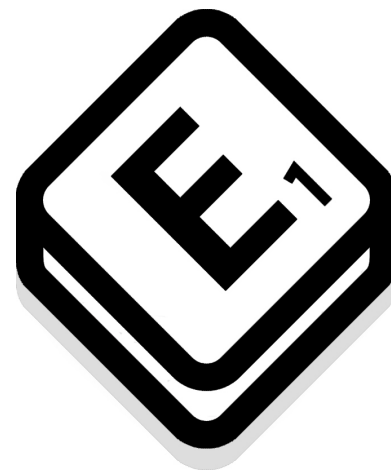




Editorial

The Synod season is here. With it the need to grapple with differing opinions, tensions, questions about what is Anglican, and whether we want to keep on struggling with it. Or more positively whether we will persevere in seeing this wonderful church keep on being changed by the Word of God. Because there is no doubt that God continues to bring fruit from his Word amongst us Anglicans. This issue has a thoughtful report on General Synod by **Richard Condie**, and a reflection on last year's Perth Synod by **Kanishka Raffel**. Both articles ask questions (and make suggestions) about the future. **Stephen Hale** reports on **Justyn Terry's** Anglican Institute lecture on the future of Anglicanism and **Paul Hunt** reflects on Peter Adam's book, *Gospel Trials in 1662* in the light of our present tensions. Justyn Terry's lecture pointed out the need to understand secularism, and **Ben Underwood** gives us a masterly overview of what our choices are in tackling it. **Thom Bull** brings an edifying look at Psalm 148 and **Peter Carolane** gives us a detailed look at how he has led a church plant in Melbourne's inner north. **Ben Underwood** helps us understand a bit of the diversity and tension in Australian Anglicanism with his review of the Doctrine Commission's book, *Christ Died for our Sins*. **Neil Walthew** and **Steven Daly** review two books that will be useful in the parish including one that buys into the global Anglican debates, and the Editor reviews two adventure books about old manuscripts.

Dale Appleby is the rector of Christ the King Willetton and the editor of *Essentials*



Essentials Spring 2014

Promoting Christ-centred biblical ministry.

Essentials is the journal of the Evangelical Fellowship in the Anglican Communion.

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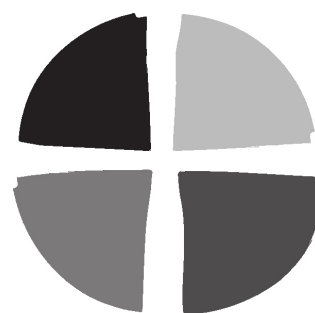
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ACNA Assembly 2014
Photos: Chris Appleby

General Synod: We need a revolution

Richard Condie reports and reflects on the recent meeting of General Synod

Introduction

In my experience, the General Synod (the national Anglican meeting that takes place once every three years) does not enjoy a great reputation. It is known for strong, sometimes acrimonious debates about matters that have the potential to divide us. It is known as a forum for the lawyers, debating the minutiae of Canon Law. It is known for our less than admirable tendencies to align on political and churchmanship lines that highlight rather than unite our differences. So how is it that I came away from the General Synod meeting in Adelaide last month, feeling positive about the experience?

It wasn't just that the meeting finished a day early, which allowed Synod reps to enjoy the delights of South Australia's capital. Nor was it the excellent hospitality of St Peter's College and warm pastry treats for morning and afternoon teas. Nor was it the South Australian wine that we enjoyed with dinner. I think it was the positive spirit of the meeting which developed as we worked really hard to communicate and engage with each other.

Small Groups

The Standing Committee, in an attempt to improve our process, had designed a small group program, where delegates were brought together in groups of 10 to study the bible and talk together about our denominational life. The spectrum of the Anglican Church was evident in every group. Bishops, clergy and lay people, evangelical and Anglo-Catholic, liberal and conservative, brought together to listen to one another, and really interact on the life of the church for 6 hours of conversation through the course of the week.

It took a little while to get going, but by and large authentic conversations took place. Real exchanges over issues that are important to us, and sometimes divide us. Genuine prayer and discussion about the message of the scriptures and the mission of church, and positive suggestions for forward movement. My group talked about the atonement, the resurrection, sexuality, as well as more mundane topics of church organization and life.

The beauty from my point of view, was the chance to move away from the adversarial parliamentary style process that dominates Synod meetings, where there are winners and losers, and to actually develop relationships. In my group at least, this

did not mean that we pretended there were no differences, or that we avoided them, but were given the chance to acknowledge them, and still practice tolerance and respect. I did not expect this from a Synod.

Synod Business

General Synods spend a lot of time and energy on legislation to govern the national church, and this Synod was no exception. Discussions about our Canons concerning marriage, confession, various professional standards matters, episcopal standards and others took some of our time together. Motions on social issues like gambling, asylum seekers, climate change and the constitutional recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders were also presented. However the most important

business of this year's meeting was the reception of the 100 page report on the Viability and Structures of the Anglican Church in Australia. This, along with the strength of the Primate's Presidential address on the first morning of business, provided a sober backdrop to the work we had come to do. The national church is not in good shape.

