *Elizabeth Smith*) which spoke of the diversity and inclusivity of Christian ministry. Early in this procession was *Canon Barbara Darling*, followed in a precise order by the 19 bishops present, including the Primate and ending with the Archbishop of Melbourne, *Philip Freier* and the chaplain.

Just as the procession passed me, Regional Bishops Phillip Huggins and Stephen Hale let go two large white helium filled balloons. These sailed up to the roof of the cathedral. They had come from *Geranium, the Christian clown*. This woman, a parishioner at St Margaret's Eltham and now in her seventies, has been visiting the cathedral on and off for ordinations for about 20 years. For her first visits she had a sad face, then for later visits a happy face and a balloon. The balloons usually last in the rafters for about a week.

The setting for the communion service was *Christ Church Mass by Phillip Matthias*. After the moving

presentation, assents and oaths (where I found it very strange to hear a woman's voice) came the prayers, the exhortation and the examination. Near the end of this we could hear the *St James Dandenong Chollo Sudanese Choir* warming up! Their bright enthusiastic singing was wonderful. One hymn was: "*If We Make or Take an Oath Before God and The People, Then We Must Stick To It.*"

The *Veni Creator Spiritus* was sung, then came the "The laying on of hands". This was especially moving as we could see *Bishop Kay Goldsworthy* among the other bishops. Next the gifts of a bible, the episcopal staff the episcopal ring and finally the cope, mitre and stole were presented to Barbara.

Then the Communion Service resumed at the Greeting of Peace and at the conclusion of the service there was a prayer for the newly ordained bishop.

The postlude (and recessional) was the finale from *Symphony No1 by Louis Vierne*. Afterwards it was lovely to watch the atmosphere of warmth and celebration outside the cathedral.

It is interesting to reflect that *Barbara Darling* was one of the first of many women to leave Sydney to study theology and then to become a priest in Melbourne. Hers was a true journey of faith, because when she left Sydney in 1975, ordination for women was not on offer, even in Melbourne.

The next day we attended the Eucharist at the Cathedral - the first service at which Barbara presided as bishop. She arrived wearing the cope, mitre and stole as symbols of being clothed in God's love - she was a symphony in blue and gold.

Muriel Porter delivered the address. She related the idea of Jesus as Mother, to God as Mother and then expanded and developed these to that of a Bishop as Mother. I was in awe. I never thought I would hear this theology (that I had read) actually set forth from the pulpit! **I reflected on how far women have come in the Anglican church in the last 30 years!**

Christine Middleton,
MOW Sydney Executive.

The Church of England at its General Synod early this month passed, in all three Houses, the Bishop of Gloucester's Motion:
That this Synod affirm that the wish of its majority is for women to be admitted to the episcopate;

DEALING WITH DIFFERENCE — CHRISTIAN ASSERTIVENESS

In the aftermath of the joy and excitement of the two recent landmark consecrations of women as Australian bishops, it's reflection time for supporters of the Movement for the Ordination of Women. Is it over? Can we all come home now? Well certainly not in Sydney and so not in some other places as well.

The sadness, length and bitterness of this debate has left lasting scars on many. A sense of deep alienation from some fellow Christians has produced a degree of alienation from the official church. The experience raises the perennial issue of how we Christians manage significant disagreement.

The first tendency is to run away from it. After all, we are told to love our enemies and forgive our brothers seventy times seven. So one solution is to pretend the disagreement is not important. At last year's "Better Together" Conference, I asked the Panel in Question Time: *How can we be "together" when we differ so strongly about the Ordination of women?* The one member of the Panel who answered responded that, she was so busy doing evangelistic work, she didn't have time to worry about such divisions.

