

# New missionary diocese for USA

## The Singapore Consecrations

Peter Hayward

The recent consecrations in Singapore of two missionary bishops to exercise episcopal oversight within the United States, brings to mind the saying of Victor Hugo: 'No army can withstand the strength of an idea whose time has come'. Though the timing of the consecrations have been questioned, it does clarify some of the ongoing difficulties faced by the Episcopal Church of the United States of America (ECUSA)—whose ideas will prevail?

The media, who always love a conflict, have portrayed the consecrations as stemming from a concern about the acceptance or non-acceptance of homosexuality within ECUSA. While this issue may have been the catalyst to some of the recent developments it is not the problem at the forefront of the dispute. Ultimately, the concern of

those behind the consecrations is the acceptance or non-acceptance of Biblical authority. On the other hand, those who object to the consecrations, perceive them as a threat to episcopal territorialism.

The Archbishops of Southeast Asia and Rwanda have given the two new missionary bishops the charge to support Anglicans inside and outside ECUSA who, though wishing to remain faithful to Biblical truth, find themselves isolated and even attacked by liberal and heretical parts of ECUSA.

Bishop John Rodgers, one of the two bishops consecrated in Singapore, has been part of ECUSA for over 40 years. He is not by nature given to precipitous actions, and carefully weighs issues before deciding to act. But he reached the stage when in good conscience he realized it was not possible for him to continue

within the existing structures of ECUSA. After years of trying to turn the church around from within, operating within conventions, Synods and starting numerous concerned groups, it became increasingly obvious that the idea that had in fact won the day was the total rejection of Biblical authority. This lead was coming from the top, from the American House of Bishops. It is the bishops in particular that have led the church astray.

In the years that John Rodgers has ministered within ECUSA, the importance of bishops has grown in magnitude. John's reflections on the reason for this are instructive. As management practices became dominate in corporate America in the 1950's there was a growing concern for efficiency in the decision making and organizational structure within ECUSA. **Continued page 6**

# Muslim vs Christian in Nigeria

Andrew Dircks, Mission Education Secretary, CMS NSW

In March/April 2000, the Muslim government of the Nigerian state which includes Kaduna Diocese, declared Sharia rule: a strict Muslim code. This decision has serious implications for the Anglican Diocese of Kaduna, a diocese with newly forged links with Sydney.

After 'discovering' Sydney Diocese through meeting Archbishop Goodhew at Lambeth 1998, and sharing with David Claydon (Federal Secretary of CMS Australia, and EFAC Australia delegate) at the EFAC Theological Resource Network, July 1999, in the diocese of Jos, Nigeria, the Bishop of Kaduna made two recent visits to Sydney. Josiah Fearon was the official guest of Synod in October 1999, and returned to Australia in January 2000 to address CMS Summer Schools in Queensland, NSW and Victoria. Bishop Josiah is keen for Australian evangelicals to assist in the growth and maturing of Kaduna Diocese. In particular, he sees a great need for Bible teachers.

Northern Nigeria has seen the rapid growth of churches in recent years. Nigeria has the largest Anglican Church in the world, with eleven million people in church on Sundays. During the last decade, the church has grown by five mil-

**During the last decade, the church has grown by five million.**

lion. Early substantial missionary work (including missionaries from CMS UK) has led to strong Christian churches in the South. But the strong Muslim presence makes the situation different in the north. In spite of opposition, however, Church growth has occurred.

Kaduna Diocese, less than two years old, has already planted an additional 15 to 20 congregations, each averaging 25 people. In his own ministry Bishop Fearon places a special emphasis on church planting. Each year he leads a two-week mission with all of the evangelists and priests in the diocese. The team goes



Bishop Josiah Fearon: playing a peace making role.

to areas where there are no churches to teach the Bible for a week. Bishop Fearon said, "After the first week we call people to Christ, and those who accept Christ become the founding members of that church... At the end of two weeks, we leave a worker there, who stays with the people and continues to disciple them."

Josiah is keen for us to keep the rapid Nigerian church growth in perspective. "While the church is growing fast, the problem in Nigeria and in Africa generally, is that Bible knowledge is only 'skin deep'. There is a great and urgent need to provide Biblical teaching to enable Christians to grow in faith in Christ, and to relate Christ to their lives." He explained further: "Internationally, people talk about church growth in Nigeria. There is truth in that. However, the church in Nigeria is not a mature church—the new converts need to be disciplined, to grow deeper in the faith. To do that we need people to help in Bible teaching."

In particular, he has expressed a desire

to see evangelical Bible teachers from Australia come to his Diocese. "We would very much appreciate assistance from the Anglican church in Australia... We request CMS to help: people with degrees in theology, preferably Masters, who will come and teach in colleges, to equip the young men in northern Nigeria, who will be able to work amongst their local people."

During the CMS NSW Summer School at Katoomba in January, the 'Bishop Fearon Training Fund' was launched, inviting Australian Christians to contribute financially to the costs of training Kaduna Diocese evangelists and pastors, using the Moore College External Studies course.

Alan Höhne, Vice-Chairman of the CMS NSW General Committee, explains the background to this fund: "During the past year, Bishop Josiah of Nigeria won the hearts of Sydney when he appealed for our help at Synod and again at CMS Summer School. He appealed to our resource-rich Diocese not for money, but for help to train his pastors **Continued page 2**

# The Australian CHURCH RECORD

May 20, 2000 Issue 1881

From the 4th to the 8th of June 2001 Sydney Synod will meet to elect a new Archbishop. Already the secular media have been asking questions and attempting to predict the outcome. But, with just over 12 months to go, the discussion has yet to embrace personalities. At this distance, we have the opportunity to think a little more broadly. This issue of *The Record* seeks to encourage thought and discussion.

## Contents

Editorial: Removing the boundaries The evangelical vision for Sydney in the 21st century	page 3
Electing Sydney's New Archbishop	page 8
Anglicanism: A Denomination in Decline	page 4
John Chapman on The Gospel of the Kingdom of God	Page 2
Michael Raiter on The soft underbelly of Islam	Page 2
Bishops on the Move	Page 6
Tasmania elects a 'Missionary Bishop'	Page 11
Lesley Ramsay on Protecting the children	Page 13
Mark Thompson on Where lies the power?	Page 15
Peter Bolt on The rhetoric of marginalisation	Page 15
Bill Salier on Lest we forget	Page 16
Met any sheep lately?	page 5
Fear of change	page 12
A word from the west	page 12
Fishers of men	page 12
Humble pie	page 13
Below the skin in Bangkok	Page 14
Lessons for the Anglican Communion	page 14
Trinity, atonement, and café talk	page 16



## Muslim vs Christian in Nigeria

from page 1

and evangelists. His present ministers receive all of three weeks training! He rightly discerned that unless he could provide better biblical training, the dangers of false teachers would beset his flock. In response, people at CMS Summer School donated 80 enrolments to the Moore College correspondence course for Nigerian pastors."

Along with church planting, Bishop Fearon's other main interest in ministry is Christian/Muslim relations. Half of the population of Nigeria is Islamic. Bishop Fearon runs courses in his diocese to teach lay people how to share with Muslims. He sees this as a "stepping stone towards helping Muslims to know who Jesus Christ is". When a Muslim converts to Christianity he or she loses all family, financial and political support and may even be killed. Bishop Fearon said, "For those who come to Christ discipling them becomes very costly... and because we are a poor church it makes it very difficult".

Tension between Muslims and Christians is often intense and is something that the Nigerian church has come to accept as the norm. He said because of it, "We hold firmly to the finality of Jesus Christ. We hold firmly to his unique nature and we do not compromise."

Since Sharia law would make most Christian activity illegal, the Christians responded to its imposition by drawing up a petition and marching to Government House to present it. On their return, they were attacked and a riot broke out. 1,000 people were killed, five of Bishop Josiah's churches were burned down and streets of houses and businesses were torched.

In late March, reports reached Australia that Bishop Josiah had been placed under house arrest. It appears that this is

not currently the case, even though a close watch is being kept on Christian leaders. As tension continues in Kaduna, Josiah is trying to play "a peace making role".

These recent developments surely call us to consider further what our responses should be. Alan Hühne comments: "It is surely no coincidence that God has stirred up our hearts just before this trial for

Bishop Josiah and his church. We urgently need to pray for him and the Diocese of Kaduna, in particular that the Lord of the Harvest will keep open the door of opportunity for these brave fellow believers." ●

For information on the Bp Fearon Training Fund, ph. CMS 9267 3711.

## Sharia

(a) The basis of Muslim religious law (Sharia') is always regarded as being divine revelation.  
(b) The two sources of this are the Quran (direct revelation) and Hadith or Traditions (indirect revelation).

(c) These are interpreted by two other principles—  
i. Ijma or Consensus which represents the opinion of the jurists called "mujtahidin" from 4 orthodox legal schools all of whom died between 750–880 AD. They are Ash Shafi, Abu Hanif, Malik, Ibn Hanbal. They were considered inspired in a secondary sense, in being able to interpret the sources and give independent decisions in legal and theological matters. So where there was no clear ruling in the Quran and the Traditions, recourse was had to interpretations given by these "mujtahidin". The Sunni Muslims think that this right ceased with the death of founders of these schools. Shi'ite Muslims think that this right still lies with their Imams.  
ii. Qiyas or analogy which is the principle whereby a problem is solved on the basis of an analogous statement in the Quran and Traditions. For instance from Quran 17:31 & 34 one could by analogy make a case against abortion.

(d) The enforcing of Sharia against non-Muslims.

There is a clear call in the Quran to Jihad (to fight for Allah's cause). Sometimes Jihad is carried out in response to a threat or to injustice (eg Q 22:39-40) on other occasions it is an act of war against those who reject the faith of Islam (eg Q 4:88-91, 9: 29, 47:4-6).

**They wish that you reject Faith, as they have rejected (Faith), and thus that you all become equal (like one another). So take not friends from their ranks, till they flee in the way of Allah (from what is forbidden). But if they turn back (from Islam), take (hold of) them and kill them wherever you find them, and take neither friends nor helpers from their ranks. Q 4:89**

**Fight those who believe not in Allah nor the Last Day, nor hold that forbidden which hath been forbidden by Allah and His Messenger, nor acknowledge the Religion of Truth, from among the People of the Book (Christians and Jews), until they pay the Jizya (tax for those who not accepting Islam) with willing submission, and feel themselves subdued. Q 9:29 ●**

## The soft underbelly of Islam

Michael Raiter



Michael Raiter is the head of the Department of Mission, Moore College, Sydney

A young woman from Tajikistan stood before the gathering of 200+ national and expatriate workers. With tears rolling down her cheeks, she pleaded with the foreign churches to send more workers into her country, where so few have become Christians. It was one of those images that will remain with me for a long time.

Since the breakup of the Soviet Union, many new independent and semi-autonomous republics have been established across central Asia. Scattered across these nations are a variety of people groups, mostly Islamic and largely untouched by the gospel. Providentially, a number of these republics are open to Christian workers. Over the last ten years,

indigenous churches have been established amongst many of these peoples. While they live in an Islamic context, the Islam practiced there is, by and large, nominal and moderate. This area has been described as "the soft underbelly of Islam".

In February I had the privilege of going to Thailand to deliver the daily Bible studies to some indigenous and expatriate workers from these republics. This annual consultation enables people to meet together, to network, exchange updates on the growth and state of the various indigenous churches, and discuss issues of relevance to the work of the gospel.

Two things struck me, in particular. Firstly, the church is growing, largely because of the evangelistic efforts of indigenous believers. Foreign workers are playing an important supportive role in teaching, leadership training, and providing business initiatives. But the effective evangelists are the local ones. These local believers are ministering in contexts of considerable government opposition. One fellow boarded the plane home fully expecting to be met at the airport by the KGB. It put my worries over excess baggage in perspective!

Of concern, though, were the frequent comments that reflected a disdain of 'theology'. National workers who see the desperate need for leadership training want the training to be 'practical' not 'theological'. Such an unhelpful dichotomy, in the end, must prove injurious to the mat-

uration of the church. People need to be grounded in a sound understanding of biblical and systematic theology. However, it is also clear that we who recognise the imperative of a sound theological education need to do some apologetic work in convincing others. Perhaps these young churches have been exposed to liberal theological teachers. More likely, theological educators from the West have failed to contextualise their theology such that it

**We who recognise the imperative of a sound theological education need to do some apologetic work in convincing others.**

intersects with important issues in the host culture. Whatever the reason, missionaries and nationals alike seem willing to jettison a commitment to theological thinking in favour of a more popular, unreflective, 'practical' education driven by the social sciences or sensational case studies.

We from our resource-rich diocese of Sydney have much to learn from, and much to give to, our fellow Christians in Central Asia. ●

## The Gospel of the Kingdom of God

John Chapman



The kingdom of God was the theme of the preaching of the Lord Jesus Christ. Mark tells us "After John was put in prison Jesus went into Galilee proclaiming the gospel of God. "The time has come" he said, "the kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the gospel" (Mark 1:14-15)

This was also the theme of the Apostle Paul's preaching. We read "For two whole years Paul stayed there (Rome) in his own rented house and welcomed all who came to see him. Boldly and without hindrance he preached the kingdom of God and taught about the Lord Jesus." (Acts 28:30-31).

### God is King

The idea that God was sovereign king in all his creation was a common one in the Psalms. Psalm 24: 7–8 is a good example.

