

A layman may ordain a Bishop

Why Anglicanism needs lay administration

Robert Doyle



Thomas Cranmer, author of the Reformation's Anglican Prayer Book, said a layman could even ordain a bishop.

Sydney Synod has passed an ordinance removing the prohibition on lay people administering the service of Holy Communion. Reactions from around the world indicate that this is the most important reaffirmation of the New Testament's teaching on the nature of ministry since the Reformation. The Archbishop of Canterbury's statement is a keen insight into what has happened: "this negates the firm ontological basis of the ordained ministry which has been central to our understanding of the Church." Further, as in recent times Sydney Synod has taken a number of important stances on the nature of scriptural ministry, this latest move is but the capstone of a much deeper movement.

What is meant by: "the firm onto-

logical basis of the ordained ministry... central to our understanding of the Church"? What is the teaching of the New Testament which Archbishop Thomas Cranmer and the other Anglican Reformers grasped? How has Sydney Synod reaffirmed the true nature of evangelical ministry?

Two views of spiritual reality

Since the Reformation there have been two competing views of spiritual reality. The first and dominant view is that of Roman Catholicism and Anglo-catholicism, whether traditional or liberal. Here, the understanding of Christian ministry, or how God works in the world, is set in the context of a firm belief in a relentlessly sacramental universe. On this view, in a fundamental way God works downward through his creation to reveal himself, and to redeem, through a hierarchy of sacraments or sacred symbols. The world is seen as a place in which created things become vehicles of God's blessing, and humanity itself is defined as a sacra-

performance of sacramental rites. That is, the foundational understanding, within which church and ministry are understood, is a sacramental and hierarchical one.

The human role in this sacramental view is focused in the three-fold ministry of bishops, priests and deacons. From Ignatius of Antioch onwards it was believed by many that the bishop, the priest and the deacon were icons, or sacred signs, or sacraments of God: God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Indeed, without the bishop, or the priest as his sacramental deputy or vicar, there could be no valid Holy Communion. This older and dominant view of spiritual reality is that of Roman Catholicism, and with the rise of Anglo-catholicism in the 19th century, it has also become the majority view in Anglicanism.

This is the "ontology" to which Archbishop Carey refers.

In their critical reports on lay administration, both the house of bishops in England and the house of bishops in

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mental being. The sacramental or symbolic potential of all nature is made actual by the consecration of some elements of it in explicitly sacramental rites. Within this understanding, grace flows down from God, through Christ, to the earthly church via the priestly

Australia have firmly endorsed the sacramental view of the nature of spiritual reality. With one exception, the diocesan bishops of Australia agreed, that after the writings of the New Testament, God revealed to the church that, "only a bishop or **Continued page 2**

High Rise Mission

We are currently witnessing another stage of the evolution of Sydney. After Sydney's expansion ever-outwards, the older inner-city suburbs which were crumbling or dead, are taking on a new lease of life. The seventies and eighties saw the 'yuppifying' of the terrace-house suburbs, and now developers have seen the potential gain in renovating old industrial and commercial sites. Where once stood a factory or a warehouse, new prestige apartments are now being erected. Where a derelict building had stood as an eyesore for decades, there is now an attractive block of units with a gym, swimming pool and countless 'executive apartments'. While some are saying these will be the slums of the future, the mood in the real estate sections of the paper is far more buoyant as the eyes of the investors are being drawn towards the opportunities of the inner-city.

This new trend represents an enormous potential influx of people into these areas of the city, and wherever the people are, there is another mission field for the gospel. This is an opportunity that must be seized, and the best time for seizing it is right now, as the population begins to move in.

But the problems are obvious too. As the city expanded outwards, leaving a dead core, so many of the older churches in these areas have also dried



Out of the dust rises new life for the city.

up and gone. This new growth has no corresponding church building program. The incoming population of people attracted to inner-city living have few centres of ministry to serve them with the good news of Christ.

But the opportunities for the gospel abound. As the investors invest in this real estate, aren't there Christian investors who could purchase apartments and then rent them to people with an evangelistic vision for their fellow

'executive apartment' dwellers? As young city workers buy up these apartments for ease of travel to work and inner-city life, aren't there Christian city workers who could become their neighbours? As the developers make their latest fortune, aren't there gospel developers who can also capitalise on this latest population move, who, instead of removing some material riches from them, can bring them the great riches of Christ? ●

The Australian CHURCH RECORD

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'The *Record* has formed a considerable and honourable part of the history of evangelical anglicanism in Australia.'

D.W.B. Robinson,
'The Church Record Limited and
The *Record*', from *ACR* July 1972.

Contents

Editorial: Sydney Synod reaffirms evangelical ministry	page 3
John Chapman on Hoping Christmas is good news	page 2
John Lavender on What does faithful ministry look like?	page 4
Terry Blowes on Revival in Argentina?	Page 4
Synod Summary by Robert Tong	Page 6
Peter Hayward on Sydney and world Evangelical Anglicanism	Page 6
Robert Tong on Who Calls the Shots?	Page 8
Peter Bolt on Whose life is it anyway?	Page 9
Barry Newman on The Revolutionary Bishop	Page 10
Stephen & Marion Gabbott on Below the skin in Bangkok	Page 10
Bill Salier on The Dome and the Wheel	Page 12
When traditions are being created	page 5
A Quiet Revolution	page 5
Synod's Counsel on Counselling Centre	page 7
Work and Ministry	page 7
Evangelical Theology Links Sydney to Nigeria	page 8
What will happen to God?	page 9
The Rhetoric of Projected Fear	page 11
Sufficient for all Occasions	page 11
Fitting Synod into Life	page 12

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from page 1

priest could celebrate the Holy Communion.”

Associated with this outlook is the belief that the Holy Communion or Lord's Supper is a sacrificial event in itself, a re-presentation to God of the once-for-all sacrifice of Christ on the cross. What theological liberalism has done to this old catholic understanding is to detach the cross of Christ from the wrath and judgment of God, and re-attach it to what they perceive to be God's present work in and through human culture. Thus, it is often re-attached to social justice and human liberation. Needless to say, as worthy as such causes are, they are not the focus of the Lord's Supper, at least in the biblical presentation of it.

The nature, content, and place of evangelical ministry

What then did our Reformers grasp from the New Testament on the true nature of spiritual reality? They saw that God works in the world *personally* and *directly* by his *word* and *Spirit*. They based this on the promises of Christ, that when the Spirit comes to us, both the Father and the Son, all of God in his very person, comes and dwells and does his work in us. God is *not* “at a distance” at the other end of a chain of sacraments. They also grasped at a deep level the promise that the fundamental form of the Spirit's work in the world is word-shaped. The characteristic mark of the Spirit's work in the world is speech.

The ministers and lay people of Sydney Synod who have worked so carefully to reaffirm the truth have done so in order to honour Christ.

Indeed, the Spirit does not speak about himself, but about Christ, and the content of that speech is the written apostolic witness to Christ, that is, the gospel. When the gospel is preached, it is the Spirit who preaches. That accounts for the marvellous effects of gospel preaching; it recreates us in the image of Christ. At the heart of that gospel is the propitiatory and substitutionary atonement wrought by the incarnation, life, work, death, resurrection and present heavenly session of Jesus Christ.

Within this personal and direct work of God in the world through word and Spirit, human ministry becomes instrumental. Human ministry is neither a sacrificing ministry as it was in the Old Testament, nor is it in the form of a fixed sacramental chain, nor does it prohibit lay people from

either preaching or administering the sacraments.

There is abundant evidence in Archbishop Cranmer's writings, as well as his prayer book and the evangelical Articles of Faith, that he with the other Reformers wholeheartedly embraced the New Testament's teaching on how God works in the world. The minister or priest who administers the Holy Communion is but a “common servant” as in a great household. A lay person may ordain a bishop. The once-for-all death of Christ, which we remember in the Lord's Supper, was “a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world”.

Synod's work

How has Sydney Synod reaffirmed the true nature of evangelical ministry in the face of the liberal Anglo-catholicism which has worked so aggressively to deny it? Three high points stand out.

First, on the advice of the Doctrine Commission, in 1996 Synod rejected the new prayer book, *A Prayer Book for Australia*. They did so because the book presented the Eucharist in terms of it being a priestly re-presentation of Christ's sacrifice to the Father, and further, it seriously down-played the New Testament's teaching on the reality of the wrath and judgment of God, and thus propitiatory atonement. By contrast, in Cranmer's Book of Common Prayer we confess that by our sins we

have provoked “most justly thy wrath and indignation against us.” Further, we remember the death of our Lord as “a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction.”

Secondly, this year the Standing Committee of Synod repudiated the Australian bishops' report on lay administration. Explicitly, they repudiated the notion that the Holy Communion in itself is a priestly activity which represents the sacrifice of Christ, and that the church has a second source of divine revelation alongside that of the Bible.

Thirdly, after 25 years of careful investigation, discussion and debate, the Synod removed the prohibition on lay people administering the Lord's Supper. Archbishop Carey was right to see in this affirmation of evangelical ministry a definite negating of the

catholic understanding of spiritual reality on which so much of Anglicanism is now based.

Has Christ been honoured in this?

In understanding the person and work of Christ, there are three questions:

Who is Jesus Christ? Truly man and truly God.

What has Christ done? He has offered himself, and especially in his death, as a propitiatory atonement which reconciles us to God and each other at the deepest levels of our existence.

How does Christ continue to work in the world today? Personally and directly, by the apostolic gospel and his Spirit.

All these are linked and interconnected. To throw doubt on one area of understanding, let alone two, as is happening in Anglicanism worldwide, undermines the rest of our knowledge of Christ. For example, to assert that the church is “the prolongation of the incarnation” and that the church in its Eucharistic activities continues Christ's high priestly work by re-presenting Christ's death to the Father, sharply challenges not only the depth of Christ's incarnation (his person) and reconciling work, but also their present value. To repress the reality of the judgment of God is to deny God his righteousness, and his mercy and love.

