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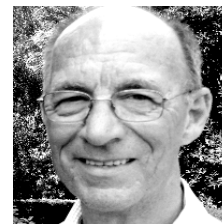
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Reports and Reforms

Dale Appleby

Dale Appleby is a retired minister in the Diocese of Perth.



As this Issue of Essentials goes to press the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse is releasing reports of Case Studies related to various Anglican Dioceses and Institutions. And there will be more to come this year. One of the issues that has emerged is about leadership. Rhys Bezzant helps us consider some aspects of this. It's an important topic since quality leadership starts with recruitment. Or perhaps recruitment builds on the discipling that takes place in our parishes. And the ministry we provide to families and children. Ben Underwood canvasses some of those issues.

same-sex marriage bill also reported this week. According to The Australian, the report agreed "that ministers of religion should be free to decline to marry same-sex couples but civil celebrants should be required to uphold the law and marry gay couples if the reform were legislated." The government said this week that no action will happen without a plebiscite. And over the sea the General Synod of the Church of England this week rejected the Bishops' report on same-sex marriage (or the House of Clergy did). The issue is clearly not going away. Ben Underwood has the first part of a complex discussion on some of the issues.

Reformation fans. Germany will no doubt be over-run with Reformation tours. And so we start the year with a very helpful perspective (again by Rhys) on aspects of the English Reformation. A topic we need to keep before our people. In some dioceses the Reformation has been all but deleted from a skewed history of Anglicanism. In others it may have been forgotten under the pressure to evangelise, modernise, and grow culturally appropriate churches.

And there are lots of other interesting things in this issue of Essentials that may encourage us to hold to and hold forth the faith.

The Senate committee on the government's

EFAC readers know this is a big year for

Editor

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EFAC is a group of Anglican clergy and lay people who value the evangelical heritage of the Anglican Church, and who endeavour to make a positive, constructive contribution at local, diocesan and national levels. EFAC Australia is part of the world-wide Evangelical Fellowship in the Anglican Communion.

The purpose of EFAC is to maintain and promote a strong biblical witness in and through the Anglican Church so as to advance the cause of the gospel in Australia.

The aims of EFAC are:

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2. To promote this biblical obedience particularly in the areas of Christian discipleship, servant leadership, church renewal, and mission in the world.
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5. To provide a forum, where appropriate:
 - a) for taking counsel together to develop policies and strategies in matters of common concern
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6. To promote evangelism through the local church and planting new congregations.
6. To coordinate and encourage EFAC branches/groups in provinces or dioceses of the Anglican Church in Australia.



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Telling another old story

Rhys Bezzant

Rhys Bezzant is Dean of Missional Leadership, and Lecturer in Christian Thought at Ridley College. First published in The Melbourne Anglican. Used by permission.



Rhys Bezzant looks at sixteenth century Biblical and theological debates that are often overlooked in modern state and secular universities.

Many of us have watched the gripping drama of *Wolf Hall* on TV, because we didn't get around to reading the book. Others of us have watched the tabloid *Tudors*, or seen *Elizabeth* or *The Other Boleyn Girl* at the movies. Period dramas draw us in, and sixteenth century England has sumptuous stories to tell. In fact, most of what a younger generation knows about Tudor England comes through movies, and not books. Movies make for great entertainment, but aren't so helpful for theological reflection. We forget that King Henry VIII wrote a theological tract that was honoured by the Pope, or that Queen Catherine Parr composed a magnificent conversion account, *Lamentation of a Sinner*. In fact, many sixteenth century Biblical and theological debates are simply overlooked in modern state and secular universities. Alister McGrath has written fantastic books on the Reformation for undergraduates at Oxford, because while teaching there he realised that so few students had been trained in theological disciplines and were ignorant of motivations, context, and the power of theological ideas. We've been watching too many shows.

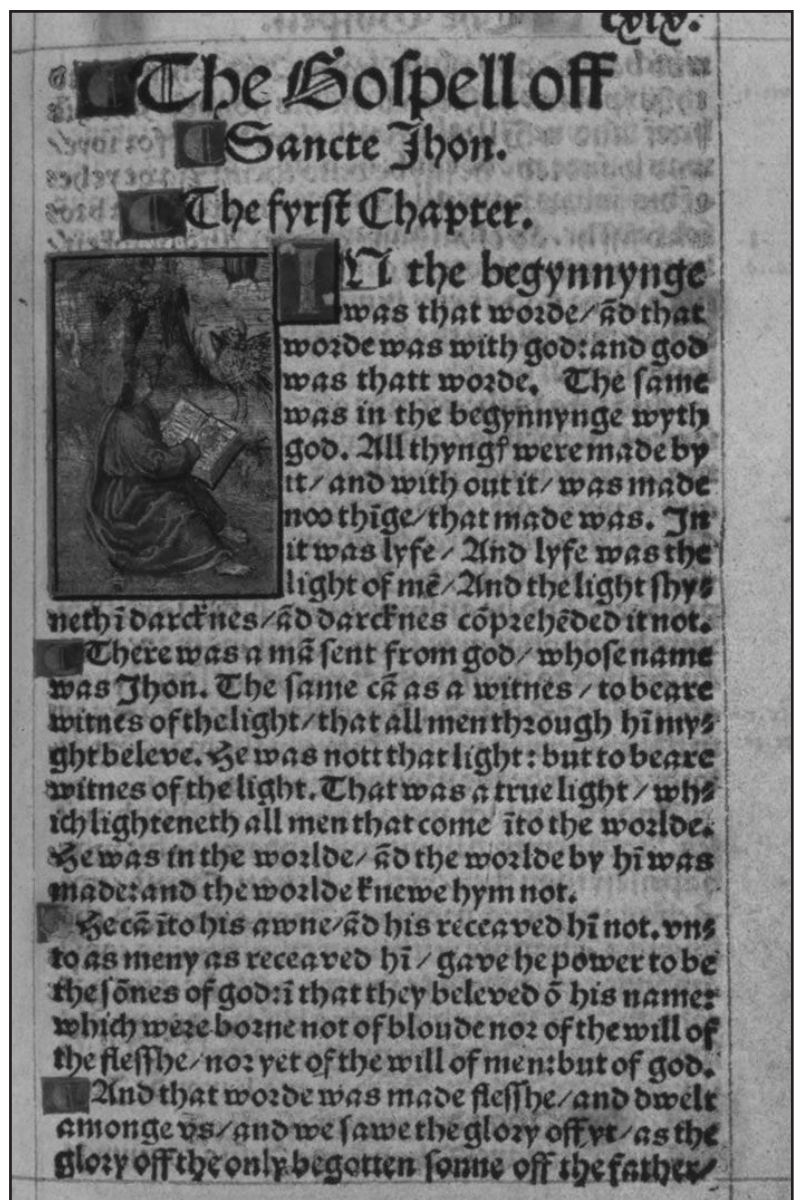
We misunderstand the shape of the English Reformation for other reasons, too. We project back onto the Tudor dynasty our assumptions about the British Empire, but in the sixteenth century England was a minor player on the European stage compared with France or the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation. She was in that period dependent on the European continent in so many ways. Today her independence and claims to exceptionalism are celebrated when she decides to keep the pound or exit the European Union, but in the early sixteenth century England had porous borders and her language was only just adequate to express noble ideas – Latin was still the language of academics and French or Spanish the language of the nobility and court. In Tudor times, England did not yet rule the waves.

In fact, in the period of the Reformation, modern England was only just being born. If we have learnt anything about the Tudors, we know that Henry married six wives, but there is more to his relationships than mere lust. We easily forget that after the disastrous Wars of the Roses in the fifteenth century, Henry's deepest drives were generated by the desire to settle England and establish stable government through siring a male heir. England could not be allowed to descend into anarchy again. Witness the tapestries commissioned by Henry in Hampton Court Palace which do not depict Solomon with many wives, nor David wooing Bathsheba, but Abraham beginning a nation. England was in the process of rethinking how it should see itself in the world.

In the end, therefore, the English Reformation was a lot more like the Reformation in Germany or Switzerland than we imagine. There were times when it looked like the Protestant cause in England would fail under Queen Mary Tudor, but failure was experienced on the continent too. After all, Calvin was kicked out of Geneva and all appeared lost. Saxon lands reverted to Roman Catholic faith in the Wittenberg Capitulation of 1547. The fortunes of reform everywhere looked bleak from time to time. But it was not only that reform movements experienced common vicissitudes. People and ideas were mobile, and feeling part of an imperial project was everywhere. Luther's ideas took ready root in the University of Cambridge in the 1520s, long before they had impacted Paris or Geneva. Melancthon, Luther's right hand man, was invited to teach in England. In fact, Lutheran and Reformed thinkers took up positions at Oxford and Cambridge and brought with them assumptions about confessional faith (often summarised under the term "articles"), the reform of the liturgy, and hopes for national (not just regional) transformation.

This was a mighty project! Exiles from Poland or Germany moved to England, and under Mary many Protestants fled to the continent where they saw models of church life that they in time brought back to England with them after Elizabeth had acceded the throne.

