



ANGLICANS TOGETHER

NEWSLETTER No. 21 August 2003

ANGLICANS TOGETHER ONLINE: <www.anglicanstogether.org>

The Chairman's Column

Jesus said about the woman caught in the act of adultery, "*Let him without sin cast the first stone*". Sin is a part of life. We are all tainted with it. It is with us at birth and we live with it until we die. However, as Christians we celebrate that God accepts us as we are, if we have faith. **God through our Saviour Jesus redeems our sinful nature and through the Holy Spirit, we are strengthened and made holy by God.** Unfortunately, recent pronouncements by the bishops of this Diocese have been inflammatory and not irenic, concerning our nature. It would seem that they have forgotten Jesus' statement about examining our own conscience before criticising others. See the Anglican Media website: <http://www.anglicanmedia.com.au/index.php/article/articleview/907/1/25>

While our sin maybe different from that of other people, it is still sin. The bishops seem to be implying that their sin (whatever it might be) is of a less serious nature than that of certain other people. Let us never forget that, as Saint Paul has written, "*there is no distinction since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.*". (Rom 3:22-23)

The matters that the bishops' have spoken about concern sexuality, particularly homosexuality. They have commented upon three issues. The first is the decision of the Bishop of the Diocese of Westminster in Canada to assent to his Synod's legislation permitting the blessing of same sex relationships. The second is the election of the **Reverend Canon Gene Robinson** as Bishop-elect of the Diocese of New Hampshire in the USA. The third is the appointment of the **Reverend Dr Jeffrey John** as Bishop of Reading, in the Diocese of Oxford in the UK.

On the first matter, I agree with our bishops that the Bishop of New Westminster has acted in a matter too serious to allow for unilateral action. While listening to the pain of homosexual members

of the Church, this decision moves from a pastoral response to a doctrinal response on such matters. The blessing of same sex relationships is outside of the Scriptural witness and the Church's teachings that describe the primary relationship of marriage as a mutuality of opposites. **My objection concerns the potential division that such a unilateral decision may have upon the unity of the Church.**

As we give thanks for friendship and the love of others, I do not however find the idea offensive that a friendship can be blessed. After all, we can bless ships, houses and animals why can we not bless friendships? Such a blessing is not a marriage blessing. However, the bishops' statement would seem to rule this out as well.

In relation to the election of the **Reverend Canon Gene Robinson as Bishop-elect of the Diocese of New Hampshire in the USA**, note should be made that the election was by a synod decision. Most bishops of the Anglican Communion are elected in this manner. All the bishops of the Australian Church, including the Archbishop of Sydney, have been elected in this way. Most importantly, the election of Fr Robinson is still to be confirmed by the General Convention of the Episcopal (Anglican) Church of the USA. **Fr Robinson is not yet the Bishop of New Hampshire.** The General Convention will have met by the time you read this. It is will be held in Minneapolis, Minnesota, from 28 July to 9 August 2003.

The appointment of the **Reverend Dr Jeffrey John as Bishop of Reading, in the Diocese of Oxford** has also been criticised. Dr John says that he supports the Church's teaching on sexual morality and will abide by it. **Dr John has since been forced to withdraw his acceptance of the appointment.** You can see his written statements on the Diocese of Oxford website: <http://www.oxford.anglican.org/detail.php?id=453>
<http://www.oxford.anglican.org/detail.php?id=475>

While he is an advocate for homosexual rights, he made it clear that he is not an active homosexual and has been celibate for many years. There is no

biblical teaching that directs us not to criticise others who have a different orientation. The current understanding is that people maybe homosexual in orientation but must not be active in their sexuality. Many people who are faithful Anglican clergy and are homosexual in orientation remain celibate. There is no law against celibate homosexual orientation. The responses of *the Archbishop of Canterbury* to the controversy concerning the appointment are on: <http://www.oxford.anglican.org/detail.php?id=458> <http://www.oxford.anglican.org/detail.php?id=477> I find the statement by our bishops to be very judgmental in character. They presume to know the thoughts of all the parties involved in this controversy. They would do well to remember another of Jesus' sayings, "*Do not judge, so that you may not be judged. For with the judgement you make you will be judged, and the measure you give will be the measure you get. Why do you see the speck in your neighbour's eye, but do not notice the log in your own eye*". (Matthew 7:1)

In the book, "*Living Tradition, Affirming Catholicism in the Anglican Church*", Editor **J John**, Cowley Press, Cambridge, 1992, many interesting things are said that are helpful in light of the current dissension. There are valuable contributions by George Carey, Rowan Williams, Richard Holloway and John Habgood, to name a few.