The ministers and lay people of Sydney Synod who have worked so carefully to reaffirm the truth have done so in order to honour Christ, in order to let God be God, and so that our not-yet-Christian friends may by faith in his Son grasp the goodness of this God in reconciling us to himself.

Strategically wise?

As well as an appeal for our Anglican friends to return to the apostolic gospel which saves and reconciles, these decisions are strategic. The ordinance passed by Synod is an “action-statement”. We have signalled our determination to stay in the denomination on terms which are dictated by our Reformation roots, the Book of Common Prayer and the creeds and articles of our faith. No longer are we prepared to engage in the hard discussions that we need to have on terms which demand silence and inaction over central teachings of the New Testament. What if the Reformers had said that, in order to have a hearing in the wider catholic church, they would not act on gospel truths?

We are not leaving. ●

Hoping Christmas is good news

John Chapman



The decorations at the stores and shopping malls tell us that Christmas is just around the corner. We are about to begin again the round of carol Services and Nativity plays. The Christmas card list is dusted off for another year and, in my case, I scan to see if any of my friends who appear there are no longer alive. I debate yet again if I will make my own ‘cards’ or buy those ones that help some good cause. All in all there is quite a bit to be done at Christmas time.

If you regularly preach at this time and if, like me, you have been at it for forty years there aren't too many Christmas-type verses left to preach on. For all that, it is hard to beat the account of the announcement to the shepherd by the angel of the birth of the Lord Jesus.

“Behold I bring you good news of great joy for all people. To you this day in the city of David your Saviour has been born. Christ the Lord.”

The good news of great joy for all people is about a rescue—your Saviour has been born.

That the good news is about a rescue implies that I am in danger and need such a Saviour. The Bible makes it clear that such is, indeed, the case. That it is for *all* people implies that we are all in the same boat. And the Bible makes it clear that this, also, is the case: all of us, in one way or another, have said ‘No’ to God as God. We have chosen to exclude him from his central place in our lives. We set ourselves up as rival authorities. We act as if we were God. This has brought the rightful wrath of God on us (Rom 1:18) and we need to be rescued from this situation.

However, there is good news. God has taken action on our behalf. He has sent his Son to be the Saviour of the world (Jn 3:16). The Lord Jesus, in his death for us, takes the punishment that our sin deserves. In his resurrection he shows us that that sin-bearing death is sufficient and that he is undoubtedly Christ the Lord. When we repent of our stupid attitude and place our trust in the Lord Jesus we are assured of God's forgiveness.

It is good news of great joy for all people who are willing to accept it.

It is bad news for the proud and ignorant who reject the Saviour! This means that the wrath of God remains on them (Jn 3:36). For such there is only bad news of judgment and hell of which the Lord Jesus warns us (Lk 12:1-11).

This Christmas will be either good news or bad news depending on what you do with the fact that your saviour has been born.

I hope it will be good news of great joy for you. Have a really happy Christmas! ●

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Editorial

Sydney Synod reaffirms evangelical ministry Anglican healing through gospel

Two historic decisions were made in October 1999. To the day, 482 years after Martin Luther nailed his 95 theses to the door of the Wittenberg church, the Lutheran World Federation signed with the Vatican a joint declaration on the Doctrine of Justification. For all its qualifications, this action symbolically declares that the 16th Century Reformation stand on justification was a mistake.

In Sydney, the lay-dominated synod voted overwhelmingly, 346 to 194, to allow lay administration of the Holy Communion for a five year trial period. This too is a symbolic move.

From the official dialogue between Roman Catholic and Anglican theologians, ARCIC III (Anglican Roman Catholic International Commission) advises Anglicans to submit to the primacy of the Pope. Further, in the wake of the Virginia Report which was discussed at Lambeth, many Anglican bishops are seeking an international hierarchy reaching up to the Archbishop of Canterbury. This will permit greater and coercive power to be exercised over the provinces. Foundational to both these moves is the old Roman Catholic view of the sacraments and priesthood. Conscious of how widespread these Catholic views are within Anglicanism, Sydney Synod has reaffirmed the New Testament's teaching on the nature of authority and ministry.

Reaction within Australia and beyond confirms that this message has been clearly heard. The comments of the Primate of Australia, Keith Rayner, Archbishop of Melbourne, were repeated in the British church press, that 'the Sydney vote represents a fundamental break with catholic order.' This is an accurate insight into the significance of what Synod has done.

This 'catholic tradition' reaches back to Ignatius, although there has always been a dissenting strand of theology and practice. Ignatius states that a valid

Eucharist must be celebrated, 'under the bishop or his delegate.' But, according to Charles Gore, in his *Church and the Ministry* (p. 184), this statement is quite compatible with a lay led Eucharist. All the layman needs is the authorization of the bishop, not ordination. "It was a question of order—not of exclusive grace", writes Gore. In the early church, he points out, "it is perfectly true... that the priesthood was not, as much as in later days, regarded as an endowment of the individual". In the Ethiopic version of the *Apostolic Tradition of Hippolytus*, deacons (who are virtually laymen) can say the thanksgiving. Others point out that in those days it was believed that what the priest did, the whole church did. Although this may have been lost in the Western 'catholic tradition', it continues in the Eastern Orthodox church and in the Coptic liturgy, where the people share the prayer of consecration.

Even within the Western Catholic tradition, this principle—the priesthood of all believers—led to the recognition that it was appropriate for laymen to baptize in cases of necessity. Tertullian extended this principle even to the celebration of the eucharist: "thus where there is no bench of clergy, *you* offer [ie. the eucharist] and baptize and are priest alone for yourself. Nay, where three are, there is a Church, although they be laics" (*de Exhort. Cast.* 7).

By the time of the Reformation, the laity were already permitted a range of ministries. Lay baptism, in necessity, had never been in dispute. Lay absolution was a fairly common practice in the Middle Ages, and until the close of the tenth century, lay men and women commonly administered *viaticum*, which included the rites of confession and absolution. John Teutonicus had also claimed that a layman could administer confirmation. For centuries, common law marriage was recognised alongside sacramentally endorsed marriage.

Luther saw where the logic of the gospel ought to lead. The priest is not ontologically different from a lay person. The priest simply has a different ministry. This is stressed in his *Address to the German Nobility* (1520), where he insists that there is no indelible character imposed through ordination. In *The Babylonian Captivity of the Church* (1520), Luther says that "the fiction of an 'indelible character' has long since become a laughing stock. I admit that the pope imparts this 'character', but Christ knows nothing of it; and a priest who is consecrated with it becomes the life-long servant and captive, not of Christ, but of the pope".

The logic was clear: if there was nothing special about the priesthood (apart from it being the public ministry of preaching), then the sacraments need not exclusively be tied to the clergy. The Papacy attempted to refute these arguments as early as the Bull *Exsurge Domine* (15/6/ 1525) and then, the Council of Trent (1547) put a damper on lay involvement with the 'anathema' cast in Luther's direction: "If any one shall say, that all Christians have power to administer the word, and all the sacraments; let him be anathema" (Session 7; Canon 10).

In Sydney, the move towards lay administration is directly opposed to this Catholicism. It picks up the logic of the Reformation and moves the next step. A group within the Church of Ireland has welcomed Sydney's decision as 'pioneering'. Even its opponents recognise that this is an historic move within the Anglican Communion, because of its deep theological nature.

In the current environment when all things Anglican seem to be moving towards all things Catholic, Sydney has made the right decision regarding ministry: to remain evangelical and Protestant. Healing for our denomination, city, nation and world lies in the direct work of God in the gospel. ●

STOP PRESS: Archbishop Declines to assent to Lay Administration Trial

On November 10th 1999, the Archbishop of Sydney issued a statement indicating he had withheld his assent to the Synod decision. The Archbishop indicated that the Appellate Tribunal's opinion that a Diocese shouldn't go ahead alone weighed heavily upon him. He also explained that, since Lambeth, he had been engaged with other parts of the Communion, calling upon other bishops not to act unilaterally. The Anglican media press release explains that this has been in regard to homosexual issues. Archbishop Goodhew felt that 'to act unilaterally myself and without wide consultation would undermine my credibility in those ongoing debates.'

How Synod can set the lead

As Synod discussed a motion of regarding treating congregations without property as parishes, Synod was called upon to step out beyond the current situation. Rev. Terry Dein, rector of St Andrew's Wahroonga, spoke in its favour, saying that the move was timely, strategic and creative.

He said that if the synod wanted to give leadership, it must face change, even if it couldn't guarantee that there would be no 'awk-

ward edges' as a result. The future would not come through being timid. With a preacher's flourish, Rev. Dein said that Synod must operate on thinking that is clear, courageous and compassionate, pointing out that organisations that were on the cutting edge in society have been shown to be those with adaptable structures that are flexible enough to quickly respond to the market place. ●

What does faithful ministry look like?

John Lavender

John Lavender is the Anglican minister at Glenmore Park.



What does faithful gospel ministry look like? How will ministry based on the New Testament take shape? At Glenmore Park where we have been involved in a new church this is a very real question for us. As we consider the direction of ministry at our church we have to ask ourselves: what should our ministry be based upon?

Should it be based on programmes or events such as socials, outings or groups where people get together? Should our ministry be based on getting

‘out there’ into the community, targeting the many needs of people in our local area? Should we base our ministry on the ‘sacraments’: the Lord’s Supper, Weddings, Baptisms or Funerals?

Then again perhaps we could base our ministry on ‘Signs and Wonders’, emphasizing ‘miracles’ and ‘the power of the Holy Spirit’. Or maybe we should just go with what worked somewhere else, a ‘tried and true’ method we picked up from one of the church growth books.

At the end of his life, Paul wrote to his friend Timothy. For many years Paul had faithfully ministered the gospel God entrusted to him. Now, facing death, Paul wants to see the gospel progress. He longs for continued, effective, faithful gospel ministry. He wants to see God’s church grow. So with these thoughts in mind he writes to Timothy to encourage him to continue as “a good minister of Christ Jesus” (1 Tim 4:6). But how will he encourage him? What will he say to him? What will faithful ministry look like?