"Lift up your heads, O you gates;  
be lifted up, you ancient doors,  
that the King of glory may come in.  
Who is the King of glory?  
The Lord strong and mighty  
The Lord mighty in battle"

God was king over his people Israel and indeed the whole world.

### God's King—Messiah

The theme of many of the Old Testament prophets was that God would exercise his rule through his anointed king, The Messiah. He would be in the line of King David. He would embody of the good qualities of David and Solomon. He would bring about universal peace and justice. He would rescue God's people from their enemies and be the means of bringing in the New Creation. Isaiah 11 is a good example of this.

### Jesus—God's Messiah

As the disciples saw Jesus in action and heard his teachings it became clear to them that Jesus was, in fact, God's king. He stilled the storm at sea. He exorcised demons from people. He forgave people their sins and said that he would be the judge of all people at the close of the age. He taught that people could only enjoy eternal life in as much as they trusted him.

The greatest act of Jesus' kingly rule was to defeat his great enemy, and ours, by his sin-bearing death on the cross (Col.2: 13- 15). By taking the punishment which our sins deserve Jesus sets us free from the penalty of sin.

### He is both Saviour and Lord

The risen Lord Jesus is just that. He is king and He is a rescuer. He rescues us by exercising his power over Satan. He sets us free from slavery to sin and death so that we can serve God as his servants. This is so clearly described in Luke 1: 74, "to rescue us from the hands of our enemies, and to enable us to serve him without fear in holiness and righteousness before him all the days of our life."

Because of this, our response to the Lord Jesus should be repentance and faith. Not one without the other. We repent of our rebellion to his rule in our life. We gladly acknowledge him to be our Lord. We trust that his death upon the cross is sufficient for our full salvation. ●

# Editorial

## Removing the boundaries

### *The evangelical vision for Sydney in the 21st century*

In the preface to the Book of Common Prayer and elsewhere, our Anglican Reformers made it clear that their purpose was to remove boundaries to gospel ministry, following the evangelical precedent of the Apostle Paul (2 Corinthians 10:14). Only beliefs and practices that were true and edifying should remain.

This was painful and difficult for them. The Reformers lived when it was firmly believed that God did NOT work directly and personally in the world, but indirectly down a chain of signs or sacraments. By means of priestly activity, grace worked in a fixed way down through the chain of bishop-priest-deacon to the people. It was accepted teaching that “no bishop, no valid Lord’s Supper”, “no bishop, no church”.

In that context the costly radicalism of Archbishop Thomas Cranmer stands out. In order for gospel ministry to break out of the stifling mould built by human religion, he went as far as to declare: even a layperson may ordain a bishop. Against the prevailing catholic view, which since the 19th century has come back into Anglicanism, Cranmer held a simple evangelical view. With New Testament simplicity, Cranmer argued that a valid ordination only required “prayer, and the laying on of hands.” Bishops are not of the essence of the true church. They are apostolic visitors who by teaching the Bible ask the local church: how goes the apostolic, New Testament faith with you?

#### Our vision?

Sydney Diocese is well situated to serve not only the Anglican denomination, but also the evangelical church more widely. With the archiepiscopal elections due in 2001, what is our vision? Following the evangelical spirit of the Apostle Paul and Thomas Cranmer, what barriers to clear and unambiguous gospel ministry may we seek to remove? Whom we elect will reflect our vision.

Four contemporary barriers are evident: episcopal territorialism, the limitations of our present parish system, ongoing clericalism, and “diocesis”. None can be removed without pain, but all should be removed to advance gospel ministry in Australia and overseas.

#### Nurture wherever needed

How do we intend to care for Anglican’s world-wide? The reaction to the consecrations in Singapore of two “flying” bishops to minister to the beleaguered conservative Episcopalians of the United States has been revealing. In the face of the courage of the bishops of Rwanda and Singapore, the vitriol and disappointment expressed elsewhere points to the tyranny of episcopal territorialism. Apparently no matter what immorality and unfaithfulness may prevail, the fixed order inherited from the medieval church of bishop-

diocese-clergy-people must not be broken!

The Australian church is also caught up in the problem. Two diocesan bishops caught soliciting homosexual acts, although removed from their episcopal office, subsequently became rectors of parishes. That is outrageous.

The catholic idea that the bishop stands in a fixed way between us and God mediating grace has made inroads into Sydney evangelicalism. One potential archiepiscopal candidate speaks of three foundational principles of ministry: Reformed belief, godly behaviour, and Anglican order. By the latter is meant not Cranmer’s simple view, but that of contemporary Anglicanism. Thus, if the need for Reformed belief and godly behaviour cut across operations of “Anglican order”, we are told there is nothing we can do. The New Testament’s outlook is totally otherwise, where Peter and Paul are recorded as ministering to both Jews and Gentiles, even though each was assigned the apostleship of just one group. When the early church, both east and west, overwhelmingly adopted the Arian heresy, Bp Athanasius of Alexandria was prepared to ordain bishops for dioceses ruled by unfaithful men. To nurture the evangelical church wherever it may be found to be under pressure will not be an easy option, but it is part of an evangelical vision.

#### Parishes without property

Synod has already begun to address the problem of the limitations of the parish system inherited from rural England. In seeking to reach our city with the gospel, contemporary life is too secular, too complex, and too ethnically diverse for older restricted ministry patterns. Less than 3% of Sydney-siders attend any evangelical church on Sundays. Being Anglican parishes tied to property hinders us from becoming, with St Paul, “all things to all people, so that I might by all means save some” (1 Corinthians 9:19-23). So, at some risk to our normal ways of doing things, we are seeking to include into the fellowship of Synod parishes without property. Already about 20 or so Anglican congregations meet without property, and therefore without the supportive fellowship of Synod. They have been able to church people who otherwise have been bypassed by our parish system.

The gospel compels us to resist the old parochialism, and to move out of our comfort zones.

#### Lay church planters and pastors

Within Anglicanism, the administration of Holy Communion is the last official bastion of the belief that clergy are in some sense at least spiritually different in themselves from lay people. The belief that God permanently restricts certain ways of working in the world to episcopally ordained clergy is a concession to Roman

Catholic views of ministerial order and of the Holy Communion as a sacrifice. The furious reaction in the national church to our synodical decision bears eloquent testimony to this.

Synod has already determined that if we are to bear transparent witness to Jesus Christ in the national context then we must allow lay people to administer Holy Communion. But the priestly barrier to ministry is not only expressed by restrictive practices with respect to the Lord’s Supper. Will we at the official level encourage lay people to plant churches?

This is one of the evangelical breakthroughs in present day catholic Ireland, north and south, where house churches have been started by lay people converted on catholic housing estates. Closer to home, one of the strongest evangelical churches in country NSW has been planted and pastored by an unordained graduate of Moore College. That church is now planting another church.

For the sake of the growth of Christ’s church, will we at a diocesan level continue to actively support the breaking down of old clerical barriers?

#### Planting evangelical churches outside the diocese

With respect to pastoral oversight, for more than a decade Anglicans who have had to go it alone have asked for official help from Sydney. Held back by the fear of scorn from the national church, and many segments of world-wide Anglicanism, “diocesis” has stopped us from more than good will and personal assistance. But elsewhere in Australia generations of liberal Anglo-catholic episcopal rule have depleted pastoral resources, sapped spiritual and moral energy, and bred heart-breaking despair. A mixture of ill-conceived politeness and indifference have shielded many of us from the true situation outside Sydney diocese. When the secular press brings the grossest features to our notice, it is the tip of the iceberg. And in all this, Christ’s name is profaned among the unbelieving majority who are our fellow Australians, who in turn still need to hear the gospel of grace and put their trust in Jesus Christ.

The gospel compels us to offer official encouragement, support and nurture of those planting evangelical churches outside the diocese, wherever such church plants are needed. In turn, we must bear the cost, not only of accepting scorn and threat, but also, in fairness, of allowing alternative episcopal oversight for congregations who do not want to be part of an evangelical diocese.

“Removing the boundaries”: what do we need to do to allow the gospel to be ministered wherever God wants it, in a way that pleases him? In our present circumstances how may we follow the lead of our Reformers? The next Archbishop of Sydney will express our actual vision. ●

#### The Australian Church Record

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

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

*Executive Editor:* Peter G. Bolt

*All enquiries:*  
PO Box 218, Camperdown NSW 1450

#### Donations needed and welcome!

This edition of ACR has been funded by interest from the trust funds the Australian Church Record administers and the donations of friends. We will produce two or three editions a year and supply them free of charge. If you would like to help us financially, please send your donation to:

The Hon. Treasurer  
Australian Church Record  
P.O. Box 218, Camperdown NSW 1450.

This edition cost around \$5000, and except for layout, printing and postal distribution, was produced by voluntary labour.

*The Australian Church Record*  
is designed and typeset by  
Joy Lankshear Design Pty Ltd.  
Telephone: 02 9877 6777  
Email: jldesign@bigpond.net.au



# ANGLICANISM:

*The next Archbishop of Sydney will have to stand for evangelical truth in the midst of an Anglican Communion that is in tatters. When evangelical Christianity is alive and well in our own Diocese, it is easy to make the mistake that all is well with the Anglican world. Nothing could be further from the truth.*

## Crisis in ECUSA?

Following the February, 'irregular consecrations' in Singapore, American Presiding Bishop Griswold denied there was any crisis in the Episcopal Church of the USA (ECUSA). This was too much for the *Church of England Newspaper*, which sees itself in the middle ground of evangelicalism. Under the heading 'Crisis? What Crisis?', they published a list of 101 things that Griswold 'would prefer not to

advertise'. The list tells of a series of moral scandals, sexual and financial indiscretions, in ECUSA the active teaching and encouragement of doctrines and practices once considered to be unchristian, decline in church attendances and the closure of churches, heavy handed actions by church officials and legal disputes, and the like.

As a result of a March resolution, our Standing Committee has sent this article to every parish in Sydney so that congregations may be informed about the sad

state of affairs in the USA. One lay member reported to *The Record* that he was 'appalled' when he read the article. 'I was shocked at my own lack of understanding of what was happening in other places. I was also shocked at how it is that these people have strayed so far from fundamental biblical truths'.

Copies have now been sent out to the parishes. Congregation members can ask

for a copy of the article from their minister. It can also be found on the Diocesan Web page, <http://www.sydney.anglican.asn.au>

Despite the problems in ECUSA, its Presiding Bishop, Frank Griswold, has been appointed by the Archbishop of Canterbury as the Anglican Co-chairperson of ARCIC. ●

## 'No change can come from within'

David Holloway on the Church of England

During a recent visit to Sydney, the *Record* interviewed Rev. David Holloway, Vicar of Jesmond, Newcastle on Tyne, UK.

David Holloway is a good person to talk about the state of the Church of England. For many years he operated along the lines set by the Keele convention, held the same year he was ordained, in 1967. Assuming that reform would come from the centre, evangelicals emerged from Keele convinced that they ought to work within the system. In 1973 he was elected as one of youngest members of the newly formed General Synod, and he served on it for 15 years. He was immediately put on the board for social responsibility, which dealt with the political side of church life at the interface between the church and the public domain. After serving for ten years on the Standing Committee of General Synod, Holloway reports that 'I came to really understand how sick the Church of England was, and became convinced that we would not be able to change the church from the centre. The reality of central church politics is that, at best, you stop people pulling the plug; but you don't fill the bath with water.'

Does the Church of England need reform? To answer the question, it is important to recognise the varying definitions of the C of E.

Holloway stands by the definition of Canon A5, which defines the C of E considered theoretically and legally, by doctrine, i.e. by reference to its grounding

in the Scriptures. However, he points out that what has happened *de facto* in the 19th and early 20th c., is that it ceased to be defined by the Bible, and began to be defined by bishops. Since the 1970s revision and the introduction of the General Synod, it is now defined by structures such as synods.

On the other hand, the general public is only concerned with the church on the corner, or large churches which are doing either good or bad things. This is what defines the Church of England for the public.

So, do many churches called 'C. of E.' need reform? 'Yes, they do.' Does the Episcopacy need reform? 'Yes, it does.' Do the Synodical Structures? 'Yes, they do.'

There were several key events which caused him to modify his understanding of how change would occur.

The consecration of David Jenkins as Bishop of Durham in 1984 was the catalyst. 'I had been a good boy up to this time. Jenkins had denied the virgin birth and the empty tomb. A lot of people outside the church were asking, "what's going on?". No-one in the General Synod made any noise.' And so David Holloway wrote a letter to *The Daily Times* saying that Jenkins should not be consecrated. Simply to write this letter took huge energy, and he realised 'just how insidious systems can be, in intimidating people who disagree.' When the consecration went ahead, it was a landmark for the C of E, for 'it validated heresy in the C of E.' Although bishops had espoused heretical views previously,

they had done so after they were already consecrated. David Jenkins made his views known publicly before his consecration, and so the C of E was knowingly consecrating a heretical bishop.

This broke down the whole system. If a bishop defies the canons governing doctrine, as this one did, then this action holds in question all the administrative canons, since the canons must be interpreted as a whole. 'Since then there has been a rollercoaster downward; you couldn't operate structurally any more. The game is no longer being played by the rules.'

In the 1960s the theological consensus in the C of E broke down with Bishop John Robinson, the 'Death of God' theology, etc. The denomination changed after this, from a federation of churches, to a regulatory agency. At that time, evangelicals said that error is countered by preaching the truth. After David Jenkins' consecration, evangelicals said that errors also have to be denounced.

