

# NEWSLETTER

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## President's Reflections

### 'To sell or not to sell'



Every Sydney Synod seems to have a least one major debate that everyone's attention is focused on and this year's synod was no exception. **The big debate was about the Standing Committee's recommendation that the Archbishop's residence,**

**Bishopscourt should be sold.** The sale of Bishopscourt has been mooted many times in the last thirty years usually around the time of the appointment of a new Archbishop. However, this time the proposal was given a new urgency by the dire state of the Endowment of the See, (EOS). The EOS is the fund which provides income to support the office of the Archbishop and over the years it has funded all the Bishops. The depth of this fund has always been rather mysterious and this year was the first time in my memory that the synod was provided with facts and figures. We were told that the assets of the EOS consist of a 50% share holding in St. Andrew's House Corporation (SAHC), Bishopscourt, rental properties, the bishops' housing, and some equity investments which carry a total value of about \$68 million. But the accounting income arising from these is only 2.5% pa and the actual cash yield is a mere 0.4%.

A number of problems came to light:

1. The Greenoakes unit development behind Bishopscourt has not yielded the large profits that were expected – the units came on the market at the time of the GFC.
2. SAHC has over distributed its cash flows in recent years to its two equal shareholders, the Glebe Administration Board and the EOS. Furthermore income from SAHC will be greatly reduced in the short term because the Bureau of Statistics conclude their lease of three floors in 2011 and these floors will need to be refurbished before a new tenant can be found.

3. Over the years the EOS has assumed responsibility for many costs beyond the Episcopal needs of staff, office and accommodation. We learnt that when St. Andrews House was being built, the builder went bankrupt and the GAB persuaded the Archbishop of the day to fund its completion from EOS funds. This he reluctantly did on the firm understanding that this was a loan to be repaid by the GAB. The loan was never repaid.

**The argument to sell Bishopscourt was presented by Bishop Robert Forsyth on behalf of the Standing Committee- he obviously drew the short straw.** He presented the financial arguments already detailed and argued that the sale of Bishopscourt for a figure around \$24 million would release a significant amount of capital that could then be invested to generate income for the EOS. He suggested that a suitable replacement residence for the Archbishop could be found for between \$5 to \$10 million, which would leave at least \$14 million to invest. Bishop Forsyth's second line of argument was that Bishopscourt was no longer a suitable residence for an Archbishop in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century; it was too 'grand', its image was all wrong and retention of it was poor stewardship of the diocesan resources given the urgency of the diocesan mission.

**The 'no' case was presented by the Rector of Neutral Bay Parish, the Rev'd Craig Roberts. He bounced out of his corner with a fiery speech in which he challenged the notion that selling Bishopscourt was a wise financial decision.** He questioned all the financial modelling presented by Bishop Forsyth and his seconder, Peter Kell and argued that we would lose forever a valuable asset for very dubious financial gain. He continually repeated the line 'Selling Bishopscourt is a bad idea.' **In the course of his speech we also learned that the sale of Bishopscourt was not supported by the Property Trust and that it didn't have the support of all the Standing Committee.** We were witnessing a house divided with no consensus among those entrusted with managing our financial resources. Standing Committee, the GAB, the EOS committee and the Property Trust have not been singing from the same song sheet.

**The debate that followed these two presentations was long and very lively. It became apparent that many in the synod were not confident that the funds released by a sale of Bishopscourt would be managed wisely.** The track record of our financial managers was too dodgy. Professor Bernard Stewart gave one of his

signature witty speeches in which he asked the rhetorical question of the house, “Which of you would put your residence in the hands of our Standing Committee?” Pause. “You know you would be out on the street faster than you can say EOS!” Howls of laughter. A number of speakers also made the point that criticism of Bishops court as being too grand for our archbishop was specious because the house is far more than a residence: it provides a place for entertainment and hospitality and is a resource for ministry to the wider community. Debate was halted just before 10pm and we voted on an amended motion that endorsed the decision to sell Bishops court but with certain safeguards. The voting was by secret ballot and given the lateness of the hour, results were not known until the following day- 218 members voted for the sale and 249 voted against.

Four ordinances were passed by the Synod. **The one that provoked the most interest and debate was the Archbishop of Sydney (Election and Retirement) Amendment Ordinance 2010.** This ordinance made changes to the process for electing a person to the office of Archbishop and also to the terms on which the Archbishop is to retire. These include:

1. reducing the period between a vacancy occurring and when the election synod is to be held – previously 9 – 16 weeks after the vacancy, now 3 – 6 weeks.
2. Increasing the retirement age of the Archbishop to 68 years (previously 65). After the Archbishop has reached the age of 65 years, the Standing Committee has the power to extend the retirement age to 70 years by resolution passed by 75% of the members in both houses. (laity & clergy).

**Also included in this ordinance was a change to the usual declaration and assents given by the Archbishop.** Currently the Archbishop and candidates for the priesthood in Sydney assent to the following: “I firmly and sincerely believe the Catholic Faith and I give my assent to the doctrine of the Anglican Church of Australia as expressed in the Thirty Nine Articles of Religion, The Book of Common Prayer and the Ordering of Bishops Priests and Deacons; I believe that doctrine to be agreeable to the Word of God; and in public prayer and administration of the sacraments, I will use the form in the said book prescribed and none other, except as far as shall be prescribed by lawful authority.”

These words have now been replaced with the following: “I .....firmly and sincerely believing the Bible to be the Word of God and the doctrine of the Anglican Church of Australia to be agreeable to the Word of God and the Catholic and Apostolic Faith, solemnly promise to teach and uphold the Word of God and that doctrine as expressed in the Thirty Nine Articles of Religion and the Book of Common Prayer.” This statement is then followed by a solemn promise to conduct only authorized services, and any others ‘agreeable to the Word of God.’

