

NEWSLETTER

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President's Reflections

Lessons from the past

Recently one of our members sent me some archival material about the origins of Anglicans Together. Included was a copy of the letter sent to all Synod members in March 1992 inviting them to attend a meeting at the Chapter House for the purpose of considering, "the possible organisation, or the establishment of a network, of Sydney Anglicans who are concerned to express the comprehensive character of the Anglican tradition." The letter was signed by the Reverend *Lance Johnston*, Rector of St. Anne's Strathfield, the Reverend *Ian Crooks*, Rector of St. Alban's Epping and *Gerald Christmas*, the former Diocesan Registrar.

The meeting was held on the 10th April 1992 and 26 people attended. It was pleasing to note that a significant number of those present on that occasion are still members, (myself included). For this edition of the Newsletter we have asked some of those original members to write about why they first joined 'Anglicans Together' as it eventually became known and why they have continued to support it.

There were several catalysts for the formation of Anglicans Together. In that initial letter sent to Synod members the following rationale was put forward: "Rapid changes in society, the decline in the number of those claiming to be Anglican, very considerable departures from authorized services in some places, reports of pastoral rejection and exclusiveness which are alienating people from the Church, recent legal actions and talk about possible schism, all combine to make this a very critical time for the future of the Anglican Church in Australia. We are offering an opportunity to explore what it means to be the Anglican Church and how we are to meet the challenges to our unity-in-diversity here in Australia."

Nineteen years later little has changed in our diocese and much of that rationale still resonates with us today.

At the initial meeting in the Chapter House, the aims and objectives of the new organisation were described as follows:

- a) support and encourage the continued development and ministry of the Diocese of Sydney.
- b) to encourage an open exchange of ideas and views on matters concerning or affecting the Church and its ministry.
 - o To maintain support for a national Anglican Church.

As part of that commitment to encourage an open exchange of ideas, in February 1994, the Reverend Kevin Giles, a Sydney evangelical who was working in a parish in Adelaide was invited by the Anglicans Together committee to speak on the doctrine of the Church as taught at Moore College. A copy of this paper was another one of the items recently sent to me. The paper is entitled, '*The Prevailing Doctrine of the Church in the Diocese of Sydney: A Case Study in Spotlight Theology*'. It has never been published before but Dr. Giles has given us permission to have it published on our website.

He began his lecture by declaring that he had not come to attack Sydney Diocese or to criticize the important Gospel ministry evident in many parishes. His concern was the lack of independent thinking in the diocese, where in his words, "All the plaudits seem to go to those who most dogmatically and unreflectively reiterate what they were taught as students." He continued, "in this world only those who admire your virtues take the time and willingly bear the cost of warning you when you are in danger or error. It is always easier and much safer to remain silent. A lot of good people do this in Sydney."

In his lecture, Kevin Giles outlined the basics of the dominant understanding of the church as it is commonly expressed in the diocese of Sydney and secondly offered a critique of these ideas. Taking as its starting point, the use of the word '*ekklesia*' in the New Testament, this view of the church argues that "if we are to be faithful to Biblical thinking, the word 'church' can only be used of one entity on earth, Christians actually assembled in a given location for fellowship and mutual

It is always easier and much safer to remain silent.

edification.” The logical extension of this very congregational view of the church is that speaking of the Anglican Church or Uniting Church is a misnomer—they are purely human structures, a federation of churches and best called denominations. It also follows that if the church in heaven is already united around Christ and the real church on earth is the local congregation then ecumenical endeavours are of little value because the concept of church unity is theologically flawed.

I do not have the space to share all of Dr. Giles’ critique of this position but **one of the significant points he makes is that to build a doctrine of the church on the study of one word is an error in semantics. It ignores other texts which clearly refer to the concept of the church but where the word *ekklesia* does not actually occur.**

He suggests that what we have in this teaching is ‘spotlight theology’- a theology which illuminates only what you want to see. What is needed instead is ‘floodlight theology’ which brings all the relevant data into sight. He also points out that the purely congregational view of the Church is not taught by any of the reformers, is not found in the 39 articles and is generally unknown in Anglican ecclesiology. It is most commonly found in Brethren circles and among American independent fundamentalist churches. I encourage you to look at Dr. Giles’ article on our website.

Anglicans Together was always intended to be an agent for reform and that is still the case today. Our intention is not to be anti ‘the diocese’ for we are all part of the diocese. What we look for is openness to debate and an acknowledgement that sincere ‘Bible believing’ Anglicans can and do hold a variety of views on the issues which divide our Church today. ***We want to continue to affirm that there can be unity in our diversity and that we can respect those with whom we differ.***

Finally a reminder that this year at our Annual General Meetings we will elect new Synod representatives for the next three years. This Synod will be a particularly important one because in 2013 we will elect a new Archbishop. I encourage all our members to be prayerful about this very important appointment.

Philip Bradford

Parish of Hunters Hill

Gerald Christmas writes....

Having been invited to do so, may I briefly record my personal view as to what *Anglicans Together* stands for and what it should be doing.

Why did *Anglicans Together* come into being nearly 20 years ago?

A handful of synod members, including myself, were concerned at trends in Sydney Diocese which could lead to impaired relationships with other dioceses and the Anglican Communion. We convened meetings of Synod members and a few weeks later, *Anglicans Together* was born. Unfortunately, in ensuing years, what was then anticipated, and feared, has now come to pass.