Things have now gone a step further in response to the gay debate, which has become a watershed. 'Many of us have been hugely tolerant of massive doctrinal errors, but this is the line in the sand. The Church of Thyatira [Rev. 2:18ff.] was denounced for tolerating two things: immorality and a multifaith agenda. These are the two things you can't tolerate: you have to take action.' When not in the centre of power, all that can be done is to break communion with people in order to allow repentance. The EAMES

commission spoke of this, and the Singapore consecrations are an example of this kind of action. 'This is the way forward. Action has to be taken.'

According to Holloway, four things are needed to transform an organisation: 1. an agreed agenda. For us, this has to be the Bible; 2. competent leadership; 3. enabling structures; 4. market sensitivity. We need to be interfacing with the world in which we live, with sensitivity.

He sees that the danger for evangelicals is to argue strongly for the first, but neglect the others. All four are necessary. 'We need bishops who believe the Bible, and who understand Church growth, how to communicate, how to develop good structures. They need to be able to keep abreast with the world, to meet people where they are, and to bring the gospel to them.' ●

More from David Holloway, p. 8 and 14.

According to David Holloway, the five features of an organisation in decline can be discerned in the Anglican Communion:

1. denial;

2. centralisation;

3. homogenization;

4. frantic activity;

5. cleansing.



# A Denomination in Decline

## Who oversees the overseer?

The Church of England Newspaper declared Bishop Thomas Shaw of Massachusetts heavy handed, when he revoked the parochial status of St Paul's Brockton. The church was reduced from a self-governing parish to a mission, when it refused to fund the diocese after its convention rejected the Christian teaching on marriage. They left the diocese, and Bishop Shaw has now taken legal action against them to sue for the property and prevent the parishioners calling themselves St Paul's.

In England also, local churches have raised voices of protest against denominational structures. Churches have 'capped the quota', ie. refused extra and voluntary funds to the central pool in response to unacceptable practices in the Church of England. There have also been a few notable cases of local churches deciding that their Bishop's views no longer make them a suitable person to exercise episcopal oversight.

On April 1st this year, the *London Times* ran an article saying that the Vicar of Kidderminster, Charles Raven, 'was advised to resign', over a dispute with his bishop whose liberal views on homosexuality are well-known. Mr Raven has refused to have Bishop Peter Selby conduct confirmations in the parish, and is seeking another bishop to conduct them instead. Since those 'advising' the clergyman were delegates of the Archbishop of Canterbury, this news was not received well by conservative groups. After asking for some clarification, *The Record* received the following reply from Canterbury:

*Two of the Archbishop's representatives visited the benefice of Kidderminster West in January solely in connection*

*with the appointment of a new Team Rector. It had not been possible to appoint a new Team Rector as incumbent to the benefice within the period during which the presentation was in the gift of the registered Patron. The presentation therefore lapsed to the Archbishop. Amongst others, the Archbishop's representatives met all the clergy attached to the benefice, including the Rev'd Charles Raven, the Team Vicar. During discussions with Mr Raven about the appointment, he said he no longer accepted the authority of the Bishop of Worcester and by extension would accept no one who ministered in the benefice with the Bishop of Worcester's licence. It was no more than pointed out to Mr Raven that his own authority to minister in a parish in the Diocese of Worcester itself came from the Bishop of Worcester. The logic of his stance suggested therefore that the honourable thing for him to do would be to hand back his own licence.*

*I am pleased to have this opportunity to assure you that at no point has anyone from Lambeth Palace encouraged or put pressure on the Rev'd Charles Raven to hand back his licence or to resign. It is not the place of the Archbishop or any member of his staff to bring such pressure to bear, nor have they done so. They have no standing in the matter that gives*

*them a basis on which such a suggestion could be made. Any reports in the press that they have done so are mistaken, even possibly mischievous.*

*The Archbishop is not involved in Mr Raven's dispute with the Bishop of Worcester in any way. Though Mr Raven has sought to draw the Archbishop into his difference of view with the Bishop, Dr Carey has declined to intervene. The matter is one simply between a priest and his bishop.*

One of the big questions raised by such events from around the Communion is, who disciplines the bishops?

The aftermath of last year's Lambeth Conference doesn't hold out any hope that discipline will occur within the ranks of the episcopate itself, and neither does the recent meeting of the Primates in Portugal. The Primates called upon American dioceses to pause for thought before continuing with a permissive course of action in ordaining practising homosexuals and blessing same-sex unions. Presiding Bishop of ECUSA, Frank Griswold said that it was unrealistic to expect any change to come from it.

Who disciplines the bishops? If someone like the 'heavy handed' Bishop Shaw operated similarly in England, would this be, once again, a matter 'simply between a priest and his bishop'? Does this mean that a bishop has absolute power in the Anglican Communion? Does it mean that they can believe what they like, live how they like, exercise their power how they like against local churches and their ministers? Does the Anglican Communion now have a completely unrestrained episcopate? ●

### What the Primates said to American dioceses:

**"Such clear and public repudiation of those sections of the Resolution related to the public blessing of same-sex unions and the ordination of declared non-celibate homosexuals, and the declared intention of some dioceses to proceed with such actions, have come to threaten the unity of the Communion in a profound way. We strongly urge such dioceses to weigh the effects of their actions, and to listen to the expressions of pain, anger and perplexity from other parts of the Communion. We urge all bishops to recognise that further public actions of the kind mentioned above strain the reality of mutual accountability in a global Communion, where what may seem obvious and appropriate in one context may be harmful and unacceptable in another."**

— From *The Communiqué from the Primates' Meeting*

### What the American House of Bishops said in reply:

**"Theology is lived out in specific contexts. Diversity will continue to express itself. I cannot imagine any diocese altering its perspective [on ordaining homosexuals in committed relationship or blessing same-sex unions] as a result of either the bishops' or the Primates' Meeting."**

— Presiding Bishop Griswold in the final press statement

# MET ANY SHEEP LATELY?

Alison Blake



Many of us are city-slickers, who rarely get closer to a real sheep than a lamb kebab on the barbie. We've probably forgotten what sheep look like.

But I'm beginning to think there are more sheep around than we realize. Because I met one the other weekend.

I asked an acquaintance how life was treating her.

Her answer has remained jammed uncomfortably in my mind—"I'm trying to learn to go with the flow. Just when I think things are going along nicely, something always disappoints me. So I'm trying to learn to roll with the punches—it's all you can do, isn't it?"

What a sad statement on life. So much helplessness, so little hope and optimism. Yet my friend is experiencing life in the real world, where real punches and kicks are dealt out.

My friend is not a Christian. So what does Jesus offer her? What can I do to help her receive what he offers?

Jesus, described the crowds as "harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd" (Matthew 9:36; compare John 10). Just like my friend. Sure, outwardly she looks together and appears to be managing her life well enough. But when I take the time to talk with her I find a lost sheep, harassed and helpless, because, according to Jesus, she does not recognize and follow the voice of the good shepherd. She, and thousands like her, are wandering through this world's pastures, watching out for life's ravines, occasionally feeling safe enough to enjoy the pastures, but more often hoping against hope that they'll see the next wolf before it sees them.

My friend, like all of us, needs to recognize that she is a lost sheep—lost in life because she is lost from God. She, and all lost sheep, need to hear and know that Jesus is the good shepherd, who laid down his life to rescue her from sin and death. Having laid down his life for her, he took it up again at his Resurrection. He has defeated sin and death, the ultimate thief and robber. She needs to hear and believe that, with God's authority, he rules over all creation and humanity, nothing catches him by surprise, nothing is outside his sphere of influence or control. He knows and cares for his sheep deeply—to the point of dying for them when they were helpless, lost and needed rescuing.

If my friend can grasp hold of these realities then she will know new life with God forever, forgiveness from sin and judgement. As these sure and certain truths become realities for her she can begin to live life here and now with confidence, hope and optimism. She can live life secure in the knowledge that she is loved and accepted by the God who directs all the events and affairs of life and humanity. As John says, she can "come in and go out, and find pasture".

So, look out for those lost and harassed sheep. There's more of them around than we realize. Pray that you'll recognize the harassed and helpless sheep in your patch of pasture—in your family, at work amongst your children's friends and their parents, amongst your neighbours. Pray for and make opportunities to help them know and follow the Good Shepherd. ●

# BISHOPS ON



Kim Hawtrey is the director of IMPACT Evangelism, and a member of Synod.

## Authority and the Anglican Church: RESPONDING TO ARCIC

Kim Hawtrey

His latest report from the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission, entitled *The Gift of Authority* should disturb us for three reasons.

### 1. The Context of ARCIC

*The Gift of Authority* is the strongest effort so far from a growing Catholic movement in worldwide Anglicanism to seize the initiative.

This non-evangelical movement wants

to shift the nature of the Anglican 'priesthood' back towards a more Roman Catholic understanding, ultimately emphasising sacramentalist (*The Virginia Report*) and centralist (ARCIC) notions.

Since its inception (1966), ARCIC's agenda has been "visible unity": the re-uniting of the Anglican and Catholic churches. Through engineering a theological convergence it hopes to result in institutional convergence. This hinges on the thorny issue of authority (especially papal, but also priestly), which has been pursued with steadily rising intensity and seriousness.

The latest report makes a startling claim when, amongst its six points of agreement, it includes "the need for a universal primacy exercised by the Bishop of Rome". Thus, ARCIC has already agreed to united papal authority. All that remains now is to work out the details.

Evangelicals need to challenge ARCIC over this prevailing mood seeking accommodation with Rome. Visible reunification of the two organisations is not—of itself—all that valuable, and it would almost certainly come at the cost of departing from the reformed basis on which the Anglican church was founded. This is an unacceptable price to pay.

### 2. The Content of ARCIC

Evangelicals must also object to the specific ideas contained in the ARCIC report, for they are based on the theological error of 'Scripture plus ...', which the Reformers fought so hard to overturn. ARCIC seeks to insert a third party between Scripture and the ordinary believer in a manner that is highly unwarranted.

*The Gift of Authority* reflects this error in various ways.

It claims that the Pope has a "specific ministry concerning the discernment of

truth" (paragraph 47), which is an extravagant claim to say the least. Regardless of which individual happens to be the Pope of the day, this cannot be acceptable to Bible-believing Christians. Special papal infallibility, papal prophecy and its variants have long been repudiated by Anglicans, and rightly so.

The report also suggests that synods can be binding on the believer, but once again the same problem exists: if Scripture disagrees with the doctrinal pronouncements of synods then orthodox believers are bound to the former and must stand against the latter. Such human forms of authority must remain derivative and never primary.

The report then claims that there is a so-called "interaction between Scripture and Tradition" (paragraph 6), talking of the "re-reception" of Scripture. The implication is that Tradition stands alongside Scripture as some kind of co-governor of the church. In ARCIC-speak, this is really saying that bishops and priests (the custodians of church tradition) are an essential ingredient for Scripture to fulfill its function today. The word of God only becomes fully effective, in other words, when it is mediated through the Teaching of the church.

Although the claim made for papal primacy is troublesome enough, it is unlikely to be accepted by Anglicans. The relationship presented between the Bible and the Bishops has greater potential to widely influence Anglican thinking for the worse.

Bishops and clergy are seen more as the custodians of Tradition, than of Revelation. In the final analysis, too much authority is ascribed to human ministers (the pope included) by ARCIC: they are mistakenly assigned a degree of authority that rightly belongs to God alone. The same Spirit of God who led the apostles

into all truth (John 16:13; compare 15:26-27), dwells within believers enabling them to hear the voice of the Good Shepherd in the pages of Scripture. This means every believer, whether pope, or new convert.

There cannot, therefore, be two sources of Authority: Scripture and Tradition. The word of God does not need another, human authority in order to make it effective in the church today.

### 3. The Consequences of ARCIC

Because ARCIC elevates Tradition relative to Scripture in a manner that will appeal to many non-evangelical members of the Anglican communion, the ARCIC vision for a more centralised, ecclesiastical understanding of authority has the potential to do great harm to countless Anglicans.

We should not underestimate the impact that ARCIC might have on the person in the pew. It has attracted widespread attention and begun to figure in decision-making processes. At least one Australian bishop has written approvingly of aspects of ARCIC. The secular media has reported on ARCIC, with ramifications for how the community sees Anglican churches.

Ultimately, there can be no issue closer to the hearts of evangelicals than that of authority in the church. There are many who would seek by stealth to dismantle the Protestant principle that ordinary believers can know God for themselves directly through His word, illuminated for them by His Holy Spirit as they read the plain words of Scripture.

Accordingly, the Sydney synod last October passed a motion of dissent from *The Gift of Authority* and referred it to the Doctrine Commission for further detailed analysis.

We have not yet heard the last shot fired in this battle. ●

## The Gift of Authority

In October 1999 the Sydney Synod passed the following motion on ARCIC 'The Gift of Authority':

"Synod—

(1) notes the recent Statement issued by the Second Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC) entitled *The Gift of Authority* (found at [www.anglicancommunion.org](http://www.anglicancommunion.org)) and appreciates the many hours of work that went into preparing the Statement and welcomes the opportunity to respond to the issues raised

(2) respectfully requests that the Archbishop convey in writing to ARCIC a preliminary response of this Synod as follows—

(a) records that ARCIC does not speak for this Diocese on the matter of authority;

(b) dissents from the proposition that 'the Bishop of Rome offers a specific ministry concerning the discernment of truth' (paragraph 47)

(c) dissents from the proposition that Scripture has a 'dynamic interdependence' with Tradition (paragraphs 19-23)

(d) reaffirms that the Bible alone is sufficient as the final authority in all matters of Christian faith and conduct, and believes any dilution of this principle is contrary to the reformed basis on which the Anglican church is founded.

