



ANGLICANS TOGETHER

NEWSLETTER No. 30 July 2006

ANGLICANS TOGETHER ONLINE: <www.anglicanstogether.org>

Chair's Column

Another Step on the Journey

Minority views are sorely tested when confronted by the overwhelming certainty of the majority. No 'ifs' no 'buts – their way is the only way.

Still in a state of PSD (post Synod depression), I left Sydney last November to visit my brother and his wife in New York City. I anticipated the joy of a family reunion and the stimulation NYC exudes. The messages I had about US churches were mixed. I certainly did not anticipate the uplift to my spirits by experiences in one Presbyterian and three Episcopal churches. It is fair to say that the experiences found me.

Holy Trinity church on Wall Street had been recommended for its liturgy and music. Both delighted in the manner that the Anglo-catholic heritage and tradition addressed contemporary issues in an accessible manner. The surprise and joy emerged from the wonderful sense of inclusiveness and expressions of love (a word sadly missing from the Synod dictionary). Male and female, old and young, black and white, rich and poor, straight and gay – all participated in the sanctuary and the congregation.

After the service, on introducing myself as a visitor from Sydney – and, yes, they were well aware of our Diocese – I was invited to a workshop on youth leadership in the church to be held during the coming week at *St Paul's*, in downtown NYC.

***St Paul's* Episcopal Chapel is a charming 18th century church. It adjoins the World Trade Centre site and, from the TV coverage of the tragedy of 9/11, many of you will remember its**

iron railing fence covered with messages of hope and despair. In the following months *St Paul's* became the spiritual and welfare nerve centre for rescue workers, where clergy and laity from many creeds and denominations provided support on a 24/7 roster.

St Paul's was an appropriate setting for this workshop on youth leadership in Episcopalian churches in the NYC area. Bishops, clergy, lay church workers and volunteers addressed a detailed agenda with well-prepared speakers and support material and active group discussions. Again, a wonderful sense of inclusiveness – led by articulate male and female clergy, with no rhetoric, no posturing, just getting on with Christ's mission in planning to help people with the real issues confronting them in today's society.

The following Sunday we tried the 'local', *St Luke in the Fields*, in Greenwich Village. Wow! The community of Greenwich Village is a glorious mix of very young and very old, black, white, straight, gay. It is an area of highs and lows and many social problems.

The congregation at *St Luke's* mirrored the community. Led by an inspirational rector, Mother Caroline Stacey, the participation of this polyglot congregation in the liturgy and the singing was truly uplifting. Equally impressive was the outreach programme of *St Luke's* which is not a wealthy church – after hours school help for children with learning problems, food programs, support for HIV/Aids sufferers, assistance to the elderly, bible study groups, lecture series on English Christian poets, children's choirs, adults choirs and many other areas of inclusive fellowship.

On our last Sunday we attended the *First Presbyterian Church* where my brother sings in the well renowned choir and my sister in law runs the craft group. Would this be different? In essence, no – a different service but crosses,

candles and the magnificent choir. The Pastor's warm welcome to (and I quote) 'young and old, male and female, gay and straight' gave the same message of love and inclusiveness.

I know that my experiences were not necessarily representative. While I was there, the *New York Times* reported that *Willow Creek Community Church* in Illinois, a church which had been mentioned in glowing terms at the last Sydney Synod, decided not to hold worship services on the Sunday that coincided with Christmas Day, instead they were handing out DVD's for families to play in their living rooms.

What did I bring home? A sense that many of the churches in New York had progressed. They had moved on from criticising and condemning people for their differences in faith and lifestyle to looking for ways to help people in physical and spiritual need. I saw a strong reinforcement that the foundations of our faith are grounded in love and care for our fellow men and women.

Each of us may travel down a slightly different path, we may each desire a different style of worship but the devil is not in the detail but in losing sight of Christ's commandments.

*Susan Hooke, Co-Chair
Parishioner, St Peter's, Cremorne*

ANGLICANS TOGETHER ANNUAL DINNER – 2006

Friday 22nd September,
7.00 for 7.30 pm
St Alban's Parish Church Hall,
3 Pembroke Street, Epping

Speaker:

The Rev'd Canon Dr Jane Shaw,
Dean of Divinity,
Chaplain and Fellow of New
College, Oxford

**Cost: \$30.00 pp (BYO
Drinks)**

For Bookings: Tele: 02 9876 3362

Email: office@eppinganglicans.org.au

Post: C/- PO Box 79 EPPING NSW 1710

Cheques to be made out to: '**Anglicans Together**'
payable at time of booking.

Newsletter published by "Anglicans Together"

Opinions expressed are those of the contributors.

Editor: Moya Holle, PO Box 429 Glebe NSW 2037

A Month in a Trappist Monastery

*Bishop Graeme Rutherford
Diocese of Newcastle*

Overlooking the Cooper River in South Carolina, USA, the monastery buildings of *Mepkin Abbey*, are set on 3,200 acres of mostly undeveloped woodlands. The popular advertisement for beer sums up exactly my initial feelings on arriving, '*It doesn't get any better than this!*'

Mepkin is a daughter house of Gethsemani Abbey in Kentucky, made famous by the best known twentieth century Trappist monk, Thomas Merton. It derives its income solely from the sale of everything that its 20,000 chooks produce – eggs and 'chookpoo' sold under the environmentally friendly label of 'Earth Healer'. Even though I try to keep fit, I discovered in the mundane tasks of grading eggs and shovelling compost, muscles that I didn't know I had! As another guest said to me before we retired after Compline, '*The best part of it is tomorrow we get to do it all over again!*'

Four things stand out for me as lessons that monasticism has for the church today:

1. The radical call to discipleship.

This point is so fundamental it should hardly require emphasis, but the history of the church shows our urgent need to be reminded of the truth again and again. Those called to be *Jesus* disciples must take up the cross and follow him.