The Primate spoke about our structures as a church. Seen as one national church

by those on the outside, the reality is very different. The challenge to hold together 23 autonomous Dioceses, and to speak on their behalf, and to lead it, belongs to the office of the Primate. Yet he said, the "widespread expectations [which] are focused on [that] office, ... are not matched by constitutional or canonical powers to deliver results." So true! We want the Primate to speak on behalf of the church, and sometime to intervene in a Diocese over matters of business or sometimes a theological irregularity, but he has no power to do so.

... the nature of our very weak federation is largely not understood either within the church or outside it. While we refer to ourselves as 'The Anglican Church of Australia' and there is widespread perception in the community of the Anglican Church as a unified, coherent entity, the reality is quite different.

In addition to this he spoke of the financial health of Dioceses. The Diocesan Financial Advisory Group (DFAG) has been working with the Dioceses trying to get a picture of overall health. The diagnosis is not at all encouraging. The words

We do need a revolution, and in my mind it is none other than the recovery of the biblical gospel, and the urgency to proclaim it to the church and to the world... that desperately needs to hear words of life.

“parlous” and “burning platform” were used. By November 2013, DFAG reported that six Dioceses were not financially sustainable (Bathurst, Grafton, North Queensland, Canberra-Goulburn, Wangaratta, and Northern Territory) and a further three were in a serious state. In some ways this should not surprise us. The writing has been on the wall for some time. As long ago as 1998 GS was warned that “unless we can find a way to address these issues it will be economics rather than theology that will determine our future”. The Primate observed that “approaching two decades later, we have not yet found a way to address these issues”.

These comments linked very closely with the *Report on the Viability and Structures Task Force*. This report, available on the General Synod website, ought to be essential reading for anyone concerned about the national church.

Viability and Structures Report

The GS Standing Committee established a task force in 2010 to investigate the viability of Dioceses. The report is not an easy read, not because of style, but because of its contents. According to Jim Collins (author of *Good to Great*) any organization that wants to grow to health needs to “confront the brutal facts”. The report contains many such brutal facts that ought to focus our minds and actions in the next years of the national church.

The report, authored by Bishop Andrew Curnow, states that “the time has come for a revolution if [the Anglican Church of Australia] is to be a strong and sustainable church for the future”. Most of this is driven by the changing shape and culture of Australia. Urbanisation on the coastal fringe means that 10 of the 23 Dioceses cover 80% of the population, and 13 dioceses the rest. On the one hand, sparsely populated rural Dioceses, with massive distances and meager resources, pose a particular challenge. On the other hand, large urban metropolises where resources are also thinly spread, are also under pressure. The Diocese of Northwest Australia is nearly the same area as Europe, while the Southern Region of the Diocese of Melbourne is the largest episcopal area in Australia in terms numbers of parishes. How can bishops provide effective oversight in such conditions?

The report offers some suggestions to deal with this, mostly of a structural nature. It highlights partnerships, the use of shared resources and suggestions about organizational efficiencies. While it does encourage prayer, reflection and recovery of leadership and vocation and the theology of being church in the world, my own view is that it does not go far enough in these areas. We do need to attend to our structures and the work is urgent, but the key to viability is recovering our biblical mission, and grappling with the changing mission field that is our nation. I wanted to read more about this in the report, and focus our time as a national church on these very questions.

In my view we ought to be entering into a period of prayer and fasting, of self-examination and repentance over our failures. We should be calling dioceses and parishes, Bishops and Clergy,



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lay leaders and ordinary Anglicans to recover their biblical mandate for mission and disciple making, and to recommit ourselves to evangelizing Australia. It is only by tenacity in making disciples by word and prayer that the church has ever grown.

The report was received and the new Standing Committee will have the carriage of it into the future. Expect it to come to your Diocese for discussion soon. My hope and prayer is that it won't be left gathering dust on someone's shelf, but will actually be a catalyst for the change we so desperately need – a revolution no less!

Elections

Of course it is old news now that the Archbishop of Melbourne, the Most Revd Dr Philip Freier was elected by the Primatial Election Board as the new Primate. His calm business-like approach will serve us well as we head into the future. Great tributes were paid to the outgoing Primate, the Most Revd Dr Philip Aspinall, who is, I have to say, one of the best Synod chairmen I have ever experienced – clear and good humored, but strongly focused on process and good outcomes. Whatever one says, it is an unenviable job thinking about the challenges that lie before us. We would do well to lift these men to God in prayer.

"Structural change will be possible and effective only when it is accompanied by deeper spiritual transformation – transformed hearts and minds – conversion."

