



Standing Firm and Reaching Out

**'To please or displease men's mind, I mind not.
But mind (as God knows) God's mind to fulfil.
As He will, I will, and more I will not.
So God be pleased, say men what men will.'**
Bishop John Ponet (1516-1556)

CONTENTS

- | | |
|---|---|
| 2 Thank God for Ordinary Pastors
Mark Earngey | 14 New Life in an Ancient Parish?
Ben Wilkinson |
| 5 Wangaratta Defies National Church
Kanishka Raffel | 17 Contending side by side
Tom Habib |
| 7 The Opened Eyes of Wilberforce
David Ould | 19 Some Observations for Ordinary Pastoral Ministry
Archie Poulos |
| 9 Evangelism in the Upper Mountains
Jon Guyer | 22 The Christian and His Worship
D. Broughton Knox |
| 12 Gospel Growth through ANeW
Sam Broadfoot | |

Thank God for Ordinary Pastors

The noble task of the ordinary Christian minister is essential for the future health of the churches which make up the Anglican Diocese of Sydney. Yet challenges to the ordinary Christian ministry abound! The world around us seems to be spinning away from its Christian moorings at a rapid rate, the frailty of the flesh and the failure of leaders in the church saddens us all too regularly, and the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, as he has always done – crouching even at the rectory door.

There are, of course, myriad other challenges which face the mission-minded minister in Sydney today. The increased workload produced by legal compliance, risk management, and miscellaneous bureaucratic matters may put a pinch on pastoral work. The reality of declining church attendance and falling ordination numbers may produce acute pressure to grow numerically. The end of an apparent (!) golden age of money and effective ministerial models may stimulate a stressful search for new and ‘successful’ pastoral philosophies that worked for someone else, somewhere else. One particular challenge that lurks behind many of these: the problem of understanding the role of the ordinary pastor.

On the one hand, it is possible to overload the role of the pastor such that it reflects the professional more than the pastoral world – perhaps the ‘Pastor as CEO’ model or the ‘Minister as paid service provider’.



Mark Earngey,
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Visionary leadership, strategic thinking, change management, and church growth theories derived from foreign megachurch culture may tend to overload and distort the pastoral office in this way. Of course, we really need to sift and Scripturally appreciate the business experience and managerial wisdom of our natural world. However, the process of ‘plundering the Egyptians’ (cf. Exod. 3:22; 12:36) must always complement but never dislodge the ordinary ministerial priorities of the pastor.

On the other hand, it is possible to underplay the role of the pastor such that the distinction between the ordained presbyteral ministry and lay ministry effectively collapses. Overreactions to Anglo-Catholic sacerdotalism, ignorance

of the positive use of the word ‘priest’ in Reformation theology and history, and naïve views of ‘every-member ministry’ may tend towards devaluation of the pastoral office in this way. Though cultural egalitarianism and appreciation for informality may be Australian phenomena, they are no excuse for denial of the New Testament’s structured understanding of the ministry (1 Tim. 3; Acts 20:28), nor sufficient grounds for rejection of the theology of ordination held in this diocese.

It is right to speak of ministry in which every Christian person is involved, and in the same breath, the ministry for which particular Christian persons

are set apart. The former reflects the fact that all believers are given gifts for the building up of the body of Christ. The latter reflects the fact that some believers are appointed through examination and the laying on of hands for life-long ministry to the people of God. The essence of this ordinary ministry of the ‘pastor-teacher’ is Word ministry, which prioritises the preaching of Scriptures and the administration of the sacraments. Ordinary pastors, through the exercise of this ministry, pastor Christ’s flock under their care and seek out His lost sheep. Broughton Knox reflects on the Bible’s teaching of pastoral ministry and succinctly captures the nature and importance of this high calling:

“Not everyone is sent by God for such ministry. When a man is called by God to this work, he is called to something to which he must devote his life. His ministry is an essential ministry in the purposes of God for the maintenance of faith and obedience and the calling of people into fellowship with God.”¹

I am informed that there are 270 parishes represented at our diocesan synod this year, which means – praise be to God! – that there are at least this number of pastors set apart for this ordinary ministry throughout our Sydney Anglican churches. I am also informed that we have around fifty thousand regular adult worshippers in our parishes each week, which means – praise God again! – that we have an average of roughly 185 adults per parish. Of course, some of our churches are larger and some are smaller than this number – and we all earnestly desire to see more and more souls saved and see these numbers grow. But the size of a parish does not make the ministry extraordinary.



The essence of this ordinary ministry of the ‘pastor-teacher’ is Word ministry, which prioritises the preaching of Scriptures and the administration of the sacraments.



Rather, the ministry of the ordinary pastor is itself extraordinary. Through the prayerful application of the Word and sacrament, our Lord gracefully tends to the flock He has placed under the care of His pastoral undershepherds. We must not lose sight of the extraordinary nature of those basic realities.

This ordinary ministry does not require superhuman strategies, colourful charisma, exceptional eloquence, unprecedented preaching ability, marvellous managerial skills, or even – dare I say? – an alliterated arrangement of ministerial portfolios. Of course, the Lord blesses His people with various gifts and abilities, and we should rejoice when we see the Lord bless his ministers in different ways and measures. The existence of those who are strong and charismatic preachers, insightful ministerial philosophers, able managers of large ministry teams, and those who have grown large churches should give us cause to thank God and give us pause to reflect on their experiences. There are always competencies which can be grown and strengthened, and there is much in this regard that we can learn from those who have ministerial ‘runs on the board’.

But the reality is that most of us are fairly ordinary and do not possess the gifts and abilities of the megachurch minister. Indeed, a diocese of 270 parishes should not presuppose extraordinarily gifted pastors, but rather it should operate on the assumption of roughly 270 ordinary and average pastors. For a network of churches which requires its ministers to be extraordinary preachers with extraordinary charisma and possess extraordinary managerial qualities, will be a network with a rather short lifespan. It will cater for a handful of parishes with such clergy – but the vast majority will suffer a slow and depressing decline. The same goes for any

1 D.B. Knox, *Sent By Jesus* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1992), 9.



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ministry philosophy which presupposes an extraordinarily charismatic preacher and business manager and visionary leader as the senior minister. That ministry philosophy will not be suitable for most pastors, and for the handful of pastors to whom it does suit, it will function only for the duration of their ministry. Indeed, there may be a narrow-mindedness (“it worked there for that person, and so it should work across the diocese”) and short-sightedness (“it works for me, but the next generation is another person’s business”) bound up with placing these expectations on a large network of churches.

Therefore, we should thank God for the ordinary pastors of our diocese. They are dedicated and loving ministers of the Word set apart by our Lord for our good. We ought to encourage the ordinary pastor –

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If we want to reach Australia we do not need extraordinary pastors, but extra ordinary pastors.
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perhaps even our own ordinary pastor this Sunday – as he serves the saints and seeks out the Lord’s lost sheep. There are so many pressures placed on the modern minister, so let us – at least! – cast off the burdensome yoke of extraordinary megachurch ministerial expectations and be glad for the ordinary ministerial means of God’s grace to His people. And let us praise our good God for His rich blessing of so many ministers of the true gospel in our churches – and let us pray for many more. If we want to reach Australia, we do not need extraordinary pastors but extra ordinary pastors. This faithful and prayerful and ordinary ministry is the very heart of our diocese. And it is the Lord Jesus Christ who, by raising up and working through ordinary pastors, will keep it beating until the very end of the age. [ACR](#)

What happened at last Synod’s debate on the remarriage of divorced persons? A correction of the record ...

Nathan Walter

In a recent edition of the Australian Church Record, I wrote an article reflecting on, and raising concerns about, the conduct and manner of our debate on the final night of Synod last year concerning a motion on the remarriage of divorced persons. Lyn Bannerman has kindly corresponded with the Record, articulating some matters of agreement with my article, as well as giving voice to some different interpretations of the Synod’s debate.

However, Lyn also raised one matter of factual error in my article, and it is both important and helpful to have that record corrected. In my article, I identified a puzzling scenario where a vote which could not be determined by hands or by voices went to a secret ballot with a clear 2:1 result. Lyn has pointed out that in fact this scenario did not occur. Synod had previously agreed to vote on Lyn’s motion by secret ballot, and so the motion was never put to the vote on voices (or hands).

This correction certainly removes the question I raised concerning the final outcome of the vote. Even without that, however, I hope that many of the matters expressed in my article still stand. I have been heartened by the numerous discussions I’ve had with people in response to my article. Regardless of the particular views we each hold on this matter, which continues to be theologically and pastorally complex, may we continue to do all that we can to conduct our business in the most edifying manner possible.



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Wangaratta Defies National Church

At its meeting on 31 August, the Synod of the Diocese of Wangaratta passed a regulation for the blessing of ‘people married according to the Marriage Act’ which, since 2017, includes people of the same sex. The decision of the Synod, encouraged and supported by Bishop John Parkes, is deeply dismaying. It not only stands in opposition to the teaching of the bible on human sexuality and marriage, but treats the national church and our ongoing engagement with this subject with scant regard.

In 2018, the Australian bishops agreed to a protocol that would govern their approach to this difficult conversation. Amongst other things, they agreed ‘to act within the framework of the Constitution and Canons of this Church’ and ‘to working together to manifest and maintain unity, as we together discern the truth.’ Striking a rather different tone this month, Bishop Parkes told *The Melbourne Anglican* that if his views put him ‘out of sorts with some part of the Anglican Communion, so be it.’