Sydney diocese has forged and promoted a style of church life, which is a far cry from the Anglicanism of say 40 years ago. No, it wasn’t perfect in those ancient times, but, in my experience and observation, there were important qualities then, which have now been sadly diminished. Generally speaking, 40 years ago, church polity and parish life was inclusive, (less divisive), it was tolerant, (less judgemental) and based on unconditional love rather than legalism. The Church was also then seen as a more relevant and credible voice in Australian community.

It is gratifying that over the past two decades, *Anglicans Together* has continued and flourished in diocesan soil.

Our mandate and purpose is to represent those who prefer the beliefs and practices of reformed Anglicanism and who believe that many of the present policies within our diocese are potentially detrimental to the spiritual lives of our present members and future generations. Of course, there are still some parishes and pockets of people who are the exception to these majority trends, who see the church as inclusive, all embracing and ruled by the law of love rather than law. But they are a minority and they need special encouragement and attention. Hence the need for an alert, strong, supportive and influential fellowship such as *Anglicans Together*.

However, lest it be thought that we are just a bunch of sentimentalists who only hanker for “the way we were”, it is critical that members continue to proactively argue the theological and pastoral case for an inclusive, comprehensive, tolerant and loving church in the new decade we have recently entered, and to build bridges between those with differing views.

Our members should take whatever opportunity may be offered, to develop policies which will promote and encourage unity in diversity and healthy Christian fellowship within our diocesan and national structures and wise and loving spirituality among its members so that the Anglican church may be better equipped to effectively relate to Australian society.

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Opinions expressed are those of the contributors.

Editor: Moya Holle, PO Box 429 Glebe NSW 2037

Stuart Barton Babbage writes..

Dear Susan,

It was good to be reminded that I had been present at the inaugural meeting of Anglicans Together. And I am happy still to be a member.

I value the fact that Anglicans Together witness to the fact that there is neither Gentile nor Greek; there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female, but that we are all one in Christ Jesus.

I value Anglicans Together for its inclusiveness, and its recognition that there is within the Church a diversity of gifts and which are a matter not for apology, but for affirmation.

I am unhappy that so many diocesan committees are monochrome and not representative and that their tactics are more political than pastoral. I hope that Anglicans Together will continue to witness to a more excellent way – a way that is less worldly and more spiritual, less coercive and more Godly!

Yours sincerely,

Stuart Barton Babbage

WE HOPE THE HEADS OF STANDING COMMITTEE ARE DOWN

S *tanding Committee* brought two proposals for governance reform to Synod 2010 – ‘*The Archbishop’s Strategic Commission on Structure, Funding and Governance*’ and ‘*a draft policy on Diocesan Corporate Governance*’ (requested in 2009 by Synod). Both require a huge amount of careful thought and planning.

The Archbishop’s Commission was not seeking participation from Synod but was merely providing an Interim Report with a final report to be made to Synod 2011. **However, Synod invited itself to the table by a Resolution enabling submissions from Synod representatives and parishes by December 2010.** We know a number of submissions were made. Whether we shall be like good children and seen but not heard is yet to be revealed.

In respect of the draft policy on Diocesan Corporate Governance, we were told that following Synod we would be provided with a further draft to which our submissions would be requested by *31 March 2011* to enable a final report to be discussed at Synod 2011.

At the time of writing there is no sign of the ‘further draft’. It does seem unfortunate that there are two separate enquiries on governance. One of the essentials of good corporate governance is a clear cohesive plan covering macro and micro issues. The last thing the Diocese requires now is two conflicting views of issues of governance.

In addition to the above, a resolution of the *Reverend Michael Williamson* was passed by Synod requesting a report from Standing Committee by 2011 on the operational application of the charter supplied to the GAB for the management of the Diocesan Endowment. A review of this Charter (the guidelines provided by Standing Committee to the GAB) should be integral to the work of the Archbishop’s Commission. Hopefully, Standing Committee will reach a decision to look at one big picture. Time will tell.

*Susan Hooke,
Cremorne*

*You Are invited to the
ANGLICANS TOGETHER
DINNER*

*Friday 16 September 2011
7pm for 7.30pm*

*PREMIERS at NSW Leagues Club
165 Phillip Street, Sydney*

Guest Speaker

DR HEATHER THOMSON

*Academic Dean and Lecturer in Theology
Charles Sturt University*

***COST: \$50.00pp; \$45.00
pensioners/students
(Buy own drinks at Bar)***

***BOOKINGS WITH PAYMENT
By 5 September 2011***

***Cheques payable ANGLICANS TOGETHER INC
C/- All Saints Church Office
2 Ambrose St. Hunters Hill 2110
Telephone: 02 9817 2167***

Prophet of women's ordination

JANET SCARFE MARCH 2011



Some years ago in the heyday of Christian feminism in Australia, the Australian Council of Churches Commission on the Status of Women published a calendar honouring women of faith here and elsewhere. 10 January was set aside for *Patricia Brennan*, 'prophet in our time'.

And such she was — by any definition of prophet, biblical or colloquial. She was utterly dedicated to challenging the sincerity of the religious establishment about its commitment to women, without fear or favour. She was both a prophetic voice herself, and the inspirer of other prophetic women and men.