**I have two concerns about these changes. First, they are another attempt to distance our diocese from the rest of the Anglican Church of Australia.** Up till now our Archbishops and other clergy have agreed to the same declarations and assents as other clergy throughout the nation. No other diocese uses the form of words now proposed. **Secondly, the words are problematic.** We no longer firmly believe in the Catholic Faith expressed in the creeds and Prayer Book but in the Bible being the Word of God. Most Christians of all persuasions and traditions will want to agree that the Bible is the Word of God but what do we actually mean by that? I believe the Bible is the Word of God but I don’t believe that God’s Word is the Bible and I suspect that is what some of my Sydney brothers and sisters want me to affirm. **In the New Testament and in the first couple of centuries of the Christian Church, the expression the ‘Word of God’ was never used of the Scriptures. The Word of God always meant, the Word made flesh, Jesus, or it referred to the oral tradition- the message about Jesus.** We read the written Word, the Bible in order to encounter the Living Word, Jesus. We worship the God we meet in Jesus; we don’t worship the Bible. The difficulty with making the written Word the touchstone of faith is that it fails to deal with the issue of how we interpret God’s word. **The new form of words is now enshrined in the Archbishop’s Retirement Ordinance; next year the synod will have to decide if they should become the solemn promises made by all ordinands in this diocese. Watch this space.**

Finally a quick comment about the motion that appeared on the business paper every day of synod but was never actually debated. **This motion titled, Equal Representation of Women called for Standing Committee to adopt the principle of equal representation of women on all boards and councils in the diocese, wherever legislatively and practically possible and was put up by Lyn Bannerman and myself.** Currently women are grossly under represented on all our boards and councils. Women make up just under 25% of elected members on synod and on Standing Committee with 58 members there are only 7 women. The Regional Council has no women members. **The Glebe Administration Board whose decisions were responsible for the huge financial losses had no women members and remains exclusively male.** A recent survey of financial institutions and the way they weathered the GFC showed that institutions with a significant number of women on Boards performed better than those which were male dominated. Our diocese has not learnt that lesson. Our Archbishop has bemoaned the fact that many of our Boards are tired and in need of refreshment but no one in leadership has called for more women to take on positions of responsibility. No wonder that, in the wider community, we are thought to be anti women. Perhaps next year we might see some change. We continue to hope and pray.

*Philip Bradford*  
Parish of Hunters Hill

# ***“There are always problems when human beings claim that they know the mind of God”***

## **PART 1**

### **A personal testimony by Geoffrey Robinson**

**Geoffrey Robinson, Auxiliary Bishop in the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney** 1984-2004, penned the title sentence in his first book *“Confronting Power and Sex in the Catholic Church: Reclaiming the Spirit of Jesus”* (John Garratt, 2007; p.204). The publisher telegraphed on the cover, “Drawing on his own experience in responding to abuse, Bishop Geoffrey Robinson, in this explosive work, methodically offers a critique of the church’s use and misuse of power, from the pope proclaiming infallibly down to the preacher claiming a divine authority for every word spoken from the pulpit. Going back to the bible and, above all, to the teaching of Jesus ... he offers nothing less than a vision for a church of the third millennium...”. That book sold more than 10,000 copies in Australia alone and has been translated into French, German and Spanish. It drew resounding applause and fierce resistance. In 1994 **Geoffrey Robinson** had been elected by the Australian Bishops to coordinate the Catholic Churches response to sexual abuse issues, a role that challenged and changed his life.

**Bishop Geoffrey Robinson’s** personal experience over the last four years is mirrored by the countless numbers, who have been pushed to the fringes of religious institutions across the world. Jewish, Christian, Moslem, Buddhist, Confucian, women, men and children of other religions or claiming no religion, are being accused of being disloyal, threatened, punished and “silenced” by institutions that fear losing control.

It is a delight nowadays to pick up a small short book that attempts honestly to face questions for which there are no pat answers or bureaucratic burlings. Geoffrey Robinson’s second book, *“Love’s Urgent Longings: Wrestling with belief in today’s church* John Garrett, 2010) is only 103 pages. At the book launch in September, the Revd Dr Michael Whelan of the Aquinas Academy Sydney said: “It is a book of complex, substantial and often subtle thinking. It requires careful reading ... a very personal book ... that speaks as much to the heart as the head.”

I have spent much time listening from pews in different places, since I retired from full-time work as a Parish Rector and as a member of a Commission of the Anglican Church of Australia, the Sydney Diocesan Synod and Committees. Again and again I resonate with what Geoff Robinson writes in *“Love’s Urgent Longings”*; for example, “at present the congregation is asked to sit or stand passively while thousands of words are poured over it, so many that not even the greatest saint could listen to each of them”.

**Geoff Robinson** writes of the “longing for something deeper” and the longings of love that are the beginning of all that might be called “spiritual” within us. He spells out Seven Desires that are largely not being met by institutionalized religions.

1. **The Desire for Purpose and Meaning** - Where am I going? What is the purpose and meaning of my existence? “I found that I was looking for a sense of meaning that came from something deeper than just belonging to a church. ... I have made the conscious decision ... [to ask] in every new situation I encounter, “What is the most loving thing I can do here?”

2. **The Desire for Unity** - “It is only when we have a clear sense of what is central to our life that we have a sense that our life is one whole, ... For most of my adult life I have felt rushed, facing too many demands by too many people. ... but the force of demands is not always a good indication of the legitimacy of needs. ... this striving for integrity has become one of my deepest desires, and hence one of the great unifying forces of my life.”

3. **The Desire for Energy** - Using the analogy of a dam, *Geoff Robinson* writes, “I have to find a balance, a creative tension, between order and chaos. Too much order (over-control) and I would suffocate, too much chaos (lack of control) and my energy would be wasted. In earlier times people were aware of the harm energy can do, so they surrounded it with prohibitions and rituals, especially in the fields of sex and religion ... the dominant outlook was frequently negative, emphasising dangers and prohibitions, rather than positive, emphasising creativity and potential for good.”

4. **The Desire for Freedom** - “I do not speak only of freedom from physical force, but also of freedom from harmful ideas or influences. ...[e.g.] “from the God of the high jump ... from faith as intellectual assent to creeds ... to take the desire for freedom to its depths, I must think in terms of positive freedom, the freedom to do things ... and build a life of relationships.”

5. **The Desire for Happiness** - Happiness is an elusive concept. *Robinson* quotes from *“Happiness is an Inside Job”* by *John Powell S J* (Tabor Publishing, 1989) that suggests the problem is that happiness cannot be pursued directly, it is a by-product of seeking deeper things. We have “to learn to look for what is good in myself, in others and in the world around us rather than concentrate all the time on the negatives”.