(3) asks the Diocesan Doctrine Commission to critically study ARCIC III and related documents and report to the next session of this Synod." ●

## New Missionary Diocese for USA: The Singapore Consecrations

from page 1

This was seen in the 1960's and 70's in an increasing tendency to centralize decision making for the whole church. Decision making was no longer at the area of application, it was made in the bureaucratic structure. The bishops of the various Dioceses and especially the presiding bishop, who for the first time was no longer a bishop in a diocese, were increasingly exalted in their position. They had begun to operate as CEOs. Gradually the unity of the church was seen to reside within the bishops themselves. Their task was to protect the visible unity of the church, which they themselves represented. This of course meant that it was an act of disunity to disagree with a bishop's words and decisions. The end result was that the overall unity of ECUSA was no longer based on the Christian faith but on the territorial boundaries of bishop's. A few years ago ECUSA's bishops passed

a motion that included the significant words 'schism is a greater sin than heresy'. All this was occurring during the period when the church was moving away from confessional doctrinal standards, which is highlighted by the 1979 Prayer Book description of the 39 Articles as merely an 'historical document'.

Faithful men and women therefore found themselves in the context that gave birth to the 'idea whose time has come': an Episcopal Church which is a liberal majority with a hierarchal authority dominated by bishops that no longer recognizes biblical or theological authority and was hostile to men and women who did. For years those like John Rodgers have participated in endless discussion and dialogue, while trying to change the direction of ECUSA. Discussion and dialogue are very important to allow understanding. But after 25 years there is a clear understand-

ing of the ideas that are being confronted. The time had come to set up a new Anglican Missionary province in the USA.

Given this context, a lot of careful thought has gone into the new constitutions and canons of the proposed Anglican Missionary Province. Some of the features are:

- both Parishes and Dioceses will no longer have geographical boundaries,
- episcopal jurisdiction will therefore be based on affinity, though geographical proximity will also be a factor,
- parishes can exist without owning property,
- ownership of all property shall reside with the Parish,
- A Bishop shall generally be Rector of a congregation,
- each congregation is to be encouraged to be active in evangelism and church planting, and is to render a yearly

account of their ministry in these areas, vii. the bishop's role is to encourage both a theological bond between congregations and the mission of the individual congregations within his episcopacy, viii. to enforce moral and theological discipline in the church.

The consecrations of two missionary bishops to the USA, and the setting up of a new Missionary Province are issues that have huge ramifications for the world wide Anglican communion. The diocese of Sydney, as well as being a keen observer of what is happening in the USA, will also be looked on to play an important role in providing leadership to the evangelical Anglicans keen to maintain a true unity of faith. For the second 'idea whose time has come' may well indeed be a new Anglican Province in the USA, structured along lines drawn by the gospel, rather than by geography. ●



# THE MOVE

*The new archbishop of Sydney will have to stand against some worrying trends amongst the episcopacy.*

## Bishops, Bishops, everywhere

Barry Newman

What a month it was for Bishops. Archbishop Carnley was elected Primate of Australia, John Harrower was elected Bishop of Tasmania and Bishop Watson was elected Archbishop of Melbourne. Archbishop Emmanuel Kolini of Rwanda and the Most Reverend Moses Tay, Archbishop of the Province of South East Asia, together with two other bishops, consecrated two American Episcopalian clergymen, John Rodgers and Chuck Murphy, as bishops. Last, but not least, Bishop Paul Barnett made a stirring response to our new Primate's beliefs as indicated at a press conference.

What an odd thing for the Primate to say of the action of the Archbishop of Rwanda and the Archbishop of the Province of South East Asia that it was wicked! I don't know that I understand what the word "wicked" means anymore. I thought active homosexual relations were wicked, even abominable, but not attempts to enable the calling of the ungodly to repentance. May God have mercy on and give understanding to the Primate and to all of us. Well done Emmanuel Kolini and Moses Tay. May God keep you courageous, wise and concerned for His truth. Brothers Rodgers and Murphy, may God

continue to encourage you as you carry out your apostolic mission to the USA.

May God richly bless both John Harrower and Peter Watson. May he keep you from the frivolous, the unhelpful, the unwholesome compromises, the impure motives, self-interest and all that is evil. May he abundantly endow you with godly wisdom, greater understanding of God's perspectives and the ever ready willingness to stand against error, to teach unashamedly the whole truth and to lead such godly lives that those you serve begin to think more of their Lord than ever before.

Well done Bishop Barnett. We must hear more of you as you fight to clarify gospel understanding and gospel living. To focus on the substitutionary atonement of our Lord Jesus Christ and his bodily resurrection from the dead has been indeed to focus on the life and death issues.

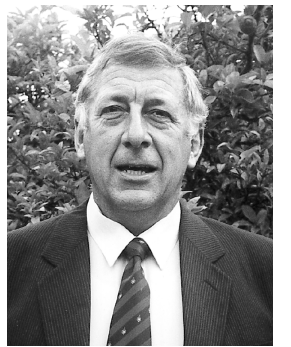
Which reminds me. When I was about 19, I had come to doubt the trustworthiness of the Scriptures, that Jesus was the Son of God, almost everything christian. I thought there was probably a God, but even that was not certain. I wanted Christianity to be true, but if it were false I had to know. I read material against Christianity—books such

as Bertrand Russell's "Why I am not a christian." I regularly prayed a prayer: "O God, if you are hearing this and are at all interested, please teach me the truth and I promise you I will follow the truth wherever it leads." I was desperate. I wanted to know one way or another. Though untrained, I began to proceed as an amateur historian. I read the Gospel records over and over again. I focused in particular on the so-called resurrection of Christ from the dead. After many anxious months, with unbelievable relief I came to the conclusion that Jesus came back from the dead "much the way the Gospel writers record". My feet were placed on a rock. I now knew I was on the road to understanding who Jesus really was and the significance of what he did and said. I never considered that his resurrection was not substantial—that is, bodily. I never considered it to be some symbolic, spiritual, ethereal or only heavenly reality. The Gospel records did not at all point in that direction. If I had come to the belief that seems to be that of the Primate, I cannot image that I would be one of God's people today and whatever length of time I would have lived I would have lived and died in hopelessness.

I was about 22 when I used to talk to

young children on the beaches around Sydney about Jesus. After one such address, a boy approached me. At four, he was very much younger than the children we usually taught. He told me: "I would like to thank the Lord Jesus for taking my place on the cross." Does a four year old have more understanding of the truth than some bishops? If God was not reconciling the world to himself in Christ, making Christ for our sake to be sin, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him, then neither I nor the 4 year old are safe from the righteous and just indignation of God. We are wretched people indeed with no hope in a godless world and no hope in the world to come. But thanks be to God that the Lord Jesus Christ gave himself for our sins to rescue us.

More power and grace to all you faithful bishops, pastors, teachers and leaders of the flock of God. But note the Bible's judgement on all unfaithful ministers: woe to those who take the flock away from good water and green pastures, who use the sheep for their own delights, who leave them for the ravenous world to prey upon and who, with them, ever so easily amble onwards to the day of slaughter. ●



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

## How essential are Bishops?

Marty Foord

ying behind the lay presidency debate is the more important issue of what is the true and 'catholic' church. According to former Primate, Keith Rayner (*The Melbourne Anglican*, November 1999) Sydney Synod's vote for lay presidency was 'a fundamental break with catholic order':

... in the 16th Century, the Anglican reformers made it clear that they were not starting a new Church. They specifically reaffirmed the received orders of bishop, priest and deacon and the functions which they fulfilled. The Sydney vote represents a fundamental break with the principles of the Anglican reformers.

According to Rayner, the threefold order of bishop, priest, and deacon is essential: without it there ceases to be the 'catholic' church.

It would seem, however, that this is not the reformation understanding of the 'catholic' church at all. The Anglican ecclesiolgologist Paul Avis (*Anglicanism and the Christian Church*, 1989, p. 33) shows that the english reformers agreed with the mainstream continental reformers that:

... ecclesiastical polity belonged to the

external form of the church, whereas the preaching of the gospel and the administration of the sacraments, which were the proper work of the church, belonged to her inward essence. They alone, not the ministry, whether episcopal or not, showed where the church was to be found.

Luther argued that justification determined the understanding of the visible church. A person was justified by simply trusting the gospel. The visible church, therefore, is constituted by those who trust the gospel, gathered around the preaching of the gospel and the proper administrations of sacraments. Gospel and sacrament defined the visible church, and Church order was not of its essence.

John Calvin consolidated Luther's ecclesiology. The two marks of the visible church were word (not simply gospel) and sacraments (*Institutes* IV.1.9)—which were visible forms of the word (*Institutes* IV.14.3.4). The visible church are those who gather in trust around word and sacrament. It was not simply a collection of believers, but a company where they were strengthened and nourished by the word of God. Any church order, be it the threefold order or something else, is not

constitutive of the visible church.

In his forty-two articles, Thomas Cranmer replicated Calvin's understanding of the visible church. Cranmer's definition of the true visible church passed into the thirty-nine articles:

The visible Church of Christe, is a congregation of faythfull men, in the which the pure worde of God is preached, and the Sacramentes be duly ministred. (Article XIX)

Hence, the Elizabethan Church of England formally affirmed Calvin. In fact, like their continental counterparts, all the English Reformers agreed that the primary mark of the true Church is the word of God.

In the second half of the sixteenth century, two different views of the church arose amongst English churchman. The extreme Puritans, such as Thomas Cartwright, sought to make church order a mark of the true visible church. This order was not the threefold order of bishop, priest, and deacon but a presbyterian arrangement. On the other hand, there was the view of the 'judicious' Richard Hooker who defined the visible Church as any person who professed one Lord, one faith, and one baptism at their

initiation (*Laus* III.1.4-7). In Hooker, the church shifted from being a "congregation" gathered around the word, to a "societie". Yet Hooker resists making any form of church order or government a part of the visible Church's essence.

If any of the concepts of the church in sixteenth century England comes closest to Rayner's, it is that of the extreme Puritans who sought to include church order in the visible Church's essence—but of a non-episcopal kind! Such a position is contrary to the thirty nine Articles.

If the true church contains ministerial order within its essence, then the logical corollary of such a position must be that any denomination or church group which does not have the threefold order of bishop, priest, and deacon is not a true church. Does this then mean that denominations and congregations without this threefold order are not truly Christian?

It is true that the sixteenth century reformers were not trying to start a new church. They were, however, attempting to purify the already existing one. If one holds to the definition of the church as given in the thirty nine articles, then a vote for lay presidency cannot be considered a novelty, nor as a move to split the church. ●

Marty Foord teaches theology in Perth.

# Electing Sydney's

## Desires: 'Integrity and courage' What we want from our next Archbishop

Joanna Warren



Joanna Warren is a teacher, who serves as a Synod rep. for her congregation.

**N**ow is the time for Synod reps. and members of congregations to begin to think and pray about the sort of person who is needed as our next Archbishop—before the politics of personalities takes over.

What sort of person are we looking for? I asked a range of different people from across Sydney to give me their opinions. There were a few lighter moments ('purple should be his colour'), but overall people responded very seriously. The standard set by people's expectations is probably impossible to fulfill. But we need to have our sights set high.

Overwhelmingly (and unsurprisingly) the quality most mentioned by my respondents was that the next Archbishop should be a godly, thoroughly evangelical man in the reformed protestant tradition, who walks humbly and closely with God. A man whose life reflects submission to the Bible as God's word. The example of his own life should encourage others.

Strong leadership was another major concern, modelling gospel priorities in spiritual, moral and social concerns, providing a vision and setting the agenda for the diocese. Courage was seen by most to be absolutely necessary, faced as he will be with many different pressure groups and competing concerns. But he will be a God-pleaser not a man-pleaser, refusing to buckle to lobby groups and above having to seek approval from others in what he does and says. Decisions based on Biblical principles, not merely on pragmatism. Secure in his own convictions, but able to take advice and criticism, weighing these objectively, accepting what is valid or dismissing it, without bearing grudges.

Yet for all this he will also be gracious

and approachable. Although outspoken and clear in his stance he will not arouse needless antagonism, and will be able to appreciate the views of those with whom he may differ.

He will be a man who understands the vagaries of parish ministry and sees clearly that the hierarchy exists for the support of the local church and not vice versa. His great pastoral concern for people, as well as parish clergy, assistants, youth workers etc in their demanding jobs, will express itself in genuine interest and direct, down-to-earth encouragement and support as he has opportunity.

Above all he will be a man who is concerned with the overwhelming need of all to be reconciled to God through the atoning death of Christ and who will never let a chance go by to present the gospel. His leadership will be marked by encouragement to all—Synod, Standing Committee and Parishes, to concerted, purposeful and effective evangelism. Ethnic groups within Sydney which have no evangelical witness as well as places outside Sydney with a similar lack, will be areas where he will feel challenged to work out ways of getting the gospel in.