The outcome of the elections to the Standing Committee were surprising, especially among the clergy, where all clerical positions filled were from among evangelicals, and all men. Despite some comments that suggested the result

was a missionary plot to overthrow womens ordination* it is more a function of the changing nature of the General Synod. Many evangelicals are represented in GS, especially with the strength of Sydney Diocese, and many make a great contribution to the life of the church. The lay side of the election was a bit more balanced, generally electing those lay people who are active on the Synod floor.

Theological Differences

My last reflection is about theological difference. In our discussion groups, in the debates, in the voting and just hanging about in our interactions at morning and afternoon tea, is the backdrop of theological difference spanning the Anglican Church of Australia. It is both a structural and a theological issue. Structural because a Diocese can hold a particular theological flavor, liberal or evangelical, and continue to operate independently from the others. As the Primate noted in his presidential address, the GS adopted a prayer book some years ago, which may or may not be adopted by an individual Diocese; a person may be canonically ordained in one diocese, but not recognized in another and so on.

But more deeply it is a theological issue. The Primate called it a

"spiritual issue" saying, we have "been plagued by lack of trust, suspicion and party spirit". He said

Structural change will be possible and effective only when it is accompanied by deeper spiritual transformation – transformed hearts and minds – conversion. The trick will be to attend to the spirit as well as to structures. Reform in the law will not be achieved apart from transformation in relationships.

While there is some hope for finding the common thread of apostolic faith running through all traditions of the Anglican Church of Australia, there are also some deep divisions about the nature

of the gospel, and the authority of the scriptures and the functions of the church. Talk is good, but also being honest about those divisions and the depth of them, and finding a way forward is much needed.

I came away from General Synod, better informed about the state of the national church, with my mind exercised about what we should do, but also with a renewed sense of urgency in mission. We do need a revolution, and in my mind it is none other than the recovery of the biblical gospel, and the urgency to proclaim it to the church and to the world. We have a massive task in promoting its claims within the church, and reforming ourselves and our practices by it, but also finding ways to teach it and preach it to a world that desperately needs to hear words of life.

I end with a shameless plug for the *Anglican Future Conference* to be held March 25-27, 2015 in Melbourne. EFAC Australia, and the Fellowship of Confessing Anglicans Australia (FCA-Aus) are jointly hosting a conference to deal with these very matters. How do we take up the mission challenges of 21st century Australia, how do we stand for the biblical gospel in our denomination, how do we recover our viability and gospel vitality, how do we do this as Anglicans today? These are the themes of the conference, and our prayer is hopeful, that it will offer a great gift to the Australian Church as a result.

Richard Condie is Vicar of St Jude's Carlton and Archdeacon of Melbourne.



*<http://www.brisbanetimes.com.au/comment/conservative-anglicans-have-women-priests-in-their-sights-20140715-zt7ue.html>

The Future of Anglicanism

In July the Annual Lecture of the Ridley Anglican Institute was given by Dr Justyn Terry. He called his lecture *The future of Anglicanism: Recent trends, current tensions and global shifts*.

Dr Justyn Terry is Dean and President, Professor of Systematic Theology, Trinity School for Ministry Pittsburgh, USA. A School founded by Bishop Alf Stanway in 1976.

Here are some of the highlights of what he said together with a summary of the lecture by Bishop Stephen Hale, Chair of EFAC Australia.

Justin Terry's lecture at Ridley Melbourne was wide ranging and extremely helpful. Justin is a positivist so it was great to hear of the remarkable growth in the Diocese of London and along what he called the 'trade routes' of the UK. While large parts of the Church of England are in decline there have been as many new plants as church closures. An amazing work has happened in and through larger churches planting and planting again as well as the explosion of mission through migrant churches in the UK. What are our trade routes and how are we following this Biblical pattern for mission?

Justin had some great insights into the challenge of mission in an increasingly secular society. His analysis of the shift back to paganism was very insightful.

Justin talked about the complex scene in the Anglican Communion. He linked this in with his framework for understanding who makes up the Anglican Communion.

- i. Progressives: Dominant in US, Canada and New Zealand and to some measure found across other parts including Australia.
- ii. Unaligned: This group is often swayed by the response of others
- iii. Global South: Includes Egypt, Middle East, Indian Ocean, Southern Cone of America, South East Asia, Sudan and Nigeria.
- iv. The Fellowship of Confessing Anglicans: Nigeria, Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, Sudan, Southern Cone and parts of the West.

In the midst of this complex mix Justin urged us to

1. Maintain a strong commitment to Theological Training
2. Address Secularism
3. Maintain a commitment to the Anglican Church – it has a lot to commend it and in spite of the obvious tensions, is a denomination with a sound theological basis and an open approach to the question to the different ways people are seeking to be Christian. He even told us that it's trendy to be Anglican in the US today!