6. **The Desire for Peace** - The author says that finding some peace or tranquillity is not a passive concept. It often requires much forethought and many things happening “in order”. This applies to all situations on the continuum from an individual person to international affairs. For example, “international peace ... requires



constant thought and attention by many people ... that aid be rushed to those in desperate need, that refugees be cared for, that nations not be saddled with impossible debts, that trade and development be assisted, that good governance be demanded and that the causes of tension be dealt with resolutely and as early as possible. It demands the highest possible level of *active order* in international affairs.” Geoff Robinson says “my quest for deeper peace has become a searching for peace in turmoil ... for an order that is based on justice, love and integrity.”

**7. The Desire for Love** - “The deepest longing of my heart is the longing for love ... [the] one fundamental longing. It is so deep that nothing on this earth can satisfy it ... The ancient Greeks ... [had] three words to express three different aspects of love: *eros* (desire), *philia* (affection) and *agape* (self-giving love). Since the time of Freud, *eros* and the adjective “erotic” have been largely restricted to sexual desire, but in earlier times the word included all desire. Eros or desire is the unquiet aspect of love, what *Rolheiser* describes as the fire within, the restlessness, the loneliness and nostalgia for better times, the wildness and ache at the centre of my being. It can be felt as a pain, dissatisfaction and frustration, but it can also be felt as an energy and pull towards beauty and creativity. It is a subject of eternal fascination, so stories about desire, sexual attraction, journeys into the unknown, tragic loss and triumphant regaining have always been popular.” (Ronald Rolheiser in “*Seeking Spirituality*” (Hodder & Stoughton, London, 1998)

“I can desire something with all my being and yet, when I achieve it, find that it has done little to assuage the deepest desires of my heart. Ultimately, all desire, no matter what form it takes, is a desire for the other two forms of love, *philia* and *agape*.” Geoff Robinson in eight pages carefully looks at how love is the key to meaning, energy and identity. He explores the paradoxes of love, the dangers and fragilities. “This deep longing for love is the firmest basis I know for all that I call spiritual in my life. To the extent that I keep striving to respond to the depth of this longing, I will be a spiritual person.”

This incisive pivotal chapter concludes with: “It may help me to remain on the right path if I remind myself of the seven deadly social sins of which Mahatma Gandhi spoke: politics without principle, wealth without work, commerce without morality, pleasure without conscience, education without character, science without humanity, and worship without sacrifice.”

Bishop Geoff Robinson’s candid personal re-evaluation comes in the 50<sup>th</sup> year of his ordination as a priest. In the introduction he said, “I am now in my seventies, so I feel too old to throw everything out and construct a new building from the foundations up. I do not wish to believe in nothing or in some vague and uncertain spiritual idea. ... I hope that this personal story will have something to say to other people.” It certainly does. He

ends his book sub-titled “Wrestling with belief in today’s church” not with a neat index but with these open questioning words: “Why God created the world the way it is I do not know. But, despite all the difficulties, I am glad I was born. And I find that I still have both the desire and the energy to try to take hold of this messy self and messy church and messy world and do whatever is within my power to make them better.”

(Geoffrey Robinson’s books are available from: Aquinas Academy 02 9247 4651 [secretary@aquinas-academy.com](mailto:secretary@aquinas-academy.com))

## PART 2

### Other voices in the age of Cosmology and Genome research.

**“You will know them by their fruits”**

(Jesus in ‘Sermon on the Mount’, Matthew 7:20)

The claims by different religions or denominations, and cultural groups within them, to ‘have the truth’ or ‘know the mind of God’ are rampant. The mass media and bloggers flourish on such arguments and conflicts. The cycle of misinformation continues because “*the noisy wheel always gets attention*”. But there are other, less reported voices within all religions.

Wrestling with what it means “to believe” in God or anything else, is happening on a world-wide canvass. As an example I quote from the notes on “*Creative Transformation*”, (number 20 of a 21 study-discussion program, *Living the Questions* 2 (2007). Each session, using short DVDs, draws on Biblical scholars, theologians, scholars, pastors and leaders from different denominations and cultures, who probe the changed ways of thinking across the world today.

“Creativity and innovation are valued and sought after qualities in virtually every human endeavour – except religion. In many faith traditions, it is tradition itself that is worshipped, held up as the whole purpose of the religious enterprise. Be it “smells and bells” or resistance to the use of inclusive language, many faithful people have confused defence of their understanding of right practice and right thinking with what they call “faith”. **They insulate themselves from the unpredictable, demanding transforming nature of the Spirit with a fierce, pious, unbending commitment to the Church.** They practice what *Fr. Richard Rohr* has called ‘a cosmetic piety’ intended to look good on the surface, but lacking any real depth or complexity. Defense of the changeless nature of their revealed “truth” becomes a virtue to be aspired to, regardless of how lifeless and rote the practice itself becomes. ....

“[The church] ... is not just comforting the human patients as they all slowly die off. It is the clinging to the threadbare and dying theologies of the past that is at issue. The message itself is on life-support. Some are convinced that if we only preached the “true Gospel” with more vigour, there would be a great revival. Others have warped the message into an individualistic

prosperity-oriented, victory-focused, self-help Kool-Aid. Many have found success by dressing up the message with catchy music, engaging videos, and light-hearted messages. But what needs creativity – what needs to be transformed – is not just the medium, but also the core message.

“A rapidly growing segment of the population is not involved in organized religion of any sort – and they are *not* just waiting to be invited to attend. ... People are simply no longer moved by the notion that they are horrible sinners from birth, redeemed only by the sacrifice of an impossibly perfect man at the hands of a bloodthirsty, tribal God. People no longer see the church as the sole keeper of what has been called ‘salvation’. ... [they] are finding their own creative ways to fulfil the deepest longing of their souls – free from the perceived (and often very real) hypocrisy of the Church.”

The age of dogmatism is dying, we need a dose of humility to live each day and not repeat the errors of the past. Anglican priest *Jim Cotter* captures a sense of awe and needed humility in “*Out of the Silence ... Into the Silence: Prayer’s Daily Round*” - An unfolding of prayers, psalms and canticles for daily or occasional use.