Another solution is to let the opposition have their way, as a matter of Christian graciousness. I was recently in email contact with an English MOW supporter who wrote to enquire about what Australia was doing about "alternative Episcopal oversight." I told her that I thought Protocol 0011 had probably got it right, because it doesn't set up specific divisive systems, when they are not needed. Her response was to find this *"helpful to us in encouraging our bishops to resist putting things into law that discriminate against women. Although we too have a clear majority of bishops in favour of women, they are constantly badgered by the opponents and get hooked into being compassionate to them and making legal arrangements for them."*

Does loving one's brother, mean we have to always agree with them? Clearly not. It's what comes next that matters. Does such disagreement put you into an unequal conflict? Is there a serious power imbalance? If so, then we do have trouble. Are we agreeing or not disagreeing because we don't want to be accused of being *unchristian* or because we will offend friends or because we might lose our job/ministry opportunity or all of the above? Well, it's certainly possible.

Power puts pressure on opinion. I recently heard a distinguished Australian cleric tell a Sydney audience, in answer to a question that we had just had to wait out the present hierarchy in Sydney. He then, jokingly looked for possible hidden microphones that might reveal this private piece of "heresy". I found that an

uncomfortable joke, because I thought it reflected a hidden reality.

So what principles can we look for in handling Christian disputes? The most basic one is to accept that disagreements as such are not sinful but normal intelligent human behaviour. In handling our disagreements we could well to look at modern theory of human behaviour which prefers assertive behaviour to passive, aggressive or manipulative behaviour.

Assertive people are typically described as being able to...

- Decide what they want
- Decide if it's fair to their opponents
- Ask clearly
- Be calm and relaxed about themselves
- Express their feelings openly
- Be unafraid of taking risks
- Give and take compliments easily
- Empower everyone
- Give and take fair criticism

One of the impressive things about the last year of the long debate on woman bishops was a new degree of assertiveness amongst the participants. Once the Appellate Tribunal gave its ruling, the nature of the discussion seemed to change. It was no longer about counting votes and using power to get what you wanted or to frustrate your opponents. Now it was a matter of deciding what each diocese thought was the best to do while considering the needs of the others. There has since been a surprisingly generous response to the consecrations of Kay and Barbara.

A formal hierarchy in any human organisation can easily set up a power imbalance which encourages passive or manipulative responses. It is a challenge for Christians, particularly those in positions of authority, to create an environment where teaching and learning, spiritual growth and organisational effectiveness can take place in a healthy, open and considerate atmosphere.

Elaine A. Peterson
Editor "The MOW Report"

"A Cautious Embrace"

4th Annual Bonhoeffer Conference
A Jewish-Christian Conference reflecting on the discipleship and legacy of Dietrich Bonhoeffer
28-29 November 2009

Visit web link:

<http://www.newcastle.edu.au/faculty/education-arts/events.html>

Doing the Lambeth Walk

The decision by Peter Jensen that none of the Anglican bishops in Sydney would go to the Lambeth Conference is another example of Anglicans living out their difficulties in public.

It is an honourable and admirable tradition. The first Lambeth Conference in 1867 was an earlier example. It also was boycotted by a number of English bishops including the archbishop of York. They objected to it on the grounds that the conference might make some decisions which could affect the Church of England.

The current Lambeth walk out is because the resolutions from the 1998 conference have not been enforced in North America. It is an ironic turn around from the first conference.

The Lambeth Conference has always said it was a purely consultative conference and not a decision making body. But in order for a boycott to look as if it is about something

substantial it helps to portray the Conference as if it had some kind of power to decide for the Anglican provinces around the world. It does not.

Is it not a commendable activity for Christians to engage and argue face to face with their fellow Christians when they disagree with them?

Peter Jensen says the current dispute about homosexuality in the public life of the church is a dispute about whether we accept the authority of the Bible. But that is not really so. Undoubtedly any decision on sexuality will involve paying the closest attention to the Bible. It is the ultimate authority for Anglicans.

Portraying the present dispute as being about the authority of the Bible frames the argument so as to presume that the Bible is the only authority. In this context it is not about accepting or rejecting a doctrine of "scripture alone" in such decision making. Scripture alone is held as a personal opinion by many, including some Anglicans, but it is nowhere to be found in the formularies constitution or laws of the Anglican Church. The question at issue is the place of homosexuality in the official life of the church. It is harder to make this a cause for separation than the authority of the Bible.