Paul challenges Timothy to godly living, to holiness and to right relationships, particularly right relationships between husband and wife, to the gov-

ernment, among church leaders, older men, younger men, older women, younger women, to the ungodly, false teachers, the rich and the poor. But one aspect of ministry dominates above all these. Paul challenges Timothy to keep on teaching. Paul presses upon Timothy that faithful gospel ministry takes place where there is a high priority on teaching the truth of the gospel. For example, Paul urges Timothy not to allow certain men to teach things that are false and contrary to the gospel (1 Tim 1:3-11). He then urges Timothy to teach the truth and to firmly hold on to the faith of the gospel and not to reject it (1 Tim 1:12-20). Then in a key passage Paul tells Timothy that “a good minister of Christ Jesus” will teach those things he himself has been taught and followed. “Command and teach these things... Devote yourself to public reading of Scripture, to preaching and teaching... Be diligent in these matters, give yourself wholly to them... Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers” (1 Tim 4:6-16). The same pattern is found in 2 Timothy. “Keep the pattern of sound teaching

with faith and love in Christ Jesus. Guard the good deposit... with the help of the Holy Spirit” (1:13-14).

In 2 Timothy he adds the element of training: “The things you have heard me say entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others” (2 Tim 2:2). Teaching the truth is vital if people are to “come to their senses and escape the trap of the devil who has taken them captive to do his will” (2 Tim 2:26). In the light of this task, Paul urges Timothy to continue in what he has learned, that is, the Scriptures that are able to make him wise for salvation and are “useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work” (2 Tim 3:17).

It is this kind of faithful ministry that will equip and train others for ministry. “Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage with great patience and careful instruction” (2 Tim 4:2). And isn’t Paul’s desire ours, that “the message might be fully proclaimed and all the Gentiles might hear it” (2 Tim 4:17)? ●

Revival in Argentina?

Terry Blowes in Corrientes, Argentina



Terry Blowes is involved, with her husband Peter, in student ministry in Argentina.

MDarcelo Lafitte, leading Christian journalist and editor of the national Christian monthly newspaper *El Puente* visited us in Corrientes for a day-long conference.

The conference, organized by Peter Blowes, CMS Australia missionary, for the Asociación Bíblica Universitaria Argentina (ABUA) was aimed to challenge pastors, professionals and senior university students—the present and future leaders of the Argentinian evangelical churches.

Introducing the topic, “An X-Ray of the Evangelical Church in Argentina”, Lafitte referred to the popular belief in much of the world that Argentina was experiencing a spiritual revival. Sadly, Lafitte stated that this is far from the truth. He said that revival is evidenced by a return to God’s word; by a clear evidence of growth in holiness in the life

of believers; by the Christian church beginning to be nationally evident; and, because of the general effect of “salt and light”, such things as corruption beginning to recede in the community.

He doesn’t see this happening in Argentina, where Evangelicals represent a tiny 1–3% of the population in the nation’s biggest cities, and no more than 5% in its most ‘Christian’ provincial areas. In its current “peaceful revolution”, the province of Corrientes is uncovering a breadth and depth of corruption at all levels of administration, and amongst those charged with wrong use of funds is one Protestant pastor.

What does Lafitte see as the worst failings of the church today?

Firstly there is a drift away from God’s word. In the era of the image, the “People of the Book” seem archaic and the regular reading and teaching of the Scriptures has been replaced in church life and meetings with hours of activities designed to stir the emotions and help people find God within themselves. Careful reflection is impossible, with God’s people so busy making noise that they forget to listen to his word to them. Lafitte quoted a local Argentinian writer who said that “young people who do not read are committing a form of suicide”. “Christians who don’t read the Bible are committing spiritual suicide,” he said, emphasizing the vulnerability that a lack of Bible knowledge creates when false teachers come to the fore.

The second problem that Lafitte noted is that churches have a greater emphasis on numbers than on personal growth. A successful church is that which is growing fast, not one full of people who love one another and serve their neighbours actively. Together

with this is the emphasis on prosperity, health and happiness as proofs of God’s blessings. Lafitte cited the Beatitudes and reminded the audience that what counts is not what you have, but what you are.

Thirdly Lafitte lamented the fact that Christians tended to shut themselves into their comfortable Christian community and its regular meetings. “The church is a place where Christians should be trained and encouraged,” he noted, “ready to be boosted into the world to announce the Good News to a condemned world.”

“We see much smoke and noise, but little light and fire,” he added. Lafitte recalled asking a Korean brother what was the single most important factor in the astonishing growth of the church in Korea. The answer he received was: a profound compassion for lost souls. He saw the church in Argentina as resem-

**“We see much smoke and noise, but little light and fire,”
Marcelo Lafitte.**

bling a man who greatly enjoys all that his new car can do—while it sits on blocks in his closed garage. “If you take your car to the street it will get dirty, damaged and worn—but it will fulfil its purpose.” He noted that one of our greatest sins, of which we must repent, is that of indifference. We should take every opportunity to sow seeds of God’s word in every situation where we encounter a non-Christian—brief though it may be.

Finally, Lafitte saw many grave

errors in how the Christian community is selecting its leadership. Qualities of a true pastor, such as those listed in 1 Timothy 3, are given little importance. Congregations love one who has a great ability to stir their feelings with his oratory, who is an activist, and who has a strong and independent spirit. They resent paying pastors to spend time in the “invisible” labours of Bible study and prayer.

Crowds flock to see, hear and experience a charismatic figure who can pronounce words of prophecy, work miracles of healing, and pray with such fervour that they feel the Holy Spirit at work. The week-day sins and the Sunday pride of such people are overlooked, as are the quiet, faithful teachers of God’s Word whose broken and contrite spirit makes them God’s real giants.

We received lots of encouragement to keep on with the emphasis that we currently have in our ministry amongst university students. We praise God that we see changed lives through the weekly reading of God’s word in small groups. Young people, and subsequently their families, are accepting Christ, as they sit together in these groups and discover that God speaks clearly through the Scriptures, and that their many questions find answers as they submit to him.

However, we are challenged to be forming future leaders who are godly, humble and dependent on God and his revealed Word. We work with the intelligencia, and it would be so easy for them to trust in their own abilities—as it is for us! Lafitte’s final challenge to us was to be people of prayer, always seeking wisdom from the Lord, always drawing near to him for light, always giving to him the glory. ●

When traditions are being created

Andrew Heard

“He who loves Christianity more than he loves the truth will love his denomination more than Jesus and himself most of all”

A very provocative statement. One I've often reflected on. I must confess, too, I reflect on it more now than I did in the past, simply because my context is so different.

When you start a church from scratch, without denominational labels, it will very likely attract people from all kinds of church backgrounds. It certainly did in our case. People came from Baptist backgrounds, Presbyterian, Uniting, Assemblies of God, Reformed, Brethren, etc. You name it we got it. We even had a few Anglicans join us. Most came because they were hungry for Bible teaching.

So here we all are. A seething mass of different people. We were all once comfortable in our monochrome churches, regularly confirmed in the way we saw things. Now, however, we are forced to mix with a range of people who all have their different out-

looks, different priorities, different styles and convictions regarding things of Christ. In the midst of this we have resisted the temptation to simply rejoice in diversity of thinking (surely the road to theological relativism) but have rather sought to bring all under the searching light of Scripture to test and critique, reject that which is false, holding on to that which is true.

In the midst of this process something has emerged. Critique by the Scriptures is enormously difficult!

Over time we grow to love our church cultures, our church style, our denominations, more than we love the truth-and, tragically, more than we love Christ. Critique by the Scriptures? We love the idea - in theory at least! In practice it's so much harder. We invest in peripheral things more than is ever warranted. In fact they become for some the very source of security which only Christ should provide. Surely this is the road to death.

It has led me to consider two things.

Firstly we must take great care constantly to allow ourselves to be reformed by the word. Otherwise, over time, we become settled in a commit-

ment, not to the Jesus of the word, but to our own form of religious practice. Given the difficulty many have with this reformation process I am convinced we need to teach each other to do it. It does not come naturally. We need leaders, too, who will demonstrate a commitment to the truth which is over and above a commitment to denomination and so model for us a love of Christ which transcends a love of self. We therefore need leaders who will model for us what it is to work from first principles. In practical terms it has challenged the way I think about preaching. People need to see me work from the text out, rather than from completed ideas in (no matter how good they are).

Secondly, and somewhat paradoxically, it has made me consider how important it is to give good traditions to people. Given that many can't or won't be constantly reformed by the word let's realise the pattern we raise people in will very likely be the pattern they hold dear. Give them good ones!

Of course the best tradition to give them is one that practises constant reformation by the word and so breeds a love of Jesus Christ that eclipses all else! ●

A Quiet Revolution

Colette Read



“To go to work in the morning without a mission is to reduce the day to mere existence.”
Monty Sholund

In ministering to city workers I have often noticed a huge gulf between appearances and reality. There is a perception that people who have a career are happy and content, and 'have it all'. Yet in my experience, nothing could be further from the truth. City workers often feel lonely, insecure and distrustful, and work itself can seem meaningless.

I suspect that many Christians are fooled by the slick veneer of office culture. The tendency to equate business success with personal success intimidates the Christian into thinking the gospel just isn't relevant to the elite. Indeed we are told that "it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God" but also that "all things are possible with God".

City workers need to know the Lord who created them and who saves them. They need to know that under God there is purpose and meaning to our endeavours and relationships.

The difficulty with city ministry can lie in the failure of Christians to see this need.

However, a second difficulty arises. City ministry is messy. It doesn't fit into nice neat structures. People networks span across geographical boundaries making it hard even to meet. Furthermore, workers are busy and transient. It is a rare person who can make the same time each week.

So, how does one reach the busy populace of the CBD? In a word: discipleship.