Proven scholarly theological ability coupled with an outstanding intellect were also seen as qualities necessary for a man who would be looked to for leadership in all sorts of debates. A good Bible teacher in his own right, giving an encouraging lead to Bishops and clergy in this area. Yet the day-to-day practicalities of running the diocese would also not be lost to view. He would be very aware of the need for responsible and intelligent administration coupled with compassionate concern for those whose lives might

be affected by his decisions.

His role as spokesman to the wider community was particularly important to my respondents. The desired qualities of strong leadership within the diocese were regarded as a necessary part of relating to the wider community, via the various media outlets. Willing and able to speak up about moral/social issues, not intimidated in any way by the world around, unashamedly putting forward a clear, distinctively Christian point of view. He should do this knowing that how ever uncomfortable and 'politically incorrect' it might seem to our society, the Bible does speak to us about current events and problems, offering the only real hope there is.

Overseas he would continue the fine work of his predecessors in being a clear, evangelical voice within the Anglican Communion. Evangelical Anglican bishops within Africa and Asia would continue to be supported and encouraged through his efforts.

Amongst the answers to my various questions, an emphasis was laid on the importance of being biblical rather than Anglican or traditional. He should be willing to introduce change which was biblical, even if it were perceived by some as un-Anglican, being prepared to abandon pointless ritual and regalia where these obscured the primacy and wonder of the gospel. These opinions were

**Not intimidated in any way by the world around, unashamedly putting forward a clear, distinctively Christian point of view... knowing... the Bible does speak to us about current events and problems, offering the only real hope there is.**

This was seen by many to be a function which he should exercise not only in the wider, secular community, but also within the wider, national and even international, Anglican community. His should be a clear voice for evangelical Christianity within the Australian Anglican church. Graciously, yet clearly he should be ready to defend biblical Christianity in the face of liberalism, ready even to call heretical bishops to account when they oppose the plain teaching of scripture.

brought into a sharper focus by the comment that we live 'in a post-denominational era', where the significance of being Anglican rather than simply Biblical is of increasingly less importance.

When the election takes place in mid 2001, we will have to choose from the candidates who have been nominated. Now is the time to be praying and asking the Lord to bring forward the right person for this important job. ●

## Qualities: What qualities are needed in a new Archbishop?

**S**ydney Diocese has a unique history of working hard to define its life by the New Testament gospel, and the merciful God who is there revealed as active to redeem us in Jesus Christ. Historically, even in the face of drifts by clergy and bishops away from this norm, the laity and synod have acted to keep us evangelical, concerned for the spiritual welfare of the city, and outward looking. At this momentous time, what ought we look for in a new archbishop? What criteria may best guide us in discerning the personal qualities we need to find in a suitable candidate or candidates? The *Church Record* suggest

that two general areas be on the list:

1. *We must pay attention to the things we often assume.*

Is the candidate converted? Does he believe wholeheartedly in the Scriptures? Does he have a Christian family life?

What is his theology? It would be possible to compile a series of questions to determine this. Neither the pedigree of a known theological college, nor his presence or position in Sydney Diocese should be deemed sufficient in itself. In this time of theological tension, beliefs and positions ought to be stated clearly so that the Synod knows exactly who it is electing.

2. *Given the current state of Anglicanism in Australia and the wider Communion, we must pay attention to his stance towards Anglicanism.*

Where does the person stand on the vexed question of the nature and theological status of "Anglican order?"

What are his ministry priorities? What is his understanding of the nature and condition of the Anglican denomination? What are the defining elements in this outlook?

At the local level, what is his view of the relationship between the local church, the diocese and the denomination? What are the appropriate authority arrange-

ments between these units? What are the theological implications of his view? Where does the candidate see the tension points in the denomination? How may these be addressed?


Nationally, when Synod wishes to engage in actions pertinent to evangelical theology and ministry, if there is conflict with the wider episcopal fellowship, where will loyalty lie? Will the veto be used?

Internationally, how will he promote the vision of his diocese? How will he take opportunity to persuade others of the legitimate strategies and directions that evangelicalism has taken Sydney in the past and will take it in the future? ●



# New Archbishop

## Task: Speaking the truth in love Leading Evangelicals in a fractured Anglican Church

 The Anglican Church is deeply divided. That is a fact with which we must all come to terms. Anglicans will line up on different sides even over central doctrinal issues (the meaning of atonement and the resurrection) as well as important issues of order (the ordination of women to the priesthood and lay administration of the Lord's Supper) and crucial ethical issues (such as forming a response to homosexuality and, in the Australian context, reconciliation). How should evangelicals respond to a fractured Anglican church?

Recent debates in Synod have highlighted very different approaches to this question. In the debate on lay administration one of the key issues was the relationship of our diocese to the rest of the Anglican communion. Some argued that even if we agreed with lay administration in principle we should not divide the Communion and 'isolate ourselves further' over this issue. It was argued that there are larger battles to be fought over more significant issues. Others argued that we owe

it not only to ourselves but to the rest of the Anglican Church to clearly state biblical truths. Every other group within the Anglican communion argues its position forcefully. How else can we offer leadership within the Anglican communion?

*What is the way forward for evangelicals in a fractured Anglican Church?*

It is always possible to simply ignore the rest of the Anglican communion and proceed on our own way within our own diocese. This isolationist policy has many adherents. After all, being involved with the wider church involves a great deal of time and effort and can be very frustrating. But to simply cut ourselves off from the wider church and to throw stones from a safe distance is a very negative and unchristian approach. It ignores the fact that there are many Christians in the wider church from whom we can learn, and many churches that would benefit a great deal from our leadership and support. We have insights based on biblical truths that the rest of the church needs to hear. How will

they hear if we are not engaged in dialogue with them? And this dialogue needs to be conducted in such a way that people are willing to listen. Arrogance has been the main criticism levelled against our diocese in the way that we have related to others. As we engage in dialogue with the wider church our speech must be characterised by courtesy, respect and love.

But speak the truth we must! It is a mistake to hold back for fear of offending others. Every other theological position and pressure group is at work forcefully presenting their viewpoints. They do influence the direction of the Anglican communion and the attitudes of the secular press and society. As the leading evangelical diocese in the Anglican communion it is our responsibility to offer some leadership to the wider church. We need to do some hard research and stay on top of current issues so that we do not simply react to the initiatives that others take. Then we need to be ready, willing and able to take the initiative and to speak out on important issues in what-


ever appropriate forums present themselves. In particular, this is what we are looking for from those who take a more public role on behalf of our diocese, from

**As the leading evangelical diocese in the Anglican communion it is our responsibility to offer some leadership to the wider church.**

our Archbishop, our Assistant Bishops, our General Synod representatives, our media spokespersons. Anglicans in the parishes are looking for these people to be effective spokespersons, representing the evangelical viewpoint on important issues to the wider world in clear and challenging ways. It is not an easy task but it is a crucial one.

Leaders who will make the greatest impact are those who will speak the truth in love. This is the kind of leadership the church needs. ●

## Process: Towards a godly campaign

 Sometimes it is said that godliness and politics cannot exist together. But as politics in itself is the process by which human beings work together for the public good, godliness does not exclude political behaviour, but ought be characteristic of it. We need godly politics.

In the run up to the election, various candidates will be discussed and campaigned for. One of the difficulties facing a large synod in a big city is that candidates are often not well known. Groups or individuals campaigning for particular candidates can thus do us a great service. But campaigns ought be godly.

God operates through his Word, through persuasion, not coercion. Likewise, votes ought be won through persuasion. It is difficult to imagine anyone in Sydney Synod attempting a campaign

based on coercion of a physical kind. But there are ways to coerce using emotional "arguments", misrepresentation, or through stooping to dishonest scare tactics, and the like. We must be committed to godly persuasion.

If a group campaigns on behalf of a candidate, they believe that he is the best person for the job. It should therefore be possible to persuade others to this opinion. The positive case FOR the candidate should be put. This requires open discussion of the strengths of the candidate, and why he is the best person to take Sydney forward. We should be committed to godly, and therefore sober evaluation of a person's strengths.

But given the importance of the position, we also need to assess a person's weaknesses. This is where it gets difficult. In the context of positive persuasion

FOR a candidate, there also needs to be a realism about the factors that may stand AGAINST a candidate. We must be committed to a godly critical evaluation of a person.

**godliness does not exclude political behaviour, but ought be characteristic of it. We need godly politics.**

The gospel is public truth. Our campaigning should also be in the public arena. We ought resist any rumour mongering or

gossip, for those are the weapons of the Evil One. The truth about candidates must be spoken, and it must be spoken in love. Speaking that truth in the public forum can act to restrain slander. We have a duty to God, to Synod, and to the people of God through Synod. We also have a duty to the candidates under consideration. At times hard truths may need to be said. But this ought not be by rumour, innuendo, or privately circulated material. Rumour can be stronger than public truth, for once in circulation, it can be very hard to refute. The written word, however, presented openly, can be discussed, evaluated, accepted, denied or refuted.

May God grant us unswerving commitment to godliness in the months ahead, and no opportunity for the Father of Lies. ●

# Electing Sydney's New Archbishop (continued)

## Procedures: The election Synod protocol

Laurie Scandrett

Laurie Scandrett is a lay representative in Synod.

In early June 2001 the Synod of the Diocese of Sydney will meet to elect a new Archbishop. After the last Archbishop's election (1993) the Standing Committee of the Diocese continued the practice of appointing a committee to review the process. Most of its recommendations have now been incorporated in an amended Archbishop of Sydney Appointment Ordinance. The current ordinance can be found on page 91 of the dark blue "Acts & Ordinances" book published in 1999 or on the web at [www.sydney.anglican.asn.au/synod/ords/adminord](http://www.sydney.anglican.asn.au/synod/ords/adminord)

The procedure for electing the next Archbishop of Sydney will be as follows:

- The Standing Committee will resolve that the vacancy be filled in accordance with the Ordinance and appoint returning officers.
- The Commissary will summon the Synod to meet not less than 8 weeks and not more than 16 weeks after the occurrence of the vacancy.
- Any two members of Synod may then nominate any "duly qualified person" for the office of Archbishop of the See of Sydney. However a "duly qualified person" must receive nominations signed by not less than 20 members of Synod before they are deemed to have been nominated.

- Any person so nominated is then officially advised of their nomination. If they respond within 14 days giving notice that they do not wish to be a nominee, their nomination lapses.
- After the close of nominations an alphabetical list of the persons nominated is then forwarded to every member of Synod. This must occur not less than 10 days before the Synod commences. The nominators of a nominee must then decide amongst themselves who will propose and second their nomination at each stage of the procedure. During the last election Synod the President only allowed each member to make one major speech. This could leave nominators in a dilemma as they organise who is to speak at which stage.
- The proceedings of Synod are held in private. After the President has finished his address the public are excluded.
- Once the Synod commences there are three major voting stages, being the compilation of the Select and Final Lists and the final vote. All votes are by secret ballot and by houses.
- To compile the Select List each nominee is proposed and seconded (in alphabetical order). If anyone then wishes to speak against that particular nomination further debate immediately ensues. At the conclusion of the debate on each nominee the Synod votes:

*"that the name of A.B. be placed upon the Select List".*

- If a majority of either house is in favour the name is placed upon the Select List. However the results of all these initial ballots are not announced until all the first stage debates are concluded. The President then selects by lot the order in which the successful nominees are placed upon the Select List.
- To compile the Final List a similar format is followed, except that a majority of both houses must be obtained for the name of a nominee to proceed to the Final List. The motion put at the end of each debate is:

*"that the name of A.B. be placed upon the Final List".*

- Once again the result of each ballot is not announced until the completion of all the debates. The objective is to have up to but no more than three names on the Final List. To achieve this there are various repechage procedures in the Ordinance. If after the repechages there is only one nominee's name on the Final List then the next motion put to the Synod is:

*"that A.B. be invited to be Archbishop of Sydney"*

- If there is a Final List of two or three nominees then each is once again proposed and seconded in the order again determined by the President by lot. After each nominee is proposed and seconded the Synod is now for the first and only time able to debate the nominees in a comparative manner. At the completion of this final debate the Synod adjourns until a following day when the vote is taken. On this day no more speeches are allowed and, if there are three nominees on this list, a preferential voting system is used in which a number must be placed beside all candidates. After the distribution of any preferences a nominee must receive an absolute majority in both houses to be elected. If there is a split decision then there is provision in the ordinance for further ballots to be immediately held. When one nominee does receive the required majority in each house the Synod is then asked:

*"that A.B. be invited to be Archbishop of Sydney"*

Assuming that the Synod does not act perversely and this motion is passed then the election is complete. ●

### 'Division', 'Schism' and 'Heresy'

The charge of being divisive seems to be the weapon of choice in many circles. Some regard the Singapore consecrations as a divisive action. The secular press seem to love to bring it out against the Sydney diocese, no matter what the issue: the non-ordination of women, lay presidency, standing for the 'conservative' view of the atonement and the resurrection. The strange thing seems to be that it is not those who depart from traditional Christianity that are charged with being 'divisive', but those who stand against those that do! It is a strange world.

The ECUSA bishops have stated that Schism is worse than Heresy. The New Testament would have us see that both are bad. But they should not be pitted against one another, and neither should a stand against heresy be declared to be schismatic.

Schism is to divide the body of Christ. This must be avoided, for we must maintain the unity that Christ has brought the church.