The English Reformation was not isolated from the continent. There were debates about the doctrine of justification by faith – see the notes in Tyndale's books – just as there had been in Saxony. When King Henry commissioned and paid for the publication and distribution of the Great Bible to be placed in every parish church, the English thereby demonstrated their commitment to re-evangelising the laity, just like Luther had done through translation work or Zwingli had done by writing in a German dialect and keeping his Swiss name. Since 1415, the Bible in English had been outlawed, but finally it was available in parish churches for all to hear in the vernacular. Homilies were written by Cranmer and others to be read and preached when the priest was unskilled in homiletics, just as Luther had done in his postils some



William Tyndale's New Testament, Worms (Germany), 1526. Gospel of John (beginning) British Library C.188.a.17

years earlier. Theologically, the English church experimented with and adopted continental scholarship, and promoted a vision for renewal common to many continental reform movements that was based on engagement with the Scriptures.

On the matter of the sacraments, historians as diverse as Diarmaid MacCulloch, Euan Cameron and Peter Newman Brooks all argue that Cranmer's views of the "true presence" of Christ in the elements was shared by Bucer, Melancthon, Bullinger and Calvin. As the great Yale historian Jaroslav Pelikan says of the English Reformation, it was "Lutheran in its intellectual origins, Catholic in its polity, Reformed in its official confessional statements." Of course, there were leaders in England (known as Lollards) agitating for reform of the church long before Luther, but theological sparks from Germany or Switzerland were instrumental in fanning English reformist flames.

Anglicans like to speak of the *via media*. By this, we commonly mean that England tried to steer a course between Roman Catholicism on one hand, and Genevan reform ideas on the other. The English temperament tends towards the moderate and the practical, so we allow ourselves to see the English Reformation as avoiding the extremes of continental positions. We forget, though, that Elizabeth was excommunicated by the Pope in 1570 and the Spanish tried to invade in 1588. She was in no hurry to placate Rome. As Diarmaid MacCulloch argues so eloquently, the true *via media* for England was not between Rome and Geneva,

but between Geneva and Wittenberg. Continental Protestantism was a powerful influence, template and norming strategy for attempts at reform on the other side of the Channel.

Teaching the Reformation is difficult, not least because we live in an age that prizes the immediate, and in which history is marginalised in our schools. We can read about dynastic or imperial politics in the Reformation world, investigate social movements using class or gender or linguistics as our frame of reference, or examine the lived experience of work, worship or warfare to ask how deeply reforming ideas were planted. All these approaches bear some fruit and are worthy of our attention. Furthermore, discussion of the Reformation in our own day carries with it concerns about ecumenical relationships, the nature of private judgement or freedom of conscience, and questions concerning the birth of capitalism and nation states. It is undoubtedly complicated. What we must not do, however, is assume that the English Reformation played by a different set of rules, or was not animated by theological debates or intellectual history. As people all around the world prepare to commemorate the 500th anniversary of the Reformation in 2017 (on October 31 to be precise), let us be included in their number. Luther's Reformation is ours too as Anglicans. The continental reformation is central to the reformation of the Church in England in the sixteenth century, and the reverberations of the hammer in Wittenberg can still be heard distinctly in Melbourne today.

Same sex marriage

- Is it a big deal?

Ben Underwood

This paper was written for Christians, to help them grasp the viewpoint of many of the supporters of the change to the Marriage Act, as well as to grasp the Christian point of view more deeply.

Ben Underwood is an Associate Minister at St Matthew's, Shenton Park, WA



This paper is about the proposal to change the Marriage Act so that it permits a man to marry a man or a woman to marry a woman. Just prior to the writing of this essay, legislation for the holding of a plebiscite on this issue failed to pass the Senate, but this will not be the end of this matter. The push for same-sex marriage is part of a long movement towards the normalisation of homosexual relationships that is not by any means spent or flagging. The debate will continue and evolve.

More and more the subject of religious freedom has become a major component of the debate, because in the event of a change to the Marriage Act, decisions would have to be made about how to accommodate those who continue to hold moral objections to endorsing same-sex marriage (objections which are usually religious in origin). Will principled objections—in particular, religious objections—to same-sex marriage be respected, or will any objection to same-sex marriage come to be regarded as sheer bigotry? Will religiously founded and directed institutions such as schools or hospitals be able to reflect their moral cultures within their staffs and practices, or will they be denied public support if they do not embrace same-sex marriages as they do marriages between a man and a woman? To what degree will the moral reservations religious providers of commercial services may have about their involvement in events which normalise or

celebrate homosexual relationships allow them to decline service? These are important, contested issues, and a lot is at stake for Christians, as well as for LGBTIQ people.

This paper was written for Christians, to help them grasp the viewpoint of many of the supporters of the change to the Marriage Act, as well as to grasp the Christian point of view more deeply. I first look at what all sides of the debate might agree on. Next, I turn to the way supporters of the change see where we are in history, as well as what supporters fear may go wrong. Then I turn to how Christians see where we are in history and how they view the debate, and what they fear may go wrong.

Proponents and opponents of changing the Marriage Act: what we might agree upon about how to participate in this debate.

I hope all sides can agree on a few things. First, that we are fellow human beings: we 'are born free and equal in dignity and rights' and 'should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood'.¹ Secondly, we are fellow Australians: we are citizens with a democratically elected representative parliament bound by a constitution and body of law. We believe in a fair go for all, and space to live and let live. We believe in getting on, not throwing our weight around.

So, we should be able to say our piece. We

should say it civilly, and kindly. We should listen when others say their piece, and take what they say in good faith, unless there is good reason to do otherwise. We should exercise compassion towards others, and try to go on together as best we can.

So too, we respect the law and the processes of government. We want to resolve things through a proper process, not through name-calling, abuse, sulking, slander, and certainly not through force, rebellion, overthrow or revolution. We will do our best at persuasion, due process, or, if absolutely necessary, for very important issues, we may use non-violent, non-destructive protest. We might get het up, but we respect the outcomes that governments or courts deliver. We might try to wear our opponents down, but we don't try to lock them up.

Further, we are for freedom and tolerant of diversity. This means we are not insistent on unanimity when it comes even to emotive moral issues. We allow people to hold, defend and promote different views about capital punishment, abortion, euthanasia, divorce, immigration policy, the situation of Indigenous people, our involvement in wars etc. We allow opposition, debate and peaceful protest and we value free speech. Neo-Nazis, jihadist terrorists and some other groups might provide an uncomfortable challenge to our commitment to freedom of speech, but only because of their association

¹ UN Declaration of Human Rights, Article 1
<http://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/>

with the justification of real violence against others. But absent a real incitement to hatred and violence, we should be free to say what we think without being silenced or abused. Conversely, we should be free to decline to endorse or participate in the speech and views of others with whom we disagree, subject to the requirements of the law (which we hope is wise and not repressive).

Christians, for their part, are committed to truth-telling and constructive conversation (Eph 4:25, 29) and are commanded to 'Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another.' (Eph 4:31-2) We hope that we honour these standards.

Is the change a big deal? Supporters of the change to the Marriage Act say YES.

How supporters of the change may see things:

Proponents of the change to the Marriage Act often tell the story of what is happening the way Michael Kirby does here:

"With the advent of substantial scientific research revealing that variations in sexual orientation and gender identity are not wilful antisocial "lifestyles" but an unremarkable variation in nature (probably in most cases genetic), moves arose in Britain, Australia and other jurisdictions, to repeal the criminal sanctions and otherwise to delete the legal discrimination against same-sex attracted individuals.

Once it became evident that legal disadvantages against people in the sexual minorities should be repealed, the question was starkly presented as to whether their stable sexual and personal relationships, akin to marriage, should receive official and legal recognition. Whatever objections might exist to legal equality in this regard, on the part of many religious institutions and some religious believers, the question was posed whether a secular society could justify such a differentiation. Was it not also a form of discrimination that should be repealed and replaced by equality, as had happened in relation to the criminal law and other laws concerning the rights and obligations of member of the sexual minorities?"²

So, our recent history is that science has shown that homosexuality is not immoral, but a harmless and naturally-arising orientation of sexual desire. So first we decriminalised homosexual acts, then removed (some) discrimination against homosexuals, and provided some legal recognition of their committed relationships (which are 'akin to marriage'). But there is still this inconsistency, this lack of equal opportunity, this point of discrimination: homosexual partnerships are only ever de facto relationships. We do not celebrate, dignify, register and treat



homosexual partnerships in the way we celebrate, dignify and register heterosexual partnerships.

Weddings concentrate the affirmation of family, friends, church and state upon the marrying couple's commitment to each other. Unregistered commitment ceremonies for homosexuals might concentrate the affirmation of friends and family upon the couple's commitment. If in addition to that the government throws in an opportunity for a registered civil union to homosexuals, then that brings some affirmation from the state as well. But still, it puts homosexual relationships in a different category to heterosexual ones, and since they are minority relationships, this sends a signal that they are abnormal, even second class. The premier relational status is 'married'. At the moment, only heterosexuals can be married, but this is not fair. For homosexuals fall in love, commit to one another, want others to recognise and affirm their relationship, want to settle down, buy a house, maybe have some kids and a 4WD, just like everyone else. Why should they be treated differently? It's like banning inter-racial marriage: it's got no foundation or legitimacy. Michael Kirby writes,

'As in the case of reforms to the laws sought by women, the longer one reflects upon the refusal of equality in the matter of marriage to same-sex couples, the more one is inclined to the opinion that opponents are simply prejudiced, discriminatory, formalistic and unkind. They have realised that there are gays and lesbians out there. But they approach their claims to legal equality with misgiving, dogmatic reluctance and distaste. They think that fellow citizens in the sexual minorities should be permanently treated as second class citizens and that equality for them is not really appropriate or, as I was told in the matter of my pension rights at an earlier stage of the journey, "not a priority".