Stephen Hale

Justyn Terry on Training Leaders

"So let us turn now to the question of the situation for Anglicanism in the USA and the role of Trinity School for Ministry in it. We may start by noticing that Bishop Alf Stanway was called to Trinity because evangelical leaders in the Episcopal Church in the 1970s saw the need to train Christian leaders, lay and ordained, with a deeply missionary spirit, which they felt was largely missing. Students who came to Trinity would need to be convinced that the Bible truly is the word of God written, be genuinely converted disciples of Jesus Christ, and be deeply committed to the mission to bring his gospel to the world. The founders also wanted to ground in the scriptures the charismatic renewal that was underway at the time. They were convinced that Bible based, mission-minded, Spirit filled men and women were the kind of leaders the Episcopal Church needed in order to fulfill her calling."

On Anglicanism in the USA today

"So how are we to characterize the challenges faced by Anglicans in North America? I would say that the basic problem is one we see in so many other places in the world today: meeting the challenge of secularism. Do we seek to accommodate our message and mission to secularism as the revisionists propose? Or do we seek to address our message and mission to the secular society as the reasserters propose? We recommend the second option, and believe that the other one is seriously weakening the witness of the Church to the world."

On Secularism in the UK today

"The continual rise of secularism in Britain is having a growing effect not only on the nation

where a debate has been underway as to whether Britain remains a Christian nation, but also on the life of the church. Many church leaders believe that the plausibility of the Christian church depends on accommodating some of the new ideas that have become so pervasive secularism. This is not just true of the more liberal parts of the church. Steve Chalk, Rob Bell and Brian McLaren are having a major impact on many evangelicals. One recent estimate suggests about a third of the students in some of the evangelical theological colleges are no longer persuaded about traditional Christian views on sexual morality. Once again, a significant number of evangelicals are becoming what would often be termed "Liberal Evangelicals" which is often a small step from being "Liberals."

On Secularism in the Church of England today

"Pressure is also growing within the Church of England to normalize same-sex marriages, even after the rejection of the Pilling Report on that subject. For instance, in June of this year an Anglican clergyman, Andrew Cain, Vicar of St Mary with All Souls in Kilburn and St James in West Hampstead, 'married' his partner Stephen Foresheew, making him the second Church of England clergyman to defy the church's ban on homosexual clerics marrying. This puts people like the Bishop of London in a difficult position. Will they uphold the church's teaching on this matter and risk the considerable hostility of those lobbying for revised views on sexual morality? Or will they turn a blind eye with a likely outcome that this example will become increasingly common to the point that the Church of England has at least *de facto* accepted same-sex marriage?"

Good News from the UK

"More positively, many evangelicals have been very pleased with the appointment of Justin Welby as Archbishop of Canterbury. ... And his is not a lone voice among the Church of England College of Bishops. It may well be the case that there have never been so many evangelical bishops on the bench of the Church of England. In addition to that, many of the more Catholic minded bishops are clearly deeply committed to Christian mission. This is a cause for great encouragement."

Church Growth in the UK

"A recent survey *Church Growth in Britain, 1980 to the Present Day*, shows that, although the Church of England remains in decline, the overall church in England is growing. The report's editor, David Goodhew of Cranmer Hall theological college in Durham summarizes its findings as follows:

* There are 500,000 Christians in black majority churches in Britain. Sixty years ago there were hardly any

* At least 5,000 new churches have been started in Britain since 1980 – and this is an undercount. The true figure is probably higher

* There are one million Christians in Britain from black, Asian and other minority ethnic communities

* The adult membership of the Anglican Diocese of London has risen by over 70 per cent since 1990."

Lessons from Church Growth in the UK

"Goodhew goes on to draw out some of the important lessons from all this, ...:

Firstly, there is hope. ...the evidence from Britain shows there is large-scale, long-lasting church growth happening in Britain. Despair is both wrong theologically and flies in the face of the evidence.

Secondly, church growth often involves people from ethnic minorities. And it is striking that the churches that most effectively harness such people come from outside the mainstream churches. ... Perhaps we need to import some leaders and humbly learn from those parts of the wider Anglican Communion that have seen serious church growth?

Thirdly, church planting is the most effective single strategy for growing the church. Every diocese needs a church planting strategy.

Fourth, church growth happens most often along the 'trade routes' of Britain – places where there is population growth, immigration and economic dynamism. ...

Fifthly, the Diocese of London is the centre of Anglican church growth. ... the wider Anglican family needs to ask why London has bucked the trend and others have not. In particular, it is striking that it was under Archbishop David Hope that London changed from decline to growth – what is it about what he did that we all can learn from?

Sixth, we need a theology of church growth. We need to articulate plainly why growing the church is what God wants – and let go of the fatalism that wider Western culture has insinuated into the hearts of both individual Christians, congregations and church structures."