Heresy, however, is a denial of the fundamental truths of Christ and his gospel. Such a denial demonstrates that the one espousing those views is not a part of Christ's body at all. In other words, heresy demonstrates a separation that is already there, brought about by the heretical position. It is the responsibility of the true believers to endorse this separation; to keep clear of heresy. But this is not schism. It is Christian responsibility. ●

### Holloway on Singapore: Who is being Schismatic?

According to David Holloway (see interview report, p.4), the distinction between heresy and schism is hugely important.

'Schism is used ad nauseum as a word of liberal panic to stop people doing anything'.

The early church fathers, such as Irenaus and Augustine, knew that Schism was different from Heresy. Schism was defined by Augustine as 'separation over unim-

portant matters'. However, they always presupposed that heresy must have separation. Richard Hooker was also clear on this distinction (see his sermon on Jude).

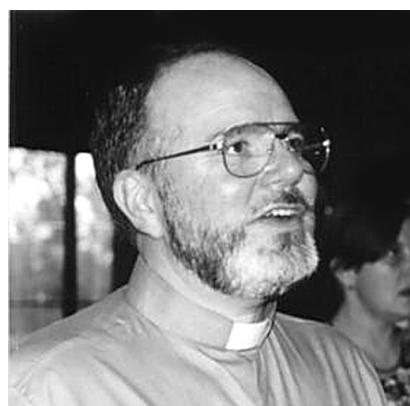
In consecrating John Rodgers and Jack Murphy, Moses Tay and his episcopal colleagues were disciplining heresy, which you must do. Cyprian argued this: that you shouldn't accept heretical bishops.

What is so serious about the OPORTO brief, is that the consecrations are declared to be valid, but the bishops are not being recognised. This is schism. ●



# Tasmania

## Tasmania elects a 'Missionary Bishop'



John Harrower.

John Harrower will become the Bishop of Tasmania on 25th of July. He is the first evangelical to be elected to that position. The election showed him overwhelming support: Clergy, 48 for, 12 against; Laity: 80 for, 30 against. Bishops John Noble, Philip Aspinall and Brian Faran were despatched in the first round with only a very few votes each. All had signed a letter dissenting from the Lambeth Resolution on homosexuality and ordination. McCall of Willochra, who has publicly backed the same resolution, went into the second round with Harrower, and did well. The laity favoured Harrower in each round, probably influencing the final vote where 3/5 majority was needed in both houses.

Born (in 1947) and bred in Melbourne, in the same city John attained degrees in Engineering, and then in Arts, Economics and Political Science. From 1979 to 1988 he and his wife Gaylene, along with their two children, served with CMS in Argentina, seconded to the student Christian organisation ABUA. In the eleven years since his return, he has been the rector of Glen Waverley, where he has steered the church through to where it is now the third largest congregation in Melbourne. In this busy parish, with plenty of ministry still left to do, and several personal factors making him feel well settled, John's election to Tasmania came somewhat as a surprise to him. He told *The Record* that the surprise 'must have been God's timing'.

By the time John retires, he wants to have built healthy parishes. He has a strong commitment to this goal. He would like to see healthy parishes, which

are integrated together into a missionary diocese. His own background, experience and simply 'how he is put together as a person', lend weight to the fact that he has been elected as 'a missionary bishop'. He has a heart for mission for God, and in the 12 years before he retires, he hopes to work from this strength towards promoting this goal.

To achieve his goal, the new bishop of Tasmania wants to combine his own relational leadership style with some exciting initiatives already in place. Harrower hopes to build good relationships between the diocesan level and the parishes, and the various chaplaincies and Anglicare, which could then foster be used to do mission together. The Diocese of Tasmania has introduced the concept of 'ministering communities'. This seeks to emphasise the local parish, while identifying the wider context, and then to look at how the gifts and skills of the church may provide opportunities for ministry in the community. Excited that an outward focus already seems to be in place, John is keen to run with these strategies, and seek to encourage, inspire, equip and train people. 'I am a teacher, and so I would work through teaching people, through pastoring people towards this goal and encouraging people to trust God.'

According to Harrower, an evangelical Bishop holds dear the classic evangelical concern for sharing the love and hope of Christ with a needy world. He has the missionary heart of God to bring to the wider Anglican Communion, with the reminder that we are not just a comfortable club, as Anglicanism has been perceived, but we are the body of Christ in mission. Anglicans ought to support one another across dioceses and provinces in this missionary task.

Experience from other parts of the world shows that the evangelical churches complain that evangelicalism lose their evangelicalism once in office. John Harrower recognises this danger, and hopes that he will remain true. He hopes that the basics such as the authority of Scripture, the centrality of Christ's birth, death and resurrection, and a commitment to the mission of God, will remain firm. He plans to ensure that daily prayer and Bible reading remain as much a part of his discipleship as it has always been.



He plans to seek out the personal encouragement he finds from events like CMS summer school. He has a number of friends who will continue to support him in these commitments and practices. But he recognises that the issue is a real one. 'In the role of Bishop there is a call to be even handed, yet there is also a need to be true to yourself.'

*Harrower points to four key issues that face evangelicalism in the future:*

**1** Effective evangelism. Even though some are doing some good things, 'the question still needs to be asked: how do we make individual men and women more evangelistic and more able to articulate their faith and to call others to follow the Nazarene? There is a concern that in our multicultural, pluralistic society, how do we encourage, inspire, equip, and train the average man or woman, boy or girl, to share their faith?'

**2** Bible reading: John senses that people do not read their bible with the same discipline and depth that they used to. The reading of the bible is not done as it

once was. This is clearly linked to people's devotional life. People desperately need to be helped to pray, and to pray effectively. In the busyness of life, when often both parents are working, people are not at prayer as they used to be. This is a great concern.

**"The question still needs to be asked: how do we make individual men and women more evangelistic and more able to articulate their faith and to call others to follow the Nazarene?"**

**3** There will always be an ongoing hermeneutical task. Discussion of how we interpret the Bible will continue to be a pressing need. How do we read the Scriptures?

**4** Other issues, such as the concern over homosexuality, will arise out of the hermeneutical discussion. ●

# Fear of change

Andrew Heard



Andrew Heard is the pastor of the Central Coast Evangelical Church.

**E**ven though I know these things to be true, they still surprise me when they happen.

We've begun talking about another church plant. This one's a little different in

that it's not 'out there', but rather in our present building (a school hall). We've started thinking about a new morning meeting at an earlier time. Pressures of growth have forced themselves upon us. All this is fairly straight forward. However I was taken a little by surprise by one person's comment.

'I've spoken to lots of people', he said. 'No one I've spoken to wants to do it.' The implication seemed obvious. If most people don't want to then it can't be a good idea. However the obvious reply is 'Did you really expect everyone to want to shift out of their comfort zone?'

Starting new churches is by it's very nature difficult. It means change. It means we can't continue as we once were. In our case it will mean removing a large number of people from a meeting they've become settled in. They may not see as many friends as they once saw. Their routine will be upset: 'We were established in a

pattern of going to church at a certain time in the day.' It will also mean that more people will have more to do. We will need new singers, new musicians, new Sunday school teachers, etc, etc.

However as a church leader once said (a Bishop in the Anglican church to be specific): "If you are only concerned about comfortably maintaining your own fellowship, you will never become involved in church planting. Only when you and I are passionately gripped by the need of men and women without Christ, will we have the hearts to initiate programs such as these."

There's a lot of work ahead of us and it's not just the work of establishing the infrastructure for a new church. It's a work far more important than this. It's the work of giving people a vision for the kingdom of God—a vision for the salvation of the thousands of lost souls who live within minutes of where we meet (let alone the

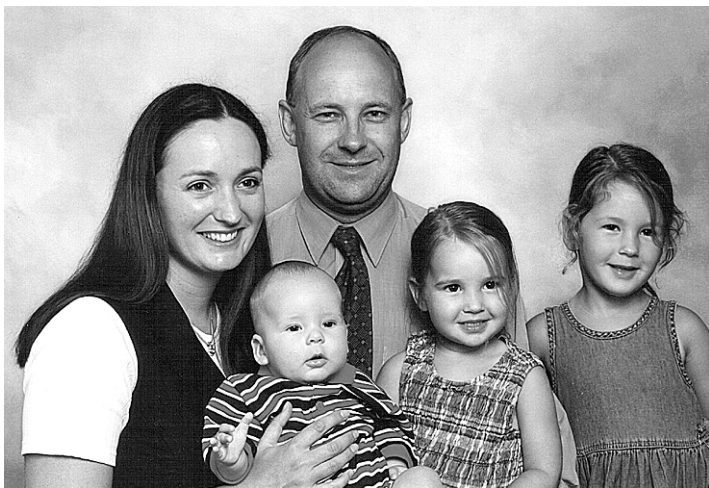
millions beyond our immediate reach). It's only in the context of being passionately gripped by this concern that we will respond to the thought of more work to provide more opportunity for gospel growth with enthusiasm and joy.

I suspect the news that no one wants to start a new church was meant to dampen my enthusiasm for it. It has certainly given me pause to reconsider the wisdom of what we're doing. Sometimes idealism needs to be tempered by reality. But it's done much more than that. It's renewed my concern and determination to bring the Scriptures to bear on the way we think about life, people, and the kingdom of God.

Under God I trust the word will ignite a fire in people's hearts to do whatever it takes to win the lost—even change the time we go to church. ●

# A word from the west

Neil Cavanagh



Neil Cavanagh is the Minister of the Anglican Church in Kallaroo, WA.

**T**he Church of the Resurrection is in Kallaroo, a coastal suburb about 25km north of Perth. When we began there, early in May 1999, a friend predicted that we would be exhausted by the end of our first year—he was right. We quickly became busy and, as expected, it has been

emotionally demanding and draining. Nevertheless, our time has been full of excitement and encouragement.

When we arrived, the church ran three weekly meetings. Apart from the two on Sunday morning, there was one on Wednesday morning which catered mostly for young mums. All three services were robed liturgical communion services. It also had CEBS and GFS as well as Mothers Union, a craft group and a seniors group.

Our arrival has brought a stronger emphasis on Bible-teaching as well as developing some more contemporary meetings. Last year we commenced a Sunday evening meeting called the 'Kallaroo Bible Fellowship' with an emphasis on Bible-teaching and contemporary music. An average of 35 now attend, many of whom were not attending church at all before they joined us, and several of these have recently turned to Jesus.

Indeed we have been emphasising evangelism, by including evangelistic

preaching and courses on the programme. We have a week of evangelistic events planned for May and we hope to do this several times a year. We've run fourteen 'Simply Christianity' groups since our arrival and this has proved very helpful. Now we have a few people confident enough to lead groups themselves. Praise God, we have seen a few people come to Christ and a number of believers revitalised in their faith and this has really excited us more than anything else. One woman wrote, "I have been going to church on and off all my life with a totally wrong understanding of how to be saved. I always felt I wasn't and couldn't ever be good enough. I feared God. For the first time I feel God is on my side; it's like a huge stress has been lifted. Finally I would say that I am a Christian."

We are also promoting Bible study groups, starting this year with six groups and we plan to start two more shortly. Another development for 2000 is that Michael & Vanessa Turner will join our

church soon to help us in our gospel work. Michael hopes to join the 'Ministry Training Strategy' full time this year and next, though we still don't have enough funds pledged to make this happen [ed.'s note to ACR Readers: can you help?].

**One woman wrote:**  
**"For the first time I feel God is on my side; it's like a huge stress has been lifted."**

Please praise God in your prayers for us for the way his word is so powerfully and clearly changing lives. Pray that the gospel continues to bear fruit and grow at Kallaroo, to the praise of his glorious grace. ●

# Fishers of men

John Lavender



John Lavender is the Anglican minister at Glenmore Park.

**J**esus calls his followers to be "fishers of men". How do we, as a newly established church in a rapidly growing outer western suburb of Sydney, make sure that we keep this focus?

It is all too easy, instead, to become 'aquarium keepers'?

As a church grows it is easy to feel comfortable with what has happened and to rest on our laurels, content with a job well done. But also as people have joined our church they have come with their various needs, hurts, problems and issues. It would be so easy to spend all the time trying to meet those needs. In a growing church it is also easy to become focussed on maintenance issues: rosters, committees, and weekly newsletters; all of which have a role and a place but all of which,

to focus on them, will take us away from Jesus command to be "fishing for people". So what do we do in a new church? What should anyone do in any church, new or old? How do we get it right?

In Mark 1:17 Jesus calls to the fishermen, his future disciples, and says, "Come, follow me and I will make you fishers of men." I take this to mean that if we follow Jesus he will teach us what it means to be "fishers of men". Not that we will ignore people's needs or hurts, not that we will ignore rosters or maintenance issues, but that we will seek to resolve all these things with a much bigger picture in mind: that is, of being equipped to be "fishers of men", people whose passion and priority is letting others know about Jesus.

It is not uncommon to hear Chris-

tians saying that they want to go to a church or be part of a bible study group where they will be "fed". It is good that people have this desire but for what purpose?

If we are to take Mark 1:17 seriously, then we must assume that to be "fed", to grow in Christian maturity is to become a more mature follower of Jesus and therefore to become a more able and better equipped "fisher of men". If we extend the metaphor somewhat, to grow in Christian maturity will mean a better understanding of the whole fishing process. We will better understand "our bait"—the power and adequacy of the gospel. We will better understand the different species of fish in the ocean; the timid ones, the brazen ones, their habits, how they think, how they like their

bait "presented". We will better understand how to fish and where to fish. We will better understand the sovereign God who controls the oceans and who directs the winds and waves. And we will better understand that if we don't fish, that there are a whole lot of sharks swimming out there in the ocean who's one desire it is to devour and destroy and that therefore our fishing trip is no mere holiday or recreational exercise but a matter of life and death; of hell or heaven.