Dr John quotes **T S Elliot** (p55) "*Christianity is always adapting itself into something which can be believed*". He was not being cynical. He was merely stating a fact about the way Christianity has always been, and has to be, in order to be a living faith in every generation.

Remember God reveals more of God's self as each day goes by. It is nothing new. Debates about discerning God's will have been with the Church from the very beginning. We read that Paul and Peter argued about what was proper to eat and who was welcome in the Church. We participate in arguments now that are revealing a little more of God's self. God's self revelation is not locked back in time. **God continues to create and so our life, based upon faith in the resurrected Christ, is an unending experience of discovery and celebration.** We all make mistakes and sometime our opinions about which direction we are being led is mistaken. We must never be stuck in faith, locked into a god that is fixed back in time as if that god was a museum piece. The God that true Anglicanism espouses is a God that is vivacious. A God that is capable of defeating the powers of death that constrains all of creation.

One of the enduring traits of our society and in turn our Church is that there is always a cry for the 'quiet life'. Why is there always change? Why cannot we live in tranquillity. Why do we have to have turbulence? Richard Holloway in his contribution to the book mentioned above says profoundly that, "*turbulence is the norm, interrupted by occasional periods of tranquillity. Turbulence and disagreement are the norm, the signs of life, and we should accept them as such*". (P116)

Unlike the rest of nature, humanity is an open, not a closed system. We are evolving beings. To be fully human is not to be fixed in time but to be on a developmental pilgrimage. Change is an integral part of life. If there is no growth, there can only be death. The Church is a human organisation made in the image of God and as such must be continually open to change.

The Bible is a book that records God's dealing with humanity. In it we see many generations of such dealings, each progression a development based on the previous generations experience. If we use the Bible as an infallible oracle that gives us orders and leads us out of our difficulties it has become an idol. If we treat it as infallible, we worship the paper and the ink instead of using the example of humanity's interaction with God over the millennia. My God is greater than a god limited by words in a book. The current turbulence, and there are more issues in it than the ones detailed above, is very much a debate based upon whether God is lively and lives with us or is fixed in time thousands of years ago.

The Christian life is not an examination in which we pass or fail. Christianity is an inexact life journey. We are to live it boldly, with confidence and hope of success through the power of the Spirit of the risen Christ. God is not finished with us yet as individuals or as the Anglican Church. There will always be times of bumping up against those who are happy to be sustainers of past traditions that lock our God into a time past. **We need to call upon God to give us grace to discern God's will for us as the Anglican part of the body of Christ.** Let us do so with Christian love and compassion, treating all members of the Church as if they were the Lord.

Jesus said: "*In everything do to others as you would have them do to you; for this is the law and the prophets*". (Matthew 7:12)

Please remember our Dinner on 18th September at Saint Alban's Epping. The Primate,

Dr Peter Carnley, will be our guest. See elsewhere in this Newsletter for more information. At the time of writing, bookings were filling fast. That occasion will also be an opportunity for us to discuss the business of Anglicans Together, to receive a Report from the Executive Committee and make any comments that you may feel appropriate.

John Cornish

LIVING IN GOD'S FUTURE

The theme of the Quiet Day at Saint Alban's Church, Epping, 31st May 2003.

The Risen Christ does not stay with his followers. But they have been told what to do. According to St Luke's account in Acts, they are to start being witnesses: to tell what they have seen and heard of Jesus in Jerusalem. And they are to take their story throughout Judea, into Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. There is our mission, too: You will be my witnesses (Acts 1:8).

But the demands of living as witnesses are often not simple. In 1984, *Professor David Jenkins was called to be bishop of Durham*. The following ten years were some of the most turbulent and challenging in Jenkins' ministry.

Last year, he published a book he describes as "not quite an autobiography", called "*The Calling of a Cuckoo*" in which he attempts to explain not only his faith in God but the principles underlying his own vocation and ministry both as priest and bishop.