Following the decision of the Wangaratta Synod, the Primate, Philip Freier, Archbishop of Melbourne, has indicated that he will refer the matter to the Appellate Tribunal. As one might expect, in his Presidential Address, Bishop Parkes stated his belief that the regulation does not breach ‘the Constitution and Canons of our Church.’ This is the question that the Appellate Tribunal will have to consider. Both Bishop Parkes and the Chancellor of the Diocese of



Kanishka Raffel,
Dean of Sydney

Wangaratta, his Honour Justice Clyde Croft, are members of the Appellate Tribunal. They should, naturally, recuse themselves. Bishop Parkes’ claim, also made in his Presidential Address, that Justice Croft’s absence from the Synod puts him at arms’ length to the matter, is irrelevant.

The Primate has also called on Bishop Parkes not to allow the newly approved regulation to be used until after the Appellate Tribunal has issued its opinion. While the Primate does not have the authority to issue an order to that effect, Bishop Parkes’ response to the Primate’s request will further demonstrate the seriousness of his commitment to the

fellowship of the national church and to the bishops’ undertaking to ‘work ... together to maintain and manifest unity.’

In light of these circumstances, it is regrettable that the Ordinary Session of General Synod that was planned for May 2020 has been postponed, and may not take place until 2023. Ostensibly, this was to create the opportunity for a non-legislative and less combative ‘conference’ to take place. It was intended that this conference would allow the General Synod Doctrine Commission’s book on human sexuality to be considered in a less formal setting. The virtue of such a conference is deeply undermined by the precipitate and schismatic actions of the Wangaratta Synod. Article XX of the *Thirty-nine Articles of Religion* states that ‘it is not lawful for the Church to



Holy Trinity Anglican Cathedral, Wangaratta.

COMMONS.WIKIMEDIA.ORG/WIKI/USER:BAHNFREND

ordain anything that is contrary to God’s Word written, neither may it so expound one place of Scripture, that it be repugnant to another.’ The seriousness of the tear in the fabric of the communion of the Australian Church that has occurred as a result of the Wangaratta decision should not be underestimated.

A disturbing aspect of Bishop Parkes’ Presidential Address, which effectively set the theological framework for the Synod debate, was his juxtaposition of Christlikeness and biblical faithfulness: ‘the ultimate test is not whether a particular action is biblical but whether it is Christlike.’ This dichotomy is both false and misleading. It is Christ himself who appointed, instructed and inspired the apostles and authors of Scripture. Indeed, we know Jesus truly only because of their testimony. In and through their Spirit-breathed words, we hear Jesus’

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words. For, as Jesus promised them, ‘the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you’ (John 14:26). Moreover, the words of Jesus are the words of the Father: ‘These words you hear are not my own; they belong to the Father who sent me’ (John 14:24). In short, there

is no such thing as biblically unfaithful Christlikeness. To dismiss Scripture is to disown Christ.

Jesus’ teaching about the nature of Christian discipleship is plain: ‘if you love me, you will keep my commands’ (John 14:15). It is precisely because our Church believes that these commands are preserved for us in Scripture that we also believe that it is ‘not lawful for the Church to ordain anything that is contrary to God’s Word written.’ **ACR**

The Opened Eyes of Wilberforce

The royal assent which was given to the Abolition of the Slave Trade Act on 25 March 1807 represented the fruition of 18 years of persistence for William Wilberforce who introduced his first bill outlawing the slave trade in the British Empire in 1789.

Despite that initial victory there was more work to do. It took another 26 years for parliament to finally vote for a comprehensive ban on the practice of slavery itself throughout the colonies of the British Empire. By this time Wilberforce had handed on the campaign leadership to Thomas Buxton but he still remained involved, speaking to meetings and writing petitions. He passed into glory on 29 July 1833, a mere three days after a messenger had rushed to his door to let him know that the Abolition of Slavery bill had passed its third reading in the Commons. His life's work was completed.

It is tempting to see Wilberforce as a “one-issue” man. His name will forever be associated with the great achievement of abolition. The reality is that he was a man of many related interests. The young William was converted in an age when religious enthusiasm was almost considered a social embarrassment. His remarkable response to this charge of fanaticism is well known:

If to be feelingly alive to the sufferings of my fellow-creatures is to be a fanatic, I am one of the most incurable fanatics ever permitted to be at large.



David Ould,
Senior Associate Minister
at St John's Anglican
Cathedral Parramatta

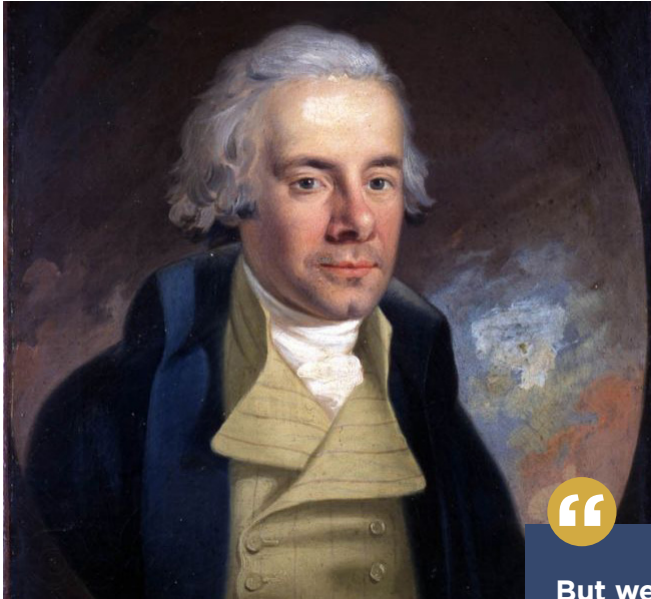
This “fanaticism” was expressed in various ventures, all of which could be summarised by Wilberforce’s pithy journal entry on 28 Sunday 1787:

God Almighty has set before me two great objects: the suppression of the slave trade and the reformation of manners.

Notwithstanding his many moral concerns, the suffering of slaves was the one that moved him most greatly. As he explained to the House of Commons, when speaking in support of his first anti-slavery bill in 1789:

You may choose to look the other way, but you can never say again that you did not know.

Blindness to the issue of slavery and the preservation of comfort were the main anchors dragging on the ship of change. As with many social issues it was not that the entire populace was entrenched in support of slavery. They simply needed to have their eyes opened, so that with that very first clear look at the issue they could never again plead ignorance. On this basis the abolitionists employed what looked very much like a viral campaign of images. Medallions depicting a kneeling and enchained slave imploring, “Am I not a man and a brother?”, were employed alongside detailed schematics of the slave ships depicting the barbaric conditions in which Africans were transported to the Americas. The tea drinking population of the United Kingdom was confronted with the realities concerning colonial plantations and their production of sugar – the question



But we need our eyes opened. It is unacceptable that we do not look long and hard at what happens in abortion.



of “one lump of two?” could never be asked with a clear conscience again.

The campaign took courage and a great deal of time, but it was worthwhile. Wilberforce, having had his own eyes opened, could no longer unsee what he had seen, and longed that others would also have clarity on the matter.

Christians today face another social tragedy of even greater devastation than the slave trade. The vexed question of abortion has long been with us but now has renewed impetus with the recent legislation put before the NSW Parliament. While our social context today is vastly different, the fundamental issue remains the same: the humanity of unborn children and their barbaric treatment.

Christians are uniquely placed to lead this campaign. We have the only world view that should and will consistently stand against these evils. It is, ultimately, the truth that unborn children – just as with slaves – are made in the *imago Dei*. With that fundamental truth, we may protect their right to life. Without that fundamental truth, there is no consistent basis on which we may act. And if we will not act, who will? Former Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams astutely observed:

If the abolition of slavery had been left to enlightened secularists in the 18th century, we’d still be waiting.¹

¹ See www.publicchristianity.org/youth-resource/am-i-not-a-man-and-a-brother-the-abolition-of-the-slave-trade/ at 4:55-5:07.

So, what will prevent us from acting in this way? The answer is, sadly, the same two things that took many so long to act on slavery.

First, we are simply not aware of the tragedy of the issue. We are blind to it. But we need our eyes opened. It is unacceptable that we do not look long and hard at what happens in abortion. It cannot be that we stand back and don’t want to know anything about the fate of those made in the image of God.

The reality is that today it does not take long at all to be adequately educated on this topic.

Therefore, secondly, our real issue is something else: we like our tea sweet.

Often our blindness is willful. This is simply too difficult a topic, too fraught with the possibility of conflict and the diminution of our standing in the various relationships in which we find ourselves. We realise that if we pursue this campaign that we will lose much of the sweetness of our social standing. This will make us unpopular and we fear it. The church where

I serve hosted a public conversation on this topic recently. It was one in a series of such meetings, but this was the first where we received a torrent of abuse on social media.

If we want sugar in the tea of our social acceptance, then we will not tread this difficult ground. But we need to know, like the British middle classes before us, that the sweetness of those relationships comes at a great cost.

It is a cost that we will effectively be transferring onto the slain unborn and their scarred mothers. Either they bear it, or we do. As evangelicals we are known for our love of what is often known as *The Great Exchange*. That is, Christ taking our burden on himself and covering us with his righteousness. He could, of course, have simply done nothing. He could have pretended that he didn’t know the horrible reality of the situation and reckoned that the cost of rejection was too much. I trust my point is made.

Wilberforce led the charge more than 200 years ago. Leaders are now taking a stand in the church on the question of abortion. It’s time for us to open our eyes and take our tea without sugar. **ACR**

Evangelism in the Upper Mountains

In 1836, while his party baited their horses at the Weatherboard Inn, Charles Darwin trailed a nearby creek down to “a view exceedingly well worth visiting”. That view was the Jamieson Valley at what is now the village of Wentworth Falls. The trail, now called “Darwin’s Walk”, is about a hundred metres from the doors of Wentworth Falls Anglican Church.

We do our evangelism in a town made famous by a hero of secular humanism. That’s a fitting start for a community of mostly Anglo-Europeans who are deeply mindful of nature and see Christianity as an evolved form of social welfare. Most of our neighbours are instinctively sure they know what Christianity is – and it’s not for them.