2 The centrality of community.

Our life of discipleship is not a lonely, individualistic project. To be called to follow *Jesus* is to be called into community.

3. Sharing possessions.

The little cameos painted of the early church in Acts 2:43-47 and 4:32-37 with their practices of economic sharing and simple living do not describe the way all are required to live (any more than monasticism is the way for all). However we are all called to model an alternative way to that of a world driven by corporate capitalism and drugged into materialistic numbness by the mass media.

4. Peacefulness and Peacemaking.

Pax is the motto of *St Benedict* under whose Rule the *Trappists* live. By recalling the community of faith to the peaceable teaching and example of *Jesus*, the monastic tradition summons us to reclaim our Christian vocation in the world as a sign of the coming Kingdom in which, under the lordship of *Jesus*, '*They shall not hurt or destroy on all my holy Mountain, for the earth will be full*

of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea' (Is 11:9).

Growing up in the Church

Late last year, while we were dissecting a cadaver, my friend Michelle asked me what my fiancé does. Her question surprised me: in our six semesters studying anatomy together the subject had never come up. "He's an Anglican priest," I replied. There was an awkward silence, but I'm used to that. People never seem to know how to respond. Sometimes they express surprise that priests are allowed to marry. Often, like in Michelle's case, they just produce a lukewarm smile and say, "that's nice." People who have known me for a long time find it hilarious to try and imagine me as the traditional vicar's wife, serving tea and cake to bishops and hosting Mothers' Union meetings.

Come July, all things going according to plan, **my name will have been entered in three of the four registers at St Alban's Epping: baptism, confirmation and marriage.** (The fourth is the funeral register – that can certainly wait). For as long as I can remember, St Alban's has been to me a 'second home,' and a 'second family'.

In November, my time at St Alban's will come to an end as Ben and I move to a new parish, in a new town, assuming in earnest our roles as clergyman and clergy wife. While I know that this positive change is part of God's plan for me, the prospect of leaving behind the love and security that I have known at St Alban's all my life fills me with sadness and apprehension. However, I have been trying to think not in terms of what I lose in moving away from here, but in terms of what I have learnt from St Alban's that I can take with me to other parishes.

My first memory of St Alban's involves being forced to wear a loathsome floral dress to Sunday School and being told off for pinching someone. At the age of seven I worked out that I could escape Sunday School by singing in the choir. For the next ten-or-so years, choir practice on Wednesday nights was the highlight of my week. So much so, in fact, that my parents often used it to their advantage: not being allowed to go to choir, was the ultimate threat that never

failed. My love of choir stemmed from a number of things: the friends that I made there, the music that we sang, and the fun that Chris Wagstaff used to bring to our rehearsals. What I didn't realise at the time was the enormous impact that this was having on my musical development. I was hardly aware that the 'games' we played during rehearsals were cleverly designed to hone our aural skills and improve our musicianship. We were often encouraged to sing solos or play our instruments in church, and for many of us this proved invaluable performance experience. I have no doubt that Chris's infectious passion and enthusiasm for music – and in particular the role it can play in Christian worship – played a large part in leading me to where I am now: completing an Honours thesis in church music, with a view to a career in music education.

My exposure to entire church services and Anglican liturgy similarly had an impact on my spiritual development. I relished the opportunity to participate in church as a child by wearing robes,

processing, and especially singing. (I also enjoyed playing hangman during sermons, sending paper aeroplanes flying out of the choir loft and flicking rubber

bands at the organist, but we won't go into that). I got a real thrill from being told by adult members of the congregation that they had enjoyed our singing, or better still, that it they had found it helpful or spiritually uplifting.

Participating in church also sparked in me an early interest in scripture and theology. I remember one Sunday, when I was about seven or eight, asking Fr Ian Crooks if I could start Lent a day early, so that I could have chocolate on my birthday. Suppressing a smile he explained to me that a Lenten discipline didn't work like that. (Most disappointing. I had thought it was a brilliant idea.) Confirmation classes and youth groups provided me with opportunities to seriously explore my relationship with God, and server training towards the end of high school helped me to better understand the liturgy with which I had become so familiar.

Almost my entire Christian education and formation have taken place at St Alban's Epping. During this time I have gained invaluable knowledge and skills that will help me in other parishes. I have been given a fantastic grounding in Anglican liturgy and how

it enriches worship. I have developed a real passion for church music and the way that musical gifts can be used as a ministry to others. I have been given insight into how a good parish operates, and a sense of what makes a great Christian community. I have learnt the importance of real equality, tolerance and love. Oh, and I have learnt, under Alan Nyholm's tutelage, how to make a darn-good palm cross.

But how has St Alban's prepared me for life as a clergy wife? It certainly hasn't been drilled into me that I should, like some clergy wives I have come across, devote my entire life to "supporting my husband". Of course I intend to give Ben all the support that I can, but I trust that he will give me equal support in all that I do. As the wife of a priest I have every intention of being actively involved in the parishes to which we are called, but I do not intend to be the "unpaid curate", and I believe I have every right to be my own person with my own life, my own career.

I feel very fortunate to have grown up in an environment where men and women are seen not as "equal but different", but simply equal. Christine Cornish has been a wonderful role model to me, always managing to enthusiastically support the parish whilst preserving her own identity. I am also very lucky to be moving to the Diocese of Bathurst. Bishop Richard Hurford has shown remarkable care and concern for my welfare, taking the time to discuss with me my aspirations and expectations, taking every step within his power to ensure that I will be as stimulated and fulfilled as my husband.