Even before his consecration in July 1984, Jenkins became the focus of controversy, disagreement and misunderstanding. He saw his task as a bishop as a simple one which he describes in apostolic terms:

"In my understanding of the apostolic ministry, the job of an apostle is to lead the faithful in their mission to challenge the world with the glorious possibilities of the purposes of God, as shown in Jesus Christ. The gospel is not a static statement, but a programme for leading men and women forward by the power of the Holy Spirit towards the kingdom and fulfilment of God's purposes for all." (CC, 97)

When we commit to living as witness to the Good News, we set our faces towards what Jenkins calls "*God's future*". It is an open future and, to that extent, it is a future that entails a certain risk. For we do not know for certain just what God is going to do with us, or when, or even how.

But we do know that God calls us to be in relationship with him, to share a common life with the Father and the Son (1 John 1), and to be reborn in the Spirit. And this relationship is based on faith. There is a big difference between the life of faith, embraced in trust, and the forms of religion, expressed in forms and rites.

David Jenkins is fond of baiting those who insist upon absolute certainty in the Christian life. For he says that there can be none. He describes religion as "*a structure that both services and contains our faith*". As such, religion can restrict, subdue and control in its bid to guarantee certainty. But the life of faith is different.

"The pilgrimage of faith is varied and risky. It is sustained by the rich deposits of previous revelatory encounters experienced by the pilgrims who have gone before; it is maintained by a real (but often fleeting) sense of a Presence and it is always looking forward in hope." (CC, 35)

Jenkins reminds us that faith is not about comfort but about service. When we commit to live as witnesses, we commit to life in relationship with the God who is, according to Jenkins, "*at least as much the creative disturber as the purveyor of peace and comfort*".

Bishop David Jenkins encourages us to remember that as God witnesses we are to reposition ourselves so that we are looking forward in hope to life in God's future. Just because we cannot be absolutely certain what this future is going to look like does not mean that we are being careless or reckless in placing our trust in God.

But faith does entail a certain risk: we are committing ourselves into the hands of our God and we are committing ourselves to wrestling with problems of human life and well-being as we participate in the forging of the Kingdom of Heaven.

And, as such, we are, as Jenkins says, joining with our sisters and brothers in the community of faith - "*the community of a pilgrim people whom God is guiding through the wilderness of this world towards the future of his eternal love.*" (CC, 60).

So this is what the Christian life is about: walking with Jesus into God's future. For *David Jenkins*, "*the calling of God is to be turned outwards for the service of his future for the world*" (CC, 158) and to be embraced for mission.

Jesus says: 'Tell people about me'. Only in this way is the mission of the church fulfilled in us, and the Good News of Jesus Christ proclaimed in Judea, and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.

“Our mission now, as Christians and as faithful believers in God, is not primarily to convert but to share; not conflict but to collaborate. We are not called to write off our neighbours but to seek to understand and to contribute some shareable insights into our mission, our hopes and our enjoyments. Where that will get us, God only knows” (CC, 175)

Peter Kurti
Rector, St James' Church, Sydney

ANGLICANS TOGETHER DINNER
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Guest Speaker

Archbishop Peter Carnley

Primate of the Anglican Church in Australia

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The Commemoration of the Papua New Guinea Martyrs

Saturday 6th September 2003

St Mark's Anglican Church. Granville

11 am Eucharist

Celebrant: The Rector, Canon James McPherson

Offertory for the Anglican Church of Papua New Guinea

Followed by Luncheon

Special Guest Speaker

Canon Geoff Smith

National Director of ABM-A,

following his return from a Consultation with ACPNG

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Editor: Moya Holle, PO Box 429 Glebe NSW 2037

MINISTRY IN THE CITY

What's it like, to be ministering at St James' Church, King Street, Sydney?

I have been at St James' since February this year. It is my first experience of a 'City Church', having been in rural or suburban congregations for the last 26 years of my ministry.

Let me tell you, it is very different being in the City.

On a personal note, one difference is that I actually "go to work" every morning! My children have grown up living in a rectory next to the church, with their father coming in and out of the house throughout the day. Now, I am usually gone just after 7.00 am, and being such a hard working priest(!), I am rarely home before 7.00 pm, even on nights with no evening meetings.