On the other hand, our ethnic roots and a significant community of retirees mean a larger-than-average number of box-ticking Anglicans. The census says there are 1,351 of us in town, but less than a fifth darken the church door. There’s a well-respected Anglican grammar school in town, but for eighty-five percent of the staff and students that is also just a tick-box allegiance.

We’re also the official start of the Upper Mountains, which makes us a holiday destination and generates a steady stream of tourists retracing Darwin’s steps. Having a sandwich board on that route brings a driz-



Jon Guyer,
Senior Minister, Holy Trinity Anglican Church, Wentworth Falls

zle of one-off visitors, but our ministry to them is mostly a sermon and a smile before they rush off to see the Three Sisters. Location can be overrated, as Darwin himself observed: “From so grand a title as Blue Mountains... I expect to have seen a bold chain of mountains crossing the country; but instead of this, a sloping plain presents merely an inconsiderable front to the low land near the coast.”² For us there are bigger mountains to climb than tourist evangelism.

Instead, our location brings the dual challenges of cold weather and geographic isolation. People love the idea of communal village life, but our older residents are loath to come out too early or late, while the younger residents are commuting early and late. Most

young adults move down to university, leaving a void of young adults in the community (and in our youth ministry).

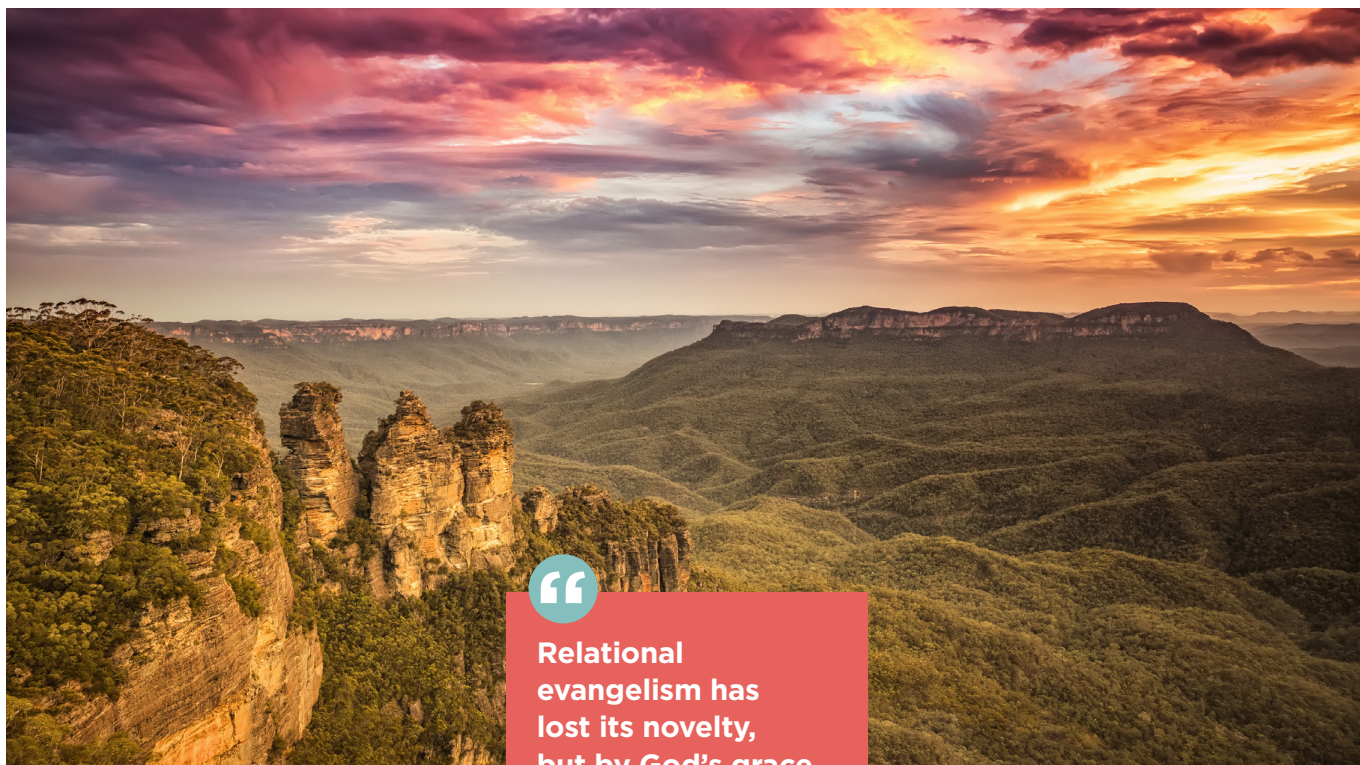
So how do you do evangelism in a cold, post-Christian town on the margins of Sydney with few young adults and an entrenched ‘Anglo’ hardness to the gospel?

A key strategy for us is the ‘overlapping fields of fire’ found in small communities.

People usually encounter our church not just in one area of communal life, but in two or three: the single parent who drops her son off to Boys’ Brigade on

1 Charles Darwin, *The Voyage of the Beagle: A Naturalists Voyage Round the World*, London: John Murray, 1913, p464.

2 Ibid.



“
Relational evangelism has lost its novelty, but by God’s grace the overlaps with church members start to pile up in people’s minds. And it’s bearing real fruit.
 ”

Friday night was here in the morning browsing at the op shop, will come to carols in the park, and her daughter’s school teacher will be one of our members.

This overlap influences ministry structures.

Here are two examples:

For many years we’ve had an on-site op shop each Friday morning, drawing about a hundred community members each week. Recently a separate ministry team has begun a ‘Community Hub’ at the same time. It adds a café, fresh food giveaways, counselling, workshops, and Anglicare’s mobile community pantry.

This naturally connects with people on the way to and from the op-shop and expands the overall surface of our ministry to them. The rosters for this ministry include not only baristas and packers, but ‘chatters’ and a ‘host’ each week, who each add a little breadth and warmth to the overlap of church relationships. It has been wonderful to see school parents, public housing residents, and retired hobbyists mingling on-site.

Another newly-minted ministry is a weekly Craft and Coffee morning which draws people to learn and practice various arts and crafts in community. It’s a ministry repeated across many churches and would be a fine stand-alone outreach.

But it also promotes a number of overlaps.

It draws people from other on-site ministries like the op-shop and gives them a stepping-stone into the main church building. It also draws older people out of their homes with a warm place to socialize during the day.

Additionally, it allows some on the fringe of church and faith to teach a craft and find themselves tasting the goodness of ministry fellowship. Stanley Hauerwas suggests many people come to faith by being ‘apprenticed’ first, rather than being converted as a rank outsider. He suggests that Christianity itself can be like a ‘craft’ to be learnt, with conversion occurring mid-stream.³

Of course each ministry needs its own ‘cutting edge’ of evangelism. But the long-term strategy is to erode abstract assumptions about Christianity by a chain of close encounters with real members of a real local church.

Then, when their child or grandchild asks a question about God, our church is the natural option. When their world implodes, they know where to find people with both care and hope.

A non-Christian attendee of a recent *The Reason*

3 Stanley Hauerwas, *Discipleship as Craft, Church as a Disciplined Community*, *The Christian Century*, October 1991, pp. 881-884.

for God course says he keeps coming back because he's struck by the caring community – despite the bad press he sees for Christianity in general. Another attendee shared abusive experiences of church in her childhood and marriage, and yet she's now at church every week. A third said her friends would disown her if they knew she was coming to church, but she's found something moving in Christ's teaching and in seeing it lived out.

Relational evangelism has lost its novelty, but by God's grace the overlaps with church members start to pile up in people's minds.

And it's bearing real fruit.

My wife presently has four school mums in her Bible study who have found that an easier place to investigate faith than church itself. What makes it a soft landing is the half-dozen other school mums in the group, including two teachers. In fact, almost 10% of our local public school students attend church. That's a lot of overlap!

There are also only two other established churches in town. So another Bible study has ended up with representatives from multiple denominations who have no other place where they can study the Scriptures. They're drawn in through Christian friends at Garden Club, Probus, book clubs etc.

It makes for a messy, porous kind of approach to evangelism. We don't have a linear "integration strategy" so much as a long list of relationships in progress.

It means our staff are constantly riding the boundaries, match-making people with the nearest stepping-stone of ministry.

It means I don't get to lead a Bible study – I'm cycling through evangelistic and special-interest groups and then grafting attendees into long-term groups.

It means constantly prodding our ministry leaders about what their 'next step' is for their attendees – and equipping them to defend the gospel to a colourful crowd of New-Agers, friendly doubters, and cultural Christians.

It means we can never assume someone on-site is converted. But that's a good thing, no matter how neat your membership model.

It also means our challenge in evangelism is not making more contacts in the community. It's helping

them take the next step.

That's a very difficult concept for our members to grasp.

Our calculation is we have around 250 non-Christians on site every week for various activities – both those mentioned and our various children's and youth ministries.

But the brutal truth is only one or two people a year make the leap from any of these events to a regular church service.

Those 'found sheep' are an angelic praise point, of course. But what tends to happen is our exhausting activity quiets our consciences to the next step we're failing to offer. For most people church is a big leap forward (or back), and we haven't laid enough stepping-stones for them to get there.

I've lost count of the times I've been asked to consider a weekday kids' club "to make more contacts in the community". I have to remind people we're long on contacts and short on converts.

Overlapping fields of fire is a hard strategy for people to see and persist with.

It's hard because when the fruit comes, we credit the immediate cause and not the accumulation of causes.

It's also hard to keep trusting the Final Cause. We keep such a close eye on relationships that we can stop expecting and praying for miraculous conversions.

It's hard not to feel guilty that we don't hold more one-off outreach events and have a greater variety of guest services like other churches.