I have been truly blessed to experience a place like St Alban's in the really formative years of my life. I pray that the St Alban's family will continue to embrace new family members and show them such fellowship, guidance, and love as I have received.

Katherine Murray
Parishioner, St Alban's, Epping

ANGLICANS TOGETHER

SPECIAL GENERAL MEETING

Saturday 26th AUGUST 2006

2-4pm at Saint James Hall,

1st Floor, 171 Phillip Street, Sydney.

All financial members of *Anglicans Together* are invited to attend and participate.

THE MAIN AGENDA ITEM WILL BE APPROVAL OF THE CONSTITUTION

The Episcopal Church of the USA elects 26th Presiding Bishop

The Episcopal Church, 30 years after it allowed women to become priests and bishops, has elected a woman as its Presiding Bishop.

On June 18, ***Katharine Jefferts Schori***, Bishop of the Diocese of Nevada, was elected Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church, on the fifth ballot cast by the House of Bishops. Her election was confirmed by the House of Deputies, as is required by church canons. ***Katharine Jefferts Schori is the first woman to hold the top post in the church's nearly 400-year history.*** Her nine-year term begins November 1st 2006; she will be invested and seated November 4th during a liturgy at Washington National Cathedral.

"I give deep and abiding thanks for the ministry of the current Presiding Bishop," she said after an introduction by Presiding Bishop Frank Griswold. She hoped his "gifts continue to be shared within the church and the world in years to come because he has very much to give us all."

Jefferts Schori was born March 26, 1954, in Pensacola, Florida. She has been married to Richard Miles Schori, a retired theoretical mathematician (topologist), since 1979. They have one child, Katharine, a second lieutenant and pilot in the U.S. Air Force.

Bishop Jefferts Schori received a BS in biology from Stanford University in 1974; an MS in Oceanography in 1977; and a PhD in 1983 from Oregon State University. Her MD in 1994 and DD in 2001 are from Church Divinity School of the Pacific.

Consecrated the ninth Bishop of Nevada in February 2001, *Jefferts Schori* serves a diocese of some 6,000 members in 35 congregations. In the House of Deputies thanked her diocese for the wonderful ministries in which they engaged.

From 2001-2003 she was as a member of the 20/20 Strategy Group and also served as secretary of the House of Bishops Ministry Committee at the 2003 General Convention.

The Presiding Bishop serves as spiritual leader to more than 2.4 million Episcopalians in the USA.

The Apostle Paul : his theology fresh perspectives

In March this year, *Tom Wright the Bishop of Durham* and widely published theologian visited Sydney at the invitation of the *Macquarie Christian Studies Institute*. I was one of a large crowd who attended a lecture he gave on '*Fresh Perspectives on Paul*' at Trinity Chapel in Robert Menzies College. This was one of a series of lectures he delivered at Trinity Chapel that week on topics ranging from the historical Jesus, the resurrection and the Da Vinci code. All were packed with attentive audiences including many students. The lecture I attended was a shared evening with *Bishop Paul Barnett* also contributing a paper on Paul and there were many questions from the floor after their presentations. It was not intended to be a debate but it became clear that while *Tom Wright* and *Paul Barnett* had some things in common, *Tom Wright's* fresh perspectives on Paul were not welcomed by *Paul Barnett*. *Tom Wright* is an engaging lecturer with a passion for his subject and I so enjoyed his lecture that I bought his book, '*Paul: Fresh Perspectives*' so I could pursue the subject a little further.

So what are *Tom Wright's* fresh perspectives on the Apostle Paul?

This expression was coined by another Durham theologian, *James Dunn* in a journal article of that title published in 1983.

Anyone who has done any reading on *Paul* lately will be aware that in the last thirty years there has been a huge volume of material being published about *Paul* and his theology, much of it provoked by what has become known as the '*new perspective on Paul*.'

Dunn used that expression to refer to the rethinking of Paul's theology brought about by the publication in 1977 of *E.P. Sander's* book, '*Paul & Palestinian Judaism*.' At the risk of oversimplification, what *Sanders* did was to question the traditional understanding of Paul's view of the law. This traditional view portrayed Paul as championing a gospel based on justification by faith as opposed to salvation by works of the law. Paul's opponents were then the Judaizers who argued for the importance of the law. But *Sanders* argued that the Palestinian Judaism of Paul's day was not based on salvation by works or law keeping: rather the faithful Jew believed that his or her place in God's plan was based on the covenant and that obedience to the law was the condition for remaining in the covenant and not a way of earning God's favour. Post *Sanders*, Paul's view of the

Law has become one of the most debated topics in Pauline studies.

Tom Wright's approach is to acknowledge the value of much of this new perspective but to challenge some of its more extreme assertions. Rather than attempt a detailed summary or critique of *Tom Wright's* book, which I am not qualified to do, it may be of interest to highlight the main points of difference between *Tom Wright's* understanding of Paul's theology and that of *Paul Barnett*. There were two main areas of difference. First was the question: Is there an underlying narrative discernible throughout Paul's writing? *Tom Wright* argued yes. To quote him directly: "*It is not simply that Paul alludes to a number of well known narratives. ...I want to insist that Paul's whole point is precisely that with the coming, the death and resurrection of Jesus the Messiah a new chapter has opened within the story in which he believed himself to be living, and that understanding what that story is and how this chapter is indeed a radically new movement within it provides one of the central clues to everything else he says, not least the questions of justification and the law upon which the 'perspective' battles have been so often fought.*" (Chapter 1, p.9)

While conceding that Paul makes many allusions and direct references to Old Testament narratives, *Paul Barnett* was unwilling to admit any underlying narrative in Paul's writing.