So this is our aim at Glenmore Park. Whenever we meet together, formally or informally, as we talk with each other and encourage each other, we've got to keep on checking our aim. We want to follow Jesus, to learn from him, letting him teach us and equip us to be his faithful "fishers of people". ●



# Protecting the children

Lesley Ramsay



Lesley Ramsay works for Anglican Youthworks developing Child Protection Policy.

The Wood Royal Commission which wound up in 1997 has had, and is going to have, serious and far-reaching repercussions throughout NSW. One of them is going to be felt quite soon here in our churches in this state.

The Commission began as an enquiry into the Police Service, but eventually widened its terms of reference to include an enquiry into paedophilia in the institutions of our state. Coming under scrutiny were the Dept of School Education, the Dept of Community Services, Juvenile Justice and churches. We had the embarrassing situation of our own Archbishop, representing the Diocese, having to answer questions before the Commission.

Justice Wood's final report stated that the problem of paedophilia had *"been compounded by the past approaches, attitudes and conduct of important institutions. Within these institutions, paedophilia was generally a subject best not spoken about; and if forced to be confronted, it was dealt with in a way that was based upon denial and protection of institutional reputation rather than regard for the welfare of children."* (p.562).

Some time in the next couple of months, legislation drawn up by the NSW Parliament will be finally proclaimed. From then on, all people in child-related employment will need to undergo some form of character screening. The big change for us, as a religious institution, is that the term "employment" now means work done voluntarily, as well as paid. That means all Sunday School teachers, leaders of kids' clubs, CEBS, GFS, youth groups and crèche workers now fall under the terms of the legislation. Also the newly-formed Commission for Children and Young People recommends that employers (which includes churches) *"train paid staff and volunteers... in the prevention of child abuse and child protection issues... plan the work of the organization so as to minimise situations where the abuse of children may occur... and provide effective supervision of all paid employees and volunteers to reduce the risk of child abuse occurring..."*

The landscape of children's and youth ministry has changed forever. We need to make arrangements to train our volunteers

our children's and youth ministries, children and young people were, at best, not being treated properly and, at worst, actually being abused? I have heard of boys clubs where the leaders' traditional form of discipline was to "take a kid out the back and give him a good clip over the ear". I have heard of youth leaders who drive a car load of kids home, making sure they drop off last the pretty young girl who wants to have a "deep and meaningful". These are obviously unwise practices, and people leave themselves open to suspicion and, in some cases, legal liability.

Children are clearly in that category of vulnerable people that the Bible says we are to watch out for, and to protect (Malachi 3:5). When children are abused inside the church, the name of Christ is dishonoured. If all this is so obvious, why did it take us so long to act?

The second question is this: now that child protection has become such a pressing issue, why is it that I still meet some people in our Diocese who are resisting these new responsibilities? Why are rectors resisting? Is it because it brings additional administrative pressure, or because

## The landscape of children's and youth ministry has changed forever. We need to make arrangements to train our volunteers in appropriate behaviour, recognising child abuse, and avoiding compromising circumstances.

in appropriate behaviour, recognising child abuse, and avoiding compromising circumstances. But let me take this opportunity to ask two questions.


Firstly, why did we have to wait for a Royal Commission to tell us, as a Christian denomination, that, and how, we ought to get our house in order? Why has it taken so long for us to realise that, under past practices and attitudes seen in

confronting some difficult issue with a long-standing Sunday School teacher is just too hard? The good news for rectors is that this new legislation actually provides some practical ways to protect against possible litigation.

Why are some youth leaders resisting? Is it because they have been used to having fairly free-wheeling relationships, and they are afraid this new way of doing things will "clip their wings"? Are they anti-authoritarian and don't want anyone telling them how to do youth ministry?



Why are some children's workers resisting? Is it because they feel slighted if the minister asks about their background? Doesn't he trust me anymore? Or have they really got something to hide?

Whatever the answers to these questions, they can no longer be avoided. It's not a matter any more of what I choose to do, but rather of what I have to do. The State Government has made sure of that. It's a pity we didn't think of it first.



## CHILD PROTECTION ESSENTIALS

*A resource kit for contemporary ministry with children and young people*

# Humble pie

Colette Read



**"Oh Lord, it's hard to be humble, perfect in every way."**

**I can't wait to look in the mirror, 'coz I get better lookin' each day"**

As the hypnotic twang of this country music song reminds me, humility is a hard topic, easily confused with low self esteem. I must confess I have been extremely reluctant to pray for humility lest it involve humiliation.

Yet the Bible is very clear about the importance of this virtue.

True humility avoids self-congratulation. I have often found that at the very moment I understand my poverty before God, the next moment I'm congratulating myself on such insight. I take pride in my humility.

Such self-congratulation fails to acknowledge my dependence on God for everything: for every good thought, deed and word.

At the other end of the spectrum: putting myself down is also a false trail. In attempts to be humble I have mistakenly assumed that I must have a low opinion of myself, denying the attributes and talents God has given me.

Such endeavours are ungrateful, unrealistic and they can result in absurdities: graceful people try to convince themselves that they are clumsy, intelligent humans try to call themselves stupid.

These false trails for individual humility, are also evident at the group or church level.

Our congregations may have a wonderful history of searching the Scriptures, submitting our wills and church practices to the will of God. Yet sometimes such 'humility' becomes self-congratulation: "WE have the truth, WE follow the Bible"

I suspect that out of sheer embarrassment at such arrogance, some have opted for self-contempt: "All our church has is problems", "We don't have anything to offer", "We don't really understand the Bible". Such self-contempt fails to show gratitude to our gracious Lord. This is not humility.

C.S. Lewis sums it up well in his book "The Screwtape Letters": Humility is self-forgetfulness. The humble person does not think well of herself or even poorly of herself but generally does not think of herself at all. "God would rather the man thought himself a great architect or a great poet and then forgot about it, than he should spend much time and pains trying to think himself a bad one" (p74)

The humble person acknowledges her talents and rejoices in them but also equally rejoices in the talents of others.

At the group level, instead of self-congratulation or self-flagellation, we can give thanks to God for the many gifts He has given us. Humility will mean rejoicing in one another's abilities and successes and then getting on with God's mission to bring the gospel to all people.

Whether it's the humble person or the humble church we must be grateful servants of our God, taking no more credit for our abilities than we would our toenails. Christ calls us to be like Him, mindful of others and forgetful of self.

So I guess I will pray for humility and should God answer my prayer in the affirmative then perhaps I will be too preoccupied with others to notice the change in myself.



# The view from Bangkok

Stephen & Marion Gabbott



The Gabbotts are serving with the Church Missionary Society.

**A**mong the questions we were asked at CMS Summer School earlier this year was this one: “Are you excited about returning to Bangkok?” It’s an obvious question. Bangkok seems like an exotic sort of place. We’re doing the Lord’s work. Pastoring a congregation like Christ Church opens windows onto situations we had only ever read about. We’ve had wonderful opportunities to open the Scriptures. Some have responded. Lives have been changed. It ought to be exciting. To be honest, our instinctive response

was: “If you’re turned on by finding yourself in the middle of an active battlefield—yes, it is.” Never before has the old BCP imagery of the “church militant” seemed so appropriate to us.

Is it worse in Bangkok than anywhere else in this universally fallen world? A moment’s sober reflection says: “No! Of course it isn’t.” Wherever God’s people follow Jesus faithfully, care for one another seriously and evangelise vigorously the devil will mobilise every possible device to frustrate them and confuse those who might benefit from their witness. That insight of Paul’s in 2 Corinthians 4 about the blindness visited upon unbelievers by the god of this age is true everywhere. In Thailand, where Buddhism is institutionalised, it just seems so much more apposite. It is an interesting experience to be so obviously and simultaneously the stench of death and the fragrance of life.

What is exciting is the realisation that people are praying for us and for others in situations like ours. Exciting, and humbling because God promises to answer such prayer. So from here at the front, so to speak, we would like to offer three suggestions for your prayer life.

Firstly, pray that people who have left Australia in obedience to the Lord’s call to

be missionaries in countries and cultures other than their own will remember why they have left the comfort of the known and understood. Like the gates of hell, the barriers of race, language and culture need to be thrown down. Of course, they must be understood, even respected, but they must never become a fascination by which missionaries are distracted from the purpose for which God called them away from what was their own. On the other

**Like the gates of hell, the barriers of race, language and culture need to be thrown down.**

hand, daily longing for the familiar is just as distracting. The desire to be in familiar surroundings with people you love and care about is hard to shake off, where language and gesture are understood, where openness, responsibility and accountability characterise truth, justice and the delivery of health care and education. How alien and awkward Jesus must have found

his creation as fallen!

Then, pray for the personal lives of missionaries for whom you are concerned. All are called to be imitators of God living lives of love—but so often, those who have left their own for others discover that living in this way elsewhere is a strange and daunting task. There often needs to be a process of deconstruction—stripping away what we realise now from a distance was merely cultural so that all our relationships can be put on a proper foundation, one that will adapt to any culture because it is based on the rules of the city that is yet to come and which cannot be shaken, even now.

Finally, there is constant need for people like ourselves to remember that: “We do not preach ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord and ourselves as your servants for Jesus’ sake... we are not trying to please men but God who tests our hearts.” (2 Corinthians 4.5 and 1 Thessalonians 2.4) We need the constant reminder that it is God’s word we speak and God’s purposes we promote. David’s “How long, O Lord, how long?” is not easily displaced by Paul’s “Now is the acceptable time—now is the day of salvation.”

Here at the front, your prayers for this sort of thing will be much appreciated. ●

## Lessons for the Anglican Communion from its origins in the Church Missionary Society

*An extract from an address given by David Holloway at the primates’ meeting held in Kampala 16–18 November 1999*

**H**ow does our Anglican tradition help us at such a time as this? Very simply, it suggests that leadership at times of crisis comes not from waiting for a consensus, but (at times of crisis, not in more normal times) leadership comes from visionary men taking action.

Take the establishment of the Anglican Communion which, in effect, began 200 years ago with the founding of the CMS (the Church Missionary Society) in 1799 and with whom I worked for a period in the sixties in the Sudan.

The founders of CMS included such people as Charles Simeon of Holy Trinity, Cambridge. They were opposed by the then authorities—bishops in the church. Some bishops refused to ordain men to go overseas. As evangelicals they were ob-

jected to on doctrinal grounds: they were called “Calvinists”. But the imperatives of the gospel meant that “the system” had to be defeated—men had to be ordained. The first ordinations were in 1813.

Fortunately there were some bishops who broke ranks and were willing to act irregularly. Bishop Ryder (Bishop of Gloucester, then of Lichfield and Coventry) and Bishop Bathurst (Bishop of Norwich) were prepared to ordain “men at the [CMS] committee’s request, accepting as a title the committee’s agreement to employ them” (Stock, History of CMS, vol. 1, p 245). Even the Archbishop of York ordained men in this way on two or three occasions. But then in 1819 came the Colonial Service Act. This Act of Parliament regularized any irregularities and the Bishop of London then had the

responsibility for ordaining men, or seeing that they were ordained, for the colonies.

The point is this: our Anglican communion, which we represent from all over the world, had its beginnings, formally, with irregularities. The founders of CMS didn’t wait for the religious establishment to provide for ordination. They sought out bishops who would be willing to put the needs of the gospel before the niceties of secondary issues—keeping to the letter of the regulations.

**In times of crisis ... leadership comes from visionary men taking action.**

This also was the position taken by Luther at the time of the Reformation. He had to act irregularly. His argument was simple: “would it not be unnatural if a fire broke out in a city and everybody were to stand by and let it burn on and on and consume everything that could

burn because nobody had the authority of the mayor, or because, perhaps, the fire broke out in the mayor’s house? In such a situation is it not the duty of every citizen to arouse and summon the rest? How much more should this be done in the spiritual city of Christ if a fire of offence breaks out, whether in the papal government, or anywhere else.”

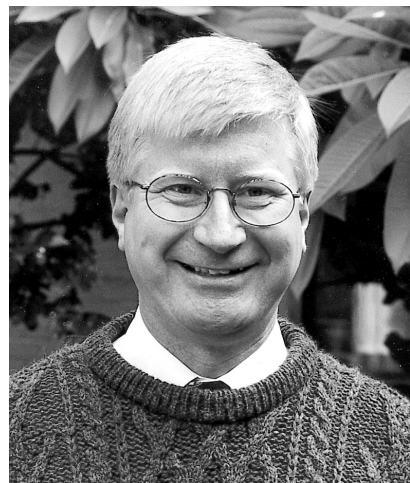
In the early centuries of the church—at the time of the Arian crisis—Athanasius acted irregularly. According to the Ecclesiastical History of Socrates (AD 380-450) Athanasius...

“... admonished the inhabitants of every city to beware of the Arians, and to receive those only that professed the Homoousian faith. In some of the churches also he performed ordination; which afforded another grounds of accusation against him, because of his undertaking to ordain in the dioceses of others.” ●



# Where lies the power?

Mark Thompson



**E**vangical Christians claim to be committed to the authority of the Bible. With Luther we confess that our consciences are bound by the Word of God. We recognise the right of the Scriptures to stand over our own cherished ideas and patterns of behaviour because in the final analysis 'what the Bible says to us, God says to us'.

