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## Chair's Column

### James' Jottings

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Dear friends,

**This Eastertide and always may you know the joy of Christ's resurrection!**

#### **Lent and Easter**

Some words are too strong for us and we shy away from them. Others are too deep, and when we think we understand them we have lost them.

The words "die" and "death" come into the first category. I notice that people don't "die", they "pass away" (for example). Yet Lent begins forcefully on Ash Wednesday: "Remember you are dust, and to dust you shall return". In other words, death is front and centre as the driving theme for Lent.

This is not maudlin, or sentimental. It is brutally realistic - we are all on a one-way journey to death.

We put this blunt reminder to Christian use on Ash Wednesday. It shatters any illusions we may cherish about the importance and durability of our lives. Second, when you know your death is very foreseeable - and you have the opportunity, the will, and the skills - you settle your accounts with people in the emotional sense as well as the business sense, and settle any accounts with God. Good Lenten stuff!

**But the third reason is the most profound.** I believe we cannot truly enter into the joy of Easter, or know the fullness of our baptism, until we enter with Christ into his death - which we can only do by entering, in a realistic and healthy way, into the grave solemnity of our own death. **Unless we deeply know our own death, we do not deeply enter into Christ's death, so the impact for us of his resurrection is correspondingly lessened.**

This is where "joy" comes in. It is one of those deep words; when we think we understand it we have lost it. Like water running downhill, we always cheapen it to "happiness". Our society promotes a tinsel joy, glittering with commercial activity (purchase/consume) or pseudo-spiritual activities such as relaxing and getting fit ("nourish your inner being").

Christ's authentic disciples can do better than that. This Eastertide and always may you know the joy of Christ's resurrection!

#### **The Anglican Communion**

"**Mother Church**" is having a tough time with much high-level sabre-rattling and posturing of the type seen at the most recent Primates' Meeting [Dar es Salaam].

I have found the Anglicans Online website comments on the current situation very helpful indeed, in providing another perspective and a deeper sense of proportion. Their address is [www.anglicansonline.org](http://www.anglicansonline.org), and their archives are kept [appropriately!] in their "morgue": <http://morgue.anglicansonline.org>

Through George Rawson's hymn 453 in *Together in Song*, I discovered the words of the Puritan John Robinson, Pastor to the Pilgrim Fathers. A first-hand account of his address to the departing emigrants in 1620 included the following:

"We were now, ere long, to part asunder; ... he charged us, before God and his blessed angels, to follow him no further than he followed Christ: and if God should reveal anything to us by any other instrument of his, to be as ready to receive it, as ever we were to receive any truth by his Ministry. For he was very confident the Lord had more truth and light yet to break forth out of his holy Word.

"He took occasion also miserably to bewail the state and condition of the Reformed Churches, who were come to a period [full stop] in religion; and would go no further than the Instruments of their Reformation. As, for example, the Lutherans: they could not be drawn to go beyond what Luther saw, for whatever part of God's will He had further imparted and revealed to Calvin, they will rather die than embrace it. 'And also,' saith he, 'you see the Calvinists. They stick where he left them, a misery much to be lamented.

"For though they were precious shining lights in their Times, yet God had not revealed his whole will to them; and were they now living,' saith he, 'they would be as ready and willing to embrace further light as that they had received.'"

(A fuller account and other resources can be found at [www.mlp.org/article.php?story=20041025123421160](http://www.mlp.org/article.php?story=20041025123421160))

**Is this what Sydney calls "liberalism"? Or is it gospel faithfulness? What does the Lord require of his disciples?**

#### **Prostate postscript**

Many thanks for prayers and other support during my treatment and recuperation. I am coming back to normal, in my own time. In February, the radiation oncology specialist gave me the best news possible under the circumstances: "It's all going according to plan". Thank you all once again! And just pray me through the next month or so ...

*James McPherson,  
Rector St Mark's Granville*

# THE BIBLE IS TRUE

SERMON BY CHRIS ALBANY  
St Mark's Church, South Hurstville

**The assertion that the Bible is true and is to be understood as the Word of God, or to put it another way God's words to us, with the implication that its contents are not the compilations of human authors but rather that God is the author, is a great stumbling block to many people.**

With such an assertion more often than not there is the demand that the Bible has to be accepted as true in its entirety - that there is no inconsistency in scripture because God does not contradict 'Godself'. **So people feel that they have to disengage their rational thinking when it comes to reading the Bible** and cannot use the same critical thinking and analysis that they might bring to any other text. Indeed it is probably not going too far to say that the insistence, by a considerable segment of the Christian Church, that this is how the Bible is to be approached is of itself the single greatest obstacle to people taking Christianity seriously.

Yes, they have a sense that their spirituality is important, have no problem with the concept of God and are interested in exploring issues of life and faith but faced with the demand: for example that they take the Genesis accounts of creation seriously (at face value - as science if you like), **or** with the insistence that some of Paul's words about the roles of men and women in family and church are to be taken as definitive for all time, **or** that the last word on human sexuality is contained in a literal reading of a small number of verses addressed to a specific context - **faced with such demands many people understandably turn away rejecting the Bible in its entirety. Seeing that as the only alternative.**

There is an ancient Chinese (I think) proverb which goes something like, "*When faced with a choice of 2 and only 2 mutually exclusive alternatives (either equally attractive or unattractive) then choose the 3rd option.*" **Which I guess is saying there are always many more options than we first think.**

Such is the case with our approach to and understanding of Scripture. There are other options than accepting it in a literal, fundamentalist way, or giving it little if any credence and value. **Modern Biblical scholarship over the past century or so has drawn on the same academic scholarship and insights as are used in other areas of historical and literary study.** It helps us understand much more clearly this set of writings, to which faith and tradition has given a special place - as the corpus (or body) of sacred texts. This has helped us see how these writings

have come to be in the form in which we know them now; an individual part often not the work of a single person but the compilation of

material from a variety of sources.

Sadly one of the things we clergy and preachers have been guilty of has been leaving such critical biblical scholarship behind in the Seminary. Often motivated by the best of reasons, not wanting to undermine people's preconceptions, fearing that to begin to question a reading of the Bible at face value will undermine people's faith. In so doing we have not only sold people short, but also the Gospel itself. We need to harness and use the best academic Biblical scholarship to enable us to read the Bible afresh. It can be akin to reading the Bible again for the first time as *Marcus Borg* suggests in the provocative title of one of his books. **"Reading the Bible Again for the First Time" has helped many people to put the Bible back into its proper place as the book we need to immerse ourselves in if we are to fully understand what it is to be human called into relationship with the God who reveals 'Godself' supremely in the person of Jesus the Christ.** To indeed help us see that the Bible is true, in that it points us to the truth about God and about humankind and how we are called to live and be in our relationships with each other, the earth and all of creation.