One encouragement to persist comes from our founding secular hero, who recalls his career's most "influential encounter" was with a science professor at Cambridge. The professor was also a devout Christian, passionate about the Thirty-nine Articles, the poor, and the humane treatment of criminals. "My intimacy with such a man ought to have been, and I hope was, an inestimable benefit."⁴

Whatever Darwin's final benefit, we trust the intimate overlaps of village life in the Upper Mountains will lead to eternal benefit for many. **ACR**

“Our challenge in evangelism is not making more contacts in the community. It's helping them take the next step.”

4 Charles Darwin, *The Autobiography of Charles Darwin: From the Life and Letters of Charles Darwin*, Edited by Francis Darwin, 1887, Page 22.

Gospel Growth through ANeW¹

“So you’re interested in leading an evangelical Anglican ministry in the centre of Newcastle? I can fund you 50-50 as archdeacon and church planter.” It’s not your typical request, but Newcastle Bishop Brian Farran’s proposal set the tone for the birth and growth of ANeW. From its inception to its growth and duplication, our church’s story testifies to God’s providential blessing of tried and true methods: preaching the Word, prayerfully, in partnership.

Following discussions with the bishop, Arthur and Anabelle Copeman packed their bags and prepared to plant ANeW in Newcastle after they’d had a quick holiday to New Zealand. In the return departure lounge, they ran into two Newcastle friends who were thrilled to hear the plan. To these were soon added more acquaintances, retired ministers, a RAAF chaplain, and a couple of young families. A local church offered their hall for free, and the initial prayer meeting started with 30 people in June 2011.

There were three particulars to ANeW in this early stage. Firstly, it was both evangelical and Anglican. Most evangelical churches in Newcastle were not Anglican. Most Anglican churches were progressive or Anglo-Catholic. This made ANeW all but unique in the local church context. Indeed, during the initial prayer meetings God pruned the core. The strong focus on the Bible saw some leave in search of other emphases. This resulted in a more unified core, committed to evangelical ministry.

A second particular was the age of the planting couple. Many saw church planting as a young man’s work, but the Copemans were empty-nesters. Positively, they had experience in ministry, under-



Sam Broadfoot, Assistant Minister, All Saints ANeW, New Lambton

stood the Newcastle diocese, and were free from the pressures of young children. In God’s providence, young families and children were part of the initial plant, so Anabelle ran a kids’ ministry from day one. Furthermore, a young family fresh from SMBC turned up willing to lead the young adults and the students moving to Newcastle to study.²

The third significant item was funding. Arthur’s employment as archdeacon, the free hall, and a grant from the diocese meant there was no pressure simply to make ends meet. Again, in God’s providence, it seems He simply put the right people in the right place at the right time.

The prayer meeting continued to grow in the first year. Members continued to invite their friends and neighbours, and a team from Sydney Uni’s EU came to help with doorknocking, gingerbread house events, and giving testimonies at ANeW with the church

1 The church’s name, ANeW stands for Anglican Newcastle Evangelical Worship.

2 SMBC stands for Sydney Missionary and Bible College.

hosting them in the hall.³ At this stage, most of the growth was transfer from other churches: people thirsty for the Word, or looking for something other evangelical churches weren't providing.

In 2012, things stepped up. One of the core members, Cathy Young, was employed as women's pastor. This was a direct benefit of ANeW's financial position, given Arthur's diocesan employment. A natural evangelist, Cathy was instrumental in shaping the core's culture, running *Simply Christianity* courses with anyone interested. With Arthur she also helped transition the prayer meeting from the hall into the church building, as appropriate to the growing size. This recognised and affirmed ANeW's trajectory, providing an appropriate 'departure' point for those initial supporters who had intended only to help ANeW gain its footing. And again, in His providence, God brought the people needed for the next stage of church life: musically gifted Christians moved in, and in February the church began to sing. The year 2012 also saw the first holiday kids' club, based around the children already present in the church. Through word of mouth, and a letterbox drop, about 30 kids came for 3 days of games and teaching.

In 2013 ANeW outgrew the building and moved to the Anglican church in nearby Lambton. This building was bigger, but its orientation and low ceiling maintained an intimate feeling. A great hall and kitchen sat adjacent to the church building, making for a relaxed, social dynamic on Sundays. There was also on-site parking – the works. And God continued providing people and opportunity to His growing church. In Easter, another SMBC graduate turned up ready to lead the children's ministry. Around the same time the minister of neighbouring parish New Lambton resigned. Bishop Peter Stuart asked Arthur to oversee the church, which he did with great help from one of the retired ministers in ANeW. Even as this new church was taken on board, the continuing growth of ANeW suggested it was time for another congregation.

ANeW's second prayer meeting was started in May, 2014, in the New Lambton church hall. A couple who'd moved from Sydney to help ANeW ran the meetings, and Arthur spoke from the Bible. In form

it was identical to the first ANeW prayer meeting, but a good Sunday saw only 8 people in attendance. By November the prayer meeting had not grown at all, but in faith it was launched as a congregation in New Lambton. Very quickly a godly couple from ANeW Lambton moved across. Then some gifted musicians joined. And just like the initial plant, God started bringing people in. As Cathy had done previously, one of the members ran *Simply Christianity* courses for anyone interested.

By 2017 the ferrying of sound gear from Lambton to New Lambton and back each week had become tiring. It was time to house all three congregations under the one roof of New Lambton. But again, every move comes with a cost. The New Lambton building is a more traditional structure, whose high ceilings and narrower layout work against the musicians. The church hall is across the road and down the street,

so the social Sunday dynamics are somewhat disjointed. But God continued to grow ANeW. Some of the young families had children, and moved from the initial to the second ANeW congregation. This gave the children's ministry a kick-start. Evangelistic events like a ladies' high tea were started, along with other mission weeks supported by teams from Anglican Youthworks and SMBC.

During 2018, sights were set on another church plant in Fletcher, a new suburb 20 minutes' drive from New Lambton. Three growth groups and many congregation members already lived in Fletcher, and access to the school (Bishop Tyrrell Anglican College) was offered for free. So a monthly mid-week prayer meeting was begun in Fletcher. A significant difference between Fletcher and the earlier plants was the existence of a team ready to go. In 2011 and 2014 there was a need to gather a team of committed evangelicals. But since God had amply resourced ANeW, the Fletcher team was ready. This exposes an issue in the earlier gatherings: transfer growth was part of the founding DNA. By God's grace, people have been converted and baptised through ANeW. But substantial growth can be attributed to transfer of those seeking expository preaching of the Scriptures. In contrast, Fletcher ANeW consists of many who are yet to become Christians, which is fantastic.

The year 2019 is seeing an ironic pairing of events: both the official launch of Fletcher ANeW, and the

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Again, in God's providence, it seems He simply put the right people in the right place at the right time.
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3 EU is a campus Christian group called Evangelical Union.

end of ANeW. Having housed two ANeW congregations under the same roof as New Lambton’s pre-existing church, All Saints, it was time to formalise the partnership. With the bishop’s blessing, both ANeW and All Saints were officially closed, and a new entity was begun: All Saints ANeW.

So we are very thankful to God for all that He has done. He has richly provided again and again, from the support of bishops, chance meeting of gospel partners, His provision of trained preachers and teachers,

buildings and finances. Preaching the word, prayerfully and in partnership seems to have worked. We will continue preaching, and inviting others to come and join God’s church. But the discomfort we have felt recently is the temptation to be less prayerful. Sunday is comfortable. There are many likeminded believers, and a trickle of newcomers. What a tragedy that our gospel ambition could be so low, as hordes of people in our suburb, let alone in the whole of Newcastle, remain ignorant of salvation. May we be driven to our

New life in an ancient parish?

Opportunities for the gospel in North West England

Bolton is a large town of 285,000 people in North West England on the northern edge of Greater Manchester and in the south of the historic county of Lancashire. It is a classic “mill town” known for its cotton manufacturing industry of years gone by, for its friendly people, and until recently, for its Premier League soccer team, Bolton Wanderers. It’s the place where I’ve been serving as a Church of England curate for the past year.

Less well known today, even to Christians in England, is Bolton’s history as a stronghold of the Reformed and Evangelical faith in the North of England. In the seventeenth century it was known as “The Geneva of the North” because of its strongly Puritan character with its churches emphasising the preaching of the pure Word of God and staunchly upholding the doctrines rediscovered during the Reformation.

A key foundation stone of this heritage seems to lie in the life and memory of Bolton’s very own



Ben Wilkinson,
Assistant Vicar, Deane
Church and Lostock
Church, Bolton

sixteenth century Reformer and martyr, George Marsh, a farmer from the local parish of Deane who became an Evangelical preacher in Cambridge and who was martyred in 1555, during the reign of the Roman Catholic Queen Mary Tudor.

Marsh’s witness to the truth of the Scriptures and his determination to stand firm even in the face of persecution and death, recorded in great detail in Foxe’s Book of Martyrs, seems to have inspired the townspeople of Bolton for a good four hundred years after his death. Even today in the Anglican Diocese of Manchester, Bolton is known for having a mainly low-church tradition and in recent decades has had its own deputy Bishop, drawn from among the Evangelical wing of the

Church.

But does this Bible-based heritage have any real impact on the people of Bolton today?

As in the rest of England, the Church and the Christian faith no longer play a central role in most

people's lives. Indeed, Bolton now has large Muslim and Hindu populations and is a destination for refugees from conflict zones around the globe. It is a rapidly changing town.

In my first year of ordained ministry in the Church of England, based in the parishes of Deane and Lostock in Bolton, I have seen God working to create new life and spiritual growth in people through the saving news of Jesus. What is more, in his grace he has chosen to use both the heritage of the past and the changes of the present in the process.

