

When the manna stops

John C Chapman



John Chapman is an evangelist in retirement

AS YOU READ THROUGH the book of Joshua and we come to Chapter 5 we see Israel coming to terms with life in the new Promised land. They have circumcised the males, they have celebrated the Passover and then you come to this fascinating statement:—‘they ate some of the produce of the land. The manna stopped the day after they ate the food of the land’ (Josh. 5:11–12). It is hard to remember, at this stage what the manna was.

When Israel was wandering in the Desert if Sin there was no food and the people of Israel cried out to God and He sent the manna. You can read about it in Exodus 26. Every day it came except on the Sabbath. Twice as much had to be collected the day before the Sabbath. This had been going on and on for 40 years. It was God’s wonderful provision for them and it taught them that they were totally dependant upon God’s goodness and kindness.

However now God was going to provide for them in a different way. Some might say a ‘natural’ way. There was no need for God to specially provide food when there was food available in the land. It didn’t mean that they were no longer dependant upon God for sustenance. I simply meant that God was providing it in a different way.

If we only recognise God’s providential

care in the spectacular we cut ourselves off from recognising the goodness of God to us in ‘life and health and daily food’

In the Prayer of Thanksgiving we thank God for our ‘creation, preservation and all the blessing of this life’. The greatest

It taught them they were totally dependant upon God’s goodness.

blessing is the wonderful death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus on our behalf. He opens the way for us to be right with God and enjoy eternal life. God is a gracious and magnanimous God. ●

Memory upgrades

Alison Blake



Alison Blake listens to podcasts and her children and the Scriptures in Sydney’s West.

Reminders must be one of life’s biggest irritations for children. The daily reminder to feed the dog (“I did it yesterday, what makes you think I won’t do it today!?”); the reminder to drive carefully, keep to the speed limit and keep the car doors locked (“What do you think I am—irresponsible!?”).

OUR HEAVENLY FATHER is big on reminders to his children. We need memory upgrades, like our computers. When Israel crossed the Jordan River and entered the promised land, God instructed each tribe to contribute a stone to a memorial. Scattered throughout the Blue Mountains are stone memorials to the explorers and surveyors. But the Israelites’

stone pillars were hands-on, visual reminders of their God’s amazing deeds. He expected each generation of children to ask “What’s this pile of stones here for, Dad?”. The fathers would enthusiastically recount how God had brought their ancestors out of Egypt, and into the Promised Land. And everyone was to respond with loving, trusting obedience.

In 2007 it is our privilege to read in the

Do we grown ups quietly switch on our “mental screen-saver”.

Scriptures of the mighty deeds of our great God who has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. Peter tells his readers that he will always remind them of the things of God, even though they know them. He wants them to remember, and live out, these things long after he is gone (2 Peter 1).

Little children delight in repeatedly hearing the same stories, but anyone who’s ever taught or read the Bible to older children will know they delight in announcing

“I already know that story – it’s boring”. But do we grown ups quietly switch on our “mental screen-saver” when the Easter and Christmas messages are recounted each year? Do I switch off, or worse, skip church, when I discover the new sermon series is the same as those convention talks I heard last year, or that podcast I listened to last week?

Daily life tells us that we and our

children are frequently forgetful of what God says to us. We are sometimes resistant to being renewed and transformed by the Word of God. Let’s actively embrace each opportunity to be exposed again to the Scriptures taught and read, to have our memories refreshed. Let’s enthusiastically welcome the opportunity to be reminded of what God has done, is doing, and will do for us in the future. Let’s pray that we, and our children, will never forget God’s precepts, for by them God has given us life (Psalm 119:93). ●

IF PERFECT LOVE CASTS OUT FEAR, this is a message that must rankle the spin-doctors today. Unfortunately, it is not just the spin-doctors outside 'the Church' that are increasing people's fear in order to gain their own political goals, or to prevent the goals of others.

Given our increasingly anxious world, the highest value now seems to be 'safety'; in our fear we allow others to take away personal freedom with the promise of greater security. Instead of arguing *from* what is right, people argue *towards* some possible disaster in the future. Their fearful audience is 'persuaded' (bullied?) by being dangled over this hypothetical pit in the future. And, of course, persuasion by *things to come* requires a new breed of prophets, high priests, and Messiahs, who then live off the capital of their new-found importance. Even in the Church, the politics of fear is running rampant.