Seriously good music

One thing that absolutely petrifies me about St James' is the music. It is seriously good. *At the 11.00 am Choral Eucharist, I often have 'hair standing at the back of my neck' experiences.* However, the very definite down side is that when I preside at 11.00 am, I find myself being very anxious, not wanting to 'spoil' the rest of the music by singing my part out of tune.

Furthermore, because the music offering is so full of richness, texture and emotions, it is easy for the rest of the liturgy to appear somewhat colourless and lifeless. In leading the liturgy, I haven't quite worked out the balance between the triangle of being too bland, too pious and too emotive. This is a great challenge to have!

Gathered congregation

On a less personal note, one thing that really strikes me about St James' is the very 'gathered' nature of the congregation.

I am sure that every other middle church Anglican parish in Sydney has this aspect of being a 'gathered' congregation. People come from every part of Sydney and beyond: from the Blue Mountains and areas this side of Goulburn. Some travel from north of Gosford and the other side of Wollongong. It is truly a 'gathered' congregation and a 'scattered' congregation. I remember one day, being called to three different hospitals (St George's Hospital, Royal North Shore and Prince of Wales) for emergencies concerning members of our congregation -

For our members to get into the City, it can involve a major logistical exercise. They either have to fit bus, ferry train timetables together like a jigsaw puzzle or fight the traffic; find and pay for parking before they can pant up those stairs at St James'. Frequent city road closures, usually on

Sundays, are the added spice and excitement we also enjoy - Not!

It takes a lot of commitment and determination to make it to church every Sunday. And in many ways, this 'gathered' nature of the congregation militates against building a strong sense of community.

However, one wonderful aspect of our gathered congregation is that we have a huge range of interesting, strong willed, and determined individuals, who come to St James' because they really want to! And let me tell you, **they come with an amazing breadth of social and theological views. They bring rich and diverse professional knowledge and life experience, as well as enquiring and properly critical minds.** They leave neither their brains nor humanity at the door of the church!

Who is the 'City'?

We often talk about St James' Church, 'ministering' to the City' but the question is, 'who is the City?'

In many respects, 'the City' is some 80 'street people' who are given lunch every Sunday by St James' Sister Freda Mission. The legal fraternity is 'the City', and St James' has strong and historical connections with them. 'The City' is some of the city workers who come to the lunchtime Eucharist, and 'the City' is the people who come to relax in our Quiet Garden Space or at lunchtime organ concerts and music events.

I am also aware that on quite a different plain, there is yet another level at which St James' seeks to 'minister to the City'. In this context, we almost equate the word 'the City' with 'the society'. A question which is constantly asked by our people is - *'St James' Church is located in the heart of the City of Sydney, so how can we minister and engage the heart of the society, the heart of Sydney as a whole?'*

St James' Ethics Centre grew out of a desire to engage the wider society, and *St James' Institute of Spirituality* has sprung up out of the same soil. I am currently witnessing the beginnings of a number of ventures that are germinating in that same fertile soil.

For me, it is exciting and interesting to be part of the 'hot bed' of ideas and visions. Mind you, at the same time, I need to make sure that I don't just live in my head! I must engage and connect with the real lives of real people, and not just with the idea of 'the City' and the idea of 'the society'

Being a loyal Sydney Anglican

Being on the staff at St James' Church, within the Diocese of Sydney, creates certain tensions and

challenges. The Diocese of Sydney I knew in the early 1970's, where I had my early Christian involvement, was a very different Diocese from the way the Diocese is now.

Together with other more 'moderate' Anglican parishes in the Diocese, I believe it is important for St James' to be a window into mainstream Anglicanism for those living and working in this Diocese. When we seek to do this, I experience tensions, especially in the area of women's ministry and the issue of sexuality, because we are also committed to remaining loyal to the authority of the Archbishop and the Synod.

It is also a challenge for me to make sure that I don't let 'them' set my agenda. It is easy to do things or not do things, just to spite 'the Sydney Anglicans!' I am constantly asking the question - "How would I approach this, if I were in the Diocese of Melbourne, Gippsland or Canberra and Goulburn?" (three dioceses I served in before coming back to Sydney).

It is important for me to maintain the broad view of the Church and not become fixated in being 'anti-Sydney'.