The past year has been my first time living in the North of England (although my wife does come from the rival northern county of Yorkshire) and my first full experience of normal Anglican parish ministry. My main previous experience of full-time Bible teaching ministry was in a completely different context: for five years I was on the staff team of St Helen's Bishopsgate, a large and well-resourced church in the central business district of London. Although I was able to get involved with a broader range of ministry settings during my theological training at Wycliffe Hall, Oxford, this has been my first time fully immersed in local parish life.

Opportunities springing from old traditions

At Deane Church, the expectation that a substantial Bible-based sermon will be preached is a part of the Evangelical heritage that has extended to the present day. The rector of the past nine years, Terry Clark, together with two previous curates and a wider ministry team, has built on this foundation to establish a pattern of expository preaching, working through books of the Bible in order to bring people God's message for today. Three years ago, Terry was asked to take on the leadership of the neighbouring Lostock Church, where expository preaching had not been the tradition previously, and he has been able to introduce it gently. In the past year, as Terry and I have preached through most of John's Gospel and the early chapters of Genesis, we have had the privilege of seeing the word of God being received with joy by many and seeing signs of a growing hunger for God's word. As a result there are now over thirty people at Lostock Church attending mid-week Bible

study groups, where two years ago there were fewer than ten. A handful of these group members were not attending church regularly or at all as recently as a year ago.

Another Anglican tradition which God has used over the past year is the time of spiritual reflection around Lent. While celebrating Lent was a novelty to me, to many church-goers here it seems natural to do some kind of course or engage with some extended Christian teaching in the run-up to Easter. This year we used a resource called *Gospel Shaped Living*, produced by The Gospel Coalition, as a seven-week Lent course, exploring big truths of the gospel and how they should change our daily lives as God's people. A record number of people from a wide range of spiritual backgrounds came along and by the end of the course it was evident that some people had come to

a new or deeper understanding of essential aspects of the gospel and all of us had been challenged to live transformed lives and share the good news with those around us.

A part of our Anglican tradition of which I had little previous experience is that of funeral and bereavement ministry to parishioners who have rarely, if ever, been to church.

I have been pleasantly surprised that God can use even this as fruitful ground for the good news of Jesus. Over recent years several people have started coming to church since the death of their spouse, and their involvement is a direct result of the church's ministry to them. One of the highlights of the past year for me has been leading a terminally ill man to salvation in Christ during his last few months of life. I was able to share his testimony of faith and explain the Christian hope at his funeral and in subsequent conversations with his family and friends.

There have been other open doors for the good news of Jesus provided by the Evangelical heritage of the past, including regular opportunities to teach the message of Jesus in two local primary schools, one of which is a church-founded school and the other a regular state school. I have also been able to explain the gospel to a group of elderly parishioners who asked me for a tour of our church building, the oldest part of which dates back over 800 years. Even the layout of the building bears testament to people's understanding of God's grace to us in Christ.

I have seen God working to create new life and spiritual growth in people through the saving news of Jesus.

Opportunities springing from present-day developments

By no means all of the evangelistic opportunities in Deane and Lostock, however, have their origin in local Evangelical tradition. One of the most noticeable changes to the town in recent decades has been settlement of refugees in the area from places of conflict that we see on our news screens, including Syria, South Sudan, Iraq and Iran. A number are based in Deane due to the availability of low-cost housing. Over the past six months it has been a privilege for Deane Church to play a small part in the global movement of Persian and Kurdish people coming to faith in Christ from Muslim backgrounds. As well as providing practical support through an English class, we have been able to run the Farsi language version of the *Christianity Explored* course and three brothers and sisters have been baptised.

We also have a growing community of refugees from South Sudan, many of whom come from a Christian background. One South Sudanese man who is here with his family and who is a keen evangelist was overjoyed to hear that one of Deane Church's Crosslinks mission partners was training church pastors in the very refugee camp in Uganda where his parents are currently based. We are currently seeking to explore prayerfully how we can further support and equip our South Sudanese brothers and sisters and reach those who do not yet know Christ.

Lostock, by contrast to much of the Deane parish, is an up-market suburb. Whilst this means there are no refugees settling here, God is using other aspects of modern life to spread the life-giving message of

Jesus. One such opportunity is one-to-one Bible reading evangelism. One of the church members who has been most eager to study the Bible with me one-to-one is a relatively new believer who runs his own personal training business. Since he knows the benefit of one-to-one physical training, he needed little convincing of the benefit of one-to-one spiritual training. We began working through John's Gospel using a resource called *The Word One-To-One* and within just a few weeks he was not only much clearer on the gospel message himself, but he was passing on what he was learning about Jesus to his clients during training sessions either in his gym or in their own living rooms.

Another fruitful use of *The Word One-To-One* booklets has been in teaching parents of young children – parents who are not familiar with Bible study groups and who find it difficult to take the first steps in attending them due to their responsibilities at home. One young married couple have been steadily reading John's Gospel together once or twice a week for a few months now and I've been able to meet with them monthly to talk and pray about what they've been learning, seeing them building each other up in the gospel along the way.

Not all has been plain sailing in gospel ministry here in Bolton. As is the case everywhere, there have been plenty of setbacks in ministry and spiritual opposition of various kinds. It is, however, a great joy to be a part of a local parish church which God has been using for centuries to bring his saving news to the world and which God is still using for his saving purposes today, in old ways and new. **ACR**

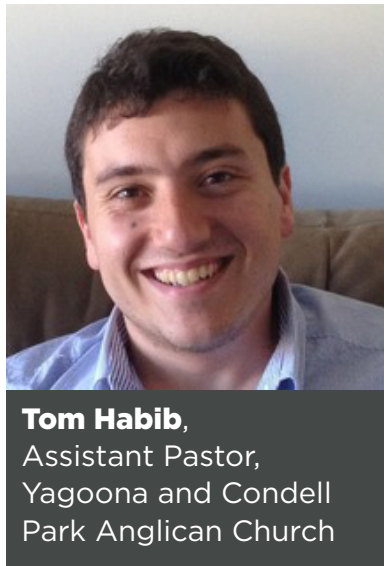
Contending side by side

In October, I will be saying goodbye to my church family and finishing up my job as an assistant minister after six years. There are many things that my wife and I will miss, but one in particular will be the wonderful relationship we have enjoyed with Ray and Jenny, our rector and his wife. They have shared their lives with us and been a constant source of encouragement and care. Ray is a great boss. He is the sort of pastor that you read about in the pastorals: full of integrity and conviction, godliness and humility. And he loves Jesus.

This is not to say that we never disagree or get on each other's nerves. But despite our differences, we have a wonderful working relationship.

Sadly, I know that this is not the norm. In the past few years, stories of workplace bullying and abuse by rectors have been made public. I personally know several assistant ministers who have gone through truly awful experiences. Some are quite shocking. Meanwhile, many senior ministers feel under more pressure than ever before. Some are expected to oversee large and complex staff teams, dealing with a range of personalities and problems that they haven't been trained to manage. There are plenty of assistant ministers that aren't easy to work with too!

It is important that we listen and learn from these stories of when things don't go well. But it is equally important to hear stories about when things do go well. To see the positive as well as the negative. I don't imagine that I have all the answers, or that Ray or



Tom Habib,
Assistant Pastor,
Yagoona and Condell
Park Anglican Church

myself are particularly special. But I wanted to share a positive picture of fellow workers in the gospel, contending side by side for the gospel. So here it is:

Gospel unity and learning to let things go

The foundation of our working relationship has been our unity in the gospel.

We share in one body, one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism and one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all (Eph 4:4-5). And as fellow

workers, we are united by a common purpose: to make disciples of all nations (Matt 28:19). We are engaged in a spiritual war for the souls of our community, and if we are to gain ground for the gospel we must stand firm in one spirit and contend as one man for the gospel (Phil 1:27). This gospel unity is a joy! How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity (Psalm 133:1).

Of course, there are (rare!) times when you must divide. If a rector is preaching heresy or has become abusive, action must be taken. We should never help the wicked nor love those who hate the Lord (2 Chron 19:1-2). There may also be times when you remain united in the Spirit, but choose to part ways. If your ministry philosophy or your personalities clash to the point where it hinders the spread of the gospel, you may choose to leave *for the sake of unity*. I take it this is what Paul and Barnabas were doing (Acts 15:36-41).

But for us, by the grace of God, our gospel unity

has kept us together. It has also allowed us to let the little things go. In many ways, Ray and I are opposites. I am big picture, Ray is details. He loves one-on-one evangelism, I love big-crowd preaching. He wants to work in his study at home. I want us all together in an office. He is “ready, aim, aim, aim, aim, aim, fire!”, I am “ready, fire, aim!” As you can imagine, these differences have led to frustrations along the way. Most of the time we complement each other, but we can get on each other’s nerves.

And yet, our deep unity in the gospel has allowed us to let the little things go. We live in an outrage culture where every little transgression is magnified. Sadly, this attitude can seep into our staff teams. Whether we feel our work has gone overlooked or our boss isn’t hearing what we are saying, it is so easy for us assistant ministers to let every little thing become bigger than it really is. Similarly, it can be easy for a rector to become fixated on the many little failures of their assistants as they learn on the job. Over the years, there have been plenty of little things that could have driven a wedge between me and Ray. But these things never did. We could let the little things go, because we have been united by much bigger things. In fact, it is these big things that help us to make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace (Eph 4:3).

The grace of God and learning to give and receive

If the foundation of our relationship has been gospel unity, the dynamic of our relationship has been according to the grace of God. This is the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich he became poor so that by his poverty we might become rich (2 Cor 8:9). This grace has taught us to be both receivers and givers.