On Evangelism

"Evangelicals have remarkable opportunities at this time of renewed interest in evangelistic mission. ... The former Archbishop of Canterbury, Michael Ramsey, famously remarked that, "All the noise comes from the shallow end of the swimming pool." ... It is a wonderfully vivid image ... But there is no mistaking the challenge it levels at the evangelical wing of the Church: it is being accused of shallowness and a lack of theological rigor. ...It suggests that evangelical voices get heard in the wider society. ...The image also suggests evangelicals are busy with non-swimmers and new swimmers."

On Hope for Anglicanism

"So is there a future for Anglicanism? Not surprisingly I say: Yes! We do have a great tradition that is, I believe, well able to stand the acids of secularism. But we will need to pay attention to our heritage and our history and be sure we play a full part in commending our evangelical views within it. We will need to be fully engaged in God's mission in word and deed and seek to strengthen the local church for this work in every way we can, since that is where the work of the gospel is on display to the world. And we will need to be saying our prayers, privately and corporately, since in the end all our hope rests in God."

To Stay or Go?

Paul Hunt reviews and explores some issues raised by a book by Peter Adam: *Gospel Trials in 1662: To Stay or to Go?* The Latimer Trust, 2012, ISBN 978-1906327132.

A maelstrom of political, social and religious factors, mixed with theological divisions and zeal for God were tearing the Anglican Church apart.

Sinful or godly motivations were hard to discern as clergy and lay people faced hard choices about whether they would stay in the Anglican Church or leave.

People agonized over their options and at what point their threshold of faithfulness to the word of God meant they should **leave** and shake off the limitations of the church structures. Some with the same commitment to faithfulness led them intentionally to **stay**, and seek to reform the church from the inside.

Some ministers started independent churches, some stayed, but quietly “broke the rules”. Still others left, but felt torn by the decision and the damage to congregations they had left behind. Some criticised those who left, some criticised those who stayed.

A present day scenario?

Well, yes, but the description above refers to a defining year in the Church of England. It was 1662 and the Act of Uniformity required ministers to assent to its declarations and restrictions and to only use the 1662 Book of Common Prayer in their public worship.

In a short but extremely illuminating book, *Gospel Trials in 1662: To Stay or to Go?* Dr. Peter Adam (former Principal of Ridley College, Melbourne) outlines the pain and struggle over the years before and after, that had a profound effect on the Church of England, such influences that carry over into today's challenges. This is a timely, readable and relevant book, from an “elder statesman” of the evangelical wing of the Anglican Church in Australia.

Between 1660 and 1662 an astounding 1,760 of its clergy, 20%, left the Anglican Church, unable, for various reasons to stay.

In analysing the historical context and causes of the divisions, theological foundations and assumptions, the political and social factors that precipitated such changes, Peter Adam raises some helpful questions and indeed gives some direct advice for our current context, including the basis on

which some might choose to remain within the Anglican Church in their context, or choose to leave.

He doesn't gloss over the complexities¹ nor give a definitive answer as to why people left in such numbers, rather he suggests that there was no one issue and hence no single answer as to why people left, such were the assortment of factors at play. He reminds us of the difficulties at this distance to comprehend the intentions of the people involved, and in a helpful pastoral comment amidst the historical analysis, notes that human sinfulness rarely allows us to be completely honest about our motivations, no matter how self reflective we seek to be.

Nevertheless some motivations can be discerned, and you will find in this book a striking number of parallels with our present day.

Some did not want to accept the role of Bishops, or to have Bishops' powers changed. Some, though they found the *Book of Common Prayer* generally to their liking, were offended that no other prayers could be used except those authorised. This excluded extempore prayer, which offended the sensibilities of those who felt

there needed be more reliance on the work of the Holy Spirit.

Quakers saw no room for them under the strictures of *The Act of Uniformity* nor did a number of pastors of Puritan persuasion. Some, like Richard Baxter while acting as a Puritan pastor, stayed in the Church of England as a parishioner but not as a minister, so as to “to separate from them no further than they separate from God”.²

These “non conformists” started independent churches (sound familiar?) or held private meetings for teaching people the faith. But unlike today, these public or private meetings were under sanction from the government, as well as the Church of England, and persecution, fines, loss of property or imprisonment could result from rebellion against the *Act of Uniformity*.

Various acts of parliament in the years that followed turned the screws tighter against those who would not conform – “This was a persecution of Protestants by Protestants unique in Europe in its intensity and bitterness: another major question mark against the complacent English boast of a

[Adam] warns to not to be too quick to judge the motives of those who choose a different path, to be careful of being so critical that we focus on secondary matters and make them primary.

national history of tolerance".³ Nonconformists were not allowed to graduate from Universities until the 19th Century!