This question came up in North America largely as a result of changes in cultural attitudes in the wider society. Those cultural conditions do not arise in Nigeria, quite the opposite situation exists. Gay and Lesbian people are persecuted. In responding to those changes North American Anglicans disagreed among themselves. In attempting to relate to wider cultural attitudes the question has become, how far can or should the church go. Cultural disengagement is

clearly not an option. Anglicans have generally looked for critical engagement, though not always successfully.

The point was put sharply in January last year by Peter Akinola, the Primate of the Anglican church in Nigeria, when he announced (<http://www.gafcon.org>) that the Global Anglican Future Conference in Jerusalem (GAFCON), to which Peter Jensen is contributing, was in sharp contrast to Lambeth.

"The word of God has precedence over any culture. Those of us who will abide with the Word of God, come rain come fire, are those who are in GAFCON. Those who say it does not matter are the ones who are attending Lambeth. There might be a view, for whatever it is worth, that they want to be there to observe what is going on. But Uganda, Rwanda, Sydney, Nigeria: we are not going to Lambeth conference."

"For whatever it is worth" is a somewhat diminished way of referring to the obligations of Christian relationships, especially with those who share a particular faith tradition and with whom we have professed institutional connections.

It is said to be a matter of conscience on the grounds that the offence of the North American churches is so bad that they cannot be associated with. But is not the Christian model to associate with sinners and tax collectors? Is it not a commendable activity for Christians to engage and argue face to face with their fellow Christians when they disagree with them?

It is not really a question of conscience. It is a matter of judgment and it is a great pity that a judgment has been made which refuses to engage with difference within the Christian community.

There is a significant number of Anglicans in Sydney who would like to see some Sydney presence at Lambeth. They may not constitute the majority on the Standing Committee or the Diocesan Synod, but they are still Anglicans in Sydney.

It may not be possible at this stage for the Archbishop to go but surely it is still not too late for one of the Sydney bishops to be allowed to go to Lambeth and walk the talk.

The Reverend Dr Bruce Kaye
Formerly General Secretary, Anglican Church of Australia

Author of a new book to be released in September - **'Introduction to World Anglicanism'** Cambridge University Press, 2008.
Visit: www.cambridge.org/aus/9780521618663
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St John's Dee Why – A Journey in Faith for the Jubilee Year.

The Anglican Parish of St John the Evangelist, at Dee Why on the idyllic northern beaches of Sydney, embarked on a journey in faith with the completion in May, 2008 - our Jubilee Year - of a magnificent new Parish Community Centre.

Looking back some 15 years, when despairing a little about the state of the Parish buildings, we see now how greatly we are blessed. The site housed an old hall (the original 1922 church) and the present 1958 church. Our early planning then focused on an unaffordable and extremely modest proposal.

The Parish relies on free-will offerings, having no endowment income or investment property. However, there was a small branch church congregation at North Curl Curl (Thomas Vickers Memorial Chapel), and a nearby, dilapidated second residence. Realising the potential of developing a new Centre, this congregation generously agreed to its closure in 1999. All other costs have been met from donations and bequests by Parish members and supporters; they have now made possible facilities the Parish hopes to use over the next 50 years - with the same faithfulness that pioneer generations demonstrated when they established the parish and church over 50 years ago.

While formally debt-free, the Parish is indebted to many whose efforts have brought the project to fruition. These included Diocesan authorities who supported the project at every step; Warringah Council which approved the development in advance of the major urban development anticipated for the district; our neighbours who have supported the construction (tolerating the inconveniences); local media; designers and builders (Gledhill Constructions). Under the attentive leadership of the Rector, Fr Steven Salmon, Wardens and Parish Council, who needed to formalise many difficult decisions, we were able to draw on the special professional and technical skills of parishioners.



The former disconnected, inaccessible, “single-function” facilities have been replaced. Now there is a beautiful,

multi-functional, fully accessible Centre, integrated with the main church. During the 12 months taken by the project, the parish ministries continued, even though seriously handicapped by having to “make do” in very limited space. Although it was trying, with cooperation from parishioners and builders, good humour was preserved throughout as we jostled in our temporary, confined areas and demountables, and commandeered rooms in the adjacent rectory.