Whether we are a part of a city church or a suburban one, we are called to keep our eye on the main game and both our eyes firmly fixed on the Cross of Jesus.

Atsushi Shibaoka

Senior Assistant Priest, St James' Sydney

MINISTRY IN A SYDNEY SUBURB

St Mark's Anglican Church, South Hurstville is placed in a fairly comfortable, multicultural part of southern Sydney, just before you cross the Georges River into Sutherland Shire. As I write this, I am conscious that we have not yet come to grips with cross-cultural ministry in any serious way. However, our church is showing modest signs of growth, for which we are grateful to God.

As I reflect on the past 8 years in which I have been Rector of the parish, I think **there are three things that have helped move us forward in positive ways (involving some healthy change).** The first is the Education for Ministry program, a substantial Biblical and theological course for lay people, with an emphasis on reflective individual and group learning. This has helped provide informed, motivated lay leadership for the parish. The second is the Alpha course, which gives lay people a simple but effective way to introduce non-

church-going friends to some basic Christian truths. The group discussion and shared meals help people feel the excitement of belonging to a Christian fellowship. Information on both of these courses is readily available.

Most significant, however, has been the Natural Church Development process, which we have been implementing in our parish for around three years now. This process has helped us develop an approach to church life and growth that avoids a debilitating emphasis on numbers and a "driven" feeling in the congregation.

The basic principle of NCD is that a healthy organism will 'naturally' grow to maturity through the mechanisms God has built into it. This principle is applied to the congregation which is better understood as an organism (the Body of Christ) than an organisation. The NCD process is built on extensive research into 1000 churches in 32 countries on 5 continents. More than 20,000 churches have now used NCD in more than 50 countries.

This research has identified 8 key characteristics of church life that must be developed in any church that wishes to be healthy and, therefore, more likely to be growing. The eight characteristics are: Leadership that is empowering; Members who are using their gifts in ministry; Passionate spirituality; Structures that are functional; Worship services that are inspiring; Small groups that meet the needs of the whole person; Evangelism that is oriented to people's needs; and the Development of loving community.

Each year we conduct a survey within our congregation, the results of which are computer-analysed at the NCD head-office in Brisbane. The analysis of the survey identifies the weakest of the eight health areas for our church at the moment, and this becomes the aspect of church life we focus on for several months.

Over time, we have found this process a valuable discipline, helping us to reflect on our church life, and to focus our congregational energies on things that really help us to be the church God wants us to be. And, as I said earlier, we have seen some modest growth, which encourages us to continue with the process. Over time, we hope to become better at recognising and making the most of the potential for growth at St Mark's.

Information on the NCD process can be found on the Direction Ministry web site:

["http://www.directionresources.com.au/"](http://www.directionresources.com.au/)

Peter Middleton
Rector, St Mark's Parish

TRUTH AND THE BIBLE

Charles Simeon, the illustrious Evangelical vicar of Holy Trinity, Cambridge from 1783 to 1836, once remarked that "*Truth is not in the middle and not in one extreme, but in both extremes*"

There are strong indications that Simeon's approach has sadly become out of favour in our Diocese of Sydney.

There is much to suggest that the politically correct view now is that truth resides only in one extreme, and that every opportunity should be taken to ensure that alternative views are marginalised. This is a far less generous Evangelicalism than has hitherto existed in our Diocese. Not only are Catholic-minded and Central Church Anglicans not to be regarded as true-blue Anglicans, so too it seems that generous minded Evangelicals (some might say of a more 'liberal' ilk) are in no way to be encouraged.

We are told that the meaning of the Bible is plain, and that every aspect of Diocesan life needs to be brought into line with it. If its meaning is so transparent why is Moore College needed as the only way of entry to ordained ministry in the diocese? This college exists to foster a particular interpretation of both Scripture and Anglican history. In other words it exists to promote a single tradition. That may be fine, except that ironically the purveyors of this tradition suggest that they eschew all tradition. They are simply Bible Christians.

For many Anglicans things are not quite so simple. I myself have a deep reverence for the Bible and read it daily. I regard it as a precious and irreplaceable gift from God to his people. As the Word of God it points us to the supreme Word of God, Jesus Christ. Its magnificence is such that it seems to me to be bordering on the irreverent to attempt to narrow its truth to one stream of interpretation.