While we in Australia do not yet feel such extreme pressures (although no doubt there are some who do indeed face hostility from liberal Bishops), some of our fellow Anglicans in the USA and Canada have faced persecution from the Episcopal Churches. They have lost their church properties, and through secular courts have been threatened with legal action including the threat of suing individuals who have sought, through convinced biblical reasons, to separate their churches or dioceses away from the liberal philosophies of a heterodox church.

In trying to identify some factors as to why the division in the Church of England occurred and so many ministers left, Peter Adam gives us reason to reflect on our own church context and practice.

Some of it was due to the political agenda pursued by the Puritans, some to the failure of Puritanism to actually bring about the change in the hearts of people that should be expected of those who were committed to listening to faithful preaching from the Scriptures.

The Puritan commitment to the medieval style of preaching – taking a short text of scripture and analysing and dissecting it, seemed to be too far above the minds (and hearts?) of ordinary people so that it "became increasingly culturally inappropriate and unacceptable".⁴

While those who are preachers today lament that many in our congregations seem to think that most sermons, no matter how long, are "too long", Puritan sermons were routinely an hour or so in length, and became unpopular in being caught up in the minutia of the text.

One Puritan, Joseph Carryl, in thinking Job would be an appropriate book for a suffering church, began as Peter Adam sagely says a "perhaps pastorally unwise" decision to preach on it for 29 years!

There were class divisions undermining the Reformed movement (not such an issue in egalitarian Australia?), and a

weakness within reformed theology that led to Arianism, Deism and Unitarianism creeping into the church, whilst Calvinist ministers fought over the extent of Christ's atonement – "only for the elect or for the whole world?" These theologically founded fights, though different in emphasis, are evident amongst Australian Anglican churches today.

The Preface to the *Book of Common Prayer* says

Christ's Gospel is not Ceremonial Law, (as much as Moses' Law was) but it is a Religion to serve God, not in the bondage of the figure or shadow, but in the freedom of the Spirit...

Adam says, "While the rhetoric of the Church of England appeared to promise liberty, the practice was very different... *The Act of Uniformity* felt like bondage, not liberty".⁵

Clergy in Australia today who work under liberal bishops may find that their "liberal" bishops do not tolerate questioning or dissent, and sometimes seem to work actively against the practice and placement of evangelical clergy in parishes as well as seek to micro manage the practice of their ministries. "Liberalism" can tolerate great diversity, but sometimes be very intolerant of evangelicals with little "liberty" offered to them.

Despite all the ructions and divisions that surrounded it, Peter Adam also says the Church of England in 1662 is rightly described as "Reformed Anglicanism" and 1662 is a key to Anglican identity even today. He argues that its formularies and emphasis on Scripture as the final place of authority above church councils helps its reformed flavour, even if it did over time become broader in practice and lose some of its cutting gospel edge.

Peter Adam finishes his book with some helpful lessons and wise advice as the Anglican Church of Australia faces its own internal tensions over numerous issues – from the role of women in ordained or bishop's roles to the sexuality debate that has continued for decades. These issues in some cases divide evangelicals from evangelicals, in some cases evangelicals and liberals.

The Anglican Church worldwide faces great strains with the rise of the African initiated GAFCON movement, who no

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longer see the link with “Canterbury” as necessary to have an authentic Anglican identity.

Orthodox Anglican clergy, congregations and even dioceses are leaving the Episcopal Church in both North and South America. Some have suffered much in these circumstances, and some clergy in trying to work for the good of the Gospel and in seeking to be godly have seen their health broken and their ministries taken away.

The Church of England in England seems set for ongoing fights over numerous issues. Many of these are seen as battles for orthodoxy and it seems almost inevitable that more clergy, members of churches and congregations will need to decide whether “to stay or to go”.

Peter Adam identifies a lack of grace towards those who stay or those who go a major failure of Christian charity. In 1662, the Bishop of Exeter, a Reformed Anglican, described some of those who left as “enemies of the church”. “Those whom he should have loved as brothers in the gospel he dismissed because of their lack of Anglican order. Valuing conformity to church practice over gospel partnership is a great sin”.⁶

I was challenged by his comments - “it is difficult to think of a Biblical instruction to leave a church or to leave ministry in a church because it has fallen away from the Gospel. Jeremiah had to continue his ministry, and face the consequent persecution. Timothy seems to be the only minister in Ephesus... who was still faithful to Paul’s gospel, but he was instructed to stay, teach and reform”.⁷

He warns to not to be too quick to judge the motives of those who choose a different path, to be careful of being so critical that we focus on secondary matters and make them primary. That issue of course depends on your definitions of “primary” and “secondary”! He suggests that the Puritan problem – that their theological rigor led often to division and intolerance – maybe true of some evangelical movements today.

Referencing the call to love and the fruit of the Spirit (1 Cor 13:4; Gal 5:22) he urges those of us who are pastors to be patient in ministry even though we are urgent for godly change and God’s glory – “We need patience with individuals, much more patience with a congregation, and even more patience with a denomination or nation.”⁸ Aim to win people, not arguments he says. God is patient with our sin so we should show God’s patience towards others.