From what he described as 'the controlling narrative of the historical story

of God, the world, humankind and Israel', *Tom Wright* drew out major themes in Paul's theology and at the forefront of those themes were creation and covenant. He argued that this theology of creation and covenant is often summed up in the expression '*the righteousness of God*'. Here again *Tom* and *Paul* had significantly different understandings. For *Tom*, the righteousness of God in Paul's epistles refers to God's covenant faithfulness. Again quoting from chapter 2 of his book, *Tom* argues that "*God has unveiled his righteousness in the faithful Messiah, Jesus, the one in whom at last we find an Israelite faithful to God's purposes....the one through whom God has now called into being a renewed people among whom Jews and Gentiles are welcomed on equal terms.*" The new covenant in *Tom Wright's* understanding is the old covenant fulfilled. Christ is

the ‘climax’, rather than the ‘end’ of the law, (Romans 10.4).

Paul Barnett on the other hand defended the traditional view that when Paul talks about the righteousness of God in the opening chapters of Romans and other key passages, he is referring to personal righteousness imputed to the believer through the sacrificial death of Jesus. This was, perhaps, the crucial point of difference between these two theologians both of whom are committed to the authority of the scriptures.

Well, does any of this matter? The important issue here is not so much whether *Tom Wright’s* view or *Paul Barnett’s* view is correct. What is important is that we go back to Paul and keep reading him with an open mind willing to receive new insights and understandings. **In Tom Wright’s words, “for me there has been no more stimulating exercise for the mind, the heart, the imagination and the spirit, than trying to think thoughts after him and constantly be stirred up to fresh glimpses of God’s ways and purposes for the world and with us strange human creatures.”**

Paul, Fresh Perspectives, by N.T. Wright, published by SPCK, ISBN 0-281-05739-7

Philip Bradford
Rector, Parish of Hunter’s Hill

Wave which changed our world

Life sometimes throws you opportunities which are well out of the ordinary. Depending on how you respond, the impact on your own and others’ lives can be momentous.

On the morning of Sunday 26 December 2004, an earthquake erupted in the Indian Ocean. Registering 9.0 on the Richter scale, the seismic activity triggered a wall of water, up to fifteen metres in height, which crashed through a coastal city of Indonesia. It drowned thousands instantly, and its deadly composite of swirling, broken wreckage injured thousands more.

Word filtered through to Australia, which was celebrating the Christmas festive season. Most people were on holidays and were not reading their normal daily newspaper or listening to their regular radio or

television news, nor were they downloading their emails. **Despite hospitals being on down-time, and many medical people being generally out of reach, within 24 hours of the event, Australians were eagerly putting together rescue teams and supplies for the devastated areas.**

Eleven other countries were affected. The final toll would be over 200 000 dead. It was a natural disaster the like of which the modern world had never seen before.

Australian teams were to help in Sri Lanka, the Maldives and Thailand, and in the most affected area of all: **Banda Aceh, in Aceh province, Indonesia.** This team was called the **Combined Australian Surgical team – Aceh (CASTA), led by Dr Michael Flynn.** CASTA arrived on the evening of Thursday December 30, 2004, and within 24 hours of arrival in this devastated area, were operating on the injured Acehnese.

CASTA team members did not know what they would encounter, and to their credit, they overcame hurdles which met them. They went into what had been a warzone for thirty years. It was a devout Muslim province. The team was from a predominantly Christian country. **They were greeted with some circumspection. Some cultural differences surfaced in medical practices and gender relationships- an Australian woman surgeon was ejected from the operating theatre in the early days.** There were threats of disease, there was a constant military presence, it was intensely hot and conditions were far from ideal as far as rest, hygiene and medical practice were concerned. **The surgery was radical and confronting – surgeons call it ‘Tiger country’.**

However team members built up relationships of friendship and trust with the Acehnese patients and the Indonesian hierarchy. They left on excellent terms with all they encountered.

Whilst the team was there, the international media covered its work, and relayed it to a shocked world. Donations of record proportions started pouring in. Australia led the donor table for the first month, donating more than \$200 million privately and \$1 billion in a government aid and reconstruction package. By the time the team departed, nine days after their arrival, 130 aid agencies had arrived. The compassion of various nations was evident in the fact that help arrived quickly, and in such abundance. Nations of Christian background were leaders in the generous response, a tribute to their faith and the values which go with this. Even those who do not subscribe to any faith, but live in countries with a history of Christian belief, benefit from this outreaching attitude which is based upon following the selfless example of Jesus of Nazareth - and ought never be taken for granted.

The team left an enduring legacy: the community of **Banda Aceh** will never forget the kindness of Australians in their moment of need. It was Christian faith in action, and a great example was set. With Australian and international donations, Acehnese homes are being re-built, livelihoods re-established - a gutted society is being put back together. And of great long-term significance, a peace treaty was signed in August 2005 between TNI (Tentara Nasional Indonesia) the government military forces of Indonesia and GAM, (Gerakan Aceh Merdeka) the 'Free Aceh Movement', ending three decades of war in Aceh.

Australia's relief work did not stop with the tsunami response. On March 28 2005, an earthquake struck the island of Nias, killing more than one thousand people and rendering many injured and homeless. Australia sent *HMAS Kanimbla* and a team to help. Tragically, a Seaking helicopter carrying medical personnel crashed in Nias, killing nine Australians. There were two survivors. *President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono* visited Australia in April 2005 to thank Australia for its help with the tsunami. He presented Medals of Valour posthumously to the deceased.