'Anyone with familiarity of the struggle for legal equality in relation to women's rights will be familiar with these attitudes. Many of them today are felt and voiced by the opponents of change.'³

And he concludes:

'Change will come, including in the matter of marriage equality in Australia. And when it does, we will look back on the current state of the law that expressly enshrines inequality in the Australian federal statute book (as we now do on the old criminal laws against sexual minorities) with embarrassment, shame and ultimately astonishment.'⁴

It's a story we have lived through before; a civil-rights-movement story. Just as feminism is winning long overdue rights and recognition for women, and African-Americans or Indigenous Australians are fighting prejudice and discrimination to win equal treatment, inclusion and respect, so homosexuals are hammering on the last doors of exclusion and stigmatisation. The way the story should go is clear. The Marriage Act must change.

But of course, there are things proponents of the change fear, especially those with a personal stake in it. Like all of us, they fear rejection. When you are knocking on the door asking to be let in, what if the people inside say, 'No, we will not let you in.'? What if they say to one another, 'Those people aren't the right sort of people to let in here? Their relationships are second class, second rate, wrong even.'? What if they say, 'Those people will wreck everything if they get in here'? Or, 'Those people are disordered, damaged, perverted, wicked'? Or, 'We hate you, you are disgusting'? All of that is a kick in the guts. 'Stay outside', is what many people will hear and feel if the push to change the Marriage Act falls short. We should add to this the fact that the health advice given to the LGBTIQ community these days is quick to say that the poorer mental health statistics and higher rates of drug and alcohol abuse and suicide that LGBTIQ people experience are largely due to the discrimination and fear of abuse or violence that they experience living as a sexual minority in a heterosexual, homophobic mainstream. It is therefore a short step to the conclusion that to oppose same sex marriage is cruelly to prolong a tragic situation likely to produce more suicide and misery amongst the LGBTIQ minorities. When it seems so obvious why the change is urgent and necessary, who would oppose opening the door, except

2 "The Case for Marriage Equality" by Michael Kirby. <http://www.abc.net.au/religion/articles/2012/09/08/3585826.htm> accessed 27 October 2016.

3 ibid

4 ibid

someone who hates or fears homosexuals? So, yes, same sex marriage is a big deal.

Is the change a big deal? Opponents of the change to the Marriage Act say YES.

How opponents of the change may see things:

Opponents of the change to the Marriage Act tell a different story to explain where we are and what is happening. Some of them at least see the push for committed same-sex relationships to be recognised as marriages as part of a larger story of our society losing its way when it comes to gender and marriage. There are religious and secular versions of this story, Christian and non-Christian versions, but here I will give a Christian version of the story.⁵

Firstly, for a long time in what we now call the West, we have taken our understanding of ourselves largely from the Christian faith, whose central text is the Bible. And that tradition has been a great gift to the cultures it has formed. It has been in deep ways a humanising, pacifying influence on our cultural institutions, despite many departures from its best ideals by those who claimed to uphold them. This tradition is a primary source of the moral impulses towards recognition of the equal dignity and value of all individuals, and the duty to love and treat with justice all our fellow human beings that underlie the human rights we assert. In this way, it is Christian ideals of charity, humility, mutual acceptance, repentance and reform that create many of the conditions for our self-critical Western cultures ready to widen our spheres of recognition and inclusion.

However, for the last couple of centuries our inherited Christian outlook has been critiqued (at times vigorously), and modifications (some rather drastic) have been advocated. Lately in the West it is getting to the point where we wish to shed (and even disown) our Christianity, because many influential people have become convinced it is actually dehumanising. This has played itself out in our conceptions of maleness and femaleness, marriage and sexuality, and never more furiously than in the last 50 years. The meanings of all these things are being revised, sometimes radically, and this is no mere neutral process of empirical discovery, but is the purposeful forging of a new and quite different moral vision. This sexual revolution yields mixed results at best, and at worst we are defacing the humanising gift that God has given us, to our peril.

Maleness, Femaleness and Marriage in Creation

To dive in more deeply, here is a Christian account of maleness, femaleness, and marriage. To begin, we are created by God male and female. In Genesis 1:27 that differentiation of human beings is associated with us being made in the image of God. Maleness and femaleness are intrinsic to what

God intended for us when he made us in his own image.

‘So God created mankind in his own image,
in the image of God he created them;
male and female he created them.’

The differentiation of male and female is also associated here with God’s intention that human beings reproduce. The next verse says,

‘God blessed them and said to them, “Be fruitful and increase in number”’.

In Genesis 2, the woman is the long-sought ‘suitable helper’ for the man – bone of his bones and flesh of his flesh. He could not fulfil the task that God set him of working, caring for (and extending) the Garden alone. He needed a suitable partner for the human vocation, and that partner could not be an animal, but had to be his peer, his kin, his equal. When the woman is brought to the man, he recognises her as the one whom he belongs to and who belongs to him;

‘The man said,
“This is now bone of my bones
and flesh of my flesh;
she shall be called ‘woman’,
for she was taken out of man.”’

At this point the narrator makes a connection to marriage. Verse 24 says, ‘That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh.’

When the man says, ‘This is now bone of my bones’, he’s not just recognising a truth, he’s making a personal commitment to this woman: ‘You are flesh of my flesh, and hence I will treat you as my own flesh, my very self, protecting and prospering you as I do these things for myself.’

This is definitely a dual and heteronormal vision of gender. Genesis 1-2 names two original states for human beings: ‘male and female he created them’. It does not envisage original bare genderless persons, or a diversity of many idiosyncratic and individual sexual types. Further, the Bible does not here or elsewhere distinguish a distinct gender identity that may diverge from the sex of a person’s body, as modern gender theory often does.⁶ It is also a heteronormal vision of gender, in that it makes heterosexuality the norm; i.e. the proper, radical orientation of the sexes. In the intention of God maleness is for femaleness, and femaleness is for maleness.

This is not to say that gender theory is all bunk, because Gen 1-2 is not all there is to say.

⁶ A ‘helper’ is not a servant or aide, but one who lends you their strength to allow you to do what you otherwise could not, for instance; someone who comes and gets you out of a jam. The word is used many times to describe what God does in helping human beings, e.g. Deuteronomy 33:26, 29.

⁷ See the recent Essentials articles, ‘The End of Gender’ by Rob and Claire Smith, pp4-6 in Essentials Spring 2015, and ‘A Brief History of Gender’ by Daniel Patterson, pp6-10 in Essentials Spring 2016.

Genesis 3 qualifies what we read in Genesis 1-2 in profound ways, and we human beings are not what we were in the Garden. Verses 6-7 say,

‘When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realised that they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.’

Our nakedness has become a problem to us. More specifically, the man is ashamed to be naked before the woman, and the woman is ashamed to be naked before the man. The coverings indicate an alienation between the man and the woman, a kind of terror of the other that has entered their relations, and distorted what the man was originally to be in relation to the woman, and what the woman was originally to be in relation to the man. This alienation is exacerbated when before God the man sets forth the woman as the reason for his disobedience (v12), and God later warns the woman, ‘Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you’ (v16).

If all sorts of divergence from a joyful heteronormativity emerges in our self-conception and sexual desiring, that is not at all inconsistent with the story the Bible tells us about who we are. But these will be considered divergences from the original norm, rather

than original differences which can be self-norming, rather than subject to some other norm—an increasingly unpopular conclusion (see further below).

Despite the alienation of the man and the woman, in the aftermath of God’s curses upon the serpent and the ground, there is some reconciliation between them. In naming his wife Eve, Adam turns again towards her in hope. God has not struck them down despite their transgression. Indeed, there is hope of life yet: ‘Adam named his wife Eve, because she would become the mother of all the living’ (v20). And God makes a gesture too; ‘The LORD God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them’ (v21). In this gesture, God indicates that a modest distancing of the sexes is an appropriate way to manage our fallen maleness and femaleness, and the danger male might present to female, or female to male, without certain screens in place. But for all that, the man and the woman still belong together as husband and wife (Gen 4:1). There is still a place for some nakedness.

Which is a fitting moment to move on from gender to marriage. Given Genesis 2:23-24, on a Christian view, marriage is not a civil or legal institution fundamentally, but an institution

⁵ You can compare a secular ‘secular’ version of the story by reading ‘Marriage equality or the destruction of difference?’ by Roger Scruton and Phillip Blond. <http://www.abc.net.au/religion/articles/2013/02/04/3682721.htm> accessed 28 October 2016.

that is prior to any state or human culture. It is given to human beings by God, to bind men and women together, that they together might fulfil the vocation God has given us to 'work and take care of' the world he has set us in.