In a caution to those who think leaving will solve many problems he notes “If you look from the perspective of the 21st Century, it could be argued that staying within the Church of

England had as much gospel impact on the nation as leaving”.

If you are planning to leave he says, do not leave for trivial reasons, for “unnecessary schism is a sin”. He recognises that different people with different temperaments might be more likely to stay or to leave, one to reform within, another to offer through a new ministry something that the existing structures won’t or can’t.

He warns about thinking the pasture is greener on the side of leaving when you may not be in a good position to know the real cost to gospel-founded relationships if you leave.

For those who stay he encourages reforming your church by the Bible, making godly, appropriate changes. He even draws our attention to the strategy of the liberal part of the Anglican Church. They made their theological and ministry changes despite the objections of the orthodox, and those changes are now accepted as normal Anglican practice. His advice? – “Make changes, and suffer the consequences, and eventually the Church of England will change too”.⁹ On the certainty of outcome of that piece of advice I am more skeptical, although maybe I need a more historical perspective on our current day church!

Gospel trials are not unexpected; indeed they come upon those who seek to be the true church in every age. And while we need to plan long term – training future gospel leaders especially – he reminds the impatient amongst us that we must trust in the providential care of God and his accomplishment of his gospel plan for the world. It is a call to humility and recognition of the limits of our wisdom as we put into place our plans.

Of those 20% who left in 1662 he asks - “was it right to leave or to stay? It is not for us to say: each of us is accountable to God, not to each other.” (Romans 14:12).

“This booklet is dedicated to those who stayed for the sake of Christ and the gospel, and to those who left, for the sake of Christ and the gospel. They honoured God by patiently enduring gospel trials, and by their lives and ministries. May their examples encourage us to fight the good fight, keep the faith and run the race, so that we, with them, may receive the crown”.

To that I say – Amen.

Paul Hunt

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1. His comprehensive bibliography indicates the research behind this short book
 2. p7, quoting Baxter from Wood, Church Unity, p242
 3 p 7, quoting Diarmaid MacCulloch, Reformation: Europe’s House Divided 1490-1700 (London: Penguin 2004), p531
 4 p18 5 p26 6 Peter Adam, p43 7 p50 8 p55 9 p64

The Diocese of Perth: A Test Case?

Kanishka Raffel looks back over two recent synod decisions and ponders what the future might hold

The Perth Diocesan Synod has twice debated (the same) motion that sought to affirm same sex partnerships as consistent with Christian discipleship. In 2012 and 2013 the motion was passed by a majority of Synod voting by houses but vetoed by Archbishop Roger Herft. On both occasions, the Synod debate was accompanied by media coverage before and/or after the Synod. On both occasions, Archbishop Herft made use of the full thirty days allowed to him under the statutes to prayerfully consider his decision. Under the statutes, the second use of the archiepiscopal veto required that the motion be voted upon by the Provincial Council. The Provincial Council unanimously rejected the motion, thereby endorsing the Archbishop's veto.

The Archbishop's reasons for veto included that:

- a. the resolution 'as worded' was capable of being interpreted as contrary to the Fundamental Declarations and Ruling Principles of the Constitution of the Anglican Church of Australia which govern the Matrimony Canon 1981; and
- b. the resolution gave a focus to sexuality that is 'at variance with the doctrine of the human person' as expressed in Lambeth Resolution 1.10/98.

Section 2 of The Fundamental Declarations affirms 'all the canonical scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as being the ultimate rule and standard of faith given by inspiration of God and containing all things necessary for salvation'. Section 3 of The Fundamental Declarations commits 'this church' to 'ever obey the commands of Christ, teach his doctrine...follow and uphold his discipline...'

The Australian Bishops Protocol 15 (March 2012) accepts as 'expressing the mind of this Church on issues of human sexuality' Lambeth Resolution 1.10/98 and General Synod Resolutions 33, 59, 61-64/2004. Lambeth Resolution 1.10 declares that the Lambeth Conference 1998 'upholds faithfulness in marriage between a man and woman in lifelong union and believes that abstinence is right for those who are not called to marriage'; 'reject(s) homosexual practice as incompatible with Scripture'; and 'cannot advise the legitimising or blessing of same sex unions nor ordaining those involved in same sex unions'.

General Synod Resolution 62/04 states that the General Synod cannot condone the liturgical blessing of same sex relationships. General Synod Resolution 63/04 states that the

General Synod cannot condone the ordination of people in open committed same sex relationships. General Synod Resolution 64/04 states that the General Synod welcomes the clarification by Federal Parliament that, at law, marriage is the union of a man and a woman to the exclusion of all others voluntarily entered in to for life.