This involves meeting with two or three Christian or non-Christian friends in the city to discuss and model what it means to be a follower of Jesus. It doesn't require rigid structures, just a free lunch hour and a willingness to explore the Bible together. It's not the sort of thing that looks impressive. I don't expect to see Americans flocking to Australia to attend City Ministry Conferences.

Yet perhaps it will be a quiet revolution. As I meet with women in the city I see their lives change. Increasingly they exhibit sacrificial love to those around them. Frequently they start to disciple others.

A friend of mine meets with a couple of people from work. She remarked upon the immense value of having mature Christian role models. "Churches rarely talk about the sorts of day-to-day dilemmas faced by workers," she said. "To see someone standing firm as a Christian, upholding Christ-centred values in a secular environment strengthens other believers. What's more, it has brought an overtly Christian influence to our work place, opening the doors for evangelism".

A quiet revolution.

The beauty of discipleship is that you don't need a licence or a degree in theology to do it. Discipling is for any and everybody. The command in Matthew 28 to "make disciples of all nations" can seem an overwhelming task. Yet to go to work in the morning with a mission just to have lunch and Bible discussion with a few friends can turn our day from mere existence to revolutionary, abundant life. ●



Sydney's Historic

Synod Summary by Robert Tong

A sense of frustration developed as the Synod unfolded this October. This was due in part to an exceptional number of set debates, debates on procedure, an exceedingly crowded Business Paper and a blackout. At the beginning of Day 4, it was clear that Motions placed on the Business Paper by members (as distinct from the Standing Committee) would not be reached. A feeling of powerlessness was expressed by some members, although it was evident that new members of the Synod did speak in several debates.

Significant domestic, mission and Anglican identity matters were addressed.

A three year budget was adopted and a 'parish cost recovery' formula adopted in separate set debates. The three year budget will provide some certainty in financial planning for Synod organisations and regional programs dependent upon Synod funding. Parish cost recovery was more controversial and the opponents to the idea were given equal time to persuade the Synod to another method. In essence, each Parish is now required to pay for Minister's and Assistant Minister's superannuation, insurance, long service leave, etc. It amounts to approximately

\$9,000 for each member of the clergy in a parish.

Another highly controversial set piece debate was on the third reading of the Lay and Diaconal Administration of the Holy Communion Ordinance. The hall was packed and the debate was engaging. In many ways it was Sydney's Synod at its best. Views were put with vigour but without animosity. Keith Mason and Neil Cameron differed on the legal basis for the Ordinance. Paul Barnett warned of the loss of credibility outside Sydney, but Ross Nicholson counter punched with his own survey. The Synod asked that the vote would be taken by secret ballot and by Orders. The third reading passed (Clergy 122 to 66; Laity 224 to 128). The Bill was left in the Archbishop's hands, with one month to give his assent or the Bill would lapse.

There was a set debate on the Anglican Counselling Centre. Readers may be aware that the Standing Committee initiated a review of the operations of the Anglican Counselling Centre during 1999. Some recommendations were disputed by the Anglican Counselling Service and this debate gave opportunity for points of view to be aired and questions answered. The Standing Committee has been asked

to look again at its disputed recommendations.

Last Synod, a report was requested on enabling congregations to be established as parish units without the need to have property owned by the parish. The report and a draft ordinance to create this mission opportunity will be placed before the Synod for consideration next year.

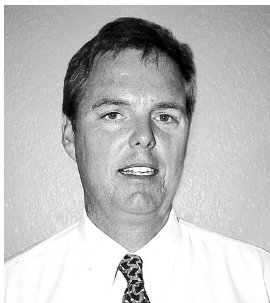
Some readers might have noticed that during the year the Anglican Roman Catholic International Commission produced a report (ARCIC III) calling for the Anglican Communion to submit to the Universal Primacy of the Bishop of Rome. The Synod in a preliminary response denied the basic thrust of the report. Our Doctrine Commission will bring a considered response to Synod next year.

Daily Bible readings by Bishop Josiah Idowu-Fearon and a riveting missionary hour challenged the Synod. Bishop Josiah has his diocese in the centre of Nigeria at a very real intersection between the Christian south and the Muslim north. ●

Robert Tong is a member of Standing Committee and author of *The Synod Survival Manual*

Sydney and world Evangelical Anglicanism

Peter Hayward



Peter Hayward is the minister of an independent Anglican church in Spokane, Washington, USA.

o his recent Presidential address to Synod the Archbishop appended a copy of a speech that John Stott gave to American Episcopalians.

The arguments used by John Stott are the same as those he used on previous occasions going back to his famous confrontation with Martyn Lloyd-Jones in 1966. Then, Lloyd-Jones was encouraging evangelical Anglicans to unite with other Evangelicals and not to be concerned with denominational loyalty. John Stott's response then is much the same today. That is, while the 1662 Book of Common Prayer and the 39 Articles of religion remain in place in the constitution of the Anglican Church and are in regular use, then the Anglican Church is in fact biblical, reformed and evangelical even if subscription to them has been relaxed. Therefore, Stott recommends that Evangelicals in the Anglican church should not get out (secession), nor should they give in (compromise), but they ought to stay in while refusing to give in (witness).

However, in the current state of the Episcopal Church of the USA (ECUSA) the arguments do not work either in theory or practice. Back in the 1970's ECUSA turned its back on the evangelical religion of the Book of Common Prayer. It was set aside in favor of the 1979 Book of Common Prayer in which the Articles of Religion were placed in very small print at the back as

an historical document. The new Prayer Book which defines the Episcopal Church has, it would seem, deliberately spurned its evangelical heritage. In theory, at least, subscription to its biblical, reformed and evangelical past has not been relaxed, it has been overturned.

In practice such a departure is harder to discern. For a member of a local Episcopal Church any changes in the national church hardly seem important, nor have much of an impact on normal church life: the Prayer Book looks basically the same; the Bible is still used. But slowly, over the last 20 years, the local church or Diocese has evolved into something very different.

The extent to which ECUSA is out of step with the Anglican Communion became evident at Lambeth and in the fallout afterwards. But the break had occurred long before. Individuals had a growing disquiet with what was happening in their local churches and dioceses. Increasingly they were unbiblical in their teaching and practice. The current controversy over the desire of over 70% of the 99 Dioceses to ordain practising homosexuals in the Episcopal Church is the culmination of this drift which merely brings the current state of the Church into focus.

During the decade of evangelism ECUSA is estimated to have lost 600,000 members. The anecdotal evidence is that these are the orthodox biblically conservative members who have 'got

out'. Of course there are individual Parishes and Dioceses that in practice have kept their evangelical heritage, but in large areas of the USA anything evangelical is dismissed as being non-Anglican both in theory and practice. The testimony heard on many occasions is that with great heartache individuals and groups have got out, because they are told they cannot have a voice. Some stayed for years but became traumatized in the process of staying in but not giving in.

This might put into perspective what impact something like Lay Presidency will have on Sydney's influence on the Anglican Church in the USA. As Pastor of an Independent Anglican church, it would seem unlikely that the issue of Lay Presidency will make a difference to my relations to those Evangelicals still inside ECUSA or to the groups that are promoting the formation of a new Anglican Province in the USA. Some support, some oppose Lay Presidency, but the real concern is the overturning of the biblical, reformed, evangelical heritage of the Episcopal Church.

Last Thursday I contacted Jim Basinger, one of the leading evangelicals still operating within ECUSA. I asked him for his thoughts on the Lay Presidency issue. His answer was along the lines that Sydney would have the most impact upon ECUSA if it had the courage to follow their convictions on what was biblically true. He finds it

strange that there is this concern of some, that if Sydney goes ahead with lay Presidency, Sydney would detach itself from ECUSA, when ECUSA detached itself from Sydney years ago—it's just that nobody announced it.

Whether Sydney has lay presidency or not will not change the dominant ideology within ECUSA, nor will it increase the chance of getting more than a polite hearing from the ECUSA hierarchy. The one voice that is not allowed to be heard by the existing ECUSA ideology is that of reformed evangelical Anglicans.

If Sydney Diocese is to have an impact on Anglicanism in the USA it will in practice not be within the existing structures of ECUSA. This is in fact what some of the African Dioceses have already decided. One suspects that the die has been cast for the future of ECUSA. In the end it is not the actions that Sydney takes on any particular matter that is of concern, for the problem lies with the direction that ECUSA has already decided to take. The larger question then is what impact can Sydney play on the future of *Anglicanism* in the USA? No one can be certain how the current situation will be resolved, but the observation from one in the USA is that Sydney can play a very positive role towards those Evangelical Anglicans both outside and inside ECUSA by continuing to promote biblical and reformed theology and practice. ●

Synod

Synod's Counsel on Counselling Centre

One of the more substantial issues addressed this Synod was a scheduled "debate" concerning the Anglican Counselling Centre.

In May 1998, Standing Committee appointed a committee to enquire into the work of the Anglican Counselling Centre (ACC). The committee included two senior psychiatrists, an experienced psychologist, a social worker, a general practitioner and a QC. It was chaired by Rev. Dr. John Woodhouse.

The committee produced a substantial 146-page report and made 22 recommendations, which were supported by all committee members. Many of these recommendations were for uncontroversial improvements. Some were more significant. The committee recommended these changes in order to ensure the reliability of the help offered by our Diocesan counselling agency.

Standing Committee then passed this report on to the ACC for comment.

In response the ACC Council submitted a document to Standing Committee. It was 124 pages in length. It rejected 7 of the 22 recommendations made by the committee of enquiry. These disputed recommendations sought to achieve the following four changes:

- have the ACC major on General Counselling;
- require ACC counsellors who engage in Clinical Counselling to have professional registration or membership as psychologists, social workers or equivalent;
- require the ACC not to practise Specialised Psychotherapy, but focus on other methods of counselling;
- require the ACC not be involved in cases involving "recovered" (or "enhanced") "memories" of abuse.

Two members of the Council did not support this ACC document and submitted separate responses which expressed particular concern about the Centre's work with recovered memory.

Standing Committee after considering all these documents, voted to accept the recommendations of the committee of enquiry, including the disputed recommendations.