We are all receivers, since every good gift is from above (Jas 1:17). Therefore, we can only serve God according to the grace that he has given us (Rom 12:6). This includes the *responsibilities* given to us. Like others, I came out of theological college convinced of what would change the church (and the world!) and ready to put it into practice. There was just one problem. I wasn’t in charge. For the first few years I was frustrated because I wanted to do Ray’s job

instead of my own. And it’s really hard to steer the ship when your hand isn’t on the wheel. Like Jacob, I was the grasper, always trying to reach out for more. But instead I had to learn to humbly receive the responsibilities given to me by Ray (and by God!). Rather than focusing on all the things I couldn’t control, I started asking myself, “What are the responsibilities that I have been given?” and then focused on fulfilling them. I don’t always get this right, but when I do I am able to get on with the job in front of me.

The grace of God also teaches us to give. This has shaped Ray’s leadership. From the very beginning, Ray has given me a seat at the table – always consulting with me on what we should do and taking on board my suggestions. He has entrusted me with major projects, whole congregations, difficult decisions and risky ideas. So much of my learning has in fact come from Ray allowing me to make mistakes. Ray is generous with the power that he has, graciously giving me responsibilities.

The dynamic of grace doesn’t work without both giving and receiving. Without Ray’s giving, I wouldn’t be able to receive. And unless I maintain a spirit of receiving, Ray won’t want to give me anything. This is the dynamic of grace: giving and receiving. This is because it is the dynamic of the Father and the Son. The Son only does what he sees his Father doing, and the Father loves the Son and shows him everything that he does (John 5:19-20).

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Like others, I came out of theological college convinced of what would change the church (and the world!) and ready to put it into practice. There was just one problem.
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The Lordship of Christ and learning to be humble

Our foundation is gospel unity. Our dynamic is the grace of God. And our vision is the Lordship of Christ.

Vision statements can be helpful tools for any staff team. But there is one vision that really matters: the Lordship of Christ. This is *the* vision statement. It is the ultimate reality. And that means the growth of our church doesn’t depend on me nor Ray. It depends on Jesus. Jesus Christ is Lord. It is His church. He will build it (Matt 16:18). But it is easy to buy into the lie of our culture that we are the ones who will change the world. We embrace the line that we are Jesus’ hands and feet, as if our Lord was like the hopeless Dagon who needed to be lifted back up every time he fell (see 1 Sam 5:1-5). We forget that Jesus Christ is Lord, and

we think it all depends on us.

I left theological college having listened to the latest lectures, been to the latest conferences and read the latest books on ministry. It was so easy for me to think that I had all the answers and that I could do a better job than Ray. And I've had to repent of my pride. I have had to think what it looks like as an assistant minister to do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but rather value others as more important than me (Phil 2:3-4). One way I've tried to do this in the past year is to ask the question, "How can I help Ray succeed in what he is trying to do?" I haven't always done a good job of this, but it's something I want to get better at.

Humility, more than anything else, is the quality that I most admire in Ray. He is a deeply humble man. His unflinching vision of the Lordship of Christ has allowed him to not want to conquer the world. It has stopped him from being the panicky rector who wants to reinvent our ministry every week. He interprets setbacks as stages in God's plan and holds a generous

Kingdom mindset to the advance of the gospel. And he is very quick to repent, even to me, when he knows he has done something wrong.

Remembering the Lordship of Christ has taught us to be humble. To not have an overinflated view of ourselves or place unrealistic expectations on each other. Our job is to serve Jesus, contending side by side. And as we do that, he will build his church.

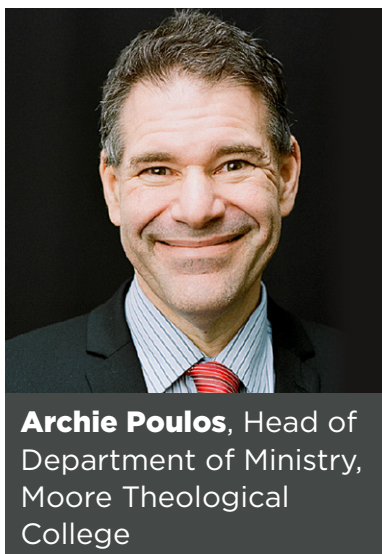
There but for the grace of God go I

I am under no illusion that this positive picture is because of me. Or even Ray. I know brothers wiser and godlier than me who have sadly endured a messy breakdown in their staff team. It is only by the grace of God. And I am thankful for His grace. But I write this as an encouragement to fellow workers in the harvest field: with the grace that God has given us, let us work together with the unity of the gospel, according to the grace of God, with our eyes fixed on the Lordship of Christ. **ACR**

Some Observations for Ordinary Pastoral Ministry

On Identity Politics and Diocesan Discourse

In the course of my recent PhD research, I have come to realise that Jonathan Haidt is onto something with his work on polarisation and identity politics. That is, we easily lose the ability to see another person's position. It is possible to have a position and only listen to, or converse on social media with, those with the same view. When my position is reinforced, anyone with another position is automatically rejected, and I do not engage with those who do not think like I do. We have observed this dynamic from afar with the American public discourse about Donald Trump,



and we have seen it locally in the recent public debate over same-sex marriage. I think we struggle to know how to have good conflict or engage well with alternative positions.

This is relevant for my research into clergy competencies. Through a large number of interviews with clergy and senior lay people, I have noticed that there are two aspects of identity which are true of clergy in Sydney, and they sometimes compete with one another. One of the tasks we engage in is mission. We want the world to come under the saving power of the gospel. We have arms out to embrace people. At the same time we want to defend

the faith. Our posture is arms crossed. We recognise the truth and importance of both of those tasks in our overall task of Christian ministry. But our natural disposition can lean towards one, or the other. Sometimes we may struggle to characterise a person with a differing disposition as ‘true blue’. The person who wants more mission says, “you theological purists, you never have a conversation about Jesus with anyone.” And the defender of the faith says, “you are compromising the gospel.” We can struggle to know how to have a genuine and substantial conversation about such things.

The solution is not to create a centre ground that half-heartedly defends the faith or is on mission part-time. We do not want to be lukewarm and in the middle. Rather, the solution is to recognise that we need to be both missionary and defender, and to know and when to emphasise these tasks. I want us to be hard, but I want us to know when to be hard. And I want us to be soft, and to know when to be soft. There are times when you need to reach out to someone, and there are times when you need to cross your arms and stand your ground. Take the contemporary challenge to SRE in schools. We could go straight into the Principal’s office and demand action because of our legal right to teach Scripture in NSW state schools. Or, we could go in as a missionary and say, “let’s work together.” There are times for both of these courses of action. The larger point is that the tasks of defender and missionary are essential for Christian ministry, but we need to know when to exercise them.

On the Need for Wisdom and Courage

In order to do this dual task well, we pray to the Lord for wisdom about how and when to be which. An important aspect of this wisdom is to know ourselves. Am I more inclined to be a missionary or a defender? We can be deceived as to what we are, so it is helpful to look at our behaviour. For example, if you say I am absolutely committed to evangelism, you may want to ask when was the last time I shared the gospel with someone? Or, if you say I am absolutely committed to upholding the truth, then you might want to ask whether anyone has been offended in the last twelve months by a position I have taken? It takes wisdom to discern this, but such a process will enable you to be honest with yourself and humble in your dealing with others.

“It takes courage to say that I am still of this tribe, but at this point I need to say this.”

There are a number of other aspects of wisdom that benefit from ministerial self-reflection. Firstly, it takes wisdom to amend our lives with the virtues of the gospel. Secondly, it takes wisdom to understand what is going on in our world and the local circumstances around us, and then to make critical observations about these things. Thirdly, it takes wisdom to recognise the created patterns in reality, and minister responsibly along the grain of the universe. We talk about faithfulness to what the Scriptures say, but we need to look at the structures within the created world and handle them with faithfulness to the Lord. Fourthly, it takes wisdom to recognise that we are players in systems of relationships. We need to know what our relational norms within these systems are, and we need wisdom to know how to act on them. Fifthly, we must beware of wrongly attributing motive to others. This ‘intention invention’ problem happens

when we observe a behaviour or position and hastily (and often mistakenly) assume the reason behind it – and this is always counterproductive in any context, whether in the workplace, or in marital or theological debates.

Furthermore, acting on wisdom takes courage. You may minister in a network of relationships which prioritises certain values, and therefore, if you do or say something slightly differently to your tribe you may be ostracised. You’ll feel like you are going to be on the outer and you may feel some reputational risk. It takes courage to say that I am still of this tribe, but at this point I need to say this. Another reason why it takes courage is that you might be wrong. At one level, this realisation involves basic Christian humility. Being secure in our ultimate identity – ‘in Christ’ – enables us to share our opinions and thus have constructive debate and discussion.

On Bullying in Churches

We can apply this to the current debate over bullying in ministry. Bullying is a reality – it happens and we must watch out for it. Pastors are in a position of power and authority, and we have the opportunity and knowledge which can be misused. But one person’s bully is sometimes another person’s leader. You have to be careful of that. If you are being pushed to say, “my rector is a bully”, the rector might say, “I am just exercising authority because I see where this ends

up for a person.” We need to understand the truth of the other person’s position. Assistant ministers have had the safety net of not having to juggle everything that goes on in a parish. And rectors do sometimes drop the ball on occasion. It’s too easy to say you are a bully, you are incompetent, you are all these things – because you have never had to deal with the responsibilities that a rector has had. We need to work out a way to help each other see what the other is really saying and thinking. A rector will need to determine if he is the one who is able to help the assistant minister be the person they need to be, or would they benefit from engaging with someone else? And rectors must also steward the resources of the church, and assistant ministers cost money.

In addition to realising the realities of each other’s position, we need to examine our own hearts. Sometimes bullying occurs because I am really intimidated by the competence of my assistant minister. But you have to be the person who delights in the successes of others. The trouble is that as soon as a bright light is behind you, if your identity is that I am the bright light, you will seek to domesticate your assistant minister or dominate them. Sometimes a rector will need to recognise that others are far better at aspects of ministry than they are, and they will need to enable others to serve for the sake of the gospel. But as we examine our own hearts, we must not assume to know the motives of the heart of the other person. And we must know how to hold a person with a different position as a brother and co-worker in Christ.