More than any other single individual she put the ordination of women on the agenda of the Anglican Church and kept it there, in full public view. She brought together several isolated groups and created the Movement for the Ordination of Women, whose voice and influence far exceeded its membership.

Patricia's name became synonymous with the struggle. She brought MOW into a much wider arena. She led a delegation of Australian women to challenge their bishops at the Lambeth conference in 1988.

A year later, she was in Washington, reporting widely through the media on the consecration of *Barbara Harris* as the first woman bishop in the Anglican communion — ironically on the same day as the Diocese of Sydney ordained its first women deacons.

Her friendship with *Alison Cheek*, one of the [Philadelphia 11](#), persisted until her death.

She pushed MOW into the wider Christian context. It was *Patricia* who brought Catholic feminists, Uniting Church feminists and Women Church together for a conference in 1989.

Like *Germaine Greer*, *Patricia* was tall, with an unmissable presence and an unforgettable rich voice. She was challenging, provocative, talented and slightly eccentric. She had a way with words and debate, and a great gift for one-liners, which the media loved. But *Patricia's* one-liners were never empty spin, they were informed, insightful and devastatingly incisive.

Like *Germaine*, she was often called strident. Criticisms like that stung her deeply. But it was typical of *Patricia* that she immediately broke the word 'strident' into two words, 'stir' and 'tend'. And those two words symbolised her life. She did stir up and disturb the comfortably churchied. She did stir up and irritate the armchair ecclesiastical liberals.

She dared to challenge the sincerity of their commitment to women, in the same way as she challenged the overt opponents of women's ordination. And she tended to those who were distressed and harmed by the Church and its leaden, sometimes cruel ways.

I cannot speak of her as a forensic and medical sexual assault clinician, but I am sure her approach was exactly the same: a bold, courageous, uncompromising quest for true justice.

It would be remiss not to include her voice here. In 1989, she wrote:

To have gone to the press and onto the streets and declared publicly in front of our cathedrals that a great wrong was being done to women in the Church, put our hearts into our mouths. But, in the prophetic tradition, it isn't a bad place for the heart to be kept.

Now she is in the great company of prophets, not only the biblical ones but those who were her friends on earth: *Angela of Stroud*, *Margaret Anne Franklin*, *Monica Furlong*, *Marie Louise Uhr*, *Camille Paul*, *Alison Gent*, *John Gaden*, *Alder Hall* among them.

Let us all mark 10 January in our perpetual calendars and remember the life of *Patricia Brennan* as a courageous prophet and dear friend.

Janet Scarfe was national president of the Movement for the Ordination of Women 1989–95. This tribute was read at Patricia Brennan's funeral at St Stephen's Church in Sydney, on 11 March 2011, by Janet Nelson, former convenor of MOW Melbourne.

PATRICIA BRENNAN, AM

Patricia, after graduating with a medical degree, went off to Nigeria, where at the age of 26, with only one year of senior surgery behind her, she was the only doctor for hundreds of miles. She returned to Australia in 1971, married Robert Brennan and three children, Kate, Peter and James were born, as they continued their missionary work.

Questions were stirring in Patricia. One Sunday at a local church service, taking communion on her knees, with head bowed, she caught a glint of a polished patent leather shoe peeping out from beneath the cassock of the priest and was overwhelmed by one thought 'here are the women?' ..There began a passionate and harrowing journey of advocacy for the ordination of women within the Anglican Church in Australia which lasted over a decade and brought Patricia to a level of both national notoriety and admiration. Patricia was made a member of the Order of Australia for her services to women which she accepted on behalf of all the MOW members.

Patricia lived her life with great verve and passion. Her full and diverse career spanned missionary physician and surgeon, general practitioner, Breast Cancer Clinician, Television Presenter, Medical Director, Forensic Consultant Physician and finally Staff Specialist.

Vale Patricia

The Hopi Elders Speak

You have been telling the people that this is the Eleventh Hour. Now you must go back and tell the people that this is the Hour, and there are things to be considered: Where are you living? What are you doing? What are your relationships? Are you in right relation? Where is your water?

Know your garden. It is time to speak your Truth. Create your community. Be good to each other. And do not look outside yourself for the leader.

This could be a good time! There is a river flowing now very fast. It is so great and swift that there are those who will be afraid. They will try to hold on to the shore. They will feel they are being torn apart and they will suffer greatly.

Know the river has its destination. The Elders say we must let go of the shore, push off into the middle of the river, keep our eyes open, and our heads above the water. See who is in there with you and celebrate.

At this time in history we are to take nothing personally, least of all ourselves. For the moment that we do, our spiritual growth and journey comes to a halt. The time of the lone wolf is over.

Gather yourselves! Banish the word struggle from your attitude and your vocabulary. All that we do now must be done in a sacred manner and in celebration.

We are the ones we've been waiting for.

The Elders, Oraibi, Arizona Hopi Nation
Message delivered December 1999, on the eve of the new millennium.

(One of Patricia Brennan's favourite pieces, read by her son James at her funeral)

Members of the Anglican Communion new Primates' Standing Committee

The following were elected as members of the Primates' Standing Committee at the recent Primates' Meeting in Dublin, Ireland.