It is this commitment which lies behind the confidence that has always been so characteristic of evangelical preaching (a confidence its opponents reg-

ularly caricature as arrogance). God has spoken and he has spoken not in faltering or tentative tones but directly and forcefully and urgently. The gospel is not so much a platform for debate as a stark proclamation of God's purposes fulfilled in Jesus, a proclamation that demands a response from all who hear it. And we know the truth about these things because God himself has told us.

Yet, amongst friends, perhaps it is worth asking ourselves whether our use of the Bible—even when we claim to be preaching it—does not reveal that our real confidence lies elsewhere. Isn't it just possible that from time to time we rely on our own personalities, a powerful or emotive illustration, a clever use of words, or the inescapable logic of our theological system rather than the power of God's word to change people? Of course preaching involves the personality. Certainly well-chosen illustrations enable people to understand what you are saying. There can be no doubt that preachers use words and need to use them well. A sermon ought to be an exercise in effective communication. In addition, and most importantly in today's climate, it is vital that we show how the teaching of a particular passage contributes to the teaching of the entire

Bible on the subject at hand. Nevertheless, when the technique or the theological system becomes the basis of our confidence rather than the text of the Bible itself, are we not on dangerous ground?

We'd be the last to know of course, wouldn't we? After all, our Bibles would still be open. There would still be plenty of people to tell us how moving or stimulating or challenging they found the ser-

**God has spoken and he has spoken not in faltering or tentative tones but directly and forcefully and urgently.**

mon. We could still be teaching things that are perfectly true and even biblical. But our attention and the attention of those who listen to us would have been subtly diverted from the Bible. The real focus would have become the preacher, the preacher's skills and the preacher's knowledge. Once this shift of focus has

taken place we will inevitably have failed in one of the principal tasks of the preacher: to help people to read the Bible for themselves.

The apostle Paul knew well the lure of entertaining speech and impressive displays of knowledge. It was the way to gather a crowd in the first century just as it is in the twenty-first. Yet Paul deliberately turned his back on technique. He wanted people to leave the assembly impressed with God and his mercy rather than with Paul and his skill. He told the Corinthians how he had not come to them with eloquence or superior wisdom when he proclaimed to them the testimony about God. Rather, he had determined to know nothing among them except Jesus Christ and him crucified. (1 Cor 2:1-2) His confidence was not in the clever turn of phrase or the moving story. After all, it was not his wit or his intellectual prowess that would win people for Christ. But the power of God, the work of God's Spirit in and through God's Word changed people then as it changes people now. That is why he wanted to speak about 'what God has freely given us [...] not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit' (1 Cor 2:12-13). ●

# The rhetoric of marginalisation

Peter Bolt



**A**t Easter, we remembered that greatest of all events, when a crucified man rose again from the dead. A unique event. An event so unbelievable to many, that those who joined the 2000 year old chorus, 'Christ is risen. He is risen indeed', may well be declared to be on the margins of society.

Easter was also the occasion when a prominent Australian Anglican official

added his voice to the chorus of those who declare Sydney Diocese to be marginalised from the rest of the Anglican Communion. Apparently, we have our backs against the wall about our historic vote for lay presidency of the Lord's Supper. Apparently, the Communion finds our arguments rather strange. Apparently, the historic vote made by last year's Synod has 'isolated' us. Apparently, this means we should reconsider, even back down.

"Marginalisation". It is a strategy as old as the Garden of Eden (the majority of one snake, plus Eve and her husband, versus the minority: 'did God really say?'), as powerful as imperialism, as destructive as solitary confinement, and as common as the bullies in every playground. Too often, those who think they are in the centre of things, or who think that they hold the upper hand, use this supposed position in an attempt to intimidate the one they deem to be 'outside'.

But even the secular world has now moved beyond. The post-modern world speaks of 'subverting the dominant paradigm'. This world takes a dim view of those who presume they speak from the

centre, when they declare certain other groups to be on the fringe, or even outside society. All are part of society. What right has anyone to claim the centre for themselves in order to push another aside? In this post-modern world, the voices 'at the margins' are being heard afresh. It is these voices that issue an important protest when the majority juggernaut has gone seriously wrong, and the sheer momentum of its massive bulk has blinded it to the way things really are and how they ought to be. The voice from the margins that is threatened by the bully who believes he has the strength of the centre, speaks a word of strong protest against tyranny.

And so, Sydney has been marginalised again. Well let the voice from the margins be heard for what it is. It is the voice of Protest. In fact, it is the voice of Protestantism. This voice will not be silenced or intimidated by defensive strategies, such as the rhetoric of marginalisation. This voice has sounded out before against a church in serious need of reform, and by God's grace, it will sound out again.

For, it is fuelled by a message of such great hope for our world that it must not

be snuffed out behind an unbelieving church. And, perhaps not surprisingly, it is from the margins of a world gone wrong that the gospel adds its quiet word. A word about a minority figure: a crucified man. A word about a minority event: he is the One who really did rise from the dead.

**Too often, those who think they are in the centre of things, or who think that they hold the upper hand, use this supposed position in an attempt to intimidate the one they deem to be 'outside'.**

Those holding power may seek to marginalise the resurrection message. But if this ancient whisper is heard again today, perhaps even a dying denomination may spring to life again. Perhaps we might indeed 'turn the world upside down' once again. ●

## ACR NOW ON THE WEB

Each new issue of the ACR can now be found on our website, <http://www.acr.asn.au>

# Lest we forget

Bill Salier



Bill recently conducted England's ANZAC Day service in Cambridge.

Can you say anything at an ANZAC day service when you have no experience of war? The ex-pat Australians and New Zealanders will all be there, in a church in England, to remember and reflect. An honour to be asked to officiate? No doubt. An opportunity? Yes. But what to say? A grandfather who was too young for WW1 and too old for WW2. A father born at the beginning of WW2 and who never made it to Korea and Vietnam, although he reports a glorious responsibility free year in the 'Nasho'.

My experience of war, I suspect like many of my generation has been mediated through the movies and television. My first experience with Gallipoli was via the profoundly moving and evocative movie of the same name. That and Breaker Morant taught me to despise the British for callously sacrificing the flower of a nation's youth.

**A nation.**

In the School Certificate in 1975 (Australian History was only worthy of the School certificate in those days as I recall; the real thing was done at the Higher

School certificate level) the quote we were given to discuss was "A nation was born on the bloodied beaches of Gallipoli". With the final scenes of the movie flickering still in my vision it seemed a curious and wasteful way for a nation to be born. But then all sorts of curious rebirths can come out of violence.

I vaguely recall the furore of the sixties about Vietnam and the derision that I seem to remember that ANZAC day was held in those days; the play "The One Day of the Year" seemed to capture it.

But now ANZAC day is back. In the last decade or so has the day gained new respect, new meaning, as the last diggers are dying, the marches are growing. Even Midnight Oil have sung a song about them—surely a stamp of approval if ever there was one. The Last Post sighs and moans and cries, evoking the carnage, stillness and solemnity of the battle ground.

Some suggest that you can measure the development of Australia as a nation refracted through the changing way that ANZAC day is celebrated. A nation continues to be born? Or is perhaps reaching its majority. It seems to be a day certainly more worthy of support than some of

our other contemporary celebrations of decadence in the name of freedom.

It would be too easy to say that as noble as the ANZAC gospel is it is a false gospel; to decry what passes for the only religiously observed national festival that we have (Besides perhaps Melbourne Cup Day; Christmas and Easter have long been lost to the holiday spirit). But this may miss a number of points. In a culture that forgets and re-writes history this very simple, national act of remembering seems to be more important than ever. And not just because of the diggers, freedom, sacrifice and the thousand and one other connotations of the day.

The day itself reminds us of the importance of history, events and memory; in a culture that increasingly lives in some ever present now or neverland of the young, bright and (surgically enhanced) beautiful we need to see those dwindling ranks, those etched faces that remind us of mortality and the fragility of life lived under the shadow of death. Perhaps we will also be reminded of the necessity (even the glory?) of duty and service to others. The futility and waste of the events recalled serve again to underline the truth of the

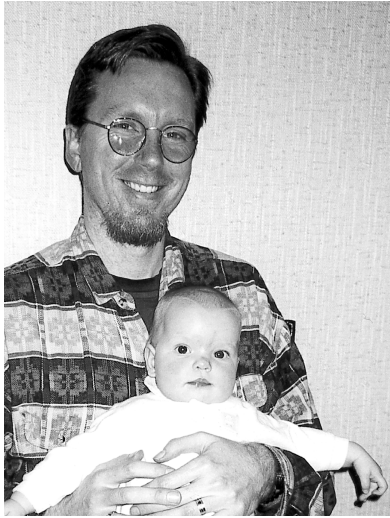
observation that mankind is both the glory and the garbage of the universe and make us groan for redemption.

We remember that as Christians we are citizens of a nation as well as the kingdom of God; that we have two histories, two stories that shape us. The day reminds us of the power of historical events, stories to shape the present and the future. In the very act of remembering the past can be evoked and return to shape the present. We are reminded that events a long way away in space and time, to all intents and purposes with very little personal connection, can become part of an individual's personal history and may actually redirect, in ways large and small, the course of that life. For this reason, of course, the truth about those events must be told as well continually recalled.

And, as dual citizens, we are reminded that we live with a foot in two worlds. And that somewhere near the heart of this particular part of the world, even if only for day, lies a notion of sacrifice, of commitment to others, of curious resurrection that may provide some with a key to the next. ●

# Trinity, atonement, and café talk

David Höhne



David Höhne is the assistant minister at the Anglican Church in Wanniasa, Canberra.

*Somewhere along the Boulevard of the avant-garde, two young vagabonds continue their quest for the ultimate cyber-café. One of them sits forlornly in front of his laptop in the hope of producing an article for a prominent evangelical broadsheet.*

**BEN:** Is it that time again?  
**BILL:** Yes and I haven't got a clue of what to write about.  
**BEN:** Why don't you write some more on the Trinity?  
**BILL:** Oh I don't think people are really interested. It's like you said, "It's not exactly seeker service stuff."

**BEN:** As much as I'm loathed to admit it, your last article got me thinking.  
**BILL:** So it is possible after all.  
**BEN:** Stop it, you're hurting me. What I was going to say was that it got me thinking about the recent remarks made by the new chairman of General Synod. You mentioned before that the gospel is the best way to understand how there can be three persons in the Godhead but only one God.

**BILL:** Yes that's right. In the gospel we see that God's people 'have been chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the sanctifying work of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and sprinkling by his blood.' Alternatively you could say that the gospel is about the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ that flows from the love of God for the fellowship of the Holy Spirit.  
**BEN:** You know it occurred to me that when we see the gospel as the action of the one Triune God reconciling the world to himself, there is less need to be concerned that there is injustice in the gospel.  
**BILL:** What do you mean exactly?  
**BEN:** What I mean is that the Chairman...  
**BILL:** I think you mean Primate.  
**BEN:** Yes that's the word—I knew it had

something to do with monkey business. The Primate seems awfully concerned that to say that Jesus died for our sins was somehow unjust since an innocent third party was being forced to die instead of the guilty in order to meet God's justice.  
**BILL:** I seem to recall the Primate wanted to blame poor old Anselm of Canterbury for this idea of substitutionary atonement. What does this have to do with the Trinity?  
**BEN:** Well poor old Anselm, bless his scholastic heart, was really just trying to work out why it was logically necessary for God to become man in order to restore the relationship between himself and human beings. What he concluded was that it was only through the God-man Jesus Christ, that this was possible.  
**BILL:** I'm afraid I still don't follow.  
**BEN:** What Anselm was doing was trying work out why God was in Christ reconciling himself to the world. You see, it is only because Jesus Christ, who was in very nature God, being found in appearance as a man, humbled himself and became obedient to death on a cross, that the sin of humankind against the holiness could be

atoned for. God made the atonement himself when Jesus died upon the cross.  
**BILL:** I still don't see what this has to do with the Trinity.  
**BEN:** When we see that Jesus Christ is God the Son offering himself as the sacrifice for sin in order to make peace between us and God, we see that there is no innocent third party involved in the gospel. The Triune God deals with sin and absorbs his wrath into himself, if you like. This is what Paul means when he says, 'God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement... he did it to demonstrate his justice at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus.'  
**BILL:** So the three persons of the Godhead 'play a part' in the reconciliation of the world to the one God.  
**BEN:** Precisely, my young padawan.  
**BILL:** Do you think you should explain that to the Primate?  
**BEN:** No doubt he'll read it in your article. ●

EQUAL BUT DIFFERENT AND LAITY FOR BIBLICAL LEADERSHIP *present*

**PRESENT FATHERHOOD AND LEADERSHIP**

*The Trinity • The Family • The Church*

DATE: Saturday, August 26th 2000  
TIME: 9am - 1pm  
VENUE: St Paul's Carlingford  
COST: \$12 per adult, \$10 Concession  
DETAILS PHONE: 9817 2631  
OR EMAIL: [Secretary@lbl.asn.au](mailto:Secretary@lbl.asn.au)

SPEAKERS:  
Peter Jensen — The Trinity  
Tony Payne — The Family  
David McDonald — The Church

The nature of the relationship of love between the Father and the Son has important practical implications for family and church life. Join us as we explore this vital issue of Christian living.