Marriage done well is a gift to those who are married, to the children of the marriage and to the community that does marriage well. But marriage is a pretty stern discipline. When a man commits to a woman as bone of his bones and flesh of his flesh, both of them understanding that they are 'what God has joined together' (as Jesus put it in Mark 10:9), then plenty of self-renunciation is required of them as each faithfully protects and cares for the other (and any children of their marriage) over a lifetime. It may not feel natural or be easy to give yourself to one spouse entirely, but this marital discipline will bless you, your spouse, your children and the wider society in the long run, even as it requires husbands and wives to deny themselves in many ways. Human cultures may do marriage well or badly through their customary attitudes, practices and laws regarding marriage, and to the extent that we neglect the true meaning and end of marriage, we wound ourselves and our society.

Christians have misgivings about recent changes in attitude to marriage in the West, notably the far more relaxed attitudes to divorce, cohabitation and children out of wedlock that have become widespread. Whatever benefits have come with easier divorce, there are also undeniable and rather large downsides, especially for many children (and grandparents) of parents who divorce, or many children whose fathers never commit to their mothers. These unanticipated downsides have caused some to question the relaxed attitude to divorce that many embraced.⁸ Hence, when a new change to the civil institution of marriage is proposed, (one that is not supported by the Bible's vision of marriage) Christians are apprehensive about what unforeseen consequences might follow after a generation or two.

Maleness, Femaleness and Marriage in Redemption

The burden of the Bible's message is not about creation, but about redemption. The Christian life is not a life focussed on the way things are now, but regards the current situation as a very temporary arrangement. This leads to counsel such as the following (1 Corinthians 7:29-31)

'From now on those who have wives should live as if they had none; those who mourn, as if they did not; those who are happy, as if they were not; those who buy something, as if it were not theirs to keep; those who use the things of the world, as if not engrossed in them. For this world in its present form is passing away.'

This paradoxical exhortation derives from Jesus, who said such things as (Mark 8:34-36),

'If anyone would come after me, he must deny

himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me and for the gospel will save it. What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, yet forfeit his soul?'

The great redeeming act of God is in the sacrificial death and victorious resurrection of his beloved Son, very God incarnate. The future that Christ has won for his people is that we will be made like him and share in his glory (Rom 8:17, 1 Cor 15:47-49, 1 Jn 3:2-3). Where is gender and marriage in this coming age? And what about gender and marriage now, as we wait for our promised inheritance, sharing the sufferings of Christ?

It must be said that human maleness and femaleness are rather de-emphasised, if not entirely eclipsed, in the Bible's talk of the world to come. Jesus taught that, 'At the resurrection people will neither marry (as men do) nor be given in marriage (as women are); they will be like the angels in heaven.' (Matt 22:30) It would be great to have from Jesus a fuller exposition of the ways people will be like (and unlike) the angels at the resurrection. Since we don't have more now, we shall have to receive with gratitude whatever we have here. Perhaps being like the angels means transcending earthly conditions such as the need to reproduce, and hence transcending marriage. More radically, perhaps it means transcending sexual differentiation altogether. Revelation takes up the imagery of sexual differentiation and marriage to speak of the age to come, but does not apply it to human beings as such, but rather to the union of Christ and his church (Rev 19:6-9, 21:1-5). The New Testament previews of the resurrection life could have brought back imagery of the man and the woman, naked and unashamed before one another in the new creation, but doesn't. Instead, it presents the wedding of Christ and his bride, the church. This is not to say that gender will be transcended in the end, but it does suggest that the belonging we experience in marriage and family will ultimately be outdone by the belonging we experience in Christ and the church.

As for gender now, between Christ's ascension and his return, we see the following: Marriage continues, and is to be honoured by all (Heb 13:4) and husbands and wives should model the relationship of self-sacrifice and submission that is between Christ and his church, caring for one another and sharing themselves with one another sexually (Eph 5:22-33, 1 Cor 7:1-5). The usual course of life is expected to be the course of marriage and child-rearing (1 Cor 7:1-5 again, 1 Tim 5:14).

However, marriage is relativised in the Christian life. That is, because 'the world in its present form is passing away', and 'those who marry will face many troubles in this life'; and because the unmarried can live 'in undivided devotion to the Lord', while the married must please a spouse as well as the Lord, Paul judges that to marry is to do right, but not to marry is to do better (1 Cor 7:25-40), and he wishes all Christians were able to make same choice not to marry that he makes (1 Cor 7:6-8).

When it comes to issues of gender beyond the question of marriage, Paul still regards gender differentiation as important. His concern for covering the head—or not—in prayer (1 Cor 11:2-16) and his concern that women not exercise pastoral authority over men (1 Tim 2:11-15), mean that Christian churches are not gender-blind. Rather, our maleness or femaleness is an integral part of how we participate in relationship and community, and while there are not endless detailed prescriptions about what that looks like, there are some.

There is much in the Bible that affirms and encourages us to embrace maleness and femaleness as distinct, equal and complementary modes of being human, given to us by God, given to nearly all of us in our bodies,⁹ and which we live out as gendered persons, in marriage, family, church and everywhere. But there is also much—especially as the New Testament looks to the new creation—that de-emphasises our maleness and femaleness, and prioritises our belonging to Christ and to one another over our belonging to spouse or family (and perhaps even our gender, if that is what Jesus' comment about us becoming like the angels signifies). This does suggest that our sense of belonging to our fellow Christians should be no loose or casual bond, but should often be a substantial bond capable of sustaining real intimacy between us.

Continued next issue: What about homosexual relationships? What do Christians fear in all this?

⁹ Some intersex people might have legitimate questions about whether maleness or femaleness has been given to them in their bodies. This essay won't go into their particular situation.



⁸ E.g. Bettina Arndt - www.bettinaarndt.com.au/resources/articles/unhappily-ever-after/

Why do we need more churches?

Scott Sanders

Scott Sanders serves as the Executive Director of Geneva Push. During the last 7 years Scott has working alongside church leaders and planting couples to see over 65 churches established.



Using new research Scott Sanders discusses a question he get asked once he shares that his full-time job is helping start new churches- 'Why do we need more churches?'

'Why do we need more churches?' It's a question I get asked in the park once I've shared that my full-time job is helping start new churches. It's often the reaction of some Christians when a new church plant is proposed - 'Why do we need more churches?' Well, in my local area there aren't lots of churches - a local Anglican church and Armenian Orthodox Church. There are more mosques (three). The cranes that silhouette the skyline at dusk in my part of Sydney demonstrate why we need new churches - Australia is growing. And importantly, new churches are the most effective way to make new disciples, to reach the unreached and to encourage growth in existing churches.

In 2016, Geneva Push engaged Lifeway Research to conduct a Church Planting Study of Australian church planting (the study was undertaken concurrently with the United States and Canada). It was that **church plants are 5 times more likely to reach the unreached than established churches**. The National Church Life Survey in 2011 showed that only 6% of people in churches weren't in churches 5 years ago. In a recent study done on Church Plants in Australia, that figure is 33%. So while church plants are often accused of merely hoovering up disgruntled Christians from other churches (and that can certainly be the case), it is also true that church plants are far more effective at reaching the unreached than established churches.

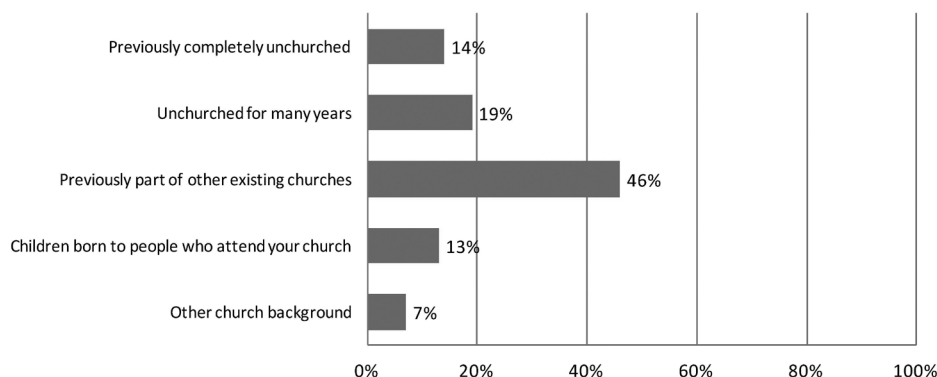
Firstly, the importance of **INTENTIONALITY**. The research showed that those church plants which conduct a membership class or course demonstrate significant increases in church growth over a period of time (note: a membership course is a program that initiates a new person to the church and often requires new members to commit to church). Why is this? Membership courses build community, make new church members aware of the church's vision and key aims, and help new members integrate and engage in the life of the church. Conduct a membership course.

Pray! As Christians we should see the importance of prayer. The church should be praying. The data from the survey demonstrates that church plants enlisting people to pray directly for the church and continue to use prayer meetings / prayer walks grew and reached the unreached in greater numbers.

A church plant with a desire to plant more churches overflows into the whole church's ability to reach the unreached. When you are putting together your mission plans have a long term goal to reach the unreached through planting churches. Note: be realistic about when you will plant a church - at least 5 years into the plant; and take the opportunities from the start to support other church planting teams prayerfully, financially or by sending a few people where possible.