Africa

Archbishop Daniel Deng Bul Yak (Sudan) - alternate
Archbishop Bernard Ntahoturi (Burundi)

Central, North, South Americas and the Caribbean

Presiding Bishop Katharine Jefferts Schori (The Episcopal Church) - alternate
Archbishop John Holder (West Indies)

Europe

Archbishop David Chillingworth (Scotland) - alternate
Archbishop Alan Harper (Ireland)

Middle East and West Asia

Bishop Samuel Azariah (Pakistan) - alternate
Bishop Paul Sarker (Bangladesh)

South East Asia and Oceania

Archbishop Paul Kwong (Hong Kong) - alternate
Archbishop Winston Halapua (Aotearoa, New Zealand & Polynesia)

Each Primate serves for three years, and thereafter until the next Primates' Meeting. Membership ceases when a member ceases to be a Primate.

National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Anglican Council to host International Gathering

The National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Council (NATSIAIC) is determined to host the **12th Gathering of the Anglican Indigenous Network** in May this year in spite of being affected by the devastating floods that wrecked homes, businesses and farmland during December and January. It will be held at the Salvation Army Collaroy Centre, north of Sydney,

Five-person delegations from each of the Anglican Indigenous Network's member groups in the Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand & Polynesia, the Anglican Church of Canada, the Anglican Church of Australia and The Episcopal Church are expected to attend.

The Anglican Indigenous Network has its roots in the 1991 General Convention of The Episcopal Church, in Phoenix, Arizona. The Network connects indigenous minority peoples living in their own lands. Its members are committed to the Anglican tradition while affirming traditional spiritualities.

Happening Right Now

Two decades late I have had the opportunity to read an enlightening biography of an Archbishop of Canterbury, who published more books than any Archbishop since *Thomas Cranmer* in the 16th century. **“Michael Ramsey – A Life” by Owen Chadwick** (Oxford Uni Press 1981; 400pp paperback) records much detail about the stupendous tasks that confronted Ramsey, especially the years 1961-74 as Archbishop of Canterbury. *Michael Ramsey’s* grandfather was a Congregationalist minister, his father remained a non-conformist, his mother was Anglican. As a family they all attended the Congregational church regularly. *Michael Ramsey* was nurtured by that ecumenism in his own family, and grew up sharing their radical concern for children, women and men suffering poverty, discrimination, and the effects of two World Wars and the Great Depression. *Owen Chadwick* says that Ramsey was never ‘taken in’ by the trappings of office, the pomp and circumstance of being a Bishop in the British House of Lords or wearing liturgical and episcopal regalia expected of his role.

***“He presented prayer, not as an isolated religious exercise but, as one part of a many-sided converse between the soul and its Maker.*”**

In the fascinating chapter 15, **“The Silences – (2) No Religious Truth without Prayer”** (pp.370-376), *Owen Chadwick* documents Archbishop Ramsey’s responses to the publication by the Bishop of Woolwich, *John A T Robinson*, of the small book **“Honest to God”** (March 1963). Ramsey was positive in praise as well as critical, but tried to protect church people and others who were up “But a decade later, when he looked back over this controversy he thought his reactions had been mistaken. ... On reflection he realized that the hullabaloo was symptomatic of a crisis of faith in the nation and that it needed a treatment different from that of his first reaction. It showed gropings, conscious and unconscious, among many people on the periphery of faith. It needed more understanding than contradiction. It was not just a press hoo-ha. ...” (p.372). He wrote, ““A world of half-belief and half doubt, of searching and questionings, was dug up by *Honest to God.*’ Here was the opportunity to learn from that wistful world which was being uncovered, to understand, to discriminate, and then to try to guide with patience”. (M Ramsey in *Canterbury Pilgrim*, 1974 p.410)

“Later he looked back and thought that he was not prepared intellectually for what happened in the sixties. William Temple’s death, he said to himself, left a vacuum in the leadership of English religious thought. ... Suddenly he recognized that his tradition

of thought – *Gore/Hoskyns/Temple/Ramsey* – was not quite able, for all its coherence, to meet the needs of the new time. He struggled to see how it was to be adapted.” (p.373).

What was *Michael Ramsey’s* greatest contribution to English-speaking Christianity? It is in the large area where divinity passes into prayer and religious experience, that area which is commonly known as spirituality. “His sense of ‘*an immediacy*’ in God could be felt especially by those who came to know him well. And yet he came of such a family that he must have sympathy for the doubter and the sceptic and the hesitant. A man with certainty and yet a man with an open mind – that was not so common a contribution to religious thinking or experience and that made him special. ‘People ask me if I have ever felt like losing my faith. No: my faith is part of me. But faith isn’t a state of easy and calm security. It is an adventure of ceaseless battling with troubles: a peace of mind and serenity indeed, but a costly peace and serenity in the midst of conflict.” (p.373)

“He presented prayer not as an isolated religious exercise but as one part of a many-sided converse between the soul and its Maker, with the beauty of nature, or the events of history, or the stirrings of conscience, or the inspiration in the writings or words of men and women, as other parts of the same converse. And he represented prayer as no withdrawal from the caring for humanity, but as the force behind it – ‘the prayer with beautiful buildings and lovely music must be a prayer which also speaks from places where men and women work, or lack work, and are sad, and hungry, suffer and die.’” (p.375)