**Let me explain what I mean by saying the, "Bible is true" in two ways:**

**First, look at the Genesis accounts of creation at the very beginning of the Judeo-Christian scriptures.** Now I know that for some of you, perhaps most, what I am about to say is nothing new, but I hope you will bear with me, for the sake of those for whom it is new. **The first thing, which needs to be said, is that Genesis contains 2 different and at times contradictory accounts of creation.** The first, in Genesis chapter 1, splits creation into 7 days, well 6 really because on the 7th day God rested. Unless like Finn's mother in my most favourite of books "*Mr God this is Anna*" you see that rest itself is the greatest act of creation. (But that's another story and another essay!) This account begins with God and chaos (or formless void), into which God speaks and creates Light and Dark, Night and Day, and then successively sky and earth and seas and vegetation and then sun and moon and stars (begging the question of whence the earlier light and dark?) and then sea creatures and birds and then animals and finally humankind - "male and female God created them" Genesis 1 tells us.

**The second account is quite different.** After creating the earth and heavens, before there are any

plants or animals, God creates a male human being, from the dust of the earth and then plants a garden in Eden and then creates animals and birds and the fish of the sea, and then because none of these is found to be a worthy helpmate for the man, God makes the man fall into a deep sleep and fashions woman from one of his ribs.

**Now what is quite clear from all this is that we were never intended to take all this literally. This is not history, not science that is recorded here. If that had been the understanding of the ancient Hebrew compilers would they have given us two, such differing accounts?** I suspect not, but they had no problem in putting two different, conflicting accounts side by side. Each of these creation stories had grown out of their oral tradition, going back into the mists of time and pre-history. Each in their own way contains truth, as is the case with all good stories. They help convey understanding of what it is to be human, of what humankind is like and of our relationship to God and the earth and all of creation.

What the compilers of these stories are saying is: **"This is how we understand ourselves to be, and the way humankind has always been."** First and foremost there is the assertion that God is, and is the one who is the creative force behind this world, the source of all life and being. All that is, humans included, have been brought into being by and are dependent on this Creator God. There is the profound insight that human beings are made in the image of God and that what God has created is good, very good in fact. Also revealed in these creation accounts is the understanding that humankind has a special pre-eminent place in creation and is called to exercise stewardship over the earth. What is also revealed is that humankind is created to enjoy intimacy with God, an intimacy that is broken by disobedience. Not accepting one's 'creatureliness', but wanting to usurp the place of God. Broken also by a failure to accept responsibility, but rather pass the buck and put the blame elsewhere. Sound familiar? There is great truth in all this. But if we were to say to the writers of Genesis, *"You mean God created everything in 7 days? and which came first humans or animals? You seem to be having a bet both ways!"* They would laugh at us and say *"Wrong question. These stories are not about that kind of fact or truth."* We don't and can't know the answers to those questions and it doesn't matter.

All this means that we don't have to see science and religion as being in competition with each other. It is possible to accept the scientific understanding of the origins and development of life - Big Bang theory and evolution etc and also see that there is a creative entity (that we call God) behind it all. *Albert Einstein* helpfully says, **"Religion without science is blind. Science without religion is lame."** In other words they need and complement each other.

I've already alluded to the 2nd example of the way in which the Bible is true. It is the way in which the

story or message of the scriptures resonates within us, because it addresses us and our experience of what it is to be human. It is not just that here is The Story of God and God's people, but here we find our own story. We find ourselves described, addressed, and challenged. So the same passage of scripture may speak to each of us differently, or in a different way at different times depending on what is happening in our life. In that sense it comes to us as if it is a personal word, addressed to us specifically - a word from God, as if God is confronting us as we are brought face to face with ourselves - as *The Story* becomes our story. I'm sure that this is what the writer to the Hebrews was alluding to when he/she says, **"The word of God is living and active, sharper than any two edged sword."**

All of this I hope helps us to put the Bible into its rightful place. We devalue it if we dismiss it because we can't take it literally; that's like throwing the baby out with the bathwater. But we also devalue it if we say it all has to be taken at face value; that one has to accept unquestioningly the truth of *'the plain reading of the text'* as some put it. That too is to undersell the value and significance of the Bible. It can withstand much more rigorous analysis and scrutiny than that. It's kind of like replacing the baby with the bathwater. **So if you were to ask me, "is the Bible true?" I'd say, "Wrong question." The way I prefer to put it is to say the Bible contains truth.** It points us to and confronts us with the truth about God - the truth about ourselves and how we are to live and be in relation to God, with each other and all of creation. As such The Bible is immensely valuable and important and we need to read it uncommonly often.

**ANGLICANS TOGETHER  
ANNUAL GENERAL  
MEETING  
of financial members of  
ANGLICANS TOGETHER INC.  
Saturday, 25<sup>th</sup> August, 2007  
St James' Church Hall,  
Philip Street, Sydney  
2.00 pm to 4.00 pm.**

**ANGLICANS TOGETHER  
DINNER  
Friday 19th October, 2007  
St Albans Parish Centre, Epping**

## A CALL FOR OPENNESS AND INCLUSIVENESS WITHIN THE SYDNEY DIOCESE

*The Revd Dr Keith Mascord*, while Senior Assistant Minister in South Sydney Parish (St Saviour's Redfern and St James' Beaconsfield) in November last year, wrote to the Archbishop and Standing Committee of the Diocese laying out concerns that had arisen in that parish about the process in the appointment of a new Rector. The previous Rector, *Reverend John McIntyre*, had left Sydney to become Bishop of Gippsland.

The 'Open Letter' was widely circulated by email and posted on the internet, drawing over 200 responses in support for the issues he raised.