TYPICAL AUSTRALIAN CHURCH PLANT - 33% UNCHURCHED >>

CANADA: 37%, U.S.: 42%



(Source: Lifeway Research, Australian Church Planting Study, 2016)
www.genevapush.com



This slide shows the breakup amongst attendees in an average church plant. 33% of people in church plants were previously unchurched. Importantly, church plants exist to reach the lost and demonstrate good engagement. Transfer growth continues to be the biggest number across all contexts which reflects the need to have existing Christians reach the lost in a new church. We need to keep asking ourselves within our churches how we are going at reaching the unreached - measuring new attendees, finding out about where they've come from - another church, lapsed church attendance, or finding out about Jesus for the first time.

What impacts the growth of church plants? It's one of the key questions being asked by church planting teams as they engage in local mission, prepare to launch new congregations and see the lost mature in Christ. The recent study into Australian Church Planting identified the importance of **intentionality, experience and support**.

Secondly, the importance of **EXPERIENCE**. Every church planter should get experience in order to have realistic expectations. Being a part of church plant is the most helpful way church planters can gain the necessary experience to plant a church. If you are thinking of planting, join a church plant. The data demonstrates the importance of working on church planting staff teams and having realistic expectations. If you can't be a part of a church plant - read case studies, talk with experienced church planters.

Most planters have big expectations for their churches. It's important to have right expectations about growth. Jai Wright established Mackay Evangelical Church (MAKE) in 2011 in North Queensland. He expected to

have a weekly attendance of about 100 or 150 within three years. Instead only about 30 people were coming each Sunday.

"It hadn't gone as we'd hoped, and we were not wanting to waste people's time, money and effort." He was wondering whether he should keep going. But its important for mother churches, supporters and church planters to realise that growth is slow and it takes time to build momentum for mission. Average weekly attendance in a new church ranges from 38 to 70 by year four.

What is normal in the Australian context? The normal Australian church plant does not break 100 people in four years. Its important to have a realistic picture of growth. Australia and Canada have similar patterns of church attendance compared to America - its harder to plant a church in Australia.

Thirdly, the importance of **SUPPORT**. We see the positive impact on church plants receiving administrative support (accounting help, marketing infrastructure, systems and structures) helps speed up the growth. Denominations, networks and hub churches can provide accounting support, providing volunteers for children's ministry and seed funding until the church becomes financially self-sustaining.

When do church plants reach financial self-sufficiency, if at all? Among Australian church plants the majority of church plants (55%) are reaching financial self-sufficiency within a handful of years. If you are not getting to self-sufficiency by year 4 or year 5 it is likely that you will not reach financial self-sufficiency.

We need more new churches. Importantly, as we start these churches we need to have the right expectations. Establishing a new church will

take time, growth will be slow, but by being intentional, learning from experience and supporting new churches we should see new disciples and churches being evangelised into existence.

Notes about the study: A detailed quantitative survey was fielded between October 2015 and February 2016. Planters were individually invited to complete the online survey by email and phone. The draft report provides analysis of 110 church plants started in 2000 or later that continue to exist today and were started as new church plants, church plant restarts or new church sites.

The full report can be downloaded here:

<http://genevapush.com/resources/the-australian-church-planting-report>

Where do we find leaders? Rhys Bezzant

Rhys Bezzant is Dean of Missional Leadership, and Lecturer in Christian Thought at Ridley College. First published in The Melbourne Anglican. Used by permission.



Rhys Bezzant discusses our need to cultivate leaders in the church who can communicate and commend the promises of God to a world without hope, whether in sermons and sacraments, in someone's home or in the neighbourhood café.

In Melbourne, we don't do well at spotting, training, empowering, and sending leaders, and the need is increasingly clear. Our city is growing rapidly, likely to overtake Sydney in our lifetime in terms of population. Our city is expanding geographically, calling for new kinds of initiatives where Anglicans are not easily found. Our church is at best stable in terms of Sunday attendance, though this number has certainly declined since the last census. Relative to the size, complexity and composition of our city, we are barely keeping up with shifts in the population. We need more leaders, who will pastor our grand-children and reach out to a city being reinvented even as I write.

Of course, many clergy train elsewhere in Australia or overseas and come to Melbourne to take a parish or to be employed in sector ministry, obviating our need to find leaders here, but just as many leave us for missionary service, for labours in other parts of the country, or to retire gracefully. We ought not to be complacent and assume there will always be a pool of potential leaders to draw upon. It is our responsibility and privilege to tell out the goodness of the Lord to our children's children and to recount the deeds of the Lord before the nations.

What kind of leaders should we then be cultivating? Those who know Melbourne well are in the best position to encourage vocations of people who can serve in Melbourne. There is clearly a contextual element. However, there is a link between the nature of the church and the nature of leadership to be developed within the church. What kind of leaders should we be cultivating? That depends on what kind of church we are envisioning.

The promises of God lie at the heart of the church. A core Protestant conviction is the idea that God's voice, or God's Word, or God's call come before our response of faith and

obedience. God reaches out with his offer of salvation, and we receive his promises with trust. Our Anglican heritage puts the ministry of Word and Sacrament at the core of the church's life, for the church is a congregation of the faithful "in which the pure Word of God is preached, and the Sacraments be duly ministered according to Christ's ordinance." At the heart of the Tabernacle or Temple in the Old Testament was the ark of the covenant, in which the tablets of the law were placed. Christ, as the renewed Temple of God (John 2), embodies the promises of God, and as his body we the church carry his promises to the ends of the world (Matthew 28). Leaders in the church must be people who can communicate and commend the promises of God to a world without hope, whether in sermons and sacraments, in someone's home or in the neighbourhood café. We want leaders who are clear-minded, adept in speech, and confident in God's power to speak and to save. Look out for leaders like these!

And at the heart of God's promises is his desire to draw close to his people, to show them his face, and to assure them of his presence (Psalm 27). Indeed, God's presence is the second guiding criterion to establish where we find the true church. In the Tabernacle and after that in the Temple, God filled the building with his presence, and in times of disobedience he withdrew his presence from them. Moses pleaded with the Lord to remain with the people in their wanderings despite their sin (Exodus 33). The glory of the Lord eventually departed from the Temple in the time of Ezekiel (Ezekiel 10). In Christ, God has come to "tabernacle" with his people (John 1), and by the Spirit we enjoy God's intimate presence.

After his resurrection Jesus promised to be with his church until the climax of the ages, and in the Communion service we proclaim the presence of the Holy Spirit with us and

offer each other a hand of peace. Leaders in the church must be people who rejoice in the fruit and gifts of the Spirit of God, who empower others to cultivate the fruit and exercise their gifts. Through the Spirit we participate in the life of God the Holy Trinity, no longer observers but players in the divine drama. Leaders in the church are people who train others for active involvement and spiritual maturity, not dependent on the clergy but pursuing their own ministry alongside us. We need leaders like that!

But to preach God's promises and celebrate God's presence faithfully, we need to understand the context of God's purposes, which are to renovate the world through the death and resurrection of Christ, starting with us. Remarkably, the Tabernacle was adorned with images of fruit or trees from the garden of paradise reminding us of the start of the story, and ultimately the Temple became an eschatological emblem of the way the world will one day be, situated on the transformed Zion with all the nations streaming to worship there. Jesus describes his person and message in terms of the Kingdom of God, for in him all God's purposes are consummated. The church is his bride, and we will dwell with him forever. Indeed, the grand story of history focuses on the Father glorifying the Son, and the Son glorifying the Father, in the power of the Spirit. In the new world, there will be no Temple, for the ultimate purpose of God, announced in the promise of God to dwell with his people forever, will have been realised (Revelation 21-22).

Leaders in the church are people who guide us towards fulfilling the purposes of God, who are skilled in mission, who encourage us to make connections with the world around us for the sake of our witness, who have a godly impatience with the status quo and have eyes to see how the church is a down-payment on the world to come. The prophetic leader is the

person who recalls us to our true mission, and sends us out “in the power of the Spirit to live and work to his praise and glory.” Those are leaders whom we desperately need because they have a clear vision and the capacity to urge us to action. Don’t be scared of their insights and urgings. Promote them!

Where are we going to find leaders like this? In the first instance, there may not be many around. Our job, whether ordained or lay, is to imagine what the people in our parish or sector could yet be, and to take steps to help them see their future in a new way. Who is the person you could never do without? That person is surely a candidate for further training. Who is the person in the parish that others naturally look up to? That person might be the next Vicar of the parish. Who is the person who wants to learn more, is always asking questions, and is offering to help out in

ways that are not always natural to them? That person with a servant heart and nimble mind could well be a warden in waiting, if only we cultivate their enthusiasm. Leaders are made, not born, and it is the job of everyone in the church to be finders or spotters, encouraging and equipping the saints for the work of ministry (Ephesians 4).

That also means that as present leaders, who serve for example as clergy or parish council members, we need to develop our own skills in mentoring and training. If we are not doing the job of developing leaders, it is unlikely that anyone else will. We set the mood and culture of the parish. And part of the way that we lead and feed is to think long-term and beyond the boundaries of our parish itself. The ordained, for example, take our part in “the councils of the church,” owning our responsibility for its sustenance and enduring life. We ought not

to be embarrassed about investing in a few individuals – after all, the Lord Jesus did. We ought not to imagine that we have nothing to contribute – in a fragmented world, our friends or parishioners are looking for models of integration and wholeness, which even the least trained can offer. We ought not to think that someone else will do the job of cultivating vocations, whether that be the diocese, or the parish down the road, or the colleges. They each have a role to play, but leaders in local settings are in the best position to identify and empower. If you find and cultivate leaders, you won’t get a spotting fee, but you will be honouring God’s promises, presence and purposes for the church. I for one would gladly spend and be spent in that noble task.