The Anglican Communion of Churches around the world is still wrestling with the problems *Michael Ramsay* could not resolve 36 years ago. My heading for this article comes from the *Reverend H. St John Edwards*, who will be known to many readers. He was ordained with me in Chelmsford Cathedral and is now a member of a most vibrant and interesting Parish in Brisbane. Over eight decades he has been a gifted school teacher, a Christian educationalist, an inspiring leader of conferences, Dean of Grafton Cathedral, Rector of parishes in different States, Archdeacon and Archbishop’s Chaplain. He wrote in his Christmas Contact 2010: **“How will we ‘do church’ in the future? ... the model of ‘Church’ we grew up with is now done with ... the exciting bit is that the various people I discuss and plan with are convinced that this is a Spirit driven thing, and it is happening right now.”**

Since *Archbishop Ramsey* died in 1988, two unrelenting shifts have continued. First, the tide has turned even more against Anglicanism because of its links with British colonization, caricatured by the political slogan that ‘they came and gave us the Bible with one hand – and took our land and resources with the other’. Second, the fear of change has resulted in desperate attempts to cling *to some point in the past* as being “the good old days”; it has become a psychological sickness not only in Christianity, Judaism, and Islam, but in Hinduism, Buddhism, and other world faiths. The role of women in society and religious institutions, and the conflicts over recognizing the humanity and human rights of minorities are the ‘*killing fields*’. The fearful are always more concerned to ignore, override, exclude or eliminate those who do not conform to their human definitions. Literalism and fundamentalist dogmas have estranged and enraged cultures and religions around the world. I believe there can be no future without the inclusive spiritual wisdom which is humbly open to the *mystery of God* which is beyond definition by human words.

At some stage all of us probably need to look back in order to move forward. Maybe we have not given enough attention to one phrase in the Anglican ‘General Confession’: “we have left undone what we ought to have done”. ***Michael Ramsey was prepared to say he had been wrong. Are we?***

Postscript: This article was written Dec-Jan and first published in the Anglican Parish of Epping’s Magazine, Feb-Mar 2011. Since then the world we inhabit has been convulsed by unprecedented upheavals: in the Arab world resulting in murderous civil warfare; around Australia and countries floods or avalanches of snow, cyclones, and fires; earthquakes destroying Christchurch NZ, and the appalling devastation of the Japanese earthquakes and tsunami with the release of radiation from nuclear power reactors.

Prophets are not without honour except among their own people. That was the fate of the English theologian and bishop John A T Robinson and the Australian biologist, international environmentalist and theologian Charles Birch. Ignorance of, or refusal to take seriously the careful research by scientists, philosophers, historians, theologians, linguists, sociologists and other specialists of all nationalities and beliefs, leads to greater harm for present and future generations. Procrastination (deferring action) only compounds that harm¹.

The “*beliefs*” or “*prejudices*” of people around the globe determine what happens as much as science and technology. We have to confront the beliefs and prejudices bred into us over the centuries that inflame hatred, aggression, greed, corruption, superiority and exclusion. We have to nurture the ‘heart and soul’

dimension and respect the mystery of Life in every person. People and situations are sometimes changed by thinking positively and unselfishly about them and their situations. We are called to pray and act. Better and more informed ‘practical action’ frequently follows. The essence of such ‘prayer’ is that ***we all may be changed***: for example that embittered Shiites and Sunnis, divided Christians, Buddhists, religious and secular dogmatists may begin to admit that “*Now we see only reflections in a mirror ... Now, I can know only imperfectly ... these remain: faith, hope and love ... and the greatest of them is love.*” (1 Corinthians 13:12-13; New Jerusalem Bible translation)

(Postscript by CHN 17 March 2011)

¹For an in depth critique of the ‘debate’ about human activities affecting ‘global warming’ see ABC **Science Show** 8 Jan 2011, public lecture by Naomi Oreskes science historian, **Merchants of Doubt** @ University of NSW 2010
<http://www.abc.net.au/rn/scienceshow/stories/2011/3101369.htm>

Clive H Norton, Anglican Priest since 1958

WINTER

*suspended from a spar
are two leaves, sparse
as litter in a wind streak.
the lonely tree claws its
forgiveness under the emptiness
of a brazen lazy-blue sky:
the cloudless vanity of its growing.
the gazing of a winter empyrean
some tables and chairs loose in
the street*

*winter lights dusty footprints
on the polished wood floor,
the parade ground of
our tabernacle, a little
portion in a
wider sea, a building dedicated
by the few that stand
and watch the cross of
our stained glass window,
four walls, candlelit brass.*

© Noel Jeffs SSF

THE ANGLICAN COMMUNION COVENANT

The **ANGLICAN COVENANT** has been evolving over six years. It was first mooted in the Windsor Report set up by the *Archbishop of Canterbury* in 2003, with the final Report being presented in 2004.

The reason and purpose of 'A Covenant' has developed out what appears to be almost irreconcilable differences over (what on the surface are unrelated issues) the ordination and consecration of women within the ministry of the Anglican Church and the acceptance of gay and lesbian leaders (bishops and priests) within the Anglican Church.

Since the formation of the Covenant in 2009 there has been an ongoing question asked as to whether, after all these centuries, the 'Anglican Communion' needs 'A Covenant'.

The Anglican Communion has grown, in some respects rather like 'topsy'. However the fact is that the devotion and commitment to the 'Anglican Way', in all its diverse ways in different parts of the world, has not diminished.. For this reason ordinary Anglicans, in the pews Sunday by Sunday, can be grateful to their leaders for the hundreds of hours they have spent in attempting to clarify – 'what is the Anglican Communion and how can it can function as a true communion of believers'?