Keith reported that, *"Not one of these letters has questioned the need for culture change. Almost all of them warmly support the call for a more loving, humble and open Diocese. Many have commended me for my courage."*

Standing Committee has appointed a sub-committee of 4 to meet with Keith. He sought permission from each person who responded, to allow him to pass on responses to an Advisory Panel of 5, who would *"reflect on your letters and to advise me. They bring a wide range of skills, experience and perspective. They are people of integrity and will respect the confidence you put in them."*

The concerns expressed by *Mascord* would come as no surprise to most Parish Nominators trying to get a new Rector, or Rectors trying to find suitable Assistant Ministers. The Diocesan selection system, controlled by the Presentation Board, has been flawed for years, but it has reached crisis dimensions.

The significantly new thing about *Dr Mascord's* initiative is that he had been a Lecturer at Moore Theological College from 1992-2002. He understands the Diocese from within when he says:

*"I would like to see a more gracious and loving Diocese, within which all people are treated with tender love and respect. I would also, secondly, like to see a more humble Diocese where we all readily acknowledge that we can and must learn from each other. And, finally, I would like to see a Diocese where lively and respectful debate is carried out on the range of issues that face us as a church coming into this 21<sup>st</sup> century; where other points of view are valued (even when we disagree with them), because they help to sharpen our own thinking – and also because we might learn something from them!"*

*That is the sort of Diocese I would like to see, but sadly that is not what I am seeing emerge. If anything, the trend is in the opposite direction. ... There is a disturbing trend towards greater control over and censorship of thought.*

*Mascord* is the latest in a long history of lay people and clergy who have appreciated the strengths and vitality of this Diocese of Sydney, but also sought changes.

For what it is worth, my own observation after 45 years as a member of the Diocese, usually the living out of the Gospel here (the practice) has often been more convincing than the theology that is sometimes spouted. We have been used by God, e.g. in pastoral care by parishes and Anglicare; missionary enterprise here and overseas; pioneering of Anglican Retirement Villages; chaplaincies & provision for people with special needs or at risk; well-planned worship, and contributions to education, literature, art, music and every area of life.

The Diocese has achieved much in spite of the legalism and deliberate attempts over the last 7 decades, by a certain element, to weed out, disempower and sideline those who differ from them in the interpretation of Scripture or the way we minister and worship in parishes and reach out in mission and evangelism.

**There have been repeated stirrings, calls for 'openness' and inclusiveness: eg The Memorialists (1938), the Junior Clerical Society (till late 1960s), the Open Synod Group (1970-80s), Anglican Parishes Network (from Nov 1987 - ) ; Anglicans Together (1992 - ), the "Blue Ticket" (1993).**

Human institutions easily become self-serving and the setting for destructive "power games". That is just as true of Church institutions. They do not usually welcome criticism or suggestions for a different way of thinking or operating. Unfortunately people often behave in an Institution in a way they would not at home on a one-to-one meeting.

Jesus found that when he called the people of his day to hear again the inner meaning of 'the law and the prophets' (Matth.5:17). **The only people Jesus condemned were the religious people who thought they 'had the truth' all tied up in their little package. As Jesus warned, religious institutions have a habit of persecuting the prophets.**

We pray for *Keith Mascord* as he braves the wrath and pressures that arise if one dissents from "alma mater". Sometimes in the dark night I wonder if those of us who continue to remain within the "Diocese of Sydney" are masochists.

**The Anglican Church, because of its valuing of Scripture, its grounding in history going back to the Early Church, its encouragement of sound learning and the exercise of individual conscience, has something to offer the world which is NOT yet generally articulated by the Roman Catholic, the Orthodox, the Protestant or Pentecostal churches. We cannot give up!**

*Clive H Norton, Anglican Priest*  
[chnorton@bigpond.com](mailto:chnorton@bigpond.com)

## REVIEW: *Quadrant Journal* article

The March issue of *Quadrant* included a long article by **John Russell** (a retired writer and broadcaster) “**The Puritan Anglicans of Sydney**”. His is a welcome contribution to present debates, which members of **Anglicans Together** should certainly read. The article does not cover, however, the recent ‘Open Letter’ sent to the Diocese by the *Reverend Dr Keith Mascord*. That Letter, sadly has not yet been published in *Southern Cross*. Further, among some leaders in our Diocese, any criticism, such as that in *John Russell’s* article or expressed graciously by *Keith Mascord*, is unwelcome. That is not a healthy sign.

Some small criticisms could be made. The Australian link with the Evangelical movement began, not with *Marsden* but, with *Richard Johnson* (and *John Newton*). *Cranmer’s* flaws (and those of *Thomas More*) are rightly noted but *Russell’s* short assessment of *Cranmer* is of course less balanced than *Diarmuid MacCulloch’s* magisterial biography, *Thomas CRANMER*.

The article is focused on today’s crisis and does not deal, for example, with the great men and women of Sydney’s past – and present. It is hoped that *Quadrant* readers will know that the present dominant ‘Puritan Anglicans’ do not represent all Evangelical Anglicans in Sydney, let alone those of other traditions. It might have been made clear that Sydney, until the 50s, had a significant number of moderate clergy (about one third of the total), and also that ‘Irish Anglican Protestantism’ in the quite impressive Church of Ireland of today is very different to that formerly strong, but not universal *element* in it which, *John Russell* reminds us, so influenced Sydney Diocese in the past.

*John R. Bunyan*

## ORANGE - A WARNING!

### GREEN - TO GO

An orange light, or even red, for *John Shelby Spong’s* latest, *Jesus for the Non Religious* (HarperCollins, 2007). The bishop, in person always fascinating to hear, in this book repeats much that he has said before and again tends to be as one-eyed as his most conservative opponents. He takes to an extreme *Michael Goulder’s* insights into how some Gospel stories were “discovered” in the Jewish Scriptures, and his dogmatically negative assessment of much in the Gospels will help no-one. He is aware of some modern Jewish studies of Jesus (notably those of *Geza Vermes* and the contributors to “*Jesus through Jewish Eyes*” edited by *Beatrice Bruteau*) but does not really engage with them nor (at all) with other fresh, much more positive and *truly* scholarly work in the field, eg by *Richard Baulkham*, *Ben Witherington*, *Tom Wright*, and our own *John Painter*.

For anyone wanting a good account of liberal Christianity, far better than *Spong’s* book is *Tomorrow’s Faith: A new framework of Christian belief* by radical Roman Catholic priest, *Adrian B. Smith* (O Books, 2005). It is a simple, clearly printed, well-laid out, with very short chapters.