After severe pruning of activities, old ministries are restarting in their new home and already showing the expanded vigour that the new facilities can accommodate. New and innovative ministries are in various stages of development.

In addition to our dedicated ministry team, we have been able to appoint an assistant priest, and are ably supported by a growing band of volunteers.

The Church and Centre are open every day of the week. Always there are the Daily Services. There is a small regular stream of passers-by; locals and beach users; of any or no particular faith; who visit to reflect, pray and light a candle, or just wanting to yarn. For all there is hospitality – a welcome, fellowship and light refreshments.



The Parish has been approved as a public building fund with The Hon Bronwyn Bishop our Federal Member as Patron. While it is early days, we have included capacity for, solar power and other environmentally responsible plant and equipment. Her Excellency the Governor of NSW has kindly accepted our invitation to open the new Centre on 25 October in the weekend of our Jubilee dedication festival. All are invited.

Our planning and our vision has been to establish facilities that wholly support the Parish, its ministries and activities. We are a parish in the Catholic Tradition

of Anglicanism. We seek to welcome everyone openly, to reflect joyfully the Life of Christ in Community, and to share this life willingly with others.

Our congregation consists of locals and others who have made St John's their spiritual home, attracted by its beauty, atmosphere and tradition, with its liturgical worship accompanied by the riches of church music and a welcoming spirit. Our faith sharing embraces everyone. There is ecumenical activity; multi-faith dialogue; community service and engagement; pastoral care to the frail aged and ill and active children's programs; appreciation of and participation in art and music as expressions of worship and mission among people who are marginalised



The new Centre's facilities include a Chapel, an open hospitality / welcoming area, spacious hall and kitchen, young people's and children's worship and play areas, study / meeting rooms, offices, choir and servers' rooms, and sacristy. The Parish Community Centre has been planned for practical multi-functionality, to reflect the Parish's priorities & vision, to enhance the character and beauty of the existing church, and to continue the memorial to the late Thomas Vickers, supporting particularly the parish ministry to young people.

Visitors to the church are struck by its sense of space and the remarkable collection of stained glass windows, designed by the eminent local artist, Philip Handel. The nave's entire south wall contains the most arresting stained glass window, with its magnificent figure of Christ in Glory flanked by the twelve apostles and women of heroic faith. In the Parish Centre chapel, there is the beautiful stained glass window (famous for its stained glass art) taken from the former Mission to Seamen located in Angel House, Macquarie Place, Sydney. A former Rector, Bishop Neville Chynoweth, performed the dedication. The window is famous for its stained glass art, and Philip Handel generously offered to oversee its installation. **The window's nautical theme, based on Jesus' promise to make of his disciples fishers of all, links with the beachside location of St John's Dee Why.**

It is worth calling in, perhaps on your next visit to the beach?

Graham Couch, Parishioner, St John's, Dee Why

Sharing Peace

Anglicans Together rightly encourages a diversity of views. I hope a gentle response to *John Cornish's* words about the "Greeting of Peace" is in order.

John (who has done so much to speak out for marginalised Anglicans in Sydney) rightly says that this Greeting is meant to be a sign of reconciliation (S.Matt.5.24) but I think it is very rarely that and rarely can be. In reality, reconciliation and forgiveness are tough matters to deal with.

The "Greeting" itself is valued by many but it is not "welcome" to some (and in my experience is not always followed outside by any real welcome for the visitor or stranger). I, for one, do not find the Greeting "a natural communication" and my reasons are not those that John gives.

First, the hospital notices I see reminding doctors, nurses and visitors of the many infections transmitted by *hand* (from MRSA to the *common cold*) make me concerned about celebrants who handle the bread after shaking hands with all and sundry.

Secondly, arthritic hands make me wary of shaking hands at any time (just as labyrinthitis deters me from standing for long prayers. Fortunately there is equal Scriptural support for the *Prayer Book* principle of kneeling).