The Covenant is now with the Provinces of the Anglican Communion for formal consideration for adoption by each Province through appropriate processes.

Introduction to the Covenant Text *

"This life is revealed, and we have seen it and testify to it, and declare to you the eternal life that was with the Father and was revealed to us – we declare to you what we have seen and heard so that you also may have communion with us; and truly our communion is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. These things we write so that our joy may be complete." (1 John 1.2–4).

1. God has called us into communion in Jesus Christ (*1 Cor. 1.9*). This communion has been "revealed to us" by the Son as being the very divine life of God the Trinity. What is the life revealed to us? St John makes it clear that the communion of life in the Church participates in the communion which is the divine life itself, the life of the Trinity. This life is not a reality remote from us, but one that has been "seen" and "testified to" by the apostles and their followers: "for in the communion of the Church we share in the divine life"^[1]. This life of the One God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, shapes and displays itself through the very existence and ordering of the Church.

2. Our divine calling into communion is established in God's purposes for the whole of creation (*Eph 1:10; 3:9ff*). It is extended to all humankind, so that, in our sharing of God's life as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, God might restore in us the divine image. Through time, according to the Scriptures, God has furthered this calling through covenants made with Noah, Abraham, Israel, and David. The prophet Jeremiah looked forward to a new covenant not written on tablets of stone but upon the heart (*Jer 31.31-34*). In God's Son, Christ Jesus, a new covenant is given us, established in his "blood ... poured out for the many for the forgiveness of sins" (*Mt 26:28*), secure through his resurrection from the dead (*Eph 1:19-23*), and sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit poured into our hearts (*Rom 5:5*). Into this covenant of death to sin and of new life in Christ we are baptized, and empowered to share God's communion in Christ with all people, to the ends of the earth and of creation.

3. We humbly recognize that this calling and gift of communion entails responsibilities for our common life before God as we seek, through grace, to be faithful in our service of God's purposes for the world. Joined in one universal Church, which is Christ's Body, spread throughout the earth, we serve his gospel even as we are enabled to be made one across the dividing walls of human sin and estrangement (*Eph 2.12-22*). The forms of this life in the Church, caught up in the mystery of divine communion, reveal to the hostile and divisive power of the world the "manifold wisdom of God" (*Eph 3:9-10*). Faithfulness, honesty, gentleness, humility, patience, forgiveness, and love itself, lived out in mutual deference and service (*Mk 10.44-45*) among the Church's people and through its ministries, contribute to building up the body of Christ as it grows to maturity (*Eph 4.1-16; Col 3.8-17*).

4. In the providence of God, which holds sway even over our divisions caused by sin, various families of churches have grown up within the universal Church in the course of history. Among these families is the Anglican Communion, which provides a particular charism and identity among the many followers and servants of Jesus. We recognise the wonder, beauty and challenge of maintaining communion in this family of churches, and the need for mutual commitment and discipline as a witness to God's promise in a world and time of instability, conflict, and fragmentation. Therefore, we covenant together as churches of this Anglican Communion to be faithful to God's promises through the historic faith we confess, our common worship, our participation in God's mission, and the way we live together.

5. To covenant together is not intended to change the character of this Anglican expression of Christian faith. Rather, we recognise the importance of renewing in a solemn way our commitment to one another, and to the common understanding of faith and order we have received, so that the bonds of affection which hold us together may be re-affirmed and intensified. We do this in order to reflect, in our relations with one another, God's own faithfulness and promises towards us in Christ (2 Cor 1.20-22).

6. We are a people who live, learn, and pray by and with the Scriptures as God's Word. We seek to adore God in thanks and praise and to make intercession for the needs of people

everywhere through common prayer, united across many cultures and languages. We are privileged to share in the mission of the apostles to bring the gospel of Christ to all nations and peoples, not only in words but also in deeds of compassion and justice that witness to God's character and the triumph of Christ over sin and death. We give ourselves as servants of a greater unity among the divided Christians of the world. May the Lord help us to "preach not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake". (2 Cor. 4.5)

The seventh paragraph says more about our mission and how we are to undertake it.

7. Our faith embodies a coherent testimony to what we have received from God's Word and the Church's long-standing witness. Our life together reflects the blessings of God (even as it exposes our failures in faith, hope and love) in growing our Communion into a truly global family. The mission we pursue aims at serving the great promises of God in Christ that embrace the peoples and the world God so loves. This mission is carried out in shared responsibility and stewardship of resources, and in interdependence among ourselves and with the wider Church.

The final paragraph is a prayer for God to give redeeming strength to our family so that it may live and work as God means it to do.

8. Our prayer is that God will redeem our struggles and weakness, renew and enrich our common life and use the Anglican Communion to witness effectively in all the world, working with all people of good will, to the new life and hope found in Christ Jesus.

The Preamble states:

We, as Churches of the Anglican Communion, under the Lordship of Jesus Christ, solemnly covenant together in these following affirmations and commitments. As people of God, drawn from "every nation, tribe, people and language" (Rev 7.9), we do this in order to proclaim more effectively in our different contexts the grace of God revealed in the gospel, to offer God's love in responding to the needs of the world, to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, and together with all God's people to attain the full stature of Christ (Eph 4.3,13).