Why is it that so much Bible teaching in our Diocese dwells on some authors and themes rather than others? Why is St Paul quoted endlessly and St John, it would seem, hardly ever? If '*all scripture is inspired by God*' (2 Timothy 3:16) let it all, in its richness, be made available.

Way back in 1936 **Michael Ramsey** as a young theologian wrote "**The Gospel and the Catholic Church**", which in my view remains a valuable expression of sound Anglican theology. Here he wrote: *'Thus the method of the Reformers has often prevented the real voice of Scripture from sounding with its rightful power. For their appeal to the Truth of Christ was incomplete; the right appeal is to the Truth as found in Scripture and as witnessed and interpreted by the one primitive organism of sacraments, ministry, and tradition. Here alone is a doctrinal basis which rises behind and above all partial and ephemeral "isms" and controversies and points men to the one Christ in His one family on earth.'*

The kind of religion now being espoused in our Diocese makes much of the Scriptures at the expense of the Sacraments, puts trust in intellectual processes of a particular kind while fearing 'mysticism'. I think Pascal got it right. *'We arrive at the truth, not by the reason alone, but also by the heart.'* And **St Gregory of Nyssa** too when he claimed that God is better known by wonder than thought.

Gazing on God, engaging in contemplation, meditating prayerfully on the Scriptures, opens the way to a more mature faith in God. Martin Smith, a Cowley Father, in his book "**The Word is very near you**" says: *'The path of meditation leads into love of the Scriptures, an acceptance of their converting authority and an absorption of their treasures into our beings which is beyond the imagination of those who confine themselves to study and argument over the Scriptures.'*

May there be a rebirth of this dimension of prayer across our Diocese, and may we, in the kind of parishes represented by 'Anglicans Together', share in such engagement with God.

Robert Wheeler
Rector, St Peter's Church, Cremorne

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Visit our website: www.anglicanstogether.org

For further information: email: johncorn@zipworld.com.au

MARKETPLACE CONVERSATIONS

An opportunity for Australian Anglicanism in the global business context

"It is no small pity, and should cause us no little shame, that through our own fault, we do not understand ourselves, or know who we are - as to how good qualities there may be in our souls, or who dwells within them, or how precious they are -

those are things which we seldom consider and so we trouble little about preserving the soul's beauty."

Teresa of Avila

How can Australian Anglicanism shape an improved human condition in the sophisticated and technological workplace? What can our church learn from business without becoming captive to it? This brief article explores one possible response to these questions. In particular the kind of spirituality that might evoke a deeper conversation about human endeavour and a more helpful collaboration between church and business, when their relationship is one of distrust.

The spirituality, now being courted by some churches and business, concerns itself with aspects of human endeavour which seek healthy over destructive behaviour. Perhaps the most hidden form of destructive behaviour, evident in both institutions, occurs in the absence of reflecting upon our actions and evaluating their coherence with words proclaimed. An illustration is when seeking to influence someone to a particular view, usually 'my view', when our own actions display duplicity and insincerity. In this case 'my actions' will understandably breed distrust in everything I do and will be perceived as manipulative of the other. So how might spirituality assist the formation of a healthy behaviour?

The Gospels call us to be child-like (**Mark 10:15**, **Lk 9:47-48**), and as adults to seek a metanoia in our heart (**Luke 2:35**, **5:22**, & the Beatitudes **Luke 6: 20-49**). Perhaps this is an invitation to learn like a child before we begin talking. For children all learn truth from what is observed rather than from knowing the words. So our interior life and getting that right first, then being compassionate towards others, seems crucial. That quest seems to require a new orientation to one's inner self. In becoming an interior person we seek to make time for more deep pondering on the important questions, to being open and creative in thought, to seek the sacred in life and to become immersed in seeking more harmony with others in recognition of the deep interconnectedness we have with all creation.