Take, for example, the issue of Lay Administration of the Lord's Supper. In one form or another, Sydney Synod has discussed this issue for more than thirty years, and it has been discussed in other circles since at least the beginning of the twentieth century. If the Synod is persuaded that this is the *right* thing to do, then it should be done. The politics of fear, however, thinks up potential disaster scenarios, which then freeze any move towards better practice. This is despite the fact that there are usually other ways to solve these potential disasters that are far more Christian than failing to do what we believe to be right. To deal with the spectre of the potential loss of African friendships, for example, wouldn't it be better for our statesmen to approach these friends, talk with them, explain what is going on, discuss the issue theologically, seek to persuade them clearly, open up further lines of communication and relationship, etc. Couldn't this even be praised as good Christian leadership? In comparison, to sit frozen by fear seems exactly the opposite.

Then there are the more emotional (because more important) issues associated with sexual protocols and child protection. In the climate in which we unfortunately find ourselves, there are many fears that can be aroused in the course of discussion. Fear of what the world may think if we do something; fear that we don't do enough; fear of more disasters in the future; fear of costly discovery of disasters in the past; fear of being seen to be not caring for the victims, or even of supporting the perpetrators; etc. And where these fears are explicitly evoked by the advocates of certain proposals, rational debate is stifled along with the potential for even better solutions to be proposed.

In a consumer society, fear is a necessary evil. For the Christian, it is an evil that is unnecessary. It has been overcome.

Consumer societies have to promote fear, in the interest of marketing. Fear drives people from manufactured problems to the manufactured solutions that make the manufactured profits.

But Matthew 6 takes the analysis deeper. The fear that drives consumerism arises from a profound anxiety about survival. It is only the knowledge of a loving heavenly Father who cares so much that he has a kingdom in store for his children that ultimately solves this anxiety. And this is because his solution is permanent. The Son of God has destroyed the one who holds the power of death and set free those who were held in slavery all their lives by its fear (Heb. 2:14–15).

God's word encourages us not to give in to fear, but to continue to do what is right (1 Peter 3:14). We should be motivated by what God has done, and persuaded to take action because it is the right thing to do in response to his grace. The politics and rhetoric of fear should be banished from amongst us. Instead, we need a rhetoric and a politics of what is right. ●

The Australian Church Record

The Australian Church Record is an evangelical newspaper in the Reformed Anglican tradition of the historic creeds and the 39 Articles of Faith, and the standard of teaching and practice in the Book of Common Prayer. We accept the Scriptures as God's word written, and as containing all things necessary for salvation and the final authority in all matters of faith and behaviour.

Publisher: Robert C. Doyle, Chairperson,
Australian Church Record ACN 000 071 438

Executive Editor: Peter G. Bolt
All enquiries: PO Box 218, Camperdown NSW 1450

Donations towards the publication of the ACR can be sent to the Treasurer, at the above address.

From 2004 The Australian Church Record is only published in electronic form which can be subscribed to through our website, www.australianchurchrecord.net

Readers can also subscribe on behalf of other people, who will be able to unsubscribe later should they wish to do so.

The Australian Church Record is designed and typeset by Lankshear Design Pty Ltd. Telephone: 02 9868 7044

Where the CMS Footprints are still warm

Peter Bolt

Lango Diocese. Perhaps not on everyone's 'best known Anglican regions' list, Lango covers an extensive amount of territory in mid-Northern Uganda. It is under the care of Bishop Charles Idukami, who, when I first met him, was covered in brick dust from the extra room he was building onto his house at Boroboro.

THE HOUSE WAS originally built by Tom Lawrence, a CMS missionary from Victoria. Although the region was first evangelised by a Ugandan, who crossed the Nile into Lango in 1905 at the invitation of the King of the region, the work of Christian ministry was put onto an even firmer footing as a result of the ministry of Lawrence and his wife Verlie, who began their major work in Uganda in 1924. Tom translated Scripture, wrote hymns, taught church leaders, organised schools, had pastoral oversight of about 150 churches, travelled thousands of miles to baptise people, built churches and houses, and sold thousands of scriptures. Verlie became involved in running much-needed classes for women. When sickness came, they went home, vowing they would be back, but, when Tom died suddenly in 1941 Lango's link with Australia was broken.

To help the anxious Australian visitor, Lango is covered with gum trees, planted so far from home—and thriving. Today, this is a very needy area of the country. Apart from the ordinary issues of remote, rural parishes, this area of Uganda has had decades of trouble, leaving deep scars on her people. Joseph Koney's vision to form his Lord's Resistance Army led to twenty years of terror for Northern Uganda, which is only now starting to settle down. 'The Rebels' moved through the land, bringing random violence to the villagers. At night, children were kidnapped and forcefully enlisted in the LRA, deeply traumatised by



Tom Lawrence's house

the things that happened to them and by the things they were forced to do. Some two and a half million Ugandans have become 'Internally Displaced People' as a result, driven from their homes to live in concentration camps. Across two decades other children were born, who have known no other reality.

dispensary, a school, a well-reputed teacher's training college, and a cathedral—whose foundation stone was laid by Tom Lawrence, the Australian. From the pulpit on Sunday during my visit, Bishop Charles spoke of the Lawrence's ministry, and of his pleasure at welcoming one of Lawrence's countrymen to the Cathedral—'like a long-lost grandson'.