*From this lookout, this planet earth,  
remote outpost of the universe  
contemplating the stars at night,  
racing with our brother planets  
forty thousand miles an hour through space...*

*on the surface of our earth,  
warmed to life by mother sun,  
orbiting around her six hundred million miles a  
year,  
wakened by our day star that seems so close...*

*at morning turn-around of earth,  
spinning on her axis at a thousand miles an hour,  
fulness of day beyond the eastern horizon,  
thick night way out beyond the west...*

*we breathe in quiet exhilaration,  
we move into this new day in trust.*

(Cairns Publications Harlech, 2006, p.513)

[www.cottercairns.co.uk](http://www.cottercairns.co.uk)

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## **THE ANGLICANS TOGETHER DINNER**

Over a hundred people from Parishes around Sydney gathered together on Friday 15 October, to enjoy lively fellowship and hear the Guest Speaker, the **Reverend Dr Michael Spence**, Vice Chancellor and Principal of the University of Sydney, speaking on unity and resolving differences.

## **The hammer and the mirror**

*Psychotherapy’s riddle  
to make or break in reflection  
a chance to die.*

*the minnow slips past.  
In the goldfish bowl,  
is he just a beginner, or  
a small one that  
never grew*

*we dream to occupy a mind  
a blackened reputation  
and a balanced repertoire,  
what text does it take?  
wordless in grave tones  
the paradox of a divine presence  
in a divine absence  
or a spanner at work  
in the space.*

© Noel Jeffs SSF an Anglican Franciscan Brother  
working with the Homeless in Sydney

## **BOOKS.....**

### **A SYDNEY ANGLICAN’S SEVENTY FIVE SONNETS**

by John Bunyan (a small number of copies remain available for \$10 + \$2 p & p). Some do criticise the Church, and some do raise difficult questions, not seeking to undermine faith but to find sounder foundations for it - questions for which the author still seeks answers.

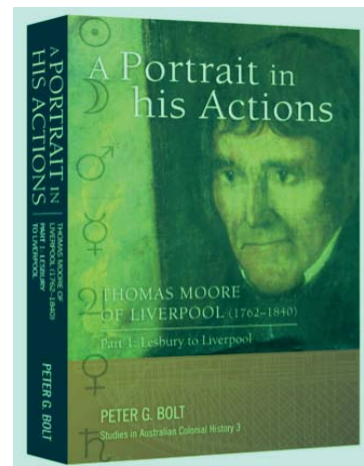
- “Witty, polished, insightful” - Assoc. Professor Barry Spurr (English Department, University of Sydney)

## **A Portrait in his Actions**

Thomas Moore of Liverpool (1762-1840)

Part 1: Lesbury to Liverpool

by Peter G. Bolt



The discovery of Thomas Moore’s papers in 2005 has brought this prominent early Australian to life again. As an adventurer, trader, ship builder, farmer and landowner, Moore’s story is thrilling and full of significance for Australian history. He is also part of Australia’s Christian heritage and the Benefactor of Moore College. (See Events Notice)

# SYDNEY SYNOD – A LEGAL PERSPECTIVE

Regrettably, for the Sydney Diocese, for too long many have seemed to find matters of law, finance and administration constricting. Too often, Synod has heard that such matters are boring and our focus should be on the vision splendid, not on the realities. Two items on the business paper followed this old and weary road.

The first being Synod's attitude to the finding of the *Appellate Tribunal that there was no support under our Constitution for lay and diaconal presidency*. Synod was told the Tribunal's finding was only an 'opinion' and not binding on Sydney. Anyone could have an opinion and opinions differed. True. But the Appellate Tribunal is not just anyone, it is a body established by our Constitution and most lawyers consider Sydney should respect its findings. **Speakers indicated that many in Sydney would continue down the path of permitting deacons to celebrate. It is hoped these deacons are made fully aware of their position.** Another alternative path to legitimize diaconal presidency has been mooted but it is anticipated that this path will inevitably lead back to the Tribunal.

The second 'legal' matter on the business paper was a parcel of amendments to the *Anglican Church Trust Property Act 1917*. Three of the four proposed changes were relatively small administrative changes which were passed. It would have made sense to defer these pending the proposed inquiries referred to below. The fourth proposed amendment was in fact deferred by its mover, Mr *Robert Tong* following much disquiet within and without the Diocese. The suggested amendment was an attempt to avoid some of Sydney Diocese's financial obligations to General Synod established under our Constitution. It is very disappointing that Standing Committee was pursuing this amendment without first consulting with the Primate, other Bishop's within the Province and our Synod. Too often Standing Committee prefers to ignore Synod and consider it is the governing body of the Diocese. Not so.

Fortunately, in two other items, for the first time, we felt a small breeze of change blowing.

It has been difficult for Sydney Anglicans to see this once mighty Diocese humbled by administrative and financial crises in recent years. Some appeared to think that as Sydney had a bundle of assets, it could spend, spend, spend. Too little thought was given to cash flows, too little thought to preservation and development of assets. The same old faces on the merry-go-round of the various governance committees controlling our fate. To the surprise of those on the carousel, but not to others, the music stopped. The gears crunched and lurched and some fell off their horses. When they stood up they found the horses had been sold. Oh dear! God's will? Not a bit of it.

This year two enquiries have been established. The more potentially wide reaching is the **Archbishop's Strategic Commission on Structure, Funding and Governance**. The terms of reference cover 3 steps: 1) maximizing the funds available to support the Endowment of the See; 2) what changes need to be made to the operations and interdependence of the various Diocesan administrative bodies; and 3) what changes should be made to the governance in order to improve their performance. As the Commission's interim finding requiring the sale of Bishops Court was not accepted by Synod, it is back to the drawing board. The report on this Commission came to Synod on a 'need to know' basis. Thanks to an amendment pushed by Lyn Bannerman, **there is now an opportunity for parishes to make submissions through their Synod reps by 31 December 2010.**

The second enquiry relates to **corporate governance of Diocesan corporations**. A draft policy has been included in the Synod papers. It is a start but more work is needed. **Again parishes are invited to make submissions, this time by 31 March 2011.**

Both these initiatives are welcomed. If readers have issues of concern, it is recommended that you access the Synod papers on the SDS website and submit your ideas.

If anyone has any queries, please contact **Susan Hooke** by email [fandshooke@aapt.net.au](mailto:fandshooke@aapt.net.au)

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## COMING EVENTS.....