Children and Church-theology and practice

Ben Underwood

Ben Underwood is an Associate Minister at St Matthew's, Shenton Park, WA



At St Matthew's Shenton Park, they run tailored programmes for younger children concurrent with the main service, instead of expecting children to stay in church with parents. Why?

Why do we have children's and youth ministries here at St Matt's in the way we do?? Why do we run tailored programmes for younger children concurrent with the main service, instead of expecting children to stay in church with parents? The short answer is that we are convinced that the Bible teaches that we should minister the word of God directly to all who come to church in the most intelligible manner possible. And we are convinced that programmes of gospel ministry tailored to children according to their capacity are the best way to minister the word of God directly to children in an intelligible manner.

1) The Bible teaches that we should minister the word of God directly to all who come to church in the most intelligible manner possible.

In building up this conviction, we need first to see that the business of church is building faith to maturity. There are a number of key passages that suggest that the business of church is to build up the faith of those who gather into maturity. One such passage is Ephesians 4:11-13, which says that Christ has given his church ‘the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature’. Compare also 1 Cor 14:26 or Hebrews 10:24-25.

A second step in establishing the conviction is to see that ‘Faith comes from hearing the word’ (Romans 10:17). There is a principle, embedded deep in scripture, that it is God’s word that calls out and grows our faith. This is why Paul valued the gift of prophecy so highly, because, as he puts it, ‘the one who prophesies speaks to people for their strengthening, encouraging and comfort. Anyone who speaks in a tongue edifies themselves, but the one who prophesies edifies the church. I would like every one of you to speak in tongues, but even more to prophesy.’ (1 Cor 14:3) Paul valued prophecy because it was the ministry of God’s word, capable of building faith, and therefore serving a central purpose of church.

A third step in establishing the conviction is to see that the more intelligible the word is, the better. If faith is to come there must be hearing, and if hearing is to come there must

be intelligibility. That is, we must seek to share the word so it can be understood by the hearer. Paul says to the Corinthians in 1 Cor 14 regarding their conduct in church, ‘Unless you speak intelligible words with your tongue, how will anyone know what you are saying? You will just be speaking into the air. [...] If then I do not grasp the meaning of what someone is saying, I am a foreigner to the speaker, and the speaker is a foreigner to me.’ To Paul’s mind church could only serve its purpose well if the words spoken there were intelligible instruction for others. He says, ‘in the church I would rather speak five intelligible words to instruct others than ten thousand words in a tongue.’ Speaking in tongues may set an example to those around of the speaker’s passion for God, and indeed speaking in tongues may be a real act of worship by the speaker, but, for Paul, seeing others have a worshipful engagement with God is not helpful if it is not intelligible to the one looking on. Being surrounded by a warm community, or being swept up in the



spiritual experience of those around you, will not edify you in Christian faith if the message that gives rise to that community and that spiritual experience is not made intelligible to you. As Paul says,

‘So if the whole church comes together and everyone speaks in tongues, and enquirers or unbelievers come in, will they not say that you are out of your mind? ²⁴ But if an unbeliever or an enquirer comes in while everyone is prophesying, they are convicted of sin and are brought under judgment by all, ²⁵ as the secrets of their hearts are laid bare. So they will fall down and worship God, exclaiming, ‘God is really among you!’ (1 Cor 14:23-25)

So, we do not want the word to be unintelligible to the children who come to church. We want them to understand, as well as possible, the word of God that is being shared, so that they feel it is addressed to them. We do not want the children just to be onlookers – amongst people who understand the word, but not really understanding it themselves as it is being presented. Our goal is to minister the word of God to the children and youth who come in the way that makes it most intelligible to them. This is the conviction that lies behind our practice of St Matt’s children’s ministry.

2) Churches should seek to minister directly to the children in their midst, and also equip parents to minister the gospel to their children.

Should churches minister directly to the children who come, or minister mostly indirectly to children, by helping parents to minister to their children? In Ephesians 6:1-4 we read,

‘Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. ² ‘Honour your father and mother’– which is the first commandment with a promise – ³ ‘so that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth.’ ⁴ Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.

In Colossians 3:20-21 we read,

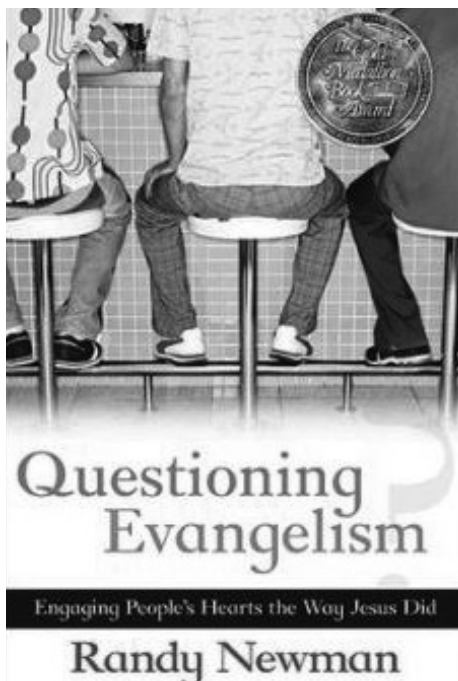
²⁰ Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord. ²¹ Fathers, do not embitter your children, or they will become

discouraged.’

From these passages we may observe two things. First, the fact that Paul addresses children directly indicates that Paul felt it right to minister directly to the children of the congregation. He did not content himself to minister to the parents of the congregation and leave them to minister to their children. He established a line of communication of Christian instruction directly to children (see also 1 Peter 5:5). On the assumption that this is the pattern of ministry he passed on to those who followed after him, it is good and right for those charged with the oversight of churches to establish ministry directly and specifically to the children of the congregation. Our goal at St Matthew’s is to minister directly to the children and youth of the congregation.

Secondly, the fact that fathers are addressed as fathers indicates that Paul was concerned with what children experienced in their families. His first priority seems to have been to restrain fathers from exasperating and embittering their children! On a more encouraging note (for fathers!), Paul did give fathers a charge to bring their children up ‘in the training and instruction of the Lord’, indicating that Paul thought it good and right that fathers play a role in the spiritual instruction of their children. Fathers may discharge this responsibility both by directly training and instructing their children themselves, and, presumably, also by bringing their children to hear other teachers of the faith, and have their children profit from having more than one channel of training and instruction.

Hence, at St Matthew’s our goals regarding parents are: to equip parents to instruct their children in their families, and to encourage them to bring their children to church, where they might be instructed by others. And our goal regarding children is: to minister the word of God directly to the children of the congregation on Sundays and at other times, in the manner most intelligible to children as children, in order to promote faith and Christian maturity. And we are convinced that programmes of gospel ministry tailored to children according to their capacity are the best way to minister the word of God directly to children in an intelligible manner.



Questioning Evangelism

Engaging People's Hearts the Way Jesus Did

Randy Newman

Kregel Publications: 2004

When I became a new Christian I was taught to memorise a gospel presentation that I could share with my friends to explain the Christian message to them. I was enthusiastic and followed the adviceand proceeded to spoil a few good friendships through my eagerness to convert them! In every conversation when there was the slightest hint of spiritual openness, I tried to ‘get them over the line’ and to pray ‘the sinners prayer’. There was nothing wrong with my motivation nor with my learning a gospel presentation but there was a good reason why it didn’t ‘work’ with most of my friends.

You see, we no longer live in a time or culture

where a simple proposition of gospel truth will convince most people. The plausibility structures required to assent to the truth of the gospel: an acceptance of absolute truth, of reliable historical record, of trust in institutions like the church, of the existence of God - these have been dismantled. This means that our presentation isn’t immediately ‘plausible’ to them. In most cases, we need to do a lot more groundwork before we can present an invitation to faith. The summary style gospel presentation is ideal when a person is receptive and ready for it, but most people simply aren’t. (Think of the ENGELS scale (see below) – it probably doesn’t go low enough in its scale when describing

BOOK REVIEWS

someone far from God but it still has lots to teach us about pitching our message and manner appropriately for where a person is at spiritually.)

Part of our ground work involves helping people to see that the ideas upon which they are building their lives are wrong. Ideas such as 'I decide what's true', 'all religions are the same', 'religion poisons everything', 'there's no such thing as sin', 'God is dead', 'anything is ok as long as its not harmful' – these are the ideas we need to dismantle to pave the way for genuine gospel conversations.

How do we do that? Well first we need to listen to our friends, to find out what they believe and to start to question why they believe what they do. Armed with simple questions such as 'really?', "why do you believe that?", "Can you explain that for me? I don't see how that can be true..." will help us to do this.

The next time you have a conversation with

a friend, try to hold back from telling them what you think. Really. (I know this is hard for most of us!) Instead, listen well, reflect back what they are saying, ask probing questions and be happy to have gotten to know them a bit better and to have left the door open for another conversation the next time you meet with them. This way, sooner rather than later we may find that we are able to question what they think and at some point that they ask us what we believe and why....