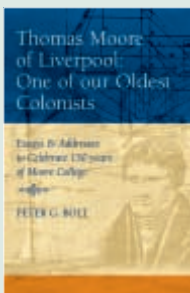
Two and a half million Ugandans have become 'Internally Displaced People'.

As Peace talks began to achieve something, the people of the North began to go home. Bishop Charles deeply feels the great needs that confront the Christians of Lango Diocese, as people start to rebuild their lives. The need for psychological help, for medical help, and the need for the hope that only springs from the gospel.

Boroboro mission station was once the centre of its local region. It now houses a

He spoke of his pleasure at Lango having revived a connection with Australia through this one gum-tree lover sitting in the front row. He spoke of his hope that the links between Lango and Australia might be revived in the near future.

It was a great honour to walk in the footsteps of these CMS missionaries from the early days. It was a cause for thanksgiving to find that their footsteps were still warm. ●



Thomas Moore of Liverpool: One of Our Oldest Colonists. Essays and Addresses to Celebrate 150 Years of Moore College

As part of the sesquicentenary celebrations of Moore College in 2006, Peter Bolt has written a number of essays examining the most interesting life of Thomas Moore, benefactor of Moore College. This collection is now available in a special limited edition hardback (\$71.50), a paperback (\$44.00), or an e-version (\$22.00).

Order form at www.boltpublishing.com.au

SYNOD AGAIN?

Thoughts of a Synod rep...

Joanna Warren



Joanna Warren
sorts out Synod

Wow ... Synod has come up early this year! I didn't realise it was only 3 weeks away! What's happening?

SO I WENT TO www.sydneyanglicans.net.au and then found under 'Services' an item 'Synod and Standing Committee', a click on that took me to a page where there was a heading 'Synod this year'. I clicked on that and found an on-line copy of what I had already received in the mail, but nothing more.

But I did notice 'Synod Procedures'—a useful document with lovely, clearly written information about the nitty-gritty of how Synod runs. Just what I need at Synod with me (with the important bits highlighted) after a tiring day at work.

The '2007 Session of Synod' book will arrive soon, with its report of what Standing Committee has done during the year (though minutes are available on-line) and the legislation up for debate at Synod.

Then there will be the online latest update after the Standing Committee meeting on 27th August.

Having to write this article has been a good exercise for me, it seems I need to re-learn every year just how all the info fits together.

The Year Book (not yet printed but it's coming...) serves as a very useful reference book for all of the organisations and many of the individuals involved in ministry in the Diocese. It includes all the office bearers of various Boards, Councils and Committees, including those of schools, colleges, welfare organisations, Standing Committee and Regional Councils. This will also soon be online.

I am still waiting for the 2007 Session of Synod handbook, which is the key, and also the Business Paper for the first day of Synod. As soon as it arrives I'll be trying to put aside the time to read through what's happening on the first day, plus all the attendant information contained in the Synod handbook with details of legislation, both current and proposed. I'll make notes and try to talk to the other parish reps about it all.

The business paper also contains other matters for discussion which don't relate to legislation at all, but still require some thought. Synod will be asked to express its mind on various concerns, passing motions to sympathise or support, or take some

The opportunity to hear ... intelligent debate ... is always stimulating and refreshing.

The most up-to-date source of information about the various pieces of legislation that regulate our common life is now on-line at www.sydneyanglicans.net.au then click on 'Services' then on 'Acts and Ordinances'. The most recent ordinances are listed here, the older book, 'Acts Ordinances and Regulations' only contains material up to 2005.

other action. The opportunity to hear (and be part of) intelligent debate that can go to the heart of what we believe, is always stimulating and refreshing.

But after reading through all the papers and doing your homework, it's great to remember God's promise that if anyone lack wisdom, all he has to do is ask. (James 1:5). I'm sure I'll be doing a lot of that! ●

Appealing for Women Bishops [CONT. FROM PAGE 1]

In April, Dr Porter said the question comes down to the word 'person' in the definition of those eligible to be a bishop. Does the use of this word include or exclude female candidates? When this ambiguity was introduced in 1989, the then Archbishop of Sydney, Donald Robinson, was concerned that it may be used to allow women bishops.