Since that time there has been considerable interest concerning this decision. The matter has been reported in both church and secular media. The ACC has received many letters of support and encouragement and as Synod business got under way, several people sought to bring the issue to the attention of the Synod.

Consequently, on the last afternoon of Synod Rev. David Crain brought an amended motion before the Synod for consideration. The motion:

- recognised the extensive good work of the Anglican Counselling Centre

since its inception;

- commended the Archbishop's initiative in exploring important aspects of an Anglican absorption of the ACC;
- commended the Standing Committee's ongoing process of consultation with the ACC;
- noted the ACC's deep concerns over the ramifications of Standing Committee's resolutions;
- noted the reported view of the committee of enquiry that these concerns were not necessarily justified;
- requested the Standing Committee to reconsider the four disputed resolutions in the light of these concerns; and
- requested the ACC Council then reconsider its response to the revised resolutions.

It was a conciliatory motion, which sought to give expression both to the dissatisfaction and fears of the ACC and its supporters, and the opinions and resolutions of the committee of enquiry, Standing Committee and other concerned individuals.

Rather than proceeding in a 'debating' format, with speeches for and against the motion, the opportunity was taken to discuss these matters of concern in an irenic fashion. No person spoke 'against' the motion.

The enquiry process was intended to help suffering people and ensure that no further harm was done.

Dr John Woodhouse, the committee of enquiry Chair opened the discussion outlining the reasons behind and parameters of the enquiry and the reasons why such an enquiry evokes emotion in so many of us. He dispelled the notion that there was a "hidden agenda" driving the enquiry and drew attention to the "much good" that the ACC has brought to many in our Christian community and beyond. He went on to note the concerns of the committee and the progress of negotiations between Standing Committee and the ACC.

Rev. David Crain chose to speak second to the motion. He stressed the desperate need in our city for counselling due to relationship difficulties and failures. He noted that the ACC in the past 20 years has seen around 25,000 clients and from this number has received only 5 legitimate complaints. One counsellor was dismissed following two of these complaints.

Mr Crain criticized the composition of the committee of enquiry, for which Mr. Crain, as a member of Standing Committee, accepted some

responsibility. He noted that the ACC engaged in emotion-focussed therapy and the committee of enquiry did not include a practitioner of this modality. He considered this an oversight and suggested that a counsellor from the Centre could also have been appointed to the committee.

During question time, Dr. Woodhouse noted that this would have compromised the 'independent' nature of the enquiry and also noted that when the committee of enquiry was first proposed an alternative member of the committee had been appointed in response to concerns raised by the ACC.

Mr Crain raised questions about the methods of the enquiry itself and expressed fears about the detrimental effect of the Standing Committee's recommendations on the level of counselling the Centre could offer, including the ability of the Centre to care adequately for those it counselled, the possible loss of government funding and the willingness of counsellors to work within the new guidelines.

Comparisons were made between the committee of enquiry report and a report from another source, not available to synod members, which suggested some similar changes which were to be implemented over a longer period of time, with possibly less restrictive outcomes.

In the ensuing discussion, many members of synod shared personal testimonies of how they had been helped by the ACC. There was some discussion about the legitimacy of 'recovered memory' therapy in cases of child sexual abuse. Others expressed the hope that the voluntary nature and professional contributions of the committee of enquiry not be overlooked.

The outcome of the discussion, as reflected in the motion itself, was that of warm appreciation of the work of the ACC accompanied by the desire that its practice be as beneficial as possible.

In summing up, Dr Woodhouse reaffirmed the committee of enquiry's deep concern for abused people, pointing out that the enquiry process was intended to help suffering people and ensure that no further harm was done to those people.

He concluded that nevertheless, there exists a deep disagreement between the conclusions and recommendations arising from the enquiry and the view of the ACC, that it was proper that this disagreement came before the Synod, and appropriate that Standing Committee be asked to consider the matter again.

The motion, which was passed by the Synod, allows for this further process of consultation, with the intended outcome that as a Diocese we can have full confidence in the accountability and practices of our Counselling Centre. ●

Work and Ministry

Andrew Mitchell

What is the value of everyday work in God's purposes and what is its relative value and relationship to the work of preaching the gospel?

Two recent reports to Synod have addressed these questions. One was presented by the Doctrine Commission last year and one came this year from a committee established by a resolution of Synod back in 1995. The motivation for both reports seems to have been to address a concern that some in the diocese undervalue everyday work seeing it only as means to support the real work of gospelling.

The study of the Doctrine Commission is carefully organised to address the issue. It considers the biblical material under three headings: Work in the Order of Creation, Work in the Order of Redemption and The Work of Ministry. The conclusion is that our position as created beings should prevent our undervaluing work. Our lives in this age depend on it, so too does the ministry of the word. However, for the Christian the ministry of God's word must be seen as the more fundamental task. They must engage in it themselves and support others in doing it as opportunity arises. The concluding sentence of the report reminds the reader that, in the end, we need to measure all we do by the great truth that "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners" (1 Tim 1:15).

The report to this year's Synod also has content that is helpful. There is a theological statement by Bishop Donald Robinson, a brief comment on the teachings of Luther and Calvin and a conclusion. The conclusion to the report is problematic. It is one and the same as the statement that the Synod adopted back in 1995. It is convoluted, a number of its terms are inadequately defined in the report and it does not make clear that gospel preaching has a very high priority in God's purposes. Here it is. Judge for yourselves.

"This Synod recognises, encourages and supports the roles of Godly men and women in their everyday work vocation—as distinct from ordained or full-time ministry—and affirms its belief that such work of service in and to the world, done in the name of the Lord Jesus and by God's enabling, is true and laudable service rendered to God Himself by those whose vocation and ministry it is and is no less acceptable to Him than the Ministry of the Word."

The relationship between work and ministry is an important issue. These reports will help anyone thinking through what the Bible has to say on the question. In order to properly encourage both Work and Ministry, it would be best not to rely solely on the 1999 report, but to also examine the Doctrine Commission report of 1998. ●

Sydney's Historic

Who Calls the Shots?

Robert Tong

Robert is the Australian representative on the Anglican Consultative Council and participated in that capacity at Lambeth last year.

ARCIC and The Gift of Authority

Sydney citizens were startled by the Bishop of Rome's direction to the Sisters of Charity to halt their involvement in the experimental drug injecting room. This naked exercise of Papal authority puts into true perspective the latest report from the Anglican/Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC). Called 'The Gift of Authority', the report offers a biblical image (2 Cor. 1.19-20) as a key to understanding how the universal Primacy of the Bishop of Rome is a gift to be shared.

ARCIC argues that primacy is about authority and authority rightly exercised is a gift of God to bring reconciliation and peace to humankind. Christ's commission at the end of Matthew's Gospel authorises his Apostles to make disciples, baptise and teach. In a unique way those in succession to the Apostles who are ordained to the Ministry of Bishops continue to exercise that authority.

Past difference between the Anglican and Roman Catholic Churches are recognised, however the report urges that 'the exercise and acceptance of authority in the Church is inseparable from the response of believers to the Gospel, how it is related to the dynamic interaction of Scripture and Tradition and how it is expressed and experienced in the Communion of the churches and

the collegiality of their Bishops.' The local church, so says the report, is centred on the Bishop. Contrast this with Article 19 where the church is 'a congregation of faithful men in which the pure Word of God is preached and the Sacraments be duly administered.'

Remember however, the Bishop of Rome, in exercise of his authority, still refuses recognition of Anglican Orders—so what value an Anglican Bishop? Is an Anglican Bishop just a layman, and by extension, each celebration of the Holy Communion lay administration??

Sydney Synod made a preliminary response to 'The Gift of Authority' noting that ARCIC did not speak for this Diocese and dissenting from any notion that the Bishop of Rome had a special ministry to discern truth and that Tradition had a 'dynamic interdependence' with Scripture. We await a full critical response from the Diocesan Doctrine Commission for Synod next year.

Eames and Virginia Reports

Ten years ago American Anglicans proposed to consecrate a woman bishop. Seen as a challenge to the unity of the Anglican Communion, the 1998 Lambeth Conference established an international committee to evaluate the impact of such a move on the various national churches making up the Communion. The Eames Report documents that evaluation.

That same Lambeth established another committee to examine how the Communion makes authoritative decisions which impact on the various national churches. The Virginia Report records their work.

Virginia describes four 'instruments of unity'. They are, the Archbishop of Canterbury, the ten yearly Lambeth Conference, the three yearly Anglican Consultative Council and the two yearly meetings of Primates. It is hard to escape the conclusion that being Anglican means being part of the four-fold structure. Of course, there is a theological undergirding in Virginia and not surprisingly it includes the Doctrine of the Trinity and 'Koinonia'.

Virginia, it is hoped, will provide some intellectual rationale for cohesion in the Anglican Communion. Such hope is illusory. None of the present thirty three independent self-governing churches will surrender power to an international secretariat or to the Archbishop of Canterbury. Canterbury, is a Primacy of honour not jurisdiction. Lambeth, the Consultative Council and the Primates are episodic. The impact of the meeting fades rapidly on returning home and changing membership is destructive of continuity. International Anglican leadership must rest on persuasion and co-operation. There can be no international jurisdictional coercion in the Anglican Communion. Clear,

Christian leadership carries with it its own authority. George Carey modelled this with his unequivocal biblical stance on homosexuality to the great annoyance of the liberals.

The Pope, World Anglicanism, and Sydney?

If the Pope wants to speak for Anglicans and Roman Catholics, and international Anglicanism is searching for identity with Canterbury calling for more power, who calls the shots in Sydney?

In the lay administration debate it was said, 'If we hold the Bible as primary then it is hypocritical not to proceed'. Christ himself through his word calls the shots. This word worked out in the pulpits by expository preaching and in the community by Christians, shapes personal behaviour, relationships and structures.

The Reformers affirmed that God works in his world directly by his word. A sacramental world view was rejected. Sydney Synod has consistently sought to obey the word. Rejection of the recent Prayer Book and support for lay administration are two examples.