Thirdly, among things that keep *some* men from churches (according to David Murrow, in *Why Men Hate Going to Church*) are hugging, hand-holding, crying, sharing relationships. I admit that although, according to Myers-Briggs, I am "extravert", energised by (more sober and natural) contacts with people, my chief reason for slipping out before the Greeting is a temperamental aversion to this particular hand-holding (a hang up?). Fortunately at S. Peter's, Campbelltown a lovely park is just outside where I can talk to the corellas until things settle down.

Of course, I still thirst for a quiet, un-demonstrative, reverent BCP Communion – sadly rarely within reach. That service explicitly speaks of coming "in love and charity" with our neighbour to receive the Sacrament, the truest God-given "sign of unity" in the Eucharist, with the Peace at its conclusion. It is at *that* service (or out among the corellas, or in real meeting with people, or in ministry) that, with my struggling faith, I myself can still sense something of the *reality* of God

The Good Drover in his Long Paddock surely has room for Mrs Gunn's Quiet Stockmen as well as for the more outwardly jubilant Jack and Jilleroos. Ours is an "inclusive" Church *if* it is concerned for **Anglicans together**, of all sorts and conditions, types and temperaments, Jack Sprat *and* his wife, "**endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit" in that bond of peace**".

John Bunyan, Campbelltown

IN THE NAME OF.....

In Christian worship, to call upon name of God is to ask that the character and power of God come into you. That's is why we have in Christian worship, the otherwise puzzling the words: "*in the name of Jesus*", "*through Jesus Christ our Lord*", "*Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name...*"

When Peter said to the lame man, "*In the name of Jesus Christ... stand up and walk*" (Acts of the Apostles 4:5-12) he was not using a legal formula as is common in secular and ecclesiastical circles such as "By the authority given me, I hereby authorise or discharge you...[such and such]"; nor was it some psychological technique, incantation or mantra.

Peter was saying that the God whom Jesus has revealed more fully to us, is present with you. God can heal you. That is the nature of God. God is always that ultimate influence of loving compassion, releasing us from the wrongs and hurts of the past, bringing healing and strength, seeking justice and peace, leading to wholeness.

When in the Gospel according to John, Jesus speaks of himself as "I AM the way ..." he is consciously and deliberately reflecting the ancient story of Moses at the Burning Bush (Exodus 3). Moses had had a life-shaking experience. God was calling him to a dangerous job. He wavered, he didn't want to go. How can I be sure? What can I tell people? According to the story God answered with a riddle: "I AM WHO I AM". It can equally be translated, "I WILL BE WHAT I WILL BE". As we read on God says to Moses if you follow my prompting, you will discover my character. "I will be with you; and this shall be the sign for you that it is I who sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall worship God on this mountain." (Exodus 3:12). In other words, it is only after you have done what is required of you that you will know for sure whether you were right or wrong.

One of the most quoted sayings of Jesus is, "***I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you know me, you will know my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him***" (Gospel of John 14:6-7). Only by careful reading of the Bible and its use of the idioms of "knowing God" and "in the name of", "in the power of" and "through me" can we discern its meaning. It should not be used as a clincher in some rational argument or dispute about the uniqueness of Jesus Christ.

It is not for us to try to judge who is "in" and who is "out" with God. "**Do not judge, so that you may not be judged**" (Jesus in Matthew 7:1) The urge that some have to define who are the "in group", suggests they have a deep insecurity and have misunderstood the "Good News" that Jesus lived and taught.

What Jesus did was to call people to follow his way and to leave the future to God. As we learn to trust God and follow God's promptings here and now, so gradually we shall learn to trust God for whatever the future may bring.

In the end, all we can say is something like "GOD into your hands I commit my spirit". It is not for us arrogantly to guess or intellectualize about "heaven" or "hell" or life after death. About these Jesus said comparatively little. The focus of his teaching was living here and now as members of the "Kingdom of God", or what John's Gospel calls "eternal life". Are we reflecting the character of God as Jesus revealed God? Are we allowing God to influence and rule our lives? Our call is to follow The Way that Jesus showed.