The greatest encouragement for this approach comes from Jesus who so often used questions to nudge people further along towards the kingdom. Check out Mark 10:17-22 and ask yourself why Jesus didn't simply tell the rich young ruler to put his faith in him or to follow him.

These ideas all come from a great book that explains how to ask probing questions in conversation with our friends. It's called "Questioning Evangelism" by Randy Newman.

Kregel Publications: 2004. It would be a great book to use in your parish in training people in personal evangelism using a questioning approach. Newman points out that questions aren't everything, i.e. we still need to be able to explain our faith and to answer questions and to live out our faith visibly...but questions are a necessary and underused tool for evangelism.

Tracy Lauersen

- +5 Stewardship
- +4 Communion with God (not just the Lord's Supper)
- +3 Conceptual and behavioral growth
- +2 Incorporation into the body
- +1 Post-decision evaluation
- NEW CREATURE**
- 1 Repentance and faith in Christ
- 2 Decision to act
- 3 Personal recognition of problem (separation from God, sin)
- 4 Positive attitude toward the gospel
- 5 Grasp of the implications of the gospel
- 6 Awareness of the fundamentals of the gospel
- 7 Initial awareness of the gospel
- 8 Awareness of a supreme being, but no effective knowledge of the gospel

Engel Scale

The Controversy over the Safe Schools Program – Finding the Sensible Centre

Patrick Parkinson

Sydney Law School Legal Studies Research Paper No. 16/83 Sept 16

Patrick Parkinson is Professor of Law at Sydney University. At the time of the Loudon Review he and Professor Kim Oates wrote a lengthy letter to Professor Loudon about the research basis for statistics presented in the Safe Schools Program. Unfortunately the Review had to be completed in a short time and "No independent review of the veracity of the statistics cited in this document was undertaken."

Parkinson's paper is a critical review of some important aspects of the Safe Schools Program, especially of the research data.

The abstract includes an outline of the scope of the paper:

"This paper seeks to draw attention to various problems in the Safe Schools materials which ought to be rectified if a program like this is to continue to be offered in schools. First, the materials present statistics on same-sex attraction and transgender prevalence that have no valid scientific basis. Secondly, they present sexual orientation as fixed when for school-aged adolescents it is very volatile, and many same-sex attractions are transitory. Thirdly, they present gender as fluid when for about 99.5% of the population, there is complete congruence between sexual characteristics and gender identity. Fourthly, they promote gender transitioning without the need for any medical and psychological guidance and even without parental knowledge or consent. Finally, they offer potentially misleading legal advice to teachers."

It is refreshing to read a rational discussion of these matters. Parkinson notes, "When a social issue becomes a contested matter politically, or support for, or opposition to, a program is seen as a marker of ideological identity, it is hard to have a rational discussion. Yet a rational discussion is badly needed about the Safe Schools program, based upon evidence."

One of the values of this paper is that it reports on a wide variety of peer-reviewed research related to statistics and assertions in the Safe Schools material. Having a collection of data of this kind, in itself, is a great help to those who would like to know reliable information about the numbers of same-sex attracted and other people.

Parkinson begins with a review of the Safe Schools Program, the extent to which it has actually been taken up (not much), and what is really

mandated, in Victoria at least. He then clearly and helpfully discusses the five areas noted above. His view is that just about all the statistics are significantly exaggerated and have no valid basis in science. The ideas of fixed sexual orientation and gender fluidity are very helpfully discussed. Parkinson rightly identifies the origins of some of these ideas in philosophy and describes them as "now quite a widespread belief system, especially in parts of the western world. This belief system is deeply held by some, and has many characteristics of being a religious belief."

His comments on the fluidity of sexual identity in the period around puberty are very helpful. It seems to me that some of the reported methods of obtaining data by asking children which gender they felt attracted to, for example, was asking questions that weren't the questions of young people of that age. Not just statistics but methodology also was a problem.

Overall the paper is a reasoned and careful critique, not only of the Safe Schools Program, but of significant aspects of the broader gender and sexual orientation discussion. He also identifies worrying extensions of the unreliable data and belief systems into policies and statements by government education departments.

At a wider level the issues discussed are not just, or even primarily, about valid research data. The issues concern ideological identities that are not really based in science. In some ways it reminds me of Emma Kowal's "Trapped in the Gap" which discusses the gap between the ideology of those who want to "close the gap" of indigenous health and the actual reality of a gap that is not closing. Part of her discussion concerns reforming identities. Maybe the ideology of gender and sexual identity may change under the pressure of reality and true data. Or a miracle may happen. In the meantime this is a very helpful and informative paper that ought to be widely read.

Dale Appleby

[This paper can be downloaded without charge from the Social Science Research Network Electronic Library at: <http://ssrn.com/abstract=2839084>]

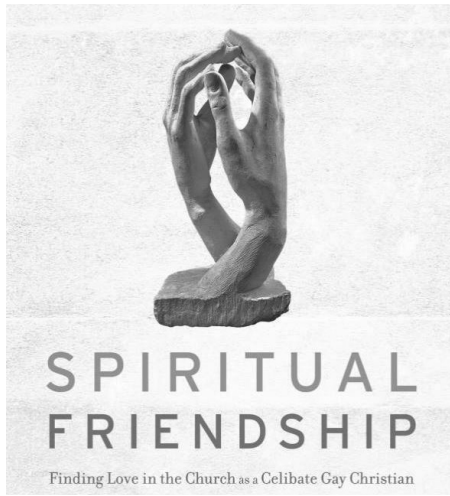
BOOK REVIEWS

Spiritual Friendship

Finding love in the Church as a celibate Gay Christian

Wesley Hill

Brazos Press, 2015



It is not very often that I would say that a book is deeply moving, but this one is both powerful and profound.

I've been thinking for quite a while that as much as we need to defend biblical orthodoxy with regard to human sexuality we also need to say a lot more than that. Wes Hill is among a group of courageous people who have been willing to share their struggle and their responses to being same sex attracted and celibate. With regard to this, Vaughan Roberts and Ed Shaw also come to mind.

Wes was in Melbourne last year and was the main speaker at a very well attended pastoral forum run by Ridley College. He also spoke at three large public lectures. Wes lectures in New Testament at Trinity School for Ministry

in Pittsburgh and is pursuing ordination in the Anglican Church. He lives with a married couple and is the godfather to their first daughter.

Wes offers a fresh and unique exploration of 'friendship' and takes us to surprising places and people along the way. Wes, as with his first book 'Washed and Waiting' is remarkably honest about his own vulnerabilities and struggles. Here is a real person exploring what it means for him to be faithful to God when it involves the challenges of being celibate. It is rare to read a book that is as frank about the pain involved in that predicament. Wes explores friendship as an idea and responds to a range of thinkers over the centuries in relation to this important area in each of our lives. He delves into biblical, theological and historical insights along the way. Hill explores what it is to be involved in committed friendships and to find true friendship in the context of a Christian community.

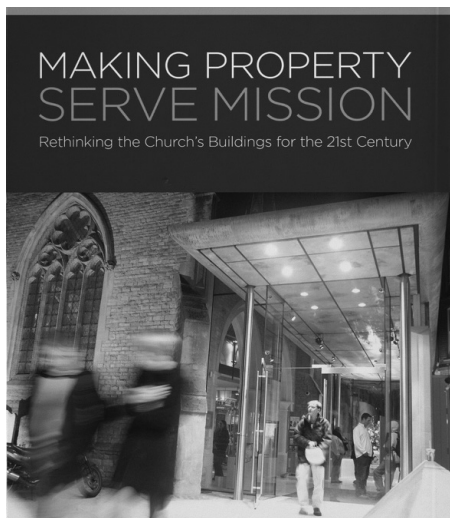
The book is broken into two parts. Part One looks at the background and biblical/theological issues and Part Two focuses on the living out of friendship today, especially for same sex attracted believers who accept that they will remain celibate. Chapter 1 looks

at the weak nature of friendship in western culture. Chapter 2 explores how friendship can be expressed in a committed way. Chapter 3 looks at the scriptural and theological underpinnings for our practice of friendship. Does Jesus death and resurrection transform friendship? Chapter 4 looks at the intersection between erotic love and friendship. Chapter 5 asks what it means to cultivate committed friendships and Chapter 6 explores how we can pursue and nurture friendships in the church today.

'Friendship is a good and godly love in its own right, just as worthy of attention, nurture and respect as any other form of Christian affection. That's what the Christian tradition has said. And that's what I want to say - from a fresh angle of vision - in this book.

Wes Hill will challenge you as well as help you to think about these issues in unique and very helpful ways. His is a prophetic voice in the church today and he offers hope and positive ways forward for those who are same sex attracted and looking for love and companionship. I strongly recommend this book.

Stephen Hale



Making Property Serve Mission: *Rethinking the Church's Buildings for the 21st Century*

Fred Batterton

Clifton Hill, 2016

Sometimes I imagine a conversation between friends from different countries or ministry contexts. This book appeals to me as a conversation between three good friends: mission; parish ministry; and buildings.