### Many additions to the Colenso Library worth reading:

With one book only to choose, the green light would be for ‘*Shaping the Good Society in Australia*’, papers read at the first Australia’s Christian Heritage National Forum at Parliament House, Canberra in 2006 (*ACHNF, Macquarie*

*Centre*). It is worth the price (\$29.95) - just for the stories of some little known Australian Christians told by the editor, *Stuart Piggin*. Other contributors include *Anne Robinson*, *Stephen Judd*, *Keith Mason* and *Kevin Rudd*.

*John Bunyan*

[prayerbookfellowship.blogspot.com](http://prayerbookfellowship.blogspot.com)

## A film not to miss!

### ‘AS IT IS IN HEAVEN’

I found this 2-hour film enthralling. It is beautifully shot in a remote part of northern Sweden. *Daniel Dareus*, a successful international conductor at the top of his profession, experiences a physical and emotional breakdown. He makes an abrupt “sea-change” and returns alone to his childhood village. There his life and the lives of others go through upheavals – often draining, revealing and painful. Browse the internet for more! The film has been in Sydney cinemas for 3 months and “last days” are flagged. Get to see it if you can!

This film is not “religious” in the narrow traditional sense. But neither was Jesus from my reading of the Gospels! At a deep level, the film’s story is about “the Spirit of truth” drawing people out of the lies and deceits, their jealousies and angers, as individuals begin to find their “own voice” and relate to others in a new way. It calls to mind what Jesus was on about in those “Last Discourses” we read in John’s Gospel, chapters 14-17.

Sweden is often dismissed as one of the most secular and non-religious countries in the world, because few people “go to church”. I think that is a simplistic and false judgement. This film emerges from Sweden’s long and deep connection with the teachings of Jesus Christ through western Catholicism and then through Lutheranism (since the 16<sup>th</sup> century)..

The in-house monthly of the Diocese of Sydney “*Southern Cross*” for March 2007 carried a note: “*Movie Ministry - The average Australian attends church less than once a year yet attends the cinema nearly eight times a year. Does this change the way you think about outreach?*” “Different groups within the church diverge on how to “do outreach”.

In my opinion, “*As it is in Heaven*” (despite its title, which I found off-putting) brings people in touch with some of the central teachings of Jesus. It inspires and uplifts. As the story unfolds, it challenges the obsession and fear of sexuality that has distorted the Christian Church, at least since the 7<sup>th</sup> century when the western Church imposed compulsory celibacy on clergy. Protestantism allowed clergy to marry, but accentuated sexuality as the prime arena for “sin”!

The conductor-cum-choirmaster, *Daniel Dareus*, is not a religious person. But through him a “Christ Event” takes place. He enables and enriches others. In *Daniel’s* unique and idiosyncratic approach, we see God at work. It is an encouragement to “go and do likewise”.

*Clive H Norton, Anglican Priest*  
[chnorton@bigpond.com](mailto:chnorton@bigpond.com)

### Newsletter published by “Anglicans Together”

Opinions expressed are those of the contributors.  
Editor: Moya Holle, PO Box 429 Glebe NSW 2037

# ARGUING IT OUT IN THE ANGLICAN COMMUNION

BRUCE KAYE

*Editor, Journal of Anglican Studies*

**T**he issues now facing the Anglican Communion have their origins buried deep in history. When Pope Gregory VII wrote to William I of England in 1080 asking for obedience and fealty William replied; "I have not consented to pay fealty, nor will I now, because I never promised it, nor do I find that my predecessors ever paid it to your predecessors." The Archbishop, *Lanfranc*, would not yield to the Pope's demand for fealty either.

The Pope's demand was an unacceptable innovation. Many connections were kept but *Henry VIII* removed the support and residual legal connections.

Anglicans have in turn applied this principle to the Anglican Communion. The Anglican Communion is thus a fellowship of autonomous inter-dependent churches.

And that is the problem. When you have a really serious disagreement there is no overarching jurisdictional power to rule on it. We just have to argue it out, and that takes time and patience.

*The Anglican Communion is a fellowship of autonomous inter-dependent churches. And that is the problem.*

## Two Big Issues

**The ordination of women came up first in the USA and generally spread around the Communion.** The response was to set up a special commission to work out pastoral guidelines. This was the *Eames Commission*, so named after its chairman. The change on this point is still going on around the world, but in general has not been the cause of major falling out between churches, though there has been a lot of argument within churches.

**The recognition of homosexuality in the public life of the church has arisen in two ways; the ordination of homosexual people and the authorising of rites of blessing for homosexual relationships.** It is important to notice that the issue becomes important when it involves institutional action. In this case ordination and authorising liturgies of the church.

**From 1960 to 1977 the General Convention of ECUSA (now called The Episcopal Church TEC) had refused to move on the subject.** In 1977 the bishop of New York ordained a woman who openly acknowledged her homosexual orientation and in 1989 the *Bishop Jack Spong* ordained a man in an open homosexual relationship. Still the **General Convention** did not change. Then in 1996 a retired bishop, *Walter Righter* was acquitted in a church court of teaching a doctrine contrary to that of the church by ordaining a homosexual man. The **General Convention** did not need to do anything. As with the

ordination of women the change was effected outside the General Convention.

All this created a heated debate at the **1998 Lambeth Conference** and agreement on Resolution 1.10, which essentially restated the traditional view.

In 2002 *Michael Ingham*, bishop of New Westminster in Canada announced he would, with the diocesan synod's agreement, authorise rites of blessing for same sex relationships. The Primates at their meeting in May 2003 said unanimously that they could not approve of such a thing. Michael Ingham did it the very next day.

In June 2003 an openly gay man, *Gene Robinson*, was nominated as bishop of New Hampshire. His election was confirmed by the **General Convention**. In October the Primates had an emergency meeting and declared that if his consecration went ahead the fabric of the Communion would be torn. He was consecrated in November 2003.

In October the Archbishop of Canterbury established the **Lambeth Commission** to be chaired by *Robin Eames* (who had chaired the women bishops' commission). *Robin Eames* also chaired the Doctrine Commission which produced the **Virginia Report which argued for unity in the Communion on the basis of a notion of *koinonia*, that is to say fellowship.**

The **Lambeth Commission** produced the *Windsor Report* in September 2004. The following February the Primates meeting asked the ACC to hear a presentation from Canada and the USA at its next meeting. They also declined a greater role for the Archbishop of Canterbury, almost certainly on his initiative. A covenant should be developed to provide a framework for the Communion.