Australia has shown its unremitting willingness to help its neighbour Indonesia in times of great tragedy and stress. Rendering aid which requires expense, motivation, willing volunteers and even the sacrifice of life (as in Nias) and in a context of ongoing political sensitivity, is evidence of a giving, forgiving country - a testament to true Christianity. The challenge for Australians is to treasure this heritage and never falter in continuing to live the faith.

by Sophie York

Sophie writes:

When my husband, Paul Dunn (an anaesthetist on the *CASTA* team) returned from the deployment, I started to write his story and he asked me to make it the story of the whole team. I interviewed the 28 member team, plus 7 extra who were involved closely. I wrote the entire book in 16 weeks, in the middle of the night between midnight and 5 am. (family commitments meant this was the only time I could do it)

My personal reflection can be summarised as being very proud of Australians for responding so quickly and generously to this mammoth tragedy and wishing to record their wonderful contribution.

Sophie York's book "Angels of Aceh" is a compelling story of 'Operation Tsunami Assist' It tells the uplifting story of the Australian team's unforgettable experience in Banda Aceh. Fifty percent of the author royalties in the first year plus a donation from the publisher Allen and Unwin, will be donated to the Jesuit Refugee Service which was already established in Aceh.

The book is available in major bookshops or at www.allenandunwin.co

Sydney Movement for the Ordination of Women.



Our AGM is being held on Saturday, 12 August at 2pm. We encourage you to come.

Were you inspired at the launch of Kevin Giles book, "The Father and the Son: modern evangelicals reinvent the doctrine of the Trinity" on Wednesday 21st June? Three learned speakers, one being the author, presented their reflections on the book. What they said was very affirming for women's full participation .

Are you excited that the US Anglican (Episcopal) Church has elected Katharine Jefferts Schori as Presiding Bishop? She is believed to be the first woman bishop to be elected as a primate

Or maybe you are just curious to see how an organisation such as ours is surviving in Sydney?

MOW has a long and valiant history. It is now well over 20 years since the first women were deaconed in Melbourne. However in Sydney, we are still waiting for women bishops!

If you answer 'yes' to any of the above questions, you may be interested in coming to hear and meet *Dr Susanne Glover* PhD(Syd) our AGM guest speaker. She has been involved with MOW from the beginning and should deliver a wonderful address.

As well, we are having afternoon tea, which will give people a chance to meet and talk with others for whom women's full ministry in the Anglican church is an important issue.

This will all happen at:

**St Mark's Anglican Church, South Hurstville.
(Cnr The Mall & Grosvenor Rd)**

Telephone: : 02 9252 5350

Christine Middleton.

God Almighty, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, by the gift of your Spirit, establish and ground us in your Spirit.

Reveal to us what we do not know: perfect in us what is lacking; strengthen in us what we know; and keep us in your service without fault; through the same Christ our Lord. Amen

St Clement, Bishop of Rome. 100AD

LAUNCH OF KEVIN GILES' BOOK

Jesus and the Father: Modern Evangelicals Reinvent the Doctrine of the Trinity Two Addresses were given, reviewing the book and issues addressed in the book.

Below is the address by the *Reverend Dr Canon James McPherson*

The Second, a long and deeply explorative one, by *Associate Professor Stuart Piggin*, will be placed on the Website: www.anglicanstogether.org

Genuine Christians base their belief on a deceptively simple claim: that Jesus of Nazareth is the Son of God who is himself divine. Such a claim stirs up a minefield of extraordinarily difficult questions. But if Christians are to lay any serious claim to being able to speak accurately about God, with any knowledge of God that is worthy of respect, they have to address the questions conscientiously and with rigour.

These thinkers were not setting out to annoy, perplex, impress or confuse, though they have succeeded in all those. The enigmatic Trinitarian formula balances their knowledge of God gained through prayerful Christian discipleship with their knowledge of God gained from the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures. It was a painfully difficult struggle for all involved. The outcome is classically expressed in the liturgical creeds known as the Nicene and the Athanasian; liturgical Anglicans regularly recite the Nicene Creed at the Eucharist.

Four features deserve comment. One, that there were stages - the teaching of Origen in the third century, for example, seemed mainstream for a while ["proto-orthodoxy"] but was later found deficient, and therefore abandoned. **Second**, it was the rigorous testing applied to current teachings that drove the process forward, Arius perhaps being the best-known example. **Third**, the discussions between the Greek-speaking theologians of the East and the Latin-speaking churches of the West were bedevilled by the differences in language – as well as by passionate rivalries, peppered sometimes by a willingness to misunderstand. Such is life even amongst the godly!

The fourth feature is highly relevant for tonight. It is the extraordinary balance and fine-tuning of the statements. Once you emphasise one aspect of Trinitarian doctrine at the expense of others, you either drift or plunge into heresy. Overemphasise the threeness; overemphasise the oneness; overemphasise the incarnation at the expense of the Son's eternal pre-existence with the Father, as Arius

did; overemphasise the Son's obedience during the course of his earthly life; they all lead into heresy.

I admire the audacity of those who write about the Trinity – it requires vast knowledge of Scripture, wide-ranging Christian experience, deep mature prayer, powerful insight, and intellectual acumen. If you get it wrong, how grave is the sin!

The weight of Trinitarian tradition enshrined in the classical Creeds should caution against any acceptance of "novelty". Yet one has also to allow that (as one of the Puritans said) "There is yet more light and truth to break forth from God's holy Word" Therefore it is possible to concede in principle that new (and richer!) formulations of the doctrine of the Trinity could conceivably emerge over the centuries. I mention this to

indicate that Sydney can be given the benefit of the doubt, at least in principle.