The 23rd Psalm is rightly one of the most loved poems from the Old Testament, "*The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.... [God] provides, restores, leads me, comforts me... my whole life long.*" Jesus spoke of himself as being like that good shepherd. There is much more to that image than the frequent artistic depiction of caring shepherd nursing a rescued lamb. In John 10, verse 16, Jesus added: "***I have other sheep that do not belong to this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice.***" In context, "this fold" for Jesus would have meant the Jewish faith in which he has born and died.

In Jesus' words there is no warrant for the churches to claim that people belonging to other religions or none, cannot know God until they know and accept Jesus *in the same terms and language that the Christian churches understand him*. God is much greater and inclusive than our experience. Jesus says "Come to me, all you that are weary, and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest." (Matthew 11:28) So often the churches do not display that Jesus-like openness and inclusiveness. The churches sometimes put non-core barriers in the way.

If Christians and church institutions spent less time theorising with dogmas, doctrines and regulations about who is in and out, they might get on with the real

mission of Christ to express the compassion and restoring love of God.

But no! Church institutions seem intent, to retreat into unholy huddles that belie and counter their pious rhetoric about evangelism. (The short well-made DVD about Sydney Diocese's "Connect 09" shown in our parish, did not ring true, because of the judgemental and divisive attitudes constantly uttered by certain leaders in the diocese.) Spiritual energy and opportunities are wasted in drawing boundaries.

We all make mistakes and those of us who have worked under pressure in the public domain are acutely aware of our failures. At times most of us probably, because of our zeal to get the 'right' things done or because of our ego or narcissism, have stepped over the line from *witnessing* to what we sincerely believe into using our privileged position to pressurise or manipulate others.

We live in a world as alien to hearing the Gospel Jesus taught, as did the writer of the First Letter of Peter in the New Testament. We can continue to turn up the volume and thump the microphones with "The Bible says..." or "The Church teaches..." but are those methods the key to evangelism? I doubt it. It seems to me that 1 Peter 3:14-15 is the key to a wiser way: *"Do not be afraid of anyone, and do not worry. But have reverence for Christ in your hearts and know him as Lord. Be ready at all times to answer anyone who asks you to explain the hope you have in you, but do it with gentleness and respect."*

By the grace of God, we can be changed and allow the Spirit of God to shape the future.

As I write the Anglican Church across the world is apparently *terminally distracted* by a comparatively trivial hair-splitting issue, with different groups of Christians pontificating about "God's Will": whether lesbian women and homosexual men who live together in a committed relationship of love and trust should be fully recognized by the law of the land and by the churches which claim the "name" of Christ.

As more and more people are now being privileged with education beyond a primary level, they are able to grasp the complexities, possibilities and responsibilities of living in the 21st century. Quite rightly they dismiss the arguments of the institutional churches on this issue as being irrelevant and bogged down in tribalism and cultural prejudices from the past

I would appeal to Peter Jensen, and the high-powered lay people on whom every Archbishop depends, to consider again Jesus' parable of the 'Weeds among the Wheat' (Matthew 13 : 24-30).

(a) There is no logical reason why the Diocese of Sydney cannot embrace diversity and allow those parishes that wish to have the ministry of women priests and bishops to do so. It is arrogant for ecclesiastical leaders to think they have to be gate-keepers and protect God.

(b) Even if you are convinced of the rightness of your stance against the unconditional acceptance by the Anglican Church of Christians who are living in lesbian and homosexual committed relationships, consider that you do not have the wisdom and skill to solve the fact that they exist. This is for God who will decide at the harvest time.

The writer of the First Letter of John puts it bluntly. "How does God's love abide in anyone who has the world's goods and sees a brother or sister in need and yet refuses help? ... Let us love, not in word or speech, but in truth and action."

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BOOKS RECOMMENDED.....

By John Bunyan

Further to *Paul Weaver's* helpful comments about his gentle, careful realistic exploration of the "interfaith world" of Jews and Christians, I refer to some valuable books. Over 30 years ago *Rosemary Radford Ruether* gave us "*Faith and Fratricide: The Theological Roots of Anti-Semitism*". Since then there has been a great series on Jesus by the Jewish scholar, *Geza Vermes* including "*Jesus and the World of Judaism*" and especially on the development of the Gospels, "*The Changing Faces of Jesus*".