## **The Windsor Requests were:**

1. The Episcopal Church (USA) be invited to express its regret that the proper constraints of the bonds of affection were breached in the events surrounding the election and consecration of a bishop for the See of New Hampshire, and for the consequences which followed.
2. The Episcopal Church (USA) be invited to effect a moratorium on the election and consent to the consecration of any candidate to the episcopate who is living in a same gender union until some new consensus in the Anglican Communion emerges
3. A moratorium on all such public Rites, and recommend that bishops who have authorised such rites in the United States and Canada be

invited to express regret that the proper constraints of the bonds of affection were breached by such authorisation.

4. Those bishops who believe it is their conscientious duty to intervene in provinces, dioceses and parishes other than their own:
  - a. " to express regret for the consequences of their actions
  - b. " to affirm their desire to remain in the Communion, and
  - c. " to effect a moratorium on any further interventions.
5. These archbishops and bishops to seek an accommodation with the bishops of the dioceses whose parishes they have taken into their own care.

**Nigeria had established 'A Convocation of Anglicans' in North America and the Anglican Mission in America had consecrated missionary bishops for America.**

<http://www.canaconvocation.org/>

**February 2007 at the Primates' Meeting progress on these points was mixed:**

The General Convention in 2006 went some way to meeting these requests, but in the view of the Primates at their recent meeting in Tanzania, not far enough on three points; There is little control attempted on local initiatives to establish rites for blessing same sex relationships, There is no secure assurance about the moratorium on consecrating homosexuals as bishops, and there is a problem that a number of bishops cannot accept the ministry of the Presiding Bishop, *Katharine Jefferts Schori*.

There continue to be episcopal interventions from outside the USA.

**The Covenant would be ready for discussion at the Lambeth Conference in July 2008.**

The Primates went further and moved to establish a Pastoral Council jointly with the Presiding Bishop of TEC to provide pastoral oversight for dissenting dioceses and parishes in the US and to monitor movement towards the *Windsor* requirements. **They also asked for a moratorium on interventions until there is a covenant in place.**

In the broad scope of Anglican history this is an astonishing intervention in the affairs of a province. Whether what is asked for is in any degree possible is very questionable. What will help to make it possible for TEC is the manifest threat of division and the breaking up of the American church.

**Where Did All This Come From ?**

**The nature of Anglican theology and faith is committed to living out the faith in the terms of the circumstances in which people are located.** This enculturation principle, or living faithfully. applies to

the life of the church community. Thus when American Anglicans seek to be faithful in a culture which is determinedly committed to individual human rights it needs to relate to that culture effectively. The homosexual issue came into TEC via the social justice commitments of the church in the 1960s. The problem is that the response to different contexts around the world will very likely create different responses. The model thus makes it very difficult to sustain an in principle agreement in details between Anglican Churches around the world.

Mostly that does not matter, but this one does because for many this is a matter of great and general importance. So the shape of the world- wide connections is tested.

**There are a lot of other things at work: *Power*** whether it be *money* (US) *history* (Canterbury) or *numbers* (Nigeria), post colonial memory, the ambition of "point of view" groupings. Some argue that it is about the authority of the Bible. I don't think this holds up. **Most of the key players accept the authority of the Bible as set out in the Thirty Nine articles, which of course is an implicit rejection of the *sola scriptura* doctrine, which has never found its way into Anglican formularies.** It is in part about interpretation of the bible, but more about the way in which we think the Bible exercises its supreme authority in the church. It is certainly about how far we want to be part of the wider catholicity of the Anglican community. For the sake of our faithfulness we can't afford not to be.

**What is clear in all this is that we are in for a period of argument.** It would be good if congregations could be informed about the terms of this argument in order to provide some feedback to synod representatives in case the diocesan synod is invited to consider aspects of these wider issues.

**CLAIM THIS DATE!**

***The Rt. Rev'd Professor Stephen Sykes,***

Former Bishop of Ely, now  
Chairman of the Anglican Communion's  
Inter-Anglican Theological and Doctrinal  
Commission,

will address a Meeting sponsored by  
**Anglicans Together**

**"The Future of Anglicanism"**

**6 pm Monday 28 May**

St James' Church, King Street,  
Sydney

Donation requested towards costs

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**INAUGURATION OF THE MOST REVEREND *KATHARINE JEFFERTS SCHORI*  
TWENTY-SIXTH PRESIDING BISHOP OF THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH, USA.  
NATIONAL CATHEDRAL, WASHINGTON DC**

*JOHN BEER \**

When planning a holiday for November last year, I discovered my visit to USA would coincide with the **Inauguration on 4th November of the newly elected Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church, *Katharine Jefferts Schori***, Bishop of Nevada. Internet admission tickets were difficult to obtain, but as luck would have it, I was invited by *Bishop Richard Hurford* of Bathurst, to represent him. He is a friend of *Bishop Katharine* whom he had met during her visit to Australia. Other Australians present among the 3000 at this service were *Archdeacon Kay Goldsworthy* (Perth) and *Bishop Garry Weatherill* (Willochra).

Having worked in the Episcopal Church in Berkeley, California in 1984, I have followed the fortunes of this part of the Anglican Communion with great interest. **It is the smallest of the Christian denominations in USA, with less than five per cent of Americans as members, yet it has a fairly high profile.** The late *President Gerald Ford* was a member, as is *Madeleine Albright* whom I saw stepping into a taxi after the Inauguration Service. **In spite of its up-market image, the Episcopal Church is deeply involved in social work by way of soup kitchens and ministries to AIDS sufferers in cities such as New York, Chicago and San Francisco.**

The Church is currently involved in a major crisis over matters of sexuality with threats that it may cease to be part of the Anglican Communion. **However, it is a Church with a great tradition of independence and resilience. The first American bishop, *Samuel Seabury* refused to take an oath of allegiance to the King of England, which meant that the bishops in England would not consecrate him with the result that he received his episcopal orders from the Scottish Episcopal Church at Aberdeen.**

The inauguration of *Bishop Schori* in November was an equally historic day for the American church as it received its first female Presiding Bishop. As a former academic and oceanographer, *Bishop Katharine* had endeared herself to the people of her vast and remote Diocese of Nevada, where as a qualified pilot she traveled over much of it by plane.