Every innovator, of course, will proclaim that the innovation was always inherent in the classical

tradition, and that only their new reading of Scripture and the new insights this has given into the traditional doctrine has led them prayerfully and conscientiously to the new statement. However, the burden of proof clearly remains with the innovators.

This brings me to Kevin Giles' first book, *The Trinity and Subordinationism* [2002]. **Subordinationism** – the Son is eternally subordinate to the Father and/or the Holy Spirit is eternally subordinate to both, instead of all three persons being absolutely co-equal as in classical Trinitarian theology – **was condemned at the Council of Constantinople in 381** (which also revised the Nicene Creed almost into our current form). Admittedly, much Christian teaching of the first three centuries (including Origen), had been openly subordinationist in its tendency but with God's guidance a deeper wisdom was gained and the Church repudiated subordinationism. The definitive conflict was with Arius, whose teaching is repellent to mainstream Christians and the term "Arian" is highly pejorative.

In 1999, the Diocese of Sydney's Doctrine Commission reported to the Synod on the Doctrine of the Trinity. Its title is illuminating: "The Doctrine of the Trinity and its bearing on the Relationship of

Early Christian thinkers struggled with the questions for more than 350 years before they came to a satisfactory set of words to describe God. Even then the outcome was cryptically obscure. There are three persons we call God, yet there is only one God; and the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, are all equally God. The numbers do not add up! To use a modern expression, "Go figure!"

Men and Women”.¹ The Synod resolution triggering the Report (cited in §1), focuses on whether the doctrine of the Trinity supports an egalitarian or a subordination model for male and female roles in ministry and marriage. The cause is dear to Sydney’s heart, and the conclusion therefore predictable. One may reasonably ask how relationships within the Trinity might have any bearing at all on gender relationships in the family or church contexts? Who would suspect a determinative connection? The theological issues here have to be brought into the open, and argued rigorously.²

In his previous book, Kevin Giles examined the Scripture and tradition, and concluded that the Report presented a new formulation of Trinitarian doctrine, driven by Sydney’s ideological requirement to keep women subordinate in the home and in the church.

In – *Jesus and the Father: Modern Evangelicals Reinvent the Doctrine of the Trinity*, it is evident that Kevin Giles feels himself denied a hearing – let alone conscientious engagement – for his critique, amongst those holding power in Sydney. Some of this is detailed in the book. He also investigates Archbishop Peter Carnley’s charge (published in 2004, when he was Primate, in *Reflections in Glass*) that the Report’s theology was Arian; while Carnley is no mean theologian, it is still a heavy claim and must be tested with due rigour. Giles also seeks, through rereading the primary thinkers of the Christian theological tradition, to determine whether the Sydney Report and the conservative Evangelical understandings behind it are consonant with the tradition or represent novelty (at best) or (at worst) the recrudescence of ancient errors.

I want to highlight one useful feature - the section on the conservative Evangelical use of language in this discussion [pp 44-54]. Giles does not use the term, but here I see him exposing what Don Watson calls “weasel words” – words used as smokescreens to obscure and deflect, rather than as precision instruments to clarify and enlighten.

Some political statements, for those who live and worship in the Diocese of Sydney and conscientiously dissent, as I do, from the 1999 Report.

One, there is a fault line in the conservative Evangelical ideology, situated very deep down. Giles doesn’t name it as such, but it strikes at the heart of their *sola Scriptura* principle. On p69:

Was God the Son really one in divinity with God the Father? [The] theologians at the Council of Nicea in 325 decided in favour. To make clear that what they believe was implied in Scripture they decided to include in the creed of Nicea the Greek word homoousios, meaning one in being, to

define the Father-Son relationship. In doing this they went beyond what was explicitly stated in Scripture. They made an objective advance in theological definition.

I would add, they made an objective advance in theological *method*. In the authentic understanding of Christian faith, the Bible alone is not enough. When you approach the doctrine of the Trinity with the assumption that “all you need is the Bible”, you are already on the way to error.

Two, if Giles is right (and I believe he is), Sydney has done us a favour. For then Sydney forfeits all rights to criticise others for innovation in doctrine; Sydney also forfeits all rights to criticise “liberals” for making words mean whatever they might want them to mean. This is the importance of the “weasel words” section! [I am not saying that this was Giles’ purpose in that section; the inference is mine alone.]

Three, why did the conservative Evangelical thinkers resort to Trinitarian doctrine to oppose women’s equality? It seems like using a sledgehammer to crack a nut. Look at it the other way: it constitutes a tacit admission that their scriptural arguments for keeping women subordinate are seriously inadequate and require extensive buttressing.

I have said very little about the subordination of women because I believe that is not the deepest issue at stake here. I want women priests in Sydney, and women bishops in the Australian Church, and we are the poorer for not already having them. However, for me that issue is secondary, when such teachings about the nature of the Christian God are being promoted by those who believe they are the only Bible-believers on the block. The Church’s mission stands or falls on the integrity and accuracy of its teaching about God.

This brings me to the key question Giles’ books raise: not whether the Report is Arian, though that had to be investigated; but has its theology been suborned by ideology?

Kevin Giles has done us a great favour with this book, as with *The Trinity and Subordinationism*. With the suspicion of heresy surrounding this Report, the Doctrine Commission cannot simply claim to be orthodox and expect everyone to accept its claim at face value. It has to engage robustly with all the questions, all the critiques, all the issues its Report raises, and defend it in the arena of Christian scrutiny.

The Commission cannot refuse to engage with Giles’ argument. The credibility amongst those who adhere to the traditional Trinitarian formularies – mainstream Anglicanism and Christian orthodoxy generally – depends on it. Kevin Giles has done the Anglican Communion a great service by engaging with this Report.