Mission has been a long term interest. Mostly global mission, but I see the same missiological principles as relevant and valuable for local mission. Another friend, Parish ministry, has been the context for most of my ministry, and God's church is central to the mission of God's people. Buildings are an old friend because my father was a builder and I spent many early summers in his employ. These friends have come into conversation in my role as Archdeacon of Essendon, in the inner North West of Melbourne. Melbourne archdeacons are seeking to help parishes to think missionally. In this endeavour I will be recommending *Making Property Serve Mission* as a great resource to consider the potential missional purpose of our buildings.

Making Property Serve Mission looks at the buildings and land

accumulated by the Christian Church and asks, is property enabling the mission of the Church in the twenty-first century? If so, how are churches achieving this aim, and if not, what should be done?

I keep wanting to describe this as 'a great little book', except that it is not little. It is comprehensive, rich in Biblical and theological perspectives. Fred Batterton is an architect, but like many of that profession, a serious thinker. He asks great questions. His first question sets up the rest of the book.

The Christian Church is one of the largest property owners in the world. It has some of the world's finest architecture as well as some of its simplest buildings, but are they serving the purpose of the church in the 21st century?

The purpose of the church is God's purpose, and that purpose is missional, centring on the gospel of Jesus Christ. Batterton has a robust ecclesiology, and readily admits that Jesus' call to his disciples, as church, had little to do with buildings. Early churches met in borrowed spaces. However Batterton also sees the possibility of a 'three way relationship between God, people and place' The Jerusalem temple was clearly meant to proclaim truth about God. For example, it was to remind people of the possibility of forgiveness.

Batterton explores opportunities that church property can offer.

My own local church congregation, St Augustine's Moreland, meets in a former Salvation Army building on a major thoroughfare, Sydney Road

BOOK REVIEWS

in Coburg. We have recently given the front of the building a facelift which includes a very contemporary mural with a cross as the central motif. We see our focus in Jesus' life, death and resurrection. However, even though we value our ancient origins and being established in Christ, we seek to see ourselves as also alive to the present and hopeful for the future. One reason for our mural is that people could not find our church. Hopefully they will find us and consider our message as relevant today. When I visited nearby businesses on Sydney Road just before Christmas the mural was a cause for comment and gave me gospel opportunities.

My son-in-law is Dean of St Paul's Cathedral, a gracious landmark in Melbourne city. My wife also serves in the 9am congregation. Cathedral clergy comment on the way the building can assist evangelism and underline theological truth. Cathedral guides and written signage draw visitors' attention to the theological significance of features. For example, the baptism font is an occasion to speak of the sacrament's gospel meaning.

Do our properties enable the mission of today's Church? *Making Property Serve Mission* helps us to reflect on how our churches achieve this aim, and if not, what should be done?

Batterton's book addresses all building types. It contains frequently asked questions and is relevant to different denominations and churchmanship. Sections include:

Its iconic status came to recent prominence when it was one of three buildings targeted by a planned terrorist attack at Christmas 2016.

- Define your core business
- How property can serve mission
- Evaluate your assets and opportunities
- Where to find help
- Design considerations
- How to pay for it
- Getting traction to proceed

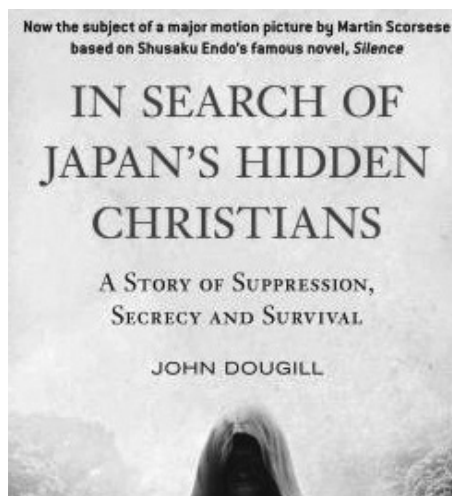
He also has good material on frequently asked questions and troubleshooting.

Richard Giles also commends the book and asks the question 'Do we own our property', or 'does our property own us'? He goes on to comment, 'This is a question all churches should ask themselves regularly.' *Making Property Serve Mission* can assist churches to investigate this important issue. If you are considering a building project, refurbishment or upgrade buy this book. It should be in the library of every Archdeacon who is concerned with people, property and mission.

Mission and buildings are, at times, seen as competitors, chasing a share of the church budget, rather than friends who can help one another. *Making Property Serve Mission* demonstrates how buildings can become tools for mission.

Making Property Serve Mission is available in paperback and various e-book formats.

Len Firth



I had the valuable opportunity to visit Japan during my long service leave, and experience the great beauty, energy, hospitality, enterprise, food, culture and courtesy of Japan and the Japanese. I enjoyed having a go at a bit of rudimentary Japanese, and being humoured by the locals as I tried. Approached well, visiting another country is a mind-and-heart-expanding moment, and I really wonder at how a short trip can make a big impact on your view of the world and your place in it, and it is good to learn something about other peoples and places.

Naturally, I was interested in the history of the gospel and the church in Japan. You probably know that Christians make up only a small percentage of Japan's population, and that Japan has never embraced the gospel in a big way as a culture – Christian affiliation has never been large nationally. And if you are a movie-goer, you may have been to see the film *Silence*, which is now showing. *Silence* is a movie adaptation of a novel by the Japanese Catholic author Shusaku Endo, directed by Martin Scorsese, which is set in the period

In Search of Japan's Hidden Christians ***A Story of Suppression, Secrecy and Survival*** **John Dougill** Tuttle, 2012

after the Tokugawa shogunate banned Christianity in 1614. Since hundreds of thousands of Japanese had become Christians by this time through the work of Catholic missionaries, this ban, and the consequent ruthless suppression backed by torture and executions, forced Japanese Christians, and the few committed Western missionaries who decided to remain, into hiding. Japan's Hidden Christians passed down their faith secretly for seven generations, until in 1854, when Japan was forced to open again to the outside world, Western incomers were amazed to discover these Hidden Christians, who had remained loyal to their faith in secret, while concealing this from the hostile authorities.

I did not know about the film *Silence*, or about the Hidden Christians until I came across *In Search of Japan's Hidden Christians* by John Dougill in a bookshop in Kyoto. I was fascinated and bought it immediately and read it in the last week of our trip. Dougill, an Englishman who is a professor at a Buddhist university in Kyoto, is not a Christian, but writes with great sympathy and interest the story of the arrival of Catholic missionaries, their work and its successes and setbacks among the Japanese of all classes, the way the authorities turned against Christianity and the West, and the subsequent suppression, resistance and eventual complete submersion of Christian life and witness into a secret practice. It is a confronting and sad story to see the progress of faith in Christ so beaten down, yet holding on tenaciously, desperately.

The expulsion of missionaries from China did not stop the growth of the gospel there, but in Japan, the Hidden Christians did not see comparable growth of the gospel. They survived, but did not thrive, it seems. They retained the prayers and ceremonies they were taught, and the church organisation they developed in the missionary phase, but some did not necessarily understand all the prayers they said, and it seems to me that the Hidden Christianity was devout, tenacious and courageous, but tragically impoverished (even disfigured at points) for all that. Of course the Lord knows those who are his, and he is the one who sustains faith in the midst of trials, and a great proportion of the Hidden Christians did emerge to join the churches that were re-established after religious toleration was achieved. Overall it is a great testimony to the depth of loyalty and commitment the gospel won in the 60 years it had to establish itself before the ban. Although we might have wished for a little longer for that work to go further.

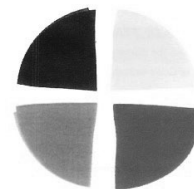
Dougill's book is a personal exploration of a compelling piece of history. He weaves his own travels and reflections into his telling of the story, giving the book elements of travelogue and journal. This makes it an accessible read, without taking away its main task of being a historical account for the general reader. This book might prove to be a doorway to further reading for those who open its pages.

Ben Underwood

NSW EFAC RETREAT

7 - 9 November 2017

A programme of bible studies, times of sharing from throughout our dioceses as well as plenty of free-time..



This year the EFAC Retreat is being held in Noonaweena which is in the ranges west of Gosford. The EFAC Retreat is open for anyone to attend. This years speaker is David Seccombe.

This years speaker is David Seccombe. In 1993 David took over the leadership of George Whitfield College in South Africa and after 20 years of training young men and women, David retired to Perth.

The programme commences on Tuesday (arriving from 7pm). Come having already eaten your evening meal. Please feel free to join us for dinner at Mangrove Mountain Memorial Club and Golf Course at 5.30pm. The retreat concludes at 1.00pm on Thursday.

Numbers are limited to 32, and there are limits to the number of delegates that will be taken from each diocese, so please book now by emailing Allan Bate at: allanbate@iprimus.com.au

Noonaweena provides motel style accommodation so all you will need are clothes, toiletries, a Bible, your diary, and personal leisure

equipment. The cost to attend is \$300 per person (to be paid during the retreat), \$100 day visitors

The cost is kept to an absolute minimum and covers the price of shared accommodation and all meals. (If you require a single room an additional fee of \$150 will apply.) Concessions are available.

A fee of \$150 is to be paid for cancellations after October 31 (\$50 for day visitors) as we are unable to alter our bookings with Noonaweena or Nena after this date.

Enquiries - Allan Bate on 0428917998

Bookings close October 31.

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