Especially challenging is "*The Misunderstood Jew: the Church and the Scandal of the Jewish Jesus*" by *Amy-Jill Levine*, (Jewish) Professor of New Testament Studies, Vanderbilt University (and recently in Sydney).

By Sue Emeleus

Like Catching Water in a Net: Human attempts to describe the Divine (Continuum, New York, 2007) is **Val Webb's latest book**. Val Webb is an Australian theologian who speaks to our own hearts. Writing from a perspective of feminist theology, Val also makes her writing relevant to different faith groups.. The book won the US award for the Best Book - 2007 in the category *religion-general*. I quote from a chapter on the divinity of Jesus:

"People can be fully committed to the GOD they discover through Jesus, a man so distinctively open to the Divine Spirit in his day, without having to make absolute claims, especially when his immediate followers did not make such claims."

EcoChurch – a Model for Faith Communities

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Abstract

EcoChurch is a model for local faith communities to respond to climate change. It is about a fresh reading of the scriptures with the focus on humankind being caretakers of God's creation rather than being in dominion of the earth. It is about implementing local and practical actions arising from a belief that we are to 'safeguard the integrity of creation; to sustain and renew the life of the earth'. The EcoChurch model comprises three strategies:

- ensuring local church buildings and activities are environmentally responsible
- to assist church members to get their households in order, and
- to encourage other churches and the local community to adopt eco-friendly practices.

EcoChurch was inspired by the first Earth Hourⁱ of 2007. This imaginative initiative provided a catalyst for St Mark's Anglican Church South Hurstville to take practical action in response to climate change. Armed with many ideas, a small teamⁱⁱ distilled them into three achievable strategies.

The project commenced without a detailed technical knowledge of the relevant science, however the team members were interested in environmental issues generally and came from the position that, practical action was consistent with Christian faith. As the project proceeded, the concept of 'caretakers of God's creation' became more important as the basis of commitment.

EcoChurch, as a once-off project has concluded – EcoChurch is now an ongoing part of St Mark's ministry. Caring for creation, as well as striving for social justice, and reaching out to others is now part of the balanced ministry at St Mark's South Hurstville.

The Planning

Along with the small action of turning off the Church's external backlit Cross on Earth Hour 2007, EcoChurch was launched at the main Eucharist the following day – Palm Sunday. The special liturgy focussed on responsible stewardship of creation, and asked for God's blessing on the project. St Mark's sees it as important that EcoChurch, like other parish initiatives, be recognised and celebrated in the weekly rhythm of worship.

The project team comprised four lay persons, with the Rector, Chris Albany as sponsor. An initial task was to 'brand' the project using an appropriate logo.

The adopted visual comprises four segments:



- the sun – source of life and energy,
 - the leaves – biodiversity of living creation,
 - the wavy lines – water and resources,
 - the circle of arrows – reduce, reuse and recycle.
- The quadrants are contained within a space forming a cross.

The term, *EcoChurch* is intended to communicate that 'church' is interested in the environment, and has a positive statement to make about our responsibility and actions for the care and renewal of God's creation. EcoChurch is an opportunity to demonstrate eco sensitive leadership and education by example within the broader church, as well as the community generally.

The adopted EcoChurch strategies are:

1. make improvements to local parish church buildings and activities,
2. facilitate improvements in parish households,
3. take the experience to the broader church and/or the local community.

The complete unabridged Paper by **Bruce Cooke**, together with *the "Protection of the Environment Canon 2007"* (adopted by the General Synod of the Anglican Church of Australia in October 2007) will appear on the Anglicans Together Website: www.anglicanstogether.com

ⁱ Earth Hour, an initiative of WWF Australia and the Sydney Morning Herald.

ⁱⁱ The EcoChurch team comprised Bridget McKern, Bruce Cooke, Sandra Scott, Robert Nelson, and the Rector The Reverend Chris Albany as project sponsor.