On Collegiality

This kind of collegiality is vital for Christian ministry more generally. In the course of my research, I was

struck that none of the people interviewed identified the ability to work well with others as a key ministry competency. Thirty or forty years ago our clergy took a ‘cure of souls’ approach to parish ministry. More recently, some of us used the language of ‘mission director’. There are some benefits of this approach, but it seems to have created a competitor mindset where ministers are more congregationally isolated and less collegial with their neighbouring rectors.

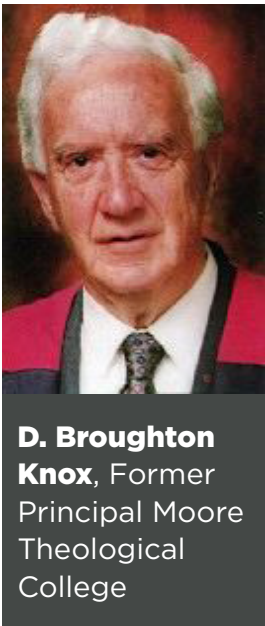
One consequence of this is that we struggle to see our parishioners enjoy the ministries of other places. So, we need to work better together – and be better networkers. It is worth considering regionalising some ministries. Take disability ministry – not

every parish should do it. Likewise, ESL ministries – why not regionalise that? We could also improve in our networking with parachurch organisations. We have Matthias Media who produce Bible study material. Why do we write all new Bible studies for our churches in 1 Corinthians, when we have these resources at our fingertips? Poor networking!

We really need to improve the networking between our rectors. Years ago we used to have ministers’ fraternals (prayer and ministry support groups between local church leaders), but we do not even do fraternals well in our own denomination. The research I have conducted underscores how much of a problem this is. It shocked me when every focus group demonstrated significant ministerial fears. A fear of failure, fear that my peers will think I am not a true member of this tribe, and fear of reputational loss – that I am not ‘true blue’. So, we need to work on collegiality. There is a great need to work together as a fellowship of ordinary pastors, recognising our different gifts and abilities and utilising our different ministry ideas and strategies, for the sake of the glory of God. **ACR**

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As we examine our own hearts, we must not assume to know the motives of the heart of the other person.
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The Christian and His Worship¹



D. Broughton Knox, Former Principal Moore Theological College

CHAPTER ONE

The nature of worship

The nature of our worship takes its character from the God whom we worship, for worship is our acknowledgment of God, our giving worth to Him by our recognition of His nature. Thus ways of worship vary with concepts of God. For example, the way Baal was worshipped was derived from the worshippers' views of what Baal was like. Heathen worship springs directly

from heathen views of God's nature, as also the worship of the philosopher is derived from his philosophic views of God. Christian worship is based on the Christian doctrine of God.

The Christian doctrine of God

The Christian doctrine of God is **unique** in its essential truths, and consequently the Christian worship of God is unique in its essential principles.

Firstly, the Christian doctrine of God is unique in its source, for our knowledge of God comes, not from the ideas of our own heart which we share with all men, but from the revelation of God Himself. God's Word gives truth about God very different from what we would have guessed if left to the resources of our

own minds. Thus if Christian worship is truly to reflect God as He has revealed Himself, it must be scriptural.

Because we are men there will always be a pull in the direction of natural religion, to make our Christian worship conform to the ideas of God which arise from our human nature. But such views of God are distorted and false, and if our worship is to remain true and acceptable to God, it must keep within the revelation of Holy Scripture.

Secondly, the Christian concept of God is unique in regard to our experience of God. Christianity is fellowship with God through forgiveness of sins. Both the doctrine of our adoption into sonship, and the doctrine of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, are unique to Christianity; and the fellowship with God and with one another which results from the gift of the Holy Spirit makes the Christian faith very different from the darkness of the non-Christian, who is "without God and without hope in the world".

Consequently our worship of God must reflect this fellowship, a fellowship expressed in many ways but essentially a fellowship on the basis of the forgiveness of sins, the fellowship, or communion, of the body and blood of Christ, a fellowship with God and with one another on the basis of Christ's atoning death.

Thirdly, the Christian concept of God is unique with regard to its content. Psalm 95 directs the worshipper to two primary aspects of God's character on which His worship depends: first, to God's almighty creative sovereignty, "For the Lord is a great God and a great King above all gods"; and secondly, to His character of love expressed in the covenant, "For He is our God and we are the people of His pasture and the sheep of His hand."

We see that God is our almighty Shepherd, One who controls in His sovereign power every event in the universe, every electron in the atoms of every galaxy, and who, with this almighty sovereignty, unites also immeasurable love, protecting and provid-

¹ The following article is a reprint of D.B. Knox, *The Christian and His Worship* (Sydney: Jordan Books, 1963), which publication supplements those which appear in *D. Broughton Knox: Select Works*, 3 Vols., (Kingsford NSW: Matthias Media, 2000-6).

ing, defending and saving the people of His pasture and the sheep of His hand.

He is our Covenant God, our almighty Shepherd and Saviour. No detail of our life, not even the hairs of our head, are too insignificant for His loving care. His love is most perfectly expressed in the gift of salvation, in that “while we were yet sinners Christ died for us”. This is the unchanging character of God as He has revealed Himself in Scripture.

The essence of true worship

How may we worthily worship such a God? How rightly acknowledge His character and attribute to Him His worth?

Both Scripture and reason unite in replying that an almighty, all-loving God is only worthily acknowledged by trust and faith. The accepting of His provision for our need is the basic response. That provision is, primarily, free forgiveness, but it also includes an ongoing provision for daily life, expressed in His promises and commands.

Thus worship is offered, firstly, in accepting His forgiveness and in daily trusting Him through prayer and obedience, with thanksgiving. Such is the truest acknowledgment of God’s essential character; of the fact that He is our almighty Shepherd and Saviour. All other worship is derivative from this.

Our common worship on Sundays is guided by the same principles. One of its chief objectives is to strengthen and express faith. Thus St. Paul exhorted the Colossians:

“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts unto God; and whatsoever ye do, in word or in deed, do all in the name of our Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.”

We see then that Christian worship is a day-by-day activity, in which every event of life, and all its problems, are the raw material for the worship of peaceful trust and glad obedience.

CHAPTER TWO

Worship and the Anglican Prayer Book

The Book of Common Prayer of the Church of England, the 300th anniversary of which was celebrated in 1962, embodies the three principles of worship which were outlined in Chapter One.

Basic principles

Firstly, the Prayer Book is scriptural. Not only does its language abound in Bible quotation and allusion but, more importantly, Scripture controls its forms of worship. Article 6 of the Thirty-Nine Articles reminds us that what is not contained in Scripture is not to be required of any man to be believed as an article of the Faith or as necessary to salvation; and the Prayer Book proceeds on the same principle that what has not the clear endorsement of Scripture is not to find a place in a book for common worship.

This is a most important principle to remember

today when Prayer Book revision is under consideration. It is not enough that a form of worship should be primitive, or that, in our estimation, it should enrich the service. If the doctrine that underlies any form of worship has not the clear support of Scripture, it is not to find its place in common public worship. If it were to do so, our worship would not honour

the God who has revealed Himself in Scripture.

Secondly, through the congregational nature of its forms of worship, the Prayer Book expresses the fellowship that characterises Christianity. Doubtless the book can be improved further in this direction, but nevertheless compared with earlier forms of worship — and with some contemporary forms — the Prayer Book is remarkably congregational, and this is one of its strengths. In the Prayer Book, especially in its form for the Lord’s Supper as it is intended to be administered, common worship is a fellowship with God and with one another on the basis of forgiveness in Christ.

Thirdly, the Prayer Book makes the response of faith a primary medium of worship. For example, the reading of the Scriptures and their exposition in the sermon are central in the Prayer Book services, because it is only as God’s Word is heard that faith can be exercised.

Of course, Christian worship includes many facets which it shares in common with non-Christian

“**Thus worship is offered, firstly, in accepting His forgiveness and in daily trusting Him.**”

religions (for example, adoration, prayer and praise); yet its distinctively Christian character is expressed through complete trust and faith in God’s loving promises and through the glad obedience which follows.

For such worship the reading of the Scripture and the proclamation of God’s character, whether through the sermon or the sacrament, is central.

The response of faith

Notice how in each of the three Absolutions of the Prayer Book² the promises of God to the truly penitent are mentioned. This was not accidental, as is illustrated from Archbishop Cranmer’s remark to Henry VIII. The King, in revising an early Reformation document, had abbreviated the form of Absolution by omitting any reference to God’s promises of forgiveness. The Archbishop expostulated, “The promises are stricken out, which chiefly ought to be known.”

Knowledge of God’s promises is essential for faith, and without faith there can be no true absolution. It is a pity that the Absolution in the proposed 1928 Prayer Book has not conformed to Cranmer’s pattern.

Notice also how the Prayer Book introduces the Comfortable Words after the Absolution in the Holy Communion, in order that when we lift up our hearts to the Lord, we might lift them up in the worship of faith.

Another illustration of the response of faith as the acme of worship is in the words of distribution of the elements. You will notice that the phrase “given for thee” or “shed for thee” occurs four times in these four short sentences. This again is not accidental, but has arisen from the history of the words. The present form is a conflation of the words of the Prayer Books of 1549 and 1552. In both those Prayer Books, although in other respects the words of distribution vary, the phrase “for thee” was twice included because it is at the point of reception of the elements that faith must be intensely personal. As we receive, so we worship God the Giver.

2 These three absolutions are found: (1) In the services of Morning and Evening Prayer; (2) in the Service of Holy Communion; and (3) in the Order for the Visitation of the Sick.

The worshipper must appropriate for himself the provision of forgiveness in Christ which God has provided for the world, if he is to honour God as a loving Saviour. Without this response of faith all other worship, whether adoration, or prayer, or the offering of ourselves in obedience, is empty.