Such orientations will be seriously challenged as we face an increasingly confusing and complex global social order, itself undergoing radical transformation. So it appears vital for the church and business institutions to reform a new way of collaborating together, to put aside for the moment their differences, their dogmas and traditions. If we do this with empathy we will uncover the immense pain and anguish of people struggling to make meaning of all that is happening in their life. We then might discover new possibilities through conversation - conversation that creates a hospitable

space where questions that really matter are explored. Conversation where diverse experience brings together different ideas to share. In honouring another's contribution, we will listen for patterns, deeper insights, and more questions to probe beneath hidden assumptions we each carry forward. Perhaps something new may emerge from that kind of conversation which is both profound and powerful.

We might like to reframe such spiritual orientation - humankind as spiritual being having human experiences; of being vitally alive to a deeper sense of the spiritual in our thoughts, feelings, decisions and actions towards the self, the Divine, others, and creation. Earlier 15th century mystics, amongst them *Teresa of Avila*, led the development of Christian spirituality, now making its re-appearance. ***Will Christian spirituality take its place amongst other forms of spirituality now seen in the business community? What role will the Church play?***

(A summary of original paper on Anglicans Together web-site "<http://www.anglicanstogether.org>" - reference sources there.)

Peter M Heath

A lay business person qualified in engineering, business and theology; a member of the Anglican Parish of Hunter's Hill, NSW.

THE LONG DEBATE: A Reflection on 20 Years.

In May, Sydney MOW hosted a formal dinner to celebrate the 20th Anniversary of the foundation of the Australian Movement for the Ordination of Women in 1983. It was a great night of reminiscence and reflection and renewed friendships. Twenty years is a big slice out of our lives and for those who had been there from the beginning, this celebration was a time of mixed emotions as they surveyed the Anglican Church in Australia today. ***The great achievement of the ordination of women in most Australian dioceses is inevitably diminished by the intransigence of the largest and wealthiest diocese.***

As someone who moved from passive to active membership of MOW in the last quarter of this time,, I welcome this opportunity to look at a campaign which has been compared to, 'Nelson Mandela, half-way though his sentence'.

This comment from Allan Reeder, Editor of 'Market Place', caused pleased applause when I reported it at the Anniversary Dinner. It pointed to a hopeful future if we can have a Mandela-like stoicism and faith. The South African apartheid period seems to have so many lessons for us, not least because it was instigated by a proudly Christian government. The amazing peaceful transition to majority rule

was much influenced by the strong Christian ethic of the people, embodied by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission chaired by former Anglican Archbishop, Desmond Tutu. There's the lovely story about him in the apartheid era. When asked why he did not feel despair. **He held up his Bible and said, "I've read to the end of the book and we win"**. I find that encouraging. I also see both **History and the Gospel is on the side of the religious liberation of women, as it was with the liberation from racial discrimination.**

Of course, in drawing an analogy with the persecutions of apartheid, I risk being accused of overstating the significance of MOW's position. However, I assert that this is a matter not only of justice in a human sense but more importantly a matter of the truth of the Gospel. If, as an institution, we deny or ignore such issues in one area, we close down access to understanding on any spiritual issue. I find it sad that my home diocese has become so inward looking, so unwilling in its synods to consider debate and respect differing viewpoints in a gracious manner. Experience shows that closed societies tend to implode. In Sydney, we do not seriously consider for election an archbishop who is not a Sydney person, we do not look for a principal of Moore College who has not himself been trained there and increasingly we do not license clergy who were not trained in Sydney. If you don't fit, you might be better to leave. **How many able sons and daughters of the diocese are now Sydney orphans?!**

Those people, who write letters to 'Southern Cross' and the 'Sydney Morning Herald', proclaiming that the Faith is unchanging and fixed in what they think lies between the covers of their favourite English translation of the scriptures, seem ready to ignore the history of Christianity. We have had nearly two thousand years of debate, much of it violent and the focus of Christian theological argument has changed many times. For example, it's difficult to find Christians today who will seriously support slavery or the Divine Right of Kings, but from the 17th to 19th centuries support for these ideas was normal orthodoxy. Even in the last twenty years in Sydney, the arguments against ordaining women have moved from asserting the primacy of texts like 1 Timothy 2:11-12 to the current doctrine of Headship. I concur with the Reverend Kevin Giles, in "*The Trinity & Subordinationism*", that this, not quite novel, but rather recycled theory doesn't fit with the Athanasian Creed and could probably be denounced as heresy. I don't want to see anyone burnt at the stake over such a difference of opinion; I don't believe that excommunication is a good way to go-

or come -to faith. However, the sad truth is that in Sydney Diocese 'the unity of the faith in the bond of peace' is becoming increasingly strained.