*www.anglicancommunion.org/commission/covenant/final/

Also: <http://www.archbishopofcanterbury.org/2686>



The Anglican Communion Covenant – A Study Guide

A Study Guide and a Questions & Answers document has been published to assist people exploring the **Anglican Communion Covenant**.

The study guide (available as a pdf document) from the Anglican Communion website* is intended for parishes, deaneries, dioceses or groups of individuals wishing to explore the Covenant and the way it describes Anglican identity. It contains the text of the Anglican Communion Covenant interspersed with summaries of the material. Communion members are invited to download the guide and to adapt it for their own context. The set of Questions & Answers about the Covenant seeks to address some commonly asked questions. Neither document is a definitive commentary on the Covenant.

These resources were produced as a result of a meeting of the **Inter-Anglican Standing Committee on Unity Faith and Order (IASCUFO)** in 2009. It is suggested some of the material could be placed in Parish Bulletins or Diocesan Newspapers.

(The working group of IASCUFO includes the Rt Revd Victoria Matthews, Bishop of Christchurch New Zealand (convenor); the Rt Revd Kumara Ilangasinghe, recently retired Bishop of Kurunagala, Church of Ceylon; and the Revd Dr Simon Oliver, Associate Professor, Systematic Theology, University of Nottingham.)

*www.anglicancommunion.org/commission/covenant/study-materials

ANGLICANS TOGETHER INC ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING and PRE SYNOD MEETING

SUNDAY PM - 25 September 2011

All Saints' Church Hall, Ambrose St. Hunters Hill

NEW RECTOR ARRIVES AT THE HISTORIC CHURCH OF ST PAUL'S, BURWOOD



The Reverend Dr James Collins was instituted and inducted as the Ninth Rector of St Paul's Anglican Church, Burwood on 9 February 2011 by the Bishop of South Sydney, *Robert Forsyth*.



James Collins did his theological training in Perth at Murdoch University and Edith Cowan University. He was ordained in 1987. He recently completed a PhD through the University of Tasmania. He was ordained in 1987. Before coming to Sydney, James

had ministered, since 2001, in parishes in the Diocese of Tasmania. Also he was the convener of the state-wide committee overseeing religious education and school chaplaincies in public schools. He was a member of the Diocesan Ministry Council and a member of the Professional Standards Committee for the Diocese of Tasmania.

ST JOHN'S, SOUTH SYDNEY (Darlinghurst) is another Historic Church with a new Rector, *the Reverend Edward (Ed) Vaughan*.

Previously Rector of Darling Street Church, "church planting guru *Ed Vaughan*", described as such in 'Sydney Anglicans', left the inner West Sydney in 2005 for 'the green fields of Ireland' to become Rector of the small but growing evangelical parish of Crinken (near Dublin); part of the Church of Ireland.

He has now returned to the inner city Church of St John's in Kings Cross, where he was instituted and inducted by the Bishop of South Sydney, *Robert Forsyth* in the presence of the Archbishop of Sydney on 2 February 2011.

VISIT US ON-LINE
www.anglicanstogether.org

**Simplicity and Integrity:
 The King James Version of the Bible in the church and the world**

A DAY CONFERENCE

Celebrating the 400th Anniversary of the King James Version

Thursday, 7th July, 9.30 am to 4 pm

Upper TC Hammond Lecture Theatre, Moore College, Newtown

Speakers:

Professor Mark Strauss, Professor of New Testament, Bethel Seminary San Diego

Professor Dianne Speed, Dean and CEO, Sydney College of Divinity

Dr Greg Clarke, CEO, Bible Society Australia

Dr Michael Jensen, Lecturer in Doctrine and Church History, Moore Theological College

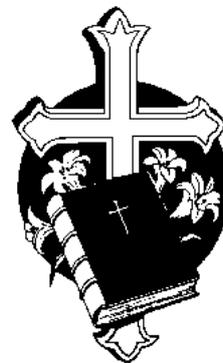
Dr Greg Anderson, Head, Dept of Mission, Moore Theological College.

Registration: \$40: Lectures, Morning Tea, Lunch

\$25 non-workers and students.

Register with Julie 95779897 or

Julie.Olston@moore.edu.cau (\$20 concession)



An Invitation to ALL CLERGY AND LAITY to join in a Festal High Mass at 5.30 pm

14th JULY, 2011

Christ Church Cathedral, Newcastle to celebrate

'*John Keble's 1833 Assize Sermon*' - considered the foundational event of the Oxford Movement

Further Details: *Fr Stephen Moore*, Assistant Rector, St Anne's Anglican Church Gresford
 Tele 4938 9313; Email: gresfordparish@bigpond.com

BOOK REVIEW

'THE THINGS THAT MAKE FOR PEACE'

HEATHER THOMSON

Barton Books, Canberra 2009.

Dr Heather Thomson, a lecturer in Theology at St Mark's National Theological Centre, Canberra, visited South Africa, Edinburgh and Northern Ireland as part of her research for this book. She draws on the experiences of participants in reconciliation processes in South Africa and Northern Ireland and concepts of restorative justice, as compared with simply punitive justice. She draws on psychological as well as legal sources in discussing "what is a justice that is truly restorative, not just punitive?" *Dr Thomson* also considers patterns of abuse and patterns of respect and mutuality in families and close relationships, no doubt drawing in part on her own experiences as a mother and social worker.