It is a real shame that the Archbishop's refusal to assent to the lay administration ordinance will be seen by many as bowing to pressure from the Anglican world outside Sydney which is almost uniformly liberal in theology and Catholic in worship. ●

Evangelical Theology Links Sydney to Nigeria

During Lambeth last year, Sydney representatives formed new links with evangelicals in Africa. One result was the presence in Synod of Bishop Josiah Idowu-Fearon of Kaduna diocese in Nigeria, who led the Bible Studies and spoke in the missionary hour. Bishop Josiah told the Synod that until Lambeth, he was not fully aware of the

evangelical nature of the Sydney Diocese. While in Sydney, he visited Moore College, where he was pleased to be introduced to Moore's Correspondence Course, seeing its potential for training his people in his diocese.

The Correspondence Course has already been introduced into another part of Nigeria, in the diocese of Jos. The impetus for this came from Bishop

Benjamin Kwashi, who while visiting the Cornhill Training Institute in London, had joined the students going through 'Introduction to the Bible'. As a result, Moore's UK agent, Mr Doug Johnson, was invited to go to Nigeria to introduce several of the courses, which he did in March 1998 and September 1999. During his visit he has worked with between 14 and 20 teach-

ers at the Christian Institute in Jos, who are now working through the material again on their own. The plan is to develop a pattern in which students attend the Institute for 2 weeks in every eight, to be taught the course, and it is hoped that between 20 and 24 students will be trained in this scheme each year. ●

Goodbye Parish Sisters?

During question time, the Synod learned that the position of Parish Sister was apparently on the way out.

The Diocese of Sydney has an enviable record in encouraging and developing the ministry of women. The first deaconess in the diocese, Mary Schleicher, began her work in 1886 and a training institution for women in ministry was set up in 1891. As deaconesses and parish sisters, women have been active in ministry in our dio-

cese for well over a century. In recent years the office of parish sister has taken on a new importance as an avenue of service for those women who are committed to full-time gospel ministry but who are not comfortable for one reason or another with the expectations that would be placed upon them if they were ordained as deacons, following the decision to ordain women to that office in 1988. For this reason it is disturbing to note that, apparently without the synod of the diocese being

aware of it, the office of parish sister has been abolished.

When women were first ordained as deacons in 1989, there was no intention that the offices of deaconess or parish sister should cease to exist. Archbishop Robinson made clear at the time that he wished these offices to remain and indeed ordained two women as deaconesses, one in 1990 and another in 1991. Deaconesses and parish sisters continue to exercise an effective and valued ministry in the Diocese.

An unintended, but nevertheless unfortunate, consequence of any decision to abolish the office of parish sister would be to reduce the avenues of appropriate Christian ministry available to women. This would run counter to the concern of this diocese for over one hundred years. It may even send the message to those women interested in gospel ministry but reluctant to take on a preaching role in a congregation that there is no place for them in this diocese. ●

Synod

Whose life is it anyway?

Peter Bolt

During a debate about another matter, one Synod speaker introduced women's ordination into the discussion, passionately telling the Synod, "For some of you it's just theory, but for some of us, it's our life, our here and now, and our future."

This is an interesting perspective on an issue that has been discussed now for several decades, with strongly felt statements being presented on both sides. The idea that for some the issue is 'life itself', while for others it is merely an academic subject that must be debated, is a massive assumption.

Both sides of the debate find ready psychological explanations for their "opponents'" stance. Those who argue that males have the responsibility for congregational teaching/leadership ministries are 'defensive', opponents of change, opponents of women—or even of the Holy Spirit, who is said to lead the attack on the centuries-old institution of male-only congregational leadership.

It is always easy to demonise opponents. It is much harder to listen.

But if this demonisation strategy is set aside in the interests of Christian love, or even simply in the interests of

common courtesy, in order to facilitate good listening and communication, it may enable the 'opposition' to be seen as real human beings with positive motivations, who believe that the issue is actually about 'life, our here and now, and our future'.

Although it could be argued that the Bible is first about God, and then about Humanity, its presentation of humanity and the questions surrounding what it means to be a human being are worth getting steamed up about. The Bible shows us that humanity is bi-polar: male

satisfyingly human when we live God's way. If male and female are created to be complementary, then our equality will never be threatened by living properly as a man or as a woman. But, on the other hand, if we do not live properly as men and as women, then our humanity comes under threat.

At many levels, our society has lost the battle for humanity already. The complementarity of male and female has been largely undermined. Many churches all over the world have followed. Sydney Synod has resisted this

Questions surrounding what it means to be a human being are worth getting steamed up about.

and female. Both are equal before God, but male and female exist in a complementary relationship. It seems almost as if this just cannot be understood in our modern western setting in which individualism and self-ism has had such a rampant and overwhelming victory in gaining control of people's minds.

If this is in fact what the Bible is teaching, then the challenge for us is to believe that we will be properly and

move away from biblical understanding. We have persistently maintained that men and women, thoroughly equal in status, are created to work together, but not to work in the same way.

This can never be 'just theory' for any of us. To relate properly as men and women, in regard to things human at least, is—for all of us!—"our life, our here and now, and our future". ●

The Threat of Schism

Whenver the church discusses an issue, both inside and outside the church it is often greeted with the cry of 'schism'. As the long-standing discussion of Lay Administration moved towards its climax in Synod's historic vote, the charge of 'division' surfaced. Sydney's decision would put it at odds with the rest of Australian Anglicanism, we were told. It would set it off from world Anglicanism.

Sydney has been engaged in this discussion for more than twenty years. During this time there has been no suggestion that Sydney Anglicans are leaving the Communion. Situated firmly within the communion, it has been an issue which seeks to clarify what Anglican priesthood is and is not. It is not a leaving of the communion, but a leaving of a view of ministry and the sacraments which has only relatively recently been embraced by much of Anglicanism. First and foremost it has been done for the sake of evangelical ministry locally, without primary focus upon any message for the rest of Anglicanism. It is certainly not a 'goodbye' call. It is, if anything, a call to be consistent with the reformation heritage of Anglicanism with its evangelical view

of order and ministry. The same view espoused by Archbishop Thomas Cranmer, whose radicalism on these issues has unfortunately been forgotten. The idea that this is all about 'leaving' is an idea that has been thrust upon Sydney diocese from the outside.

The only sense in which the charge is true is that Sydney has voted to move in a direction in which no-one else has moved, as yet. But according to the detractors, this matter-of-fact observation should also be overlaid with a further level of interpretation. By this move, we are told, Sydney is consciously breaking with Anglicanism, leaving, parting company, dividing. In short, Sydney is being schismatic.

Does this have to be the case? Internationally, is it because the decision was 'unilateral'? But as our Archbishop reminded the Synod, there have been 'unilateral' actions before in the wider communion. Nationally, is it because in the opinion of the majority of the Appellate Tribunal such a decision should only be made by General Synod, and our Synod so clearly expressed a different opinion? According to the Diocesan Advocate, Neil Cameron who spoke in the Synod debate, there would not be a secular court in the land that

would rule that Sydney had acted frivolously, not after such a long, careful and conservative process. There has already been wide consultation over this issue. It couldn't have been more carefully done, and the proposal for a five year trial was a further testimony to the conservative process of change.

So, we are back to the matter of fact observation that Sydney is 'threatening division', simply because our Synod has acted differently. But why is this schismatic? Isn't 'difference' a consequence of leadership? The one who charts the direction steps out in front and so, at least for the moment, leaves others behind. If the step of leadership is never taken, the others are never given the opportunity to be themselves persuaded and then to follow.

Despite the comments from secular and ecclesiastical detractors, there is no need to mount a conspiracy theory. Sydney is not planning secession. If the recovery and maintenance of our evangelical and reformed heritage commits us to decisions that are not in conformity with the status quo, then so be it. Loyalty to Christ, properly the only final loyalty, commits us to going where the gospel leads. When this occurs, it is not division, it is direction. ●

What will happen to God?

Women's debate raises topic of the Trinity

Stephen Fifer

At the recent Synod of the Diocese of Sydney attention was drawn to a report on the doctrine of the Trinity from the Diocesan Doctrine Commission. This report arose out of the Synod's previous debate on the ordination of women to the priesthood in which it was revealed that there was considerable disagreement about whether "subordination" exists between members of the Trinity.

After reviewing the debate, the Scriptural evidence and the Creeds of the Church, the Doctrine Commission unanimously concluded that the subordination of Son and Spirit to the Father was a significant part of the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity. The report regards a purely "egalitarian" view of the Trinity as:

"... a very significant departure from scripture and the established Church doctrine. We are troubled that a debate about the nature of humanity and human relations should have led to a move to change our established understanding of God."

The Doctrine Commission's report then moves on to consider what implications this doctrine of the Trinity may have for the relationship of men and women as such. In a carefully reasoned argument that refers to current thinkers as well as the teaching of Scripture, the report says that "God's pattern of creation makes it possible to draw conclusions about the nature of human life and relationships from God." Referring to the key passage—1 Corinthians 11:2–16—the report says that the ordering of the Trinity has a bearing on the ordering of the sexes. The Doctrine Commission concludes that the doctrine of "subordination" within the Trinity has significant implications for the relationships between the sexes.

It concludes, furthermore, that the concept of "functional subordination", that is, equality of essence with order in relation, represents the long-held teaching of the church, and that it is securely based on the revelation of the Scriptures. This teaching should, therefore, determine our commitment both to the equality of men and women in creation and salvation, and also to appropriately biblical expressions of the functional difference between men and women in home and church.

The report was presented to the Synod by the Rev. Dr Peter Jensen on behalf of the Doctrine Commission. Dr Jensen commended the report to the Synod because of its unanimous support by the Commission, its contribution to the ongoing debate about the ordination of women to the priesthood and its clarification of questions raised on the crucial doctrine of the Trinity. Synod enthusiastically agreed to receive the report and to make it widely available at a reasonable price to church members in the parishes.