**Monday 22nd November, 2010**

**Liverpool City Library 5pm for 5.30 pm.**

**Launch of "A Portrait in his Actions: Thomas Moore**

**of Liverpool" 1762-1840 Part 1, by the Reverend Dr**

**Peter Bolt, Lecturer at Moore College, Sydney**

Email: [info@boltpublishing.com.au](mailto:info@boltpublishing.com.au)

**Saturday, 27th November 2010**

**St John's Church, Balmain 10am-4.30 pm,**

**"A Quiet Day with Dietrich Bonhoeffer"**

The Revd Andrew Bowyer. \$50 (\$25)

Details from the St James Institute.

**Saturday, 4th December,**

**St Philip's Parish Room, Church Hill, Sydney 1.30**

**pm - Anglican Historical Society (Diocese of Sydney)**

**-Dr Ruth Frappell on "The writing of parish church**

**history" followed by a Christmas repast - all welcome.**

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# NOW WHO PAYS FOR OUR BISHOPS?

So, Bishops court is not for sale, and Phillip Bradford has described that interesting debate. But that left the Bishops looking anxiously across Synod's sea of faces, with no money left in the Endowment of the See to pay their salaries. The leader of the "no" vote on Bishops court, the Reverend Craig Roberts, moved to the rescue. His motion requested the EOS and the Archbishop's Commission to look at ways to realize the EOS's interest in St Andrews House by 1/1/2011. If such efforts fail, then he proposed a 1.14 percent assessment on parishes in Sydney Diocese for 2011 (ie about 24% increase to our current levies). He further proposed that Standing Committee is to report in 2011 to Synod whether this levy, if imposed, should be abolished in future years. (This was amended to 2011 only, but inevitably will be part of the full budget review next Synod). We owe this levy, Mr Roberts argued, because of our decision not to sell Bishops court and because we (parishes) should be paying for our Bishops, as is done in other Dioceses.

**Proposed amendments to this motion sought to make the possible increased levy voluntary, or to provide an exemption for very poor parishes, that is, the provisional ones.** Some motions sought to increase; others reduce the proposed levy. These motions were lost but Susan Hooke successfully got an amendment which required the examination of possible funding sources to go beyond the St Andrews House to any other funding source. It would be hard to imagine that a creative search across all funding possibilities could not find a solution. To impose increased levies on front line ministry as the first option was, to some of us, outrageous. One speaker at Synod pointed out that this would mean his parish could not afford to appoint a Moore College graduate, as planned in 2011. It is ironic that the College's budget remains untouched but what will be the employment prospects of graduates if cuts hit the main front line ministry point – parishes?

Whatever the outcome (and hopefully another funding source is found) this debate highlighted the issue of "ethos", mentioned by the Archbishop as one of the concerns he wishes his Commission to address. **I was shocked at the harshness of Synod in rejecting the two attempts to protect the very poor provisional parishes. There was a distinct harshness in the loud voices voting "no" to the exemption. This was not my paranoia; others remarked with concern. Where was compassion?**

There was a second attempt. It was at the commencement of the last evening's session, when Synod was desperately short of time and just as people were still straggling in from dinner. A Synod member, with the Archbishop's generous leave, given the time pressures and her proposal being well "out of order",

sought to have a motion voted on (no debate; no amendments; just straight to vote). **Her motion provided a process to allow parishes to consider "adopting" a provisional parish for the purpose of paying the additional levy, if imposed.** No compulsion; a voluntary arrangement. Immediately some people leapt to their feet to object, so the speaker, in accordance with her special arrangement with the Archbishop, dropped the matter. All that was needed was a minute for a vote. **What harshness was driving some members to refuse a vote on a way forward for showing some compassion for our very weak parishes? But, meanwhile, the Editor in the latest edition of the Southern Cross has offered to connect struggling parishes with those wishing to help (see S.C. p14.) Well done S.C.**

Susan Hooke has mentioned in her article the possibility of making a submission to the Archbishop's Strategic Commission. The Archbishop in his concluding remarks spoke of the need to examine the structures, ethos and governance of the Diocese. This is an opportunity not to be missed if you have something to say.

**All parishes, and all Synod members, have now received a request to put in a submission by 31 December.** Susan and I have just finalised a paper to go to interested parishes. The paper is an attempt to highlight, as we see it, the range of issues that need to be addressed. **If your parish, is interested, please let Sue or myself know and we will send you a copy.** (Susan Hooke by email [fandshooke@aapt.net.au](mailto:fandshooke@aapt.net.au); and Lyn Bannerman by email [lbannerman@ozemail.com.au](mailto:lbannerman@ozemail.com.au)).

I doubt any one parish could possibly address all the issues, and gratuitous advice from the base of little or no real knowledge should be avoided. Every parish is sure to have something substantive to say on one or more of the issues (and of course there will be other issues we have overlooked)! **Let us not miss this opportunity to influence what appears to be a genuine effort to make real changes.** As Sue Hooke has pointed out, there will be further opportunity to comment on a detailed review of governance arrangements, proceeding in parallel. This first opportunity is at the strategic level. Go for it and watch this space for more on the second review.

*Lyn Bannerman*

Synod Representative, Parish of Christ Church St Laurence

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## THE AUSTRALIAN CHRISTIAN BOOK OF THE YEAR

The Australian Christian Literature Awards are presented each year to encourage Australian Christian writers and publishers. The 2010 Winner is **"Losing My Religion" – Unbelief in Australia** by **Tom Frame** (UNSW Press)

# Traveling with John Bunyan through parts of the USA

## *Some Impressions of the US Protestant Episcopal Church: Anecdotal Evidence*

I have visited the United States on many occasions over thirty years, seen a great deal of its **Episcopal Church**, and *generally* have been much encouraged by what I have seen. It is only anecdotal evidence.

In 2010 I went especially to visit National Parks, but also historic towns and places and to visit friends. These are my impressions of places I found especially attractive or at least well worth seeing.

On my first Sunday this year, in the friendly city of **Seattle**, I attended a crowded 11am Choral Communion (choir of 50 or more) at St Mark's Cathedral. It was sensitively celebrated to take into account people's different preferences, for example, regarding standing or kneeling, and with the most genuinely warmly welcoming congregation I have ever encountered. Plus a brilliant sermon from the Canon Missioner, a woman priest.

Thirty-six hours on by Amtrak (two nights on the train) I came to St Paul and Minneapolis and to **Stillwater**, a small historic river-side town out from St. Paul (which is named, I presume, after the Roman cathedral there). Stillwater's hospitable and very well equipped *Episcopalian 'Church of the Ascension'* sent me away with a gift of CDs of fine music sung by their youth choir in that cathedral.