CHAPTER THREE

The origin of denominational disunity

Much of the present division between the English Churches (and thus of the Churches of the greater part of the English-speaking world) can be traced back to the events of the years 1660 to 1662. In view of the tremendous interest in all denominations at present in the question of Church union, it is instructive to look back and see why one comprehensive denomination did not eventuate in 1662 but that rather our present system of parallel denominations has grown up.

The restoration of the monarchy

By 1660 the Church of England had carried on its life without the use of the Prayer Book and without government by bishops for almost twenty years. During this period of the Commonwealth a great work of God had been effected through the faithful preaching of His Word.

When Oliver Cromwell died, England was faced with the dilemma

of whether the military government should be continued or the traditional government by crown and parliament restored. The great majority of the Puritan clergy in the Church of England supported the restoration of the monarchy, though they recognised the possible danger to true religion. However, they hoped that a comprehensive religious settlement would be agreed upon. They were not opposed to episcopacy, though they were opposed to prelacy that governed beyond the law; nor were they opposed to the Prayer Book liturgy, though they wished to see some changes by way of less rigidity.

At first it seemed that their very moderate requests would be met in full.

When Charles II was at Breda on the Continent before his return to England he had issued the following promise with regard to the settlement of religious affairs: “We do declare a liberty to tender consciences,

“It is at the point of reception of the elements that faith must be intensely personal. As we receive, so we worship God the Giver.”

and that no man shall be disquieted or called in question for differences of opinion in matters of religion which do not disturb the peace of the kingdom.”

Later that year, after his return — in October, 1660 — he issued what he called “a declaration to all his loving subjects of his Kingdom in England concerning ecclesiastical affairs.” In it Charles and his chancellor, Clarendon, declared their intention of meeting the main Puritan requests. Indeed, what Charles undertook went far beyond what the Puritan clergy of the Church of England were asking for.

Unfortunately, however, Charles was a man of no character or principle. Time showed that this declaration was simply meant to deceive and keep the protestant party quiet till the time was more propitious. Indeed when a bill was introduced into Parliament to give legal force to the October declaration, the king and his ministers took the lead in obtaining its rejection.

When the Act of Uniformity prescribing the present Church of England Prayer Book was enacted a little later, it conceded nothing, and made the conditions of subscription to the Prayer Book by clergy more stringent than they had ever been before in the entire history of the Church of England.

The Act of Uniformity was followed by the eviction of 2,000 clergy from their ministry: that is, almost one fifth of the clergy (and they unquestionably the most earnest and successful section). In the words of Dr. Henson, a former Bishop of Durham, “The Act of Uniformity left them no choice between retirement and infamy.” The declaration which that Act required of every clergyman and schoolmaster could not be subscribed to by a conscientious supporter of the Commonwealth without perjury, and, moreover, if the clergyman concerned had received his ministry from other than episcopal hands (and this was the case with very many, for episcopacy had been disused in the Church for the last twenty years) he could retain his church only by submitting himself for re-ordination by bishops, and thus publicly branding his original ordination as invalid, and casting a slur of suspicion upon all his ministrations. Bishop Henson, in his sermon in Westminster Abbey, continued:

“**That the liberty for every man to worship according as his conscience approves the truth, is more precious than a comprehensive, all-inclusive denomination.**”

“No man of genuine piety could lend himself to a procedure so profane. The victims of the Act of Uniformity were ejected from the national church not for disobedience to the Prayer Book but for refusing to lay guilt on their consciences by uttering an evident falsehood and for refusing to acquiesce in a sacrilegious farce. None therefore could pretend that they were separatists for a slight cause, or question their motives for their compulsory dissent. They went forth to poverty, privation and suffering.”

Persecution of non-conformists

Such intense persecution followed that twenty-one years later saintly Richard Baxter could write: “The jails are filled with nonconformists. Nine ministers are in Aldergate and many more in other places, and almost all of them mulct and fined far more than ever they were worth, their wives and children in distress and want. I myself was distrained of all my goods and books on five convictions before ever I heard of any accusation or saw a judge, and so it is with many others.”

We may perhaps see God’s judgment on the perfidy, the revenge and the mean persecution of the Clarendon Code which accompanied the settlement of 1662 in the great plague of 1665 when 100,000 people perished, and in the great fire of London of 1666; but it cannot be denied that the real judgment of God was the moral degradation into which England was plunged during the years that followed the Restoration, and from which it did not recover for a century, till the evangelical revival under Whitefield and Wesley renewed the life of the nation. It is interesting to note that both of John Wesley’s grandfathers were Church of England clergymen who had been ejected in 1662.

It is a matter of thanksgiving that the providence of God so overruled in 1662 that the Church of England received again in its new Prayer Book a form of worship which dated back to the purest time of Reformation theology, for the 1662 Book is practically the same as the Book of 1552. In view of the dominating theology of the Restoration Church leaders who authorised it, this is indeed a cause for praise.

Yet we in the Church of England must join real penitence with our thanksgiving as we recall the events of that time.

Although 300 years old, the events of 1662 are still with us in their effects, so that it is difficult to review the history of that time without our emotions being fiercely aroused one way or the other.

But wherever our sympathies lie, we should look beyond the event to see the hand of God, for nothing takes place apart from His control. The lesson of those days is surely this: that the liberty for every man to worship according as his conscience approves the truth, is more precious than a comprehensive, all-inclusive denomination.

CHAPTER FOUR
One comprehensive church and freedom of worship

At the present time negotiations and conferences between denominations are taking place in many parts of the world. In the United Kingdom, New Zealand and Australia, for instance, we see on the one hand discussions between the Baptist Church and the Churches of Christ, and on the other, the Anglican, Methodist, Presbyterian and Congregational Churches have been considering questions of Church union. The ultimate goal in each case is the uniting of existing denominations into larger, more comprehensive denominations.

Comprehension can bring much benefit: and a degree of comprehension – the inclusion of Anglicans and Presbyterians within one Church – was almost achieved in England in 1662. The factors which diverted events into another direction seem so slender that as we read them it seems unbearable that it was not achieved.

But it would have been a comprehension without any liberty or toleration for those, such as the Quakers, Baptists and Independents (the present Congregationalists), who were outside it. For neither prelate nor Puritan was willing to concede toleration in 1662.

Parallel denominationalism

However, by 1689 events had forced all to recognise that toleration was the real solution.

“**But these are temptations which may be avoided if we are determined to seek the glory of Christ only, rather than the glory of our denomination.**”

“The eviction of almost 2,000 incumbents,” said Bishop Henson, “and they unquestionably the most earnest and successful, led to consequences of great moment which were perhaps little contemplated by the leaders of the re-established church. Religious dissent became for the first time both considerable and respected. For there could be no doubt anywhere that the ejected Puritans had been treated with gross perfidy, and that they had preferred their conscience to their interest.”

Twenty-seven years of persecution demonstrated that they could not be suppressed.

Thus in place of an intolerant comprehension, we have inherited parallel denominationalism, which ensures the legal liberty of every man to worship according to his conscience, and liberty for a congregation to come into being in order to worship God in a way which its members believe to be comfortable to His mind.

The danger of parallel denominations is, of course, clear. They may provide false centres of loyalty, of loyalty to our group over against other groups, instead of loyalty to Christ’s people; and secondly they may tempt us to limit our Christian fellowship to our own denomination. But these are temptations which may be avoided if we are determined to seek the glory of Christ only, rather than the glory of our denomination, and to exercise true Christian fellowship on the basis of our common faith and sonship and experience of God, rather than on mere denominational membership: that is, if we avoid allowing our denominational limits to limit our fellowship in Christian things, but regard all God’s sons as our true brothers.

Religious liberty is the fruit of parallel denominationalism and historically has only flourished under such a system. The unitary denomination has always been a persecuting denomination, and still is, wherever it exists today.

Freedom of worship according to conscience

As now negotiations are once more afoot for amalgamation of individual denominations into a comprehensive denomination, we must be careful to preserve the right to worship God according to conscience. This is no easy thing to secure, paradoxically enough,

in a comprehensive denomination: for those who give a large measure of liberty within the comprehensive body begrudge it all the more intensely to those who are not satisfied and who continue to worship outside. There is still no real willingness among Christians, even among ecumenical Christians, to allow with goodwill other Christians who do not as yet see the truth exactly as they see it, to worship in their own congregations apart from the main group. Goodwill should be the link to bind Christians, but still we keep ourselves apart by asperity, if no longer by active persecution.

Till we attain this genuine goodwill to allow other Christians to worship separately if they believe God's truth so requires, without our diminishing our feelings of love and fellowship towards them, negotiations for reunion (if successful) will simply once more restrict religious liberty.

Yet religious liberty – liberty to follow the truth as we see it in a spirit of love and goodwill toward others who do not see it exactly as we do – is a pearl of great price, obtained at great cost. Moreover, it is essential for Christian worship. For God is glorified by truth,

not by unity without truth; and if we are to worship God through faith, which is the distinctly Christian worship, then our worship must be based on truth. For faith cannot be exercised towards that which we conceive to be a falsehood. Nor can Christian worship be expressed through forms of worship of which the conscience does not approve the truth.

“The true worshippers shall worship the Father in Spirit and in truth. For the Father seeketh such to worship Him.” (John 4:23)

May we not see the melancholy events which accompanied the restoration of the Prayer Book and the Act of Uniformity of 1662 to be just such a seeking by God, who is able to make the wrath of men turn to His praise?

For these events, in the wise and inscrutable providence of God, have resulted in this: that all may now worship God freely and according to conscience and – in the way the original compilers of the Prayer Book intended the users of that book to worship – in a worship based on God's Word as we each understand it, and a worship offered through faith and trust in our almighty Shepherd. **ACR**