Claiming that those she represents have a majority in General Synod, in Porter's view the argument for the larger issue is quite simple. In July she told Ecumenical News International, 'to say that women

can be priests, but not bishops, is to make women second-class priests'.

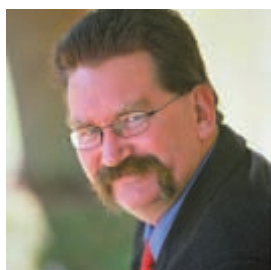
Sydney Synod has ... consistently differed from that opinion.

This clarifies the argument for the alternative opinion also. If women cannot be priests, then they also cannot be bishops. In the annals of the Appellate Tribunal there

was a previous opinion expressed that there were no theological objections to women joining the priesthood. Sydney Synod has not only consistently differed from that opinion (as we are entitled to do), but stated the exact opposite. The Tribunal's opinion on the current question is as yet uncertain. What is certain, however, is that the biblical and theological arguments which have led Sydney to repeatedly say 'no' to women priests (and so, bishops), have just as strongly said 'yes' to a whole variety of women's ministry that continues to benefit our churches. ●

The Rhetoric of Emotional Manipulation

Peter Bolt



Peter Bolt wonders about using victims to sway the crowd

WHEN THE EMOTIONAL temperature goes up, so does the opportunity for emotional manipulation.

It is really quite a simple strategy, but devastating in its power, making it almost irresistible in its force. The speaker proposes a strategy aimed at ameliorating the problem to some degree or another. Now, normally speaking, everyone knows that there would be any number of strategies for solving every other problem that emerges in human life.

But the rhetoric of emotional manipulation cannot allow multiple options. Instead, it proposes that the proposed option is THE strategy, the ONLY strategy. It just wouldn't do to allow other strategies to be proposed or discussed, so this is where the rhetoric of emotional manipulation comes into its own with emotionally charged issues.

At the first hint of any alternative being proposed, this rhetoric immediately hints, implies, suggests, or just comes out and states, that if anyone is against the proposed strategy, then they are voting against the victims and allowing the perpetrators to prevail. Of course, if anyone was given the chance to examine the issue dispassionately, then the nonsense of this position is patently clear. You can share the same assumptions and the same desire to solve the same problem, but still propose a dif-

ferent strategy for achieving the outcomes. The person who will not admit this is already well on the way to being a perfect user of the rhetoric of manipulation.

You see, once it is implied that any opposition to this one, solitary strategy (which is, of course, touted as the only solution), then the victory is almost assured. Then, when it is implied that any opponent to the strategy is at least supporting the perpetrators and ignoring the victims, or perhaps that they are suspected of being perpetrators themselves, then the victory is irresistible. In a simple, two-step procedure, you have manipulated the crowd and your strategy has been overwhelmingly supported.

“What will happen if it is the wrong strategy?”, I hear you asking. What, how could you so blatantly ignore and mistreat the victims?? Shame on you! ●

Something old, not something new

Mark D Thompson



Mark Thompson steps into the hermeneutical gap

FOR AS LONG AS THE Bible has been read by Christians, serious and careful attention has been given to just how we should read it. Important treatments of what we know as biblical hermeneutics can be found in the writings of many church fathers including Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Chrysostom, Origen and Augustine. During the Reformation, Martin Luther prefaced his German translation of the Gospels with a little introduction on what to look for as they are read—a similar little tract served as an introduction to the books of Moses in the Old Testament. Calvin and Bullinger also both wrote about the proper manner of reading the Scriptures. So while it is true that Friedrich Schleiermacher began a new era of discussion on biblical interpretation with a series of lectures he gave in the very early

years of the nineteenth century, it is certainly ridiculous to suggest that so-called ‘pre-critical exegesis’ was ‘hermeneutically naïve’.

It is particularly important to notice that these classical discussions of biblical interpretation operated within the context of a willing submission to the teaching of Scripture. The importance of reading Scripture rightly was first and foremost a matter of reading Scripture humbly, expecting to be addressed by God and being willing to be changed in both opinion and behaviour by what he has to say. The words written here are the words God wants us to read or hear read, to understand, to believe and to obey. For these theologians at least, the importance of careful thinking about what we are doing when we read Scripture arises, not from scepticism about the ability of human words to convey the truth about God and his purposes, nor from pessimism about the effectiveness of reading in general, but from an awareness that what is written here really matters and must not be distorted by intruding our own agenda upon that of the text. Hermeneutical seriousness can in fact go hand in hand with the highest view of the nature and authority of Scripture.