The evening before the Inauguration, a dinner was held in *Bishop Katharine's* honour at an Episcopal School in Washington. *Kay Goldsworthy* and I were present and delighted to meet her.

**The service was magnificent. Much preparation had gone into this historic day.** The National Cathedral was full to capacity. Although I arrived at 10.30 (the doors opened at 9) I was able to find a seat with an

excellent view, a few seats away from the Font in the centre of the building. This was the focus for the renewal of baptismal vows by all present. Six young women dressed in white, holding large Greek urns walked around the font and poured water into it. We were all sprinkled with holy water by *Frank Griswold* (*Bishop Schori's* predecessor) and several other bishops.

There was much activity before the service began. A group of about 40 black Gospel Singers sang and danced in front of the High Altar, while servers (male and female) walked up and down the aisle waving flags and banners. The highly charged atmosphere was reminiscent of an AFL Grand Final! When at last *Bishop Katharine* arrived at the west door the congregation erupted in loud cheering, stamping and clapping which continued as the long procession of bishops and dignitaries proceeded down the main aisle. The 200 bishops, in their red robes, processed down the side aisles, and then up the centre towards the back as they took their reserved seats.

The service began with the hymn '*Christ is made the sure foundation*'. Symbols of the Good News of Christ were given to the bishop - Gospel Book, Water, Bread and Wine, Oil and the Primatial Staff and then the Liturgy proceeded. The Gospel reading was from *Luke chapter 4* - the story of *Jesus as the fulfilment of Isaiah's prophecy*. Jesus, filled with the Spirit' was teaching in the synagogue and quoting the famous words from Isaiah about the spirit of the Lord anointing him to bring good news to the poor.

**The inauguration of the new Presiding Bishop has come at a time when the Episcopal Church is facing a major crisis.** This has been created by the appointment of the openly gay *Bishop Gene Robinson* of New Hampshire (a divorcee with a same sex partner) and the church's approval of the Episcopal Church's blessing of same-sex unions.

At the Primate's Meeting held in Tanzania at the end of February 2007, the leaders of the Anglican Communion's 38 provinces were preoccupied with this issue. An atmosphere of crisis prevailed and there was much discussion of a possible schism. The Primates issued a communiqué requesting the Presiding Bishop to direct the American bishops to enact a moratorium on gay bishops and also to make it clear that clergy in homosexual relationships cannot become bishops.

**The whole question is in fact a power struggle within the American Church between conservatives and liberals.** A writer in the International Catholic

journal *The Tablet* noted that the world leaders of Anglicanism were spending their time discussing what middle-aged American Christians get up to in bed rather than issues of poverty, disease and hunger.

The conservative faction is led by *Archbishop Akinola* of Nigeria, who wears full tribal costume and reigns as a sovereign prince, with ambitions of his own and a powerful cultural and religious, oft-stated disdain for homosexuals. At the Primate's meeting, the conservatives wanted to impose sanctions against the Episcopalians regarding gay blessings and bishops, but they did not get them.

**Instead, the Primates produced a statement placing unprecedented strictures on the Episcopalians, who have seven months to comply if they are to be invited to next year's Lambeth Conference.** *'So hurried was the cobbling together of their document that it is not clear whether such mechanisms as a primatial vicar to oversee conservative diocese in parallel to Bishop Jefferts Schori's oversight of liberal ones can be made to work'* commented *William Franklin* in *The Tablet*. *'It's an experiment'*, said **Archbishop Rowan Williams**, *'pray for it'*. The fear was that unless the Primates could produce a united statement, there was a risk that the Anglican Communion would be depicted as falling apart.

Ever since their first bishop received his episcopal orders from Scotland at the time of the Revolution in the eighteenth century the Episcopal Church has always taken an independent line and many of its members have little or no interest in being part of the Anglican Communion, which is, after all, a product of nineteenth century imperialism and missionary expansion. This point was made to me by one of their clergy I met in Washington. Episcopalians resent the interference of outsiders in their affairs. *The Bishop of Delaware* told me that the American bishops had been generally ignored by the English bishops at the last Lambeth Conference. There he met up with, and became a friend of, *Archbishop Watson* of Melbourne whom he visited last year. The Episcopal Church draws many members from other Christian churches. They have been nurtured on a diet of American fundamentalist theology and in later life they are looking for something with more depth and sacramental emphasis.

**The Tanzania communiqué is a classical Anglican compromise**, which *Archbishop Rowan Williams* describes as 'an interim solution that certainly falls short of resolving all disputes'. In her response to the Primate's Tanzania Communiqué, *Bishop Jefferts Schori* said: *'The Episcopal Church has in recent years been asked to consider the wider body of the Anglican Communion and its needs. Our own Church has in recent years tended to focus on the suffering of one portion of the body, particularly those who feel that justice demands the full recognition and celebration of the gifts of gay and lesbian Christians. That focus had been seen in some other parts of the global Church as*

*inappropriate, especially as it has been felt to be a dismissal of traditional understandings of sexual morality. Both parties hold positions that can be defended by appeal to our Anglican sources of authority - scripture, tradition and reason - but each finds it very difficult to understand and embrace the other....Each is being asked to forbear for a season. The word of hope is that, in God, all things are possible, and that fasting is not a permanent condition of a Christian people, nor a normative one. God's dream is of all people gathered at a feast, and we enter Lent looking toward that Easter feast and the new life that will, in God's good time, be proclaimed'.*

*Honorary Assistant Priest, St James Church, Sydney*

## THE ISSUE OF WOMEN PRIESTS IN SYDNEY IS STILL ALIVE!

The latter part of last year was busy for *MOW Sydney*. In June, our flagging spirits were lifted as we heard of the election of *Katharine Jefferts Schori* as Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church of U.S.A.

At this stage we were busy helping to organise the first **National MOWatch Conference** held for some years, in Melbourne.

This conference in August was a great time of sharing, where women priests from all over Australia met and where those of us not ordained had the pleasure of meeting them and each other. The many excellent speakers stimulated discussion, which was lively and continuous. In particular, *Dr Canon Jane Shaw*, our international speaker was very approachable.