I highly commend the book to all.

The Book Launch took place on 21st June 2006 before an audience of some 85 people at the Sydney Mechanics School of Arts.

¹ The Report is printed in full in the Year Book for 2000, at pp538ff. It is also available through the diocesan website.

² See “Does human fatherhood explain divine Fatherhood? The problem of analogical correlation”, pp 63-67.

Praise God!

On Wednesday night, 28th June, Philip and I attended the Healing Service in St Andrew's Cathedral. **It was a particularly special night because we were farewelling Jim and Carole Holbeck after 18 long and I'm sure hard years in that place.** Their home has been at the Healing Ministry Centre, a house originally named *Golden Grove* after the First Fleet supply ship. It was bought by the 'Healing Ministry' from the Mercy Sisters for residential guests and for training purposes during the leadership of Canon Jim Glennon. Until fairly recently Jim and Carole occupied part of the top floor of the residential building used for guests and then moved into the new house built for their use on a corner of the property.

Our participation in the congregation began more than 25 years ago. And for the last 18 years or so we have been fringe dwellers in the sense of being also fully occupied in a parish. **I felt impelled to attend because of the serious and incurable diagnosis I had received and my apprehension about the future for our family.** Our youngest daughter was new-born and one of three little children. I came hoping for help in whatever form it could be found, and being a good western Christian my expectations were not high in the miracle department.

Today I can look back at wonderful and inspirational experience in that beautiful place. Our children were not excited about sitting in church on a Wednesday night. Although they were exceptional by any standard some members of the congregation were also not excited by their appearance. Such is life! And such was my determination that I did keep coming and we worked hard at making the evening as acceptable to the children and the rest as possible. We even used to go to the local 'Eat-as much-as-you like' Chinese at the end of the service which was entirely joyfully received.

I was helped and St Paul's assertion that God gives more than we can ask or think became real week by week. My condition became stable, I began to learn about Christian faith and the Holy Spirit in a more dynamic and participatory way, and my emotional needs began to be addressed. **I was impressed by the careful and practical instruction I received and at the participation of the congregation who came and prayed for those who asked.** We weren't funneled into a queue

waiting for the minister to pray but the whole church became alive with active, faithful, loving prayer. Over these many years my health has been restored and sustained in miraculous ways and by medical intervention, but emphatically and repeatedly restored.

In those eighteen years since they came down from Armidale Cathedral where Jim was Dean and Carole worked in the public sector in childrens' education the work of the congregation has developed in steady and helpful ways. **The Centre has been a wonderful adjunct to the cathedral. When we have been able to come we have found the encouragement of Wednesday nights simply wonderful.** Until recently Philip was a member of the preaching team and enjoyed being part of that group while I have been one of the pray-ers. Jim as the Priest in charge, and Carole in her weekends and evenings, have been unflagging in their devoted work. Philip and I will think of them with gratitude and love in their new life in Port Macquarie.

Rosemary Bradford
Parish of Hunters Hill

QuickTime™ and a
TIFF (Uncompressed) decompressor
are needed to see this picture.

Women in the Wings.. **Waiting for the Purple** **Three Day Residential Conference** **Monday 21st August 2006 (4pm) to** **Thursday 24th August 2006 (*4pm)**

Conference Speaker:

The Rev'd Canon Dr Jane Shaw,
*Dean of Divinity, Chaplain and Fellow of
New College, Oxford and an honorary
canon of Christ Church Cathedral Oxford
UK.*

Further information from:

MOWatch Incorporated
PO Box 31 Briar Hill Victoria 3088
or vgradon@ozemail.com.au

Gremlins at Work

Apologies from the Editor

The last issue of the Newsletter in April seemed to be beset with unintentional errors.

- (1) Apology to Archbishop Peter Jensen for misprinting his Christian name.
- (2) Tony Bagnall's name is, of course, spelt with two 'l's.
- (3) Some copies of the Newsletter had pages missing, and two copies of other pages. Sorry to those who received these.
- (4) The article on p.9 titled:

“**BEING OPIEN** – το βεινγ χηωνγεδV is proof that computer systems have rigid minds of their own and that editors should not be so trusting. The article was sent as an attachment in an e-mail that was copied direct into the Newsletter. The title should have been “**BEING OPEN - to being changed.**” What was printed was a fascinating trans-literation using some English and Greek upper & lower case letters! Perhaps computers are cleverer than we think.

Associate Professor Stuart Piggin's

address, delivered at the launch of Kevin Giles' book *“The Father and the Son: modern evangelicals reinvent the doctrine of the Trinity* will be on the website.

In his address Stuart Piggin covered four matters:

1. The point at issue in this debate;
2. The Historical context of the debate in Sydney;
3. Kevin Giles' contribution to the debate;
4. An appeal to our opponents in this debate.

In his conclusion, Stuart says:

“It is the importance of the subject matter, and the clarity and the originality of Kevin's findings, which guarantee that it will attract the attention of theologians and lesser mortals like us for a long time to come. It goes out with his prayers and ours that it will honour the holy Trinity, and, with the hope, that the dust will settle soon, and that we will all come to appreciate that the great point of differentiation in the Trinity is that it makes love possible. Love must have an object for it to be love, and we must maintain our relationships if we are to express the grace and love which are the sole evidences that the Kingdom is among us “.

James Newton (Tony) Bagnall

A reader of the Newsletter commented that the brief obituary on Tony Bagnall's life in the last Newsletter was incomplete. This is true. It did not adequately tell Tony's story. His life was lived to the full; his work was varied and his witness to the Gospel and his contribution to the Anglican Church, very extensive.