Another seven or eight hours brought me to **Chicago**. I confess I chose a long morning architectural tour instead of Sunday church but the Lord caught up with me when, later in the day, I happened upon a *new* 4pm Communion service in a central *Presbyterian church*. (*St. James' Cathedral* sadly was closed on that Sunday afternoon in a busy part of the city.) In a service far more moderate than found now in most of Australian Presbyterian churches, and reverent, there were about 70 present, with supper to follow for those wishing to stay. The woman minister's sermon was a little long but the traditional hymns were accompanied by a cheerful and skilful jazz quartet. The church's enrolled membership is 5000 with an average Sunday attendance of 2000 – in a very healthy condition (compared with what one reads now of some of the US mega-churches, the Crystal Cathedral being in debt at present for \$25 million or more).

In **Boston** as usual I attended **King's Chapel**. Founded in 1689, it was Massachusetts' first Episcopal church but since the Revolution has been unitarian *Christian* in theology, congregational in polity, but Anglican in its liturgy, still with its own formal though revised Book of Common Prayer. It is on the "Freedom Trail" with many passing visitors and I think has a unique potential for reminding people that Christianity can be

"traditional in form" but "liberal in doctrine" **S. Paul's Cathedral**, near Boston Common, unfortunately, is gloomy, long shut in by other buildings but healthily involved like other inner city churches with social and pastoral ministry. Nearby is the *Church of the Advent* in the Anglo-Catholic tradition, and not far away *Trinity Church*, like an exotic mustard pot, Bishop Phillips Brooks (writer of "O little town of Bethlehem") at one time its Rector, but sadly it is the one Episcopal church I have encountered that now charges for entry – unless one is going in to pray.

Across the river at **Cambridge** is the fine classical *Christ Church* (founded by King's Chapel but remaining Episcopalian), and the interdenominational *Harvard Chapel* whose Baptist minister, Peter Gomes, officiates and preaches in Anglican robes at a Sunday Morning Prayer similar to that of the Prayer Book (including its traditional language). Daily prayer in the Chapel goes back to the very beginnings of Harvard. Other churches I have visited in Massachusetts have been mainly originally congregational, puritan foundations

**In almost every Episcopal church one finds in the pew the same 1979 Book of Common Prayer and the Church's authorised Hymnal (sometimes together with an African American or other supplement).** There are exceptions of course – very Anglo-Catholic churches such as *St Clement's*, Philadelphia, rather "way-out" liberal churches, and "one-off" imaginative places such as *St Gregory of Nyssa* in San Francisco.

Many of the colonial churches on the east coast have retained or restored their original 18th century furnishings. (The Episcopalians have not gone in for the trendy and often ugly re-orderings of churches so common in the UK. What has now been made '*Philadelphia Cathedral*' has been very imaginatively restored, although, unlike the historic down-town churches, firmly closed for most of the time, and not a church for those who wish to *kneel* for prayer or who find it very difficult for long on the one spot.)

At **Newport**, Rhode Island, *Trinity* Episcopal church, its fine classical form typical of New England still has its central pulpit, with the Holy Table, once used only a few times a year, hidden behind it in the sanctuary (the original arrangement in *St Peter's, Campbelltown NSW*). Some of my favourites among these churches are *Christ Church*, *St Peter's*, and *Gloria Dei* in Philadelphia, *St Michael's* and *St Philip's* in Charleston, *St Paul's Chapel* in New York, and *Aquia Church* north of Fredericksburg. Of course there are also many fine churches in the Gothic style, quite often with Tiffany stained glass windows.

## *Through the National Parks*

In a great tour of National Parks that began in quiet pleasant Denver there was no opportunity of attending



happened upon a mid-week Communion in **Jackson (Hole)**, Montana. I found the Episcopal church set in large grounds and with a separate chapel in which that service was held, and an extensive range of other parish buildings including a charity store – very welcome in a Jackson now more “up-market” and where those on lower incomes can no longer find affordable accommodation to purchase or to rent. There were only four at a not well-celebrated Communion, **although I appreciated the fact that the sermon followed the Episcopal BCP calendar that day honouring William Tyndale and Miles Coverdale and their Biblical translations.** The weekly bulletin concerned stewardship but without an appeal for the normal costs of ministry (taken for granted I suppose in the Episcopal Church where stewardship and pledging have never disappeared). It was solely concerned with raising additional funding for the Church’s social ministries within the town and its evangelistic and humanitarian ministry beyond the US. I noted that the parish provided rooms freely for a large number of local community organisations.

**The tour took in Salt Lake City with the rather eerie Mormon temple at its heart. Utah is strongly Mormon but in the city itself Mormons now are down to 49%. However, there are many Christian churches including the impressive Roman cathedral and the Episcopalian that I unfortunately saw only from the outside – and which I should have visited instead of even looking inside the temple compound.**

Mormon wealth is enormous in Utah and in the US generally and the contrast between Utah and adjoining Nevada in this and other respects is very marked, Nevada now the state with the highest unemployment and the worst economy, dependent as it has been for so long on extensive gambling. All present casino construction in **Las Vegas** seems to have come to a halt but the familiar casino fronts of course are fascinating. The only church on the “Strip”, I think, was Roman Catholic but the city in fact has many churches and it was interesting to venture a little beyond the Strip, and on a visit down town and to the city’s Library to meet some of the ordinary local people.

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On earlier trips I saw much more of the Episcopal Church but this latest visit confirmed earlier impressions. There are now about **67** mostly *tiny* independent Anglican bodies in the US alone (with innumerable bishops!) and I think in some cases the schisms would not have occurred if there had been a more moderate, truly Anglican, tolerant spirit on *both* the liberal and conservative sides. The disputes have usually been concerned with the ordination of women and with homosexual practice. (As usual, I follow a *via media* and I myself should not have voted for the present Bishop of New Hampshire or the present Presiding Bishop but for that matter neither for the present Archbishop of Sydney nor the present Pope! – though having regard for all.)