So what do I think about this long debate? Well, as it says in that fine old MOW song, "*Like a mighty tortoise, Moves the Church of God. Brothers we are treading, Where we've always trod*". We know that we must wait on the Holy Spirit to come to Sydney Diocese as it came to those devout members of the government of South Africa. In the meanwhile, it's important to keep the conversation going.

Elaine Peterson,

Convenor, Sydney Movement for the Ordination of Women

BOOK REVIEWS

"Living Together and Christian Ethics"

Adrian Thatcher, Cambridge University Press, 2002.

If you attended to the press, both religious and secular, you might think that the major problem for Christian sexual ethics today is same-sex relationships. Wrong. The major problem is extra-marital cohabitation. If the question with same-sex relationships relates to the sanctity of marriage, extra-marital cohabitation is surely a much greater threat. A very high percentage of the marriages celebrated in Christian churches are between cohabitating persons, that is, between persons who appear not to respect the traditional Christian teaching about marriage. Those who cohabit include both attenders and non-attenders, so the problem is definitely not "us and them". This is the problem addressed by Adrian Thatcher in his provocative and interesting book.

Thatcher begins with an analysis of what we know about the incidence and consequences of cohabitation. Overall, the evidence is against it, both as to its effects on the parties and on any children involved. Except, that is, for what Thatcher calls "prenuptial" as compared with "non-nuptial" cohabitation. By this he means those who intend to marry and those who do not. The record for prenuptial cohabitation is much better.

How does Thatcher deal with this problem? In summary, he argues that the church should re-establish the concept of "betrothal". Have you ever wondered why the marriage service is so repetitive? It first asks the couple whether they will do something and then has them do it. This is because the service has collapsed two previously separate ideas, betrothal and marriage. He argues that, historically, betrothal included sexual experience (note that in the marriage of Mary and Joseph it was the fact that Jesus was not his child that caused the

problem). By this argument Thatcher seeks genuinely to incorporate prenuptial cohabitation into marriage and to celebrate it actually and liturgically.

The essential problem with the concept of marriage used by the church is that it regards marriage as an event, not a process. This is the result of many centuries of development that sought to answer questions that are no longer relevant. In this process, betrothal, and thus marriage as a process, was lost. It was replaced by an unrealistic static concept that pretends to create marriage in a single instant in a ceremony. Survivors of both successful and unsuccessful marriages know that this is nonsense. The reinstatement of betrothal could help to resolve this problem.

This brief summary does little justice to the elegance of Thatcher's argument. My problem with his conclusion is not that I disagree with it, on the contrary, it seems quite convincing and conforms to my understanding of human processes. It is that it may be too late.

Michael Horsburgh

"Sex , Power and the Clergy"

Muriel Porter, Hardie Grant Books, South Yarra, Victoria, 2003.

This book provides a valuable and balanced study of a subject that is likely to dominate discussion within all the mainline churches in the foreseeable future.

Muriel Porter here gives extensive documented and factual information on the subject of the sexual abuse by clergy of both children and adults.

Porter has a very fluid style of writing which makes it easy to read and follow the story across a number of continents. The chapter headings give an indication of the breadth of areas covered:

The Crisis - Australian and International; Media Conspiracy?; Sex, Power and Accountability; Celibacy - Is it to Blame?

The author's experience as a journalist and her close association with the Anglican Church's hierarchy (she is a member of the Anglican General Synod) gives her an insight into the current issues regarding the Church - its power and its teaching in the area of human sexuality. She states "The churches are still answering questions the wider society is no longer asking. This is particularly true in relation to issues concerning human sexuality and personal relationships. Official church teaching is frozen in a past 'golden age', out of touch not only with wider society but with many faithful churchgoers and parish clergy as well." (p105)

This is a pertinent publication, and not more so for Anglicans, in view of the current debate on the Church's teaching on various aspects of human sexuality and behaviour.

From the book cover: "*Sex, Power and the Clergy* is a frank and timely analysis, based on

careful research. It presents a compelling case for urgent church reform and above all, real repentance."

There is an extensive bibliography and good index.
Moya Holle

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