Copies of the report can be attained from Anglican Media (9265 1505, or www.anglicanmediasydney.asn.au) ●

The Revolutionary Bishop

Barry Newman

Barry Newman is a retired lecturer in education and a member of Synod.



A revolutionary bishop would disturb us all. But who could complain if the result was outstanding for the kingdom of God?

What should the godly revolutionary Anglican bishop do? What should he be like? He would certainly need to be without question a biblical bishop and, at heart, a prayer book bishop. He would need to act swiftly if the insidious rot already present in Australia were to be surgically removed to quickly prevent future spreading of the gangrene. He would need to act incisively and ever so wisely, questioning how we think and how we operate, being ready to promote and initiate radical changes for the sake of more glorious gospel ministry.

The revolutionary bishop would examine himself. But he might also

seek to alter significantly the nature of his office by legislation. Many administrative duties could be relinquished to those with administrative gifts, some so-called public duties to those who could represent him. As he does this, the public might come to realise that the bishop is first and foremost a minister of the gospel, and not mainly a public dispenser of pleasantries. He could employ the services of the laity and other clergy, and not just in matters of administration. The effect might be a recognition that we Christians act as members of the household of God.

Let the revolutionary bishop be given greater freedom and opportunity for study and reflection, for vision, for drive and for planning, for admonition and encouragement, and for caring for the people of God of his congregation. For should he not have his own parish? Of course special circumstances would prevail. He might even be an assistant minister. It could be done, given the appropriate legislation, will and thoughtfulness.

The same principles, procedures and arrangements worked out for the revolutionary bishop might follow in one form or other for those who directly assist him, such as assistant bishops or the equivalent, archdeacons, clergy in charge of diocesan organisations and the like. Those trained in understanding and teaching the Word of God to others should not be saddled with those responsibilities that in many cases could

be better born by others better trained and fitted for matters of public office and administration. Should not these clergy assistants be ministers or assistant ministers in their own parishes? If their gifts could be so liberated, think what they could do. Sent out by their bishop and their churches from time to time, they could act as strategic planners, be involved in evangelistic outreach, assist

allow himself to be squeezed into the mould of what has been done in the past, what customs exist in the present or what others expect of him in the future. Such weighty matters as God's rule, God's forgiveness freely offered through the death of his Son and the proclamation of God's Word would dominate his thinking, planning and actions. He would exhibit a concern for heresy to be

The Revolutionary bishop would think big, very big... gospel imperatives would constrain and compel him.

others in church planting, support those with struggling parishes and act as models to others in careful exegesis of Scripture, in sound hermeneutics and in teaching the people of God. They really would be assistants, but not so much to the bishop as the churches at large. With such strategic use of his assistants would not all clergy together with the laity be bound to reconsider their role and activities in the churches and the world at large?

The Revolutionary bishop would think big, very big. Soaked in the Word of God, gospel imperatives would constrain and compel him, his understanding of the righteousness of God would focus and shape him, the recognition of the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ would liberate and overwhelm him. He would go to the heart of things. He would not

attacked, evil to be rooted out and false teachers to be exposed. He would encourage the people of God to live righteously as God is righteous, to love the brethren as God has loved us, to be generous to those in need as God has been generous to us, and to do good to all mankind as God has done good to us.

With such a revolutionary bishop would we complain that he is seeking to change too many man-made traditions too quickly, that he is seeking to root out evil by cutting too deeply, and that he is ignoring too many customs to increase gospel effectiveness? Would we not gladly assent to changes in church law and custom that would liberate him and his assistants for gospel opportunities and that would place them in congregations for service to such and to others beyond? ●

Below the skin in Bangkok

Stephen & Marion Gabbott

The Gabbotts are serving with the Church Missionary Society.



Scratch a soul's skin and you'll most likely find folk religion—folk Buddhism, folk Christianity, folk Hinduism, folk Islam, folk Judaism. In the era of globalisation, religion has become another 'logo', tribalising people in a world increasingly homogenised by the IMF, MacDonalds, CNN and the NBA.

In Thailand, one of the world's Buddhist bastions, serious practitioners of the saffron way deplore the breakdown of civilized society, the depredations of global consumerism, the loss of Thai

economic sovereignty and the erosion of personal discipline. Here Theravada Buddhism (originally from Sri Lanka) is struggling to deal with a series of deviations from the true path—a popular monk who tells his followers that their feelings are fine; a temple complex implicated in corruption and drug dealing; a mushrooming trade in amulets to soothe the fears of the anxious; and even an emerging criminal Mafia looting temples and selling off the country's religious heritage to western dealers. Buddhists who pray, Buddhists with emo-

tions, Buddhists wanting the consumer comforts this world offers are all symptomatic of 'logo' Buddhism that seeks to differentiate the Thai people from everyone else, but also suspects that the way of the Lord Buddha, strictly understood, breaks more people than it heals.

Thailand is a sharp reminder that all people are folk religionists at heart when left to their own devices. They may be dressed in the externals of a major world religion, but unless the gospel garrisons their minds and Christ rules in their hearts, they are alone and without God in the world. The image of their Maker remains, scarred as it is by sin, and so they must still search for meaning. But this is the only world they know and it is hostile to them from birth, resentful of what Adam and his kin have done to it. So they pray—but there is no fellowship with the Holy Spirit that enables those prayers to be heard in the only ears that matter. They plan—but they have no knowledge of the promises that would save the future they desire from the chill wind of their own mortality. They love—but cannot avoid the emptiness that is the fate of all who have no certainty that anyone loves them. They sin—and can do no more than curse themselves for failing to live up to the thin philosophies they have conjured up to try and make sense of life in a world doomed to pass away.

Many in the West are enamoured of

the apparent tranquillity of the East. Except in the utterances of those with a vested interest in maintaining the *status quo* which they have often learned to exploit to their own advantage, there is little evidence here that the East is enamoured of itself. In urban Bangkok, there may be academics and intellectuals who look back with nostalgia to a

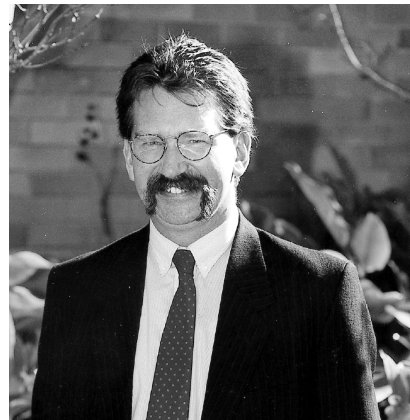
Thailand is a sharp reminder that all people are folk religionists at heart when left to their own devices.

Thai society long gone, but the ordinary person in the street doesn't have time for that. Nor does he or she have time to worry about God as the solution to the aloneness that gnaws away and is reinforced by what little they know of pure Buddhist teaching. On the surface, everything is available. Beneath the surface, much of it is inaccessible.

If you scratched the skin of a soul in Sydney, would you find someone like this, even if the logo says "Anglican"? We have a gospel that will make it less likely—if believed truly, lived faithfully and proclaimed constantly. ●

The Rhetoric of Projected Fear

Peter Bolt



In the golden days of philosophy you could sit around and examine a particular view of life for its strengths and its weaknesses. A position could be argued for, debated, disputed. It could be declared to be warranted by the evidence, justified by the argument, coherent with other known truths, corresponding with what is generally regarded as the real world, useful and productive of other socially beneficial outcomes. If it survived this rigorous process of public inquiry into the truth, then it had won its spurs. It was an examined view of life that was worth holding onto.

At every step of the way, any position would have to account for alternative arguments, counter-arguments, questions, and inquiries for further justification. If it was to be taken seri-

ously, it would have to stand up to the attacks of the counter-argument, and it would have to put forward better arguments. Under these rules, to disagree with a position was a help; a challenge. It was an opportunity to persuade or to be persuaded.

behaviour is a morally wrong choice. Such an assertion will probably land the charge of 'homophobia'. This strange new word (it makes no etymological sense), has been so successfully marketed, that even Christian groups can now talk about the need to repent of, or at least be alert to, 'homophobia'. But since when did a declaration that a behaviour was wrong (defined according to God's word), mean that the declarer was afraid of the thing they condemned?

In a moral universe, where things are right or wrong, disagreement—and therefore argument towards persuasion—is possible. Because it is possible, it is therefore a thoroughly desirable part of any inquiry after truth.

However, in a relativistic culture such as our own, where there is supposed to be no right or wrong that is universally applicable, if someone objects to another's behaviour, it is a sign of some weakness; some inability to accept difference; some rigid, controlling personality disorder that wants to 'live', but cannot 'let live'; some defensiveness against an alternative lifestyle somehow perceived to be a threat.

Under the old rules, when someone objected to 'X', the honest seeker after truth might have been met with a further explanation of the strengths of the position, or an exposition of the weaknesses of the alternative. Under the new rules, an objector will be told that

In a moral universe, where things are right or wrong, disagreement—and therefore argument towards persuasion—is possible.

he/she is causing offence through their objection; and how dare they even voice the objection; what right do they have? Obviously, they have no right to question at all (since relativism reigns supreme), so that only leaves one explanation of why they dare so to do: they have a problem. The espouser of position 'X' therefore has a very clear responsibility in this situation: the objector must be informed that his/her 'X'-ophobic attitude is 'worrying'. This one who purports to be 'seeking after the truth' should, instead, seek out a good counsellor.