**Some bodies have formed an “Anglican Church of North America” claiming about 100,000 members, but they often do not always agree among themselves.**

However, membership of the Episcopal Church *vastly* outnumbers the total membership of these independent bodies and although, like other mainline US Protestant churches, membership has fallen in recent decades, its membership is still over 2 million – and that is *not* a count of those who would call themselves “Episcopalian” in the way that many Australians still identify themselves as C. of E. or Anglican, but the number of those actually **enrolled** as members. Detailed figures for every congregation are given in the Church’s year-book, and those moving to a new church have their membership formally transferred.

Episcopalians are certainly not without faults. Theirs is still sometimes, as here, the Church of the prosperous middle classes, their services sometimes somewhat pompous, superficial and self-conscious. But there are great ministries, e.g. to Native Americans, much good music and liturgy, impressive achievements, for example



**Washington National Cathedral** (completed in recent decades), some great overseas missions, interesting converts ranging from R.C. Matthew Fox to Lutheran Marcus Borg, some lively religious communities and generally a sense of belonging to a National Church.

**In most of the Episcopal churches I have visited over the years I have heard little of the current controversies. Most people just get on with worship and service in their local parishes, little interested in high councils and global bureaucracies, simply glad to be Episcopalians in a Church which *at its best* is broad and gentle, tolerant and intelligent, and while cherishing its autonomy, glad to be in communion with other Episcopal Churches, and not least with the Archbishop of Canterbury and the ancient episcopalian Churches of England and Scotland from whence they sprang.**

There are other places one would have liked to have visited but one should be very grateful for what has been seen and count one’s blessings !

*John Bunyan*, Campbelltown

## THE GENERAL SYNOD OF THE ANGLICAN CHURCH IN AUSTRALIA

meets every three years and this year, the Fifteenth Ordinary Session, was held from 18 to 23 September, 2010 in Melbourne at the Melbourne Grammar School.

General Synod consists of the House of Bishops, House of Clergy and House of Laity with the Primate presiding. In his Opening address the Primate, **Dr Phillip Aspinall** called for unity. *“At the national level our belonging together... is expressed in a variety of ways and enables mission to the nation which otherwise would not be possible.*

*But there are real risks that we need to steer around and further development of institutions and structures is necessary.”*

*“The same is true in the international Anglican Communion.”*



The Sermon (on John 21.1-19) at the Opening of the Synod, was preached by **Ms Clare Amos**, who also gave the two Bible Studies.

Clare Amos is Director for Theological Studies in the Anglican Communion Office, UK and her roles there include

responsibility for both theological education and inter faith concerns.

Synod Agenda Items included:

### **The Covenant for the Anglican Communion**

The General Synod agreed to an Australia-wide process for considering the Anglican Communion Covenant designed to enhance the unity of the worldwide Anglican Communion.

It was agreed to ask all 23 dioceses to consider whether to back the Covenant which aims to clarify how national members relate to each other.

The Covenant – which is endorsed by the Archbishop of Canterbury Dr Rowan Williams – arose out of differences within in the Church in different parts of the world over human sexuality.

**Religious Freedom** – The Synod voted to call on the Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments to reaffirm their commitment to religious freedom, including safeguarding religious observance and practice, the ability to appoint people of faith to organizations run by faith communities and the freedom to each persuade others.

**The National Register** – a database which allows authorized officers of the church around the country to be advised of findings of misconduct against clergy, will include a new category of information regarding bullying against children.

The General Synod celebrated the Church's significant contribution to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ministry and backed a Bill welcoming the work done to date and **allowing changes to the composition and operation of the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Anglican Council (NATSIAAC).**

*“This is a great day to celebrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ministry in our country,”* said Bishop Glenn Davies speaking in support of the Bill. *“It’s also a great opportunity for us to be more aware of the nature of those ministries and how we can support them without falling into the trap of being white people making decisions for others.”*

The Primate preached the Synod Closing Sermon on Matthew 7.24 – 8.4 ‘House built on the rock’

He concluded:

*“I tend to think the choices before us are just as stark as they were for Israel in Jesus’ day. The temptation to secure our own position is just as great now as it was then. The risks to our institutions and in our personal lives are just as marked. And the urgency is just as pressing.”*

*“And yet, even in this Synod we have snatched glimpses of the transforming work of the Spirit among us, of the better way. It is not yet too late.”*

The full text of the sermon is on [www.anglican.org.au/](http://www.anglican.org.au/) - the official website of the Anglican Church of Australia.

Also a full report of the General Synod Meeting and access to Clare Amos' Bible Studies.



### **THE ANGLICANS TOGETHER DINNER**

Over a hundred people from Parishes around Sydney gathered together on Friday 15 October, to enjoy lively fellowship and hear the Guest Speaker, the **Reverend Dr Michael Spence**, Vice Chancellor and Principal of the University of Sydney.

**His theme was Christian Unity** suggesting that, while differences are inevitable and to be expected, the way we deal with them is critical. He argued that our chief concern in resolving differences should be maintaining the relationship with our Christian brother and sister and that if the issue can't be resolved, and we have to go our separate ways we should do this as graciously as possible.

**He also said we should never break fellowship with someone unless we have prayed for them regularly.**



## WHY BE AN ANGLICAN TODAY?

*The Very Reverend Richard Giles*, author of *'How to be an Anglican'* (Canterbury Press) was the guest speaker at the Anglicans Together Public Meeting in Sydney on Thursday 19 August 2010. Over fifty people met to hear Richard Giles present tackle the question *"Why be an Anglican Today?"*

Having spent over 30 years as a parish priest in England, Richard then served as Dean of Philadelphia Cathedral, Diocese of Pennsylvania, for the last 9 years of his full-time ministry.



Interior of the cathedral after renovations in 2002

*Richard Giles* was visiting Australia to speak in three dioceses on the subject of liturgical renewal and the re-ordering of worship space, on which he has written extensively.

Richard began by affirming that this was a good time to be an Anglican, for never was the message of the 'middle way' more desperately needed than in the present day, with a polarized Church reflecting a divided world. The virus of extreme fundamentalism infects all the Abrahamic faiths at this time, and the Anglican voice of gracious listening and generous inclusion is of vital importance.

The Anglican emphasis on the journey of faith is deeply Christ-like. Jesus upbraided those who claimed exclusive religious certainty, declaring indeed that the riff-raff of society would enter the Kingdom of God before them. In the spirit of St Paul we 'press on to make it (our) own' (Phil 3:12) not counting our spiritual chickens but knowing ourselves to be pilgrims, on a journey home to God in which the questions rather than the answers are the key to the kingdom.