There has been an avalanche of books on hermeneutics over the past twenty years. Many of these have been written from the same commitments as the Reformers and early church fathers. They encourage seriousness in reading the Bible: attention to what is in fact written in a particular passage; reading words, sentences and paragraphs in their context; and recognising the way the whole Bible comes together as a testimony to God's purposes in Jesus Christ and a call to repentance and faith. However some contemporary books on the subject read more like sophisticated ways of avoiding what the biblical text is in fact saying—what it has been plainly recognised as saying by two thousand years of Christian readers. The gap between the Bible and our current cultural commitments is narrowed by reinterpreting the Bible rather than by exposing our culture to criticism. The hermeneutics of faith is undergirded by confidence in God and his goodness: God wants what really is in our best interests if only we weren't too blind to see. The hermeneutics of unbelief is powered by suspicion and the arrogant assumption that we can and do know better than the Bible writers and perhaps even God himself. ●

Women and the Word



Jane serves on the ministry team at St Peter's Barge, London.

Strengthening weak knees

Jane Tooher

I can't stop thinking about a man I met this morning. I was visiting a friend's church and as I walked from the station I noticed an elderly man walking extremely slowly, stopping every few steps. His knees were permanently bent and each time he stopped he had to hold on to something for his balance. The walk from the station to the church would take most people a couple of minutes. When I was next to him I asked if he was going to church. We kept chatting and it came out that he had also caught the train, which meant that he had to walk up the stairs from the tube station. We climbed the church steps, resting often, but he could not make the last one. His legs were giving way and I couldn't lift him. Someone came and helped and after resting he was ready to go into church. It must take this man several hours, much of which is painful and exhausting for him, to get to church each Sunday. Was going to church that morning worth all that effort? Definitely. Why? Many reasons—including that the preacher believed that the Bible is God's word and that it is relevant to us. He did not shy away from preaching on Mt 7:15–23 and speaking of the reality of sin, hell and judgment. But is that what a man in his 80's needed to hear? Yes. He needed the encouragement to persevere. To be reminded that the narrow road is hard. That Christianity is true, despite his earthly body failing him.

1. How is this man an encouragement to you?
2. Is his behaviour a challenge or rebuke to you in any way?
3. We can think that we *ought* to hear God's word, but why is it that we *need* to hear God's word?

Spend some time in prayer about these things. ●

The Episcopal Church—has anything been done?

Gav Poole



Gavin Poole keeps a watch on things American.

Christ Church Plano, Texas, was the biggest church in the Episcopal denomination. Now it is the biggest church in the Anglican Mission in the Americas (AMiA). This is one of many examples of how The Episcopal Church is changing in the wake of the 2003 consecration of Gene Robinson as a Bishop.

THERE HAS BEEN MUCH talk about what has to be done in response to the 2003 consecration—what Lambeth should do, what the Primates should do and what the House of Bishops should do. Many churches however, have given up looking toward the powers to be and have taken matters into their own hands.

So what have they done? Some have stayed, some have taken their congregations and property elsewhere whilst others have left their property.

Take for instance Christ Church, Plano. It is a relatively new church, planted in 1985 in a relatively new suburb North of Dallas. With an average of 2,200 people now attending on the weekend, it would be the largest in the Episcopal denomination. It is known for its evangelical style and its Rector, David Roseberry, is a well-known evangelical. After 2003 the church waited to see what would happen. In 2006 it decided that too little had happened too late and cut its ties with the Dallas diocese and hence The Episcopal Church.

The church successfully negotiated with the Diocese to not only leave but to take its property with it. They have a lot of property, and the debt to go with it.

In 2007 they joined the AMiA, a seven year old mission initiative. They have their own Bishops but come under the oversight of Bishop Kolini from Rwanda and relate to the world wide Anglican communion through that province. They have undergone swift growth since 2003. There are now 116 churches in their organisation. Many of these were once a part of The Episcopal Church.

Christ Church, Plano, is not the only church to take radical action. I can think of five others that have left the Dallas diocese recently. Some took their property and others didn't. Some have joined the AMiA and others have joined other groups. Dallas is a relatively conservative diocese. It is one of the eleven dioceses that formed the conservative Anglican Communion Network. It seems that the beef is not with the diocese per se, rather its association with The Episcopal Church.

So while things may seem slow at Lambeth, it cannot be said that nothing is happening. Individual churches have taken action to distance themselves from The Episcopal Church. Existing Anglican organisations have provided umbrella support. New organisations have been formed. In historically unprecedented moves the provinces of Rwanda, Singapore, Nigeria, Kenya and Uganda have consecrated Episcopal clergymen as Bishops. There is plenty going on.

The Episcopal Church is dwindling whilst the kingdom of God continues to grow and flourish with or without help from Lambeth. ●