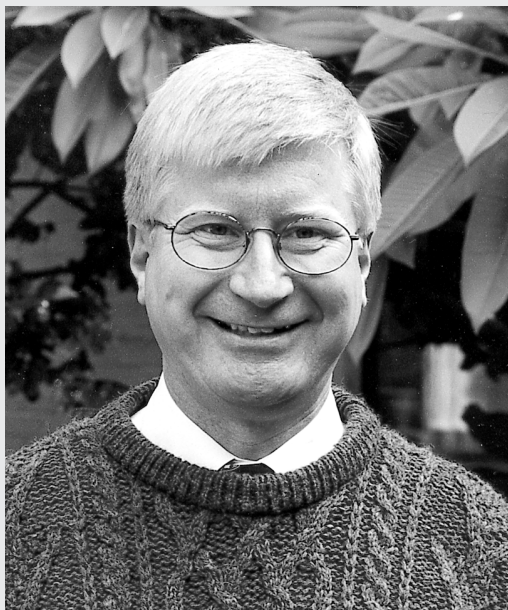
But now the rules have changed. In a day when psychological categories are more important than logical ones, and the 'argument' *ad hominem* (against the person) holds a lot of power, it is not regarded as a friendly act to disagree with a position. Instead, it is often suggested that the objector is the one with the problem.

For instance, apparently it is not an option to believe that homosexual

But that gives us a big problem. For, who has known the mind of the Lord, and who shall act as his counsellor? ●

Sufficient for all Occasions

Mark Thompson



Some find it difficult to understand why Christians would even want to shape their thinking and behaviour in accordance with writings that are thousands of years old. So much has happened in our world since the Bible was written. Can the words of men who lived before the age of electricity, steam power, or even the printing press really have much relevance for the twenty-first century? Theirs was a culture of free man and slave, patriarchy and privilege; when half the world was yet unknown; when science was rudimentary, and the great intellectual forces which have

shaped our modern consciousness had not yet been unleashed. Our world of television, email and microwave ovens has different pressures and different concerns.

The problem seems to be heightened if you look at the Bible itself. So much of the Bible seems addressed to people and situations long since past: Old Testament prophecies against nations which no longer exist; New Testament epistles to churches and individuals long gone. There is a decidedly occasional nature to much of the biblical literature. Why do Christians insist on appealing to the Bible in support of their view of God, the world, and God's purposes for the world? When faced with modern issues of controversy such as who should administer the Lord's Supper, who should lead churches, how we should respond to the modern diversity of sexual expression, why do Christians look for answers in the teaching of the Bible? Why does this take precedence over their own opinions or the will of the majority?

The occasional nature of vast tracts of the Bible is not a problem for Christians. In the first place, it locates God's actions and words in our world of time and space. The Bible did not simply fall from the sky as some kind of alien message to be deciphered and correlated with our understanding of the universe. It is God's own record of his engagement with men and women since the beginning in the midst of the realities of life as we know it. It is personal and effective communication in our time and space, focussing on that great 'moment' when God comes amongst us in the person of his Son.

The individual 'occasions' into which each of the biblical writers wrote fit within a larger occasion, namely God's ongoing plan to bring together at the end a people who will honour him from every nation, tribe, and tongue. There is a continuity between our 'occasion' and that of the Bible writers, a continuity often termed 'salvation history'. This is especially the case with the New Testament, because we live, like the apostles, in 'the last days', that great period when, amidst the fragile and fragmenting world around us, God's message of rescue is being proclaimed throughout the world.

What is more, the human writers of the books of the Bible were commissioned by God himself to write what they did. It is this commission which causes us to qualify what we mean by the word 'occasional' when applied to their writing. The apostle Paul, to take a celebrated instance, does not just write as a first century man to first century men and women locked into first century ways of thinking and living. He writes as an apostle of Jesus Christ, specifically commissioned by the living Lord himself to take 'the eternal gospel' to the nations. The words of the Bible, whilst arising in a context, reach beyond that context because God himself stands behind them as their primary author. In the final analysis these are words God has 'breathed out'.

We need to remind the skeptics that the living God is not limited by time and space. None of the developments of the last two thousand years have taken him by surprise. It was he who gave men and women the skills to produce those things which have shaped our world so considerably. He has spoken a word that was timely in the first century and is just as timely in the twenty-first: calling people to a radical gospel-centredness which will change the way we think and speak and act. It was God's word to Paul's contemporaries and it is just as much God's word to us. ●

ECUSA Bishop, Bible is not up with the times

According to David Mills, in his November 'letter from America' for *New Directions*, ECUSA Bp Griswold finds the Bible to be out of date. He writes,

'Bp Griswold is, or was, the patron of the American branch of the Affirming Catholics—of whose views the joke that they want women at the altar, men in the bed, and Mother on the throne of God is a fairly good summary—and a signer of Bp Spong's *Koinonia Statement*. He said, that "Broadly speaking, the Episcopal Church is in conflict with Scripture," because the Holy Spirit had led the Church to new ideas the writers of the Bible could not have understood or accepted.'

The Dome and the Wheel

Bill Salier



The millennium is nigh (at least for the popular mind and the non-pedants amongst us). The 0's are about to roll over and societies-at-large are planning how it might be celebrated.

In Australia it didn't seem that big a deal. White Australians don't have enough history to get wrapped up in the significance of 1000 years; indigenous Australians have too much history and too little connection with the Western story to be really interested. And the Olympics overshadows everything anyway (an interesting symbol in its own way with the number of tickets available to Australians and the bias towards the wealthy and powerful).

Here, in England, it is a different matter. The millennium is big time. A one billion dollar millennium fund is being spent on all manner of arts and local community projects. With so much history around it is understandable; the sense of the thousand years is at least palpable.

But, here in the land of culture, the land that contains and shapes so much of Western history, what are the symbols for the millennium? Will they be drawn from the vast and deep resources of cultural heritage, Christian and non-Christian? Perhaps some gesture that expresses a sense of compassion and fulfilment of need in a society where need is increasingly apparent? Where are the big dollars going?

Two things stand out—the Millennium Dome and a giant Wheel.

It is hard to see what the Millennium Dome is all about. A huge edifice constructed at Greenwich, it seems that any number of ridiculously well-paid high tech wizards have been given their head to create a tourist site. It will be full of all that apparently sums up the past and anticipates the glorious Information Technology (IT) future

that we are boldly and blindly striding towards.

The other symbol is a four hundred foot high 'Millennium Wheel'. A Ferris wheel, a giant amusement ride. And it is not being built just anywhere. It is at the heart of London, near the Houses of Parliament, right on the Thames where it can be seen from everywhere. A ride will take about half an hour and no doubt cost an arm and a leg. While the view will no doubt be spectacular, you have to wonder.

A fitting symbol for the end of the twentieth century? An amusement ride. It can only deny the pain which has marked much of the twentieth century. Take a ride. It can contribute little to the

Any number of ridiculously well-paid high tech wizards have been given their head to create a tourist site.

cultural life of the nation. It does celebrate the slide into hedonism, fun and entertainment that appears to have engulfed so much of our world and may therefore stand as a symbol for more than just England.

One of the many controversial issues concerning the Millennium Dome has been the lack of any reference to the Christian heritage of the past. Apparently this objection has been met with the addition of a Spiritual Zone. Which again sums up much about the present time. As many rush headlong towards a Christless eternity, living lives of sound and fury, they pause for a moment to ponder the mysteries of the Spiritual Zone and then get on with enjoying the dome and the wheel.

Well, at least Australia's got the games. ●

Fitting Synod into Life

Joanna Warren

Joanna Warren teaches at Sutherland Christian School.

There's no doubt about it—Synod is exhausting. I inevitably end up on the Tuesday or Wednesday of the first week convinced that it must be the next day already, because of the tiredness I feel.

All Synod representatives have the same pressures, cramming and cutting corners to find the hours that Synod takes. It might be my teacher's load of extra lesson preparation or making sandwiches for the week's lunches

day at work. My only hope is to make sure that I have read any relevant reports or bills beforehand and scribbled notes all over them to remind me of what I think about the issues that they raise. Making more notes, or commenting aloud to myself (!) or to the person next to me, also helps me to follow the argument and form my opinions. Sometimes though, I have to admit defeat, especially when it comes to financial charts and statistics or more complex legal arguments.

As with a long international plane flight, comfortable chairs, dehydrating air-conditioning and sitting down for a long time mean that the dinner breaks and times for stretching the legs are vital.

This year Synod voted for a new procedure. Rather than the 25 hours being spread over five evenings in two consecutive weeks, Justice Ken Handley proposed that Synod would be held on 3pm to 9:30 pm Friday and then from 9am to 9:30 pm on the next day. This would then be repeated at the end of the following week.

This proposal may enable some lay people with less flexible Monday to Friday working hours to become Synod reps, and any widening of the range of possible candidates would be great. Representatives from parishes further away from Sydney might also find it easier since they would need to be away for fewer nights at a time. These and



Synod Reps. sometimes have to travel some distance.

other arguments convinced Synod that it was worth a trial in 2001.

What I fear though is the apparent lack of time available under the new arrangements to think through and mull over issues. Currently the shorter periods spread over a few days have given me time to think about things from the previous evening's sessions as I drive to school or whatever. Synod debates, sandwiched between slices of everyday life and work, are put into perspective. But a twelve hour meeting on a Saturday would not provide that sort of space which I and probably others find necessary. Even if we start fresh on a Saturday morning, I dread to think of the state I will be in by 9:30 pm that evening, even

allowing for breaks! Pity the clergy who have to work the next day with all the demands that preaching and pastoring bring. Not to mention the lay Synod reps who are often very involved in congregational life. Family life, especially with younger children, would also be disrupted for two weekends in a row, since Saturday is frequently the day when families have some time together.

It was argued that Synod would be more efficient under the new arrangements, disposing of more business in the time that we have. That may be true, but I wonder if the quality of debate and decision-making might not suffer. Surely quality is more important than quantity. I guess we will have to wait and see. ●

As with a long international plane flight, comfortable chairs, dehydrating air-conditioning and sitting down for a long time mean that the dinner breaks and times for stretching the legs are vital.

or finding a bed for the reps who need to stay several nights in Sydney. Yet, despite the difficulties, it is a vitally important opportunity once a year to hear and air opinions and issues that are important to us not only as Christians, but which are supposed to help the work of evangelism and mission that we share in our corporate life as members of the Anglican Church in Sydney at this end of the 20th century.

Keeping up with the Synod debate is mentally fatiguing, especially after a