By mid October however, it seemed we were on another planet—several members of *MOW Sydney* were sitting in the visitor's gallery at Sydney Synod. The debate about **whether or not to debate the issue of women's ordination**, initiated by *the Reverend Chris Albany*, ran for at least an hour. The reasons given for not even being prepared to debate the issue seemed lame. Some months on, as I reflect on this, I still remember one statement. *Reverend Jacinth Myles* reminded the Archbishop that on another matter he had recommended that the scripture be read and its meaning be decided by one's own conscience. When the vote was taken the results were most definitely not in favour of any further discussion of women's ordination to the priesthood. It seemed to us that those in Synod, particularly the Clergy, were under some pressure to follow "the party line" on this issue.

This result does not allow for a small but significant minority of us in the diocese who are in favour of the ordination of women to the priesthood to benefit from the ministry of women priests. Dozens of capable women have left Sydney over the years and are now priests in other parts of Australia. We feel this loss greatly and it seems particularly cruel as more dioceses worldwide allow women priests and bishops.

**This year Reverend Chris Albany will put a motion before Synod, asking the Archbishop to explore ways in which the differing views about women's leadership in the church can be creatively lived out in the life and practice of the Diocese of Sydney.**

# **‘REFRESHED AND ENRICHED’**

## **Long Service Leave – Mission to Seafarers**

PHILIP BRADFORD, RECTOR, PARISH OF HUNTER’S HILL

In October and November last year, Rosemary and I had the privilege of taking some Long Service Leave, which was mainly spent in the United Kingdom, with a week in Paris and a few days in Heidelberg, Germany. Apart from the usual ‘rest and recreation’, **the main reason for going overseas was to attend the World Conference of *The Mission to Seafarers* and to spend time with our daughter, Clare in London.**

My connection with the Mission to Seafarers has been as Chairman of the MTS, Sydney Board of Directors, (my part time unpaid job). **The World Conference was held at the Hayes Conference Centre in Swanwick, Derbyshire (in the peak district).** It brought together nearly two hundred delegates from around the world - Chaplains, Managers, Board Members and partners. **2006 marked the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the Mission in England.** It now has over 300 Centres in ports world wide - **more than 20 of which are in Australia.** There was a good number of Australian representatives from 7 different ports.

For those unfamiliar with its work, *The Mission to Seafarers* is a Mission of the Anglican Church, committed to promoting the ‘spiritual, moral, and physical well being of seafarers’ who come to our shores every day of the year.

Seafarers are vital to the importation of so much of what we use every day. **While you are reading this there are one and a half million seafarers plying the oceans.** Some of them are in ships of dubious safety. On average two ships are lost at sea every week. Even with modern technology seafaring remains a dangerous occupation. In the last twenty years shipping has changed enormously: ‘containerisation’ has made cargo handling far more efficient so seafarers are often in port only a few hours and because of drastic new security procedures in some ports may not get on shore at all. Crew sizes have reduced significantly - even a large container ship will have a crew of no more than twenty. The industry is very competitive. **Sailors from ‘developing’ countries are sometimes exploited by unscrupulous ship owners, who will threaten them with dismissal if they complain about conditions, or even the seaworthiness of the vessel.**

**In Sydney, our MTS chaplains try to visit every ship in harbour every day.** A bus is provided which carries sailors into the Mission Centre (*Flying Angel House*) in Sussex Street and takes them back to their vessel at night. The Centre has a small shop, phones and phone cards allowing seafarers to ring home in privacy or check emails. The Centre has games, books,

magazines, internet and several television channels and Centre staff direct seafarers to places of interest in the city should they have the time to visit them. A chaplain is always on duty to talk to seafarers and listen to their concerns and often, when appropriate, spiritual counsel. The Centre has a large supply of Bibles in a variety of languages and these are popular. **Not every MTS Centre operates in the same way but Sydney would be fairly typical in that ship visiting and providing transport are usually the core activities.** (For information about MTS, contact the Principal Chaplain, the Reverend Ian Porter - 9264 9900)

The theme of the World conference was ‘Sea Change for Hope’. The aim was to reflect on the huge changes in the shipping industry and to look at creative ways of adapting to them, so that the Mission’s role remains effective.

*The Mission to Seafarers is a Mission of the Anglican Church, committed to promoting the ‘spiritual, moral, and physical well being of seafarers’*

For Rosemary and I, probably the most enjoyable part of the conference was to meet such a cross section of people working in different ports but all committed to the same task – the spiritual and practical welfare of seafarers. Some of them had very interesting stories to tell of how they were adapting to change.

**We were impressed with a husband and wife team, Stephen Miller and Catherine Graham working in Dubai with the International Seafarers centre. Every year over 6,500 ships, carrying a host of supplies and over 140,000 seafarers anchor in the east coast waters of the Emirates. Most of the seafarers remain on board their ships off Fujairah, unable to come ashore with often only basic on-board facilities.**

To meet the needs of these sailors, Stephen and Catherine had a vision of building a Seafarers Support Boat, equipped to offer them ‘a home away from home. Their vision caught the imagination of local and international supporters, including representatives of government and industry, as well as the MTS. Work on the boat commenced in April 2006. It was completed and launched in February this year for sea trials. It is named ‘*Flying Angel*’, and is being equipped with email and telephone facilities so seafarers can contact home; a medical clinic with a paramedic on board; a chaplain to listen to problems and offer support; book and DVD libraries - in short *a floating ‘Flying Angel House’.*

Another part of the Conference we thoroughly enjoyed were the early morning Eucharists where we gathered as a community sharing a different liturgical

setting each day - *the Church of the Province of South Africa, the Nippon Sei Ko Kai, the Anglican Church of Canada and the Church of England*. Our worship leader was a very talented musician, *Geoff Weaver* who taught us some lovely communion responses and led us in singing a range of other music, from familiar hymns to songs from Taize and Iona. It was one of the few conferences I've been to where I was sorry when it was over.

Spending nearly six weeks overseas also gave us the opportunity of experiencing a variety of different church services. As we are often being given doom and gloom stories in 'Southern Cross' about the dire state of the English Church, I thought it might be of interest to share our experience of two London Churches: *St. John's Waterloo and Holy Trinity Brompton*. *St. John's Church* stands across the road from the entrance to Waterloo Station: it was badly damaged in the blitz and rebuilt after the war. It is inner city London surrounded by a number of large housing estates. We attended the 10am family Eucharist on two Sundays and found a very diverse congregation including older people who had lived in the area all their lives; families from the local estates reflecting the cultural diversity of modern London and young professional couples who had only recently moved into the area. The service was very similar to our APBA 2<sup>nd</sup> Order Holy Communion service; hymns were a mixture of traditional and contemporary accompanied by an excellent organist. The children participated by joining us at Communion then, after Communion, displaying what they had done in Sunday School. They also led the congregation in singing the recessional hymn with a variety of musical instruments. Following church there was morning tea and opportunity to discuss the sermon. We felt very much at home and were warmly welcomed. We were impressed with the number of activities arranged during the week to meet the needs of various groups in the local community.