Evangelicals in Perth are thankful for Archbishop Herft's rejection of same-sex marriage on theological, legal and ecclesiological grounds which he has addressed not only in the formal reasons for his veto, but also in his Presidential Charge in both years. It is particularly disappointing that in light of the President's Charge in successive years, and the publication of the Archbishop's reasons for veto in 2012, the Synod vote in 2013 was overwhelmingly in favor of the motion. For evangelicals and others who understand Scripture to be both binding and clear in its rejection of same-sex activity, the question of the limits of 'tolerable diversity' is pressing.

In this context, the statements issued by the second Global Anglican Future Conference (GAFCON) held in Nairobi last year, provide clear commitments to maintaining fellowship with, and assisting the ministry of, those who find themselves excluded by their own Dioceses.

The Nairobi Communique includes among its objectives: Authorising and affirming faithful Anglicans who have been excluded by their diocese or province. The main thrust of work here would be devoted to discerning the need for new provinces, dioceses and churches — and then authenticating their ministries and orders as Anglican. (Item 3)

The Nairobi Commitment makes the following declarations:

We commit ourselves to defend essential truths of the biblical faith even when this defence threatens existing structures of human authority (Acts 5:29). For this reason, the bishops at GAFCON 2013 resolved 'to affirm and endorse the position of the Primates' Council in providing oversight in cases where provinces and dioceses compromise biblical faith, including the affirmation of a duly discerned call to ministry. This may involve ordination and consecration if the situation requires.' (Section 4)

We commit ourselves to the support and defence of those who in standing for apostolic truth are marginalized or excluded from formal communion with other Anglicans in their dioceses. (Section 5)

These statements amount to a clear indication that the GAFCON Primates' Council are prepared to intervene anywhere in the communion where Anglicans are excluded from their own Dioceses by decisions or actions inconsistent with 'essential truths of the biblical faith'. The stated intention of such intervention would be to preserve faithful Anglican witness and to avoid mass departures of Anglicans. If the Anglican Church of Australia fails to protect the place of evangelical and other orthodox Anglicans, the global communion is willing to involve itself to assist. It would be preferable by far if a locally designed solution were to emerge. This might include the creation of alternative parallel denominational structures such as already exist in South Africa (where it has existed for more than a century), North America (ACNA: The Anglican Church in North America) and, in embryonic form, in the UK (AMiE: The Anglican Mission in England).

Why is the issue of same sex relationships the 'catalyst' for division when false teaching about the resurrection or the atonement or the uniqueness of Christ has not been? I think the answer to this is that the formularies of the church, adherence to Scripture, Creed and BCP have never changed even when individual church leaders have deviated from this orthodox foundation.

In the event that a Diocese formally affirms same sex practice the issue that arises is whether Anglicans of diverse view can continue to fellowship with one another. I am not persuaded that the character of the holy life is a matter upon which we can differ and still maintain godly unity with the truth of the apostles and the mutually indwelling life of the Father and Son (Jn 17:20-21).

The Anglican Future Conference 2015 to take place in Melbourne next year (March 24-27) and jointly hosted by EFAC and the Fellowship of Confessing Anglicans-Australia will be a key opportunity for evangelicals to address the challenges of mission in the contemporary context and to contend together for the maintenance of the 'faith once delivered' within our own Australian Anglican context.

In the meantime, remember the exhortations of Jude: Contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to God's holy people. Remember that the apostles foretold there would be scoffers who follow their own ungodly desires in the last days; build yourselves up in faith and prayer in the Holy Spirit so as to keep yourself in God's love; save others by snatching them from the fire and show mercy to all. (Jude 3, 17-18, 20-23).

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Thom Bull
leads us into
the heart of

Psalm

148

Bible Study

In Psalm 148 we hear a great cosmic role call in which the entire creation is addressed and summoned to its place in the circle of God's praise. The cry, "Praise the LORD!", pours down over the universe from top to bottom like a flood, as the different spheres of God's creative work are each invited to lend their voices to the song. The exhortation is first given to the heights of heaven, the angelic armies, and the sun, moon and stars (vv.1-4); from there it descends to the creatures of earth and the depths of the sea, as weather and geography and flora and fauna are all addressed (vv. 7-10); and finally the whole human creation, of every age and position, is commanded to lift its voice and exult in the Maker of all things (vv.11-12). There is no planet, no grain of soil, no tadpole, no oxygen molecule, no man, woman or child, to whom this joyful summons isn't issued, and who is not to yield to it in raptured obedience.

This command isn't, however, one that is bare and irrational; there are three crucial reasons given as to why we and all things are to praise the LORD.

First of all, it is because he is the creator and preserver of the universe. The LORD is the one who with total freedom and ease, and therefore with sheer delight, has called absolutely everything that is into being from nothing by his word of command, and in every given moment he is the one who holds it back from chaos – it is established (vv.5-6). The irreducible dependence of all created things upon the LORD that follows from this, and the divine power, wisdom