Richard encouraged members of *Anglicans Together* to present to the rest of the diocese a picture of contemporary Catholic worship in the Anglican tradition, rediscovering in the process the roots of our faith in the primitive Christian era. The issue of what we wear at the altar (chasuble or whatever else) is a classic red herring. What is needed is worship and worship-spaces that embody the 'noble simplicity'

extolled in the documents of Vatican II and typical of Anglican worship at its best.

This requires a rejection of antiquated rites and fussy cluttered worship spaces, to embrace a thoroughly contemporary expression of the timeless faith once delivered to the saints. Worship cast in this mould engages, inspires and transforms. It is a 'conversion experience' of great power, but we have to let go of some of the past in order to seize hold of a bright future, drawing many to a fresh understanding of Catholic life and practice, even in the most hostile of environments.

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### ***Grieving Christians mourn Dead from Iraq Church Massacre***

ACNS : November 2, By Sammy Ketz (AFP)

**BAGHDAD** — Two priests, who were among dozens of Christian hostages killed by Al-Qaeda gunmen in a Baghdad Church, were buried as heroes on Tuesday after a tearful funeral that drew hundreds of people.

About 700 worshippers and representatives from the government and every religious and ethnic community in Iraq packed the **Saint Joseph Chaldean Church** in the heart of the Karrada district,

In a solemn Mass during which mourners sobbed openly, the coffins of priests **Taher Saadallah Boutros**, 32, and **Wassim Sabih**, 23, who were shot dead by the gunmen, rested on a table.

Mourners and witnesses said both priests had showed heroism during Sunday's hostage drama at a Baghdad cathedral, pleading with the hostage takers to kill them but not harm the parishioners.

Forty-six Christians were killed and sixty wounded. Seven members of the security forces also died.

**Chaldean Patriarch Emmanuel III Delly**, head of Iraq's largest Christian denomination reassured a community that has dwindled since the 2003 US-led invasion as many have left, saying "the victims came to church to pray to God and fulfill their religious duty, but the devil's hand entered the holy place to kill."

"We are not afraid of death and threats. We are the sons of this country and we will stay with our Muslim brothers in Iraq, hand-in-hand to glorify the name of Iraq,"

**The number of Christians in Iraq numbered about 800,000 before the invasion, but has fallen to 500,000 since then.**

*The Lord bless them and keep them, the Lord make his face to shine upon them and be gracious to them, the Lord lift up his countenance upon them and give them peace. Amen*

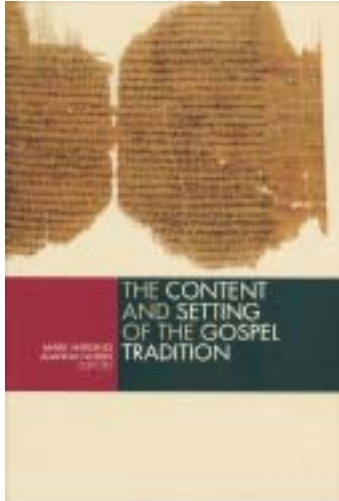


# NEW BOOK-

**Just published**

## ***“The Content and Setting of the Gospel Tradition”***

Edited by **Mark Harding** and **Alanna Nobbs** Grand Rapids/Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2010, xix + 460. ISBN 978-0-8028-3318-1.



### ***“The Content and Setting of the Gospel Tradition”***

is offered to the community of scholars and students of the New Testament Gospels and their Jewish and Greco-Roman background. The book builds on the research concentration of the faculty of the Department of Ancient History of Macquarie University and of staff

employed at other tertiary institutions, and also on the academic staff members of the longstanding national network of colleges affiliated with the Australian College of Theology (ACT). The book is a distinctive Australian contribution to Gospel and New Testament scholarship.

The book was conceived as a collaborative enterprise between researchers in two complimentary disciplines: the Greek and Roman historical and social and linguistic background, in which Macquarie University has established an internationally recognized excellence, and the expertise of academic staff at affiliated colleges of the ACT in the content of the Gospels.

Such a book fills a niche among current publications in the broad field. Many introductions to the New Testament have been and continue to be written. However, these tend to concentrate almost exclusively on the content of the books of the NT, and deal with issues such as authorship, date, and provenance. But few tackle seriously the social setting and textual tradition of the NT beyond a perfunctory chapter or two. By contrast *The Content and Setting of the Gospel Tradition* seeks to integrate the study of the Gospels as texts and the literary, social and historical context in which they were written.

The book consists of 18 chapters. They are:

(1) The Archaeology of Galilee and Palestine from the Maccabees to the Second Jewish Revolt, (2) the Gospel Manuscript Tradition, (3) the Language of the Gospels: Evidence from the Inscriptions and the Papyri, (4) the Political Context, (5) The Social Context, (6) Second Temple Judaism, (7) the Gospels and the Old Testament, (8) the Gospels in Early Christian Literature, (9) Non-Canonical Gospels, (10) Who was Jesus? (11) the

Markan Outline and Emphases, (12) Distinctive Features of the Gospels, (13) the Kingdom of God in the Proclamation of Jesus, (14) the Parables, (15) the Ethics of Jesus, (16) the Miracles of Jesus and their Significance, (17) the Titles of Jesus, and (18) the Passion and Resurrection Narratives.

Editorial responsibilities were shared by Mark Harding, Dean and CEO of the ACT, and Professor Alanna Nobbs of the Department of Ancient History at Macquarie University.

The book is available at Koorong Books for \$60 and also online at Rainbow Books at [www.rainbowbooks.com.au](http://www.rainbowbooks.com.au)

**Mark Harding**

Australian College of Theology

## ***NEW STUDY OF TS ELIOT*** ***“Anglo-Catholic in Religion – TS Eliot and Christianity”***

by **Barry Spurr** (Lutterworth, \$42)

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**‘Available December 2010’**

## **ADVENT**

***Once a dark world waited for the light;  
waited, unknowing, for a sign,  
a gracious word that would dispel  
the enveloping night.***

***We wait; each has to know the Word within,  
the song, the angelic light, the peace -  
that radiant star to guide unerringly  
to Bethlehem***

*From ‘A Collection of Poems’ by Merle Davi*