**Holy Trinity Brompton** is in a very fashionable part of London, next door to the *Brompton Oratory*. It has become famous internationally as the church where Alpha courses originated and the present Rector, *Nicky Gumbel* is the presenter on the Alpha videos and DVD's which have been seen by millions of people worldwide. We had a personal interest in attending a Service there because, at the time, our daughter was working in their bookshop and had told us a great deal about it.

**HTB as they like to be known has five services every Sunday: an 8am traditional BCP Holy Communion Service, two informal Family Services at 9.30 & 11am plus two Evening Services at 5 & 7pm. The informal Services each have a monthly Holy Communion Service. All Services are very well attended.** We attended 5pm Services and the congregations would have been 250+. At the informal Services the music is contemporary, led by a band and

the Service is described as including worship, teaching and ministry.

**Just like a typical Sydney Anglican Service then? Well, No. There is a much bigger emphasis on the work and ministry of the Holy Spirit and prayer for the healing of spiritual, emotional and other needs. There is a different emphasis noticeable in the preaching as well. There was a focus not just on conversion but on practical Christian living and making a difference in society.** This is reflected in the wide range of ministries that now emanate from HTB, including prison ministry, caring for ex-offenders; youth ministry in local housing estates; counseling; parenting courses; child care: support for HIV sufferers and many other projects. **HTB now has a staff of about 180 to organize all these activities in addition to its core Christian ministries of Alpha Courses, teaching and pastoral care. It is hard not to be impressed. The other interesting thing is that HTB does not hide the fact that it is part of the Anglican Church and it has a very good relationship with the Diocese of London, (unlike the churches that are part of the Reform group).**

We came home refreshed and enriched by our time away and thankful for the evidence of God at work in many different ways, using 11 kinds of interesting people.

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# 'Why am I still an Anglican?'

REVIEW by SUSAN HOOKE\*

As part of the Sydney Diocese, this is a question I ask myself from time to time. In January this year, I found a book in St Paul's Cathedral, London that helped me answer this question.

'Why I am Still an Anglican', is a collection of essays and conversations with Anglicans, eminent in their own professions and edited by *Caroline Chartres*, wife of *Richard*, Bishop of London. (Published by Continuum, 2006)

The views expressed represent the Anglican Spectrum from evangelical to Anglo-Catholic, from conservative to liberal. The authors are a diverse mix, including clergy: *John Stott*, 'central figure in the resurgence of evangelicalism'; the late *Hugh Montefiore*, former Bishop of Birmingham; *Lucy Winkett*, Canon Precentor at St Paul's Cathedral; and laity, author *P.D. James*; lawyer *Elizabeth Butler-Sloss*; Nigerian statesman *Emeka Anyaoku*; *Dr Rupert Sheldrake* eminent biologist. They share the various things they love about the **Anglican Communion** and all lament the present divisiveness. I shall share comments from a few and try not to misrepresent their views by giving a small quote:

*John Stott (discussing the options of separation, or compromise, and ultimately opting for comprehension reviews the history of the Anglican church):* 'it traces its history (in England) back to the first century AD when the Roman legions were colonizing the empire..and among them must have been followers of Jesus Christ. The historical dimension is important today in a world busy cutting adrift from its historical roots...the [Church] is (also) a confessional church it has doctrinal standards and a confession of faith...it is a liturgical church. Why should we value a liturgy? First, there is plenty of biblical warrant for liturgical forms. secondly, a liturgy enshrines truth and safeguards uniformity of doctrine, thirdly, it gives a sense of solidarity both with the past and the rest of the Church in the present. Fourthly, it protects the congregation from the worst idiosyncrasies of the clergy. Lastly, it is an aid to concentration and to congregational participation.

*Lucy Winkett: Being an Anglican these days is a bit nerve-wracking. There's so much to be cross about as our internal rows continue. We move in tone from diplomatic to furious, anxious to mocking, pleading to bullying. But at least we are talking about it. I have never accepted the quip that the Church is 'being dragged into the twentieth century at the beginning of the twenty-first. Yes, we were late off the mark in recognizing that women had souls, and it's taken us*

*fourteen hundred years to recover from that confusion. But at the beginning of this third Christian millennium, the Anglican Church is addressing issues that might seem to have been resolved in British society at large, but actually haven't.*

*Dr Rupert Sheldrake: I do controversial work anyway and, in the scientific world, the very fact that I am a Christian adds to prejudice. The anti-Christian feeling in scientific circles is so strong that anyone who has religious views of any kind is thought to have forfeited any kind of intellectual credibility. I would like to see a dialogue. Not between science and religion as they are now – an institutional science and institutional religion...but rather as they could be if they both moved beyond some of their dogmatic limitations.*

*P. D. James: Unhappily, the [Church] is today riven by more dissensions than I can remember in my lifetime, and one result has been a falling away from the tolerance for which the Church has always been respected. The differences have, of course, been rooted by fundamental doctrinal differences, about what the Church actually is, the primacy of Scripture and the nature of the Eucharist; compromise is hardly possible, since opinions on both sides are held with passionate conviction as a matter of conscience..If these opposing views are to be accommodated within the one Church there has to be charity – indeed Christian love – between opposing factions; unhappily, in some parishes and dioceses this loving kindness has been notably absent.*

*Carolyn Chartres: Today, apathy has been superseded by schism (or the threat of it). Hardly a day passes without reports of the latest disagreement to tear at the heart of the Anglican Communion....Ask a cross-section of [Anglicans] to explain (for the purposes of this book) why they are still Anglicans, and it might be thought prudent to rush into print very quickly, before they change their minds....Put this suggestion to the individuals in question, however and you discover that nothing could be further from the truth. They may dissent from some of the Church's decisions, regret the current disagreements, be infuriated by the General Synod, or woolly bishops, or troublesome priests, but leaving the Church is simply not an option. They are not just steadfast, but unexpectedly passionate.*

*Vice President, Anglicans Together*



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