Heather Thomson looks at "who is God?" and an understanding of God as restorer, lover and peacemaker, rather than judge and punisher. She highlights how a larger understanding of God can open us up to understand God's actions in Jesus' life, death and resurrection as truly gracious and life-giving. This points us towards a forgiveness which frees the forgiver as well as the one forgiven and allows new and restored patterns of generosity and healing in everyday life for each of us, as well as providing a template for change from larger systems of oppression such as apartheid.

The beauty of this book is the diversity of the sources chosen by the writer. She integrates insights and learning from psychology, theology, law and sociology into a study of how we live without glossing over abuse and horror but facing these honestly in ways that make for real peace.

Available: www.bartonbooks.com.au (\$25.00).

BOOKS - New Releases

WHERE THE HELL IS GOD?

Richard Leonard

Paulist 9781587680601

\$17.95

How do we reconcile the experience of God's apparent indifference to our suffering and loss with our Christian affirmation of God's goodness and unfailing love? Where is God when death takes a child, a terrible accident occurs, or when all sorts of natural disasters devastate families and communities? The book starts with a personal story of the author's sister being left a quadriplegic from a car. This personal experience of grief and tragic loss leads him to reflect seriously, objectively and compassionately about the nature of this God we worship. He offers suggestions that are pastoral, faithful and sensitive for those who suffer and are in pain as well as for those who care for them and minister to them.

BROKEN HEARTS & NEW CREATIONS

- Intimations of a great reversal

James Alison

DLT 9780232527964

\$29.95

This work has all the brilliance, wit and panache that have made Alison one of the most influential contemporary Catholic writers. Celebrated for his firm but gentle insistence on facing down current ecclesiastical teaching on homosexuality. He is also admired and enjoyed for the freshness and verve of his interpretations of Scripture, for his dazzling word play and teasing connections, surprises and reversals.

A HOUSE DIVIDED

The quest for unity within Anglicanism

Tom Frame

Acorn

9780908284924 **\$39.99**

One of Australia's best-known commentators on contemporary Anglicanism argues that the Church's problems have become acute and that it must deal with decaying foundations and crumbling walls. Contentious and controversial, this book will prompt Anglicans across Australia to think deeply about their Church and the urgent need for reform and renewal.

WHEN CHRISTIANS GET IT WRONG

Adam Hamilton

Abingdon

9781426709142 **\$21.95**

When people talk about their problems with Christianity and the Church, they most often name certain attitudes and behaviours on the part of Christians: including judging others, condemning those who belong to other religions, rejecting science, injecting politics into faith, and focusing exclusively on "hot-button" moral issues like homosexuality. But it doesn't have to be this way. *Adam Hamilton* offers hope that following Jesus can be more about open doors than locked fences, more about serving people than judging them, more about joyful living than angry fighting.

THE RESURRECTION EFFECT

Transforming Christian life and thought

Anthony Kelly

Orbis 9781570757709 was \$39.95; NOW **\$19.98**

What difference should the resurrection of the crucified Jesus make to Christian thought, to our sense of the cosmos, and our understanding of humanity itself? Despite the centrality of the resurrection in the New Testament and the Creed, the practical answer of many Christians might be: not much. In this light, Australian theologian, *Anthony Kelly* sets out to affirm the resurrection as the living centre of Christian life.

These books available from :

St Luke's Bookshop, Enmore.

For information ring: **02 9798 35 89** or

Email: jwinton@swifts1.com.au

SPIRITUALITY FOR EVERYDAY LIVING

ANGLICANS TOGETHER WEEKEND AWAY

28th – 30th October 2011

The Tops Conference Centre, Stanwell Tops

just 1 hour south of Sydney

Rev'd Dr Erica Mathieson, Rector of Holy Cross Anglican Church Hackett, ACT since August 2008 will give addresses on the topic, followed by discussion. Erica is known to many from her ministries at St James King St, St Peters Cremorne Sydney, St Margaret's Eltham in Victoria and in the Diocese of Bathurst. She is also a visiting lecturer in pastoral theology at St Mark's National Theological Centre in Canberra. Erica has a strong ecumenical commitment and seeks a faith that is life-giving, growing in spiritual depth and love, inclusive, celebratory and caring.

Rev'd Andrew Bowyer, Associate priest at St James King St will lead bible studies on the topic, complementing the addresses.

There will be several workshops to choose from and a beautiful bushland setting to enjoy, minutes from the beach, with time for fun, friendship and connecting with others from parishes around Sydney and environs. A Sunday Eucharist will cap it all off!

SEE YOU THERE!

COST

EARL BIRD RATE FOR BOOKINGS BY 30 MAY 2011 - \$140 per person and \$50 for pre-secondary school children, otherwise \$150 per person & \$55 for children (pre-secondary school)

The cost includes accommodation and meals. Linen is not provided.

BOOKINGS ARE ESSENTIAL USING THE FORM BELOW.

PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM BY 31 JULY 2011 TO:

Anglicans Together Weekend Away
C/- 'Tricia Blombery
11 Park Road
Marrickville NSW 2204

Electronic Payment Details
BSB: 062 165
Account name: Anglicans Together Inc
Account no.: 1012 3708



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Booking form for Anglicans Together Weekend Away 28th – 30th October 2011

Name:

Address:

Contact phone &/or email:

Number of adults..... Number & ages of children attending

I enclose a cheque for:.....

If paying electronically, direct payment receipt number:.....

Any special dietary requirements:.....