It is difficult to find one person who can now comprehensively tell his story. Different people met him at different times, when he was engaged in a particular aspect of his ministry in the Church. Following on from his 'retirement' (?) as Rector of St Peter's Cremorne, he went to the Diocese of Melbourne to work in Christian education. Then in 1982 the Archbishop of Brisbane and Primate, John Grindrod, appointed him as his Personal Assistant. He remained in that position for seven years until 1989, using his many skills for the good of the Church. Many people within the Australian Church owe a debt of gratitude to Tony for his wise pastoral counselling, teaching and preaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

The Archbishop of Canterbury addressed the General Synod of the Church of England on the Anglican Communion – 7th July 2006

Archbishop Rowan Williams started by saying:

“I am glad to have the opportunity of offering in these few minutes a very brief update on the current situation in the Anglican Communion, particularly in the light of the recent session of the Episcopal Church's General Convention.”

He concluded:

“I make no secret of the fact that my commitment and conviction are given to the ideal of the Church Catholic. I know that its embodiment in Anglicanism has always been debated, yet I believe that the vision of Catholic sacramental unity without centralisation or coercion is one that we have witnessed to at our best and still need to work at. That is why a concern for unity - for unity (I must repeat this yet again) as a means to living in the truth - is not about placing the survival of an institution above the demands of conscience. God forbid. It is a question of how we work out, faithfully, attentively, obediently what we need to do and say in order to remain within sight and sound of each other in the fellowship to which Christ has called us. It has never been easy and it isn't now. But it is the call that matters, and that sustains us together in the task.”

Archbishop of Canterbury - 'Challenge and hope' for the Anglican Communion

27th June 2006

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Rowan Williams has set out his thinking on the future of the Anglican Communion in the wake of the deliberations in the United States on the Windsor Report and the Anglican Communion at the 75th General Convention of The Episcopal Church (USA).

'The Challenge and Hope of Being an Anglican Today, A Reflection for the Bishops, Clergy and Faithful of the Anglican Communion', has been sent to Primates with a covering letter, published more widely and made available as audio on the internet. In it, Dr Williams says that the strength of the Anglican tradition has been in maintaining a balance between the absolute priority of the Bible, a catholic loyalty to the sacraments and a habit of cultural sensitivity and intellectual flexibility:

"To accept that each of these has a place in the church's life and that they need each other means that the enthusiasts for each aspect have to be prepared to live with certain tensions or even sacrifices. The only reason for being an Anglican is that this balance seems to you to be healthy for the Church Catholic"

Dr Williams acknowledges that the debate following the consecration of a practising gay bishop has posed challenges for the unity of the church. He stresses that the key issue now for the church is not about the human rights of homosexual people, but about how the church makes decisions in a responsible way.

"It is imperative to give the strongest support to the defence of homosexual people against violence, bigotry and legal disadvantage, to appreciate the role played in the life of the church by people of homosexual orientation."

The debate in the Anglican Communion had for many, he says, become much harder after the consecration in 2003 which could be seen to have pre-empted the outcome. The structures of the Communion had struggled to cope with the resulting effects:

". whatever the presenting issue, no member Church can make significant decisions unilaterally and still expect this to make no difference to how it is regarded in the fellowship; this would be uncomfortably like saying that every member could redefine the terms of belonging as and when it suited them. Some actions - and sacramental actions in particular - just do have the effect of putting a Church outside or even across the central stream of the life they have shared with other Churches."

Dr Williams says that the divisions run through as well as between the different Provinces of the Anglican Communion and this would make a solution difficult. **He favours the exploration of a formal Covenant**

agreement between the Provinces of the Anglican Communion as providing a possible way forward. Under such a scheme, member provinces that chose to would make a formal but voluntary commitment to each other.

"Those churches that were prepared to take this on as an expression of their responsibility to each other would limit their local freedoms for the sake of a wider witness: some might not be willing to do this. We could arrive at a situation where there were 'constituent' Churches in the Anglican Communion and other 'churches in association', which were bound by historic and perhaps personal links, fed from many of the same sources but not bound in a single and unrestricted sacramental communion and not sharing the same constitutional structures".

Different views within a province might mean that local churches had to consider what kind of relationship they wanted with each other. This, though, might lead to a more positive understanding of unity:

"It could mean the need for local Churches to work at ordered and mutually respectful separation between constituent and associated elements; but it could also mean a positive challenge for churches to work out what they believed to be involved in belonging in a global sacramental fellowship, a chance to rediscover a positive common obedience to the mystery of God's gift that was not a matter of coercion from above but that of 'waiting for each other' that St Paul commends to the Corinthians."

Dr Williams stresses that the matter cannot be resolved by his decree:

". the idea of an Archbishop of Canterbury resolving any of this by decree is misplaced, however tempting for many. The Archbishop of Canterbury presides and convenes in the Communion, and may . outline the theological framework in which a problem should be addressed; but he must always act collegially, with the bishops of his own local Church and with the primates and the other instruments of communion."

"That is why the process currently going forward of assessing our situation in the wake of the General Convention is a shared one. But it is nonetheless possible for the Churches of the Communion to decide that this is indeed the identity, the living tradition - and by God's grace, the gift - we want to share with the rest of the Christian world in the coming generation; more importantly still, that this is a valid and vital way of presenting the Good News of Jesus Christ to the world.

My hope is that the period ahead - of detailed response to the work of General Convention, exploration of new structures, and further refinement of the covenant model - will renew our positive appreciation of the possibilities of our heritage so that we can pursue our mission with deeper confidence and harmony."

www.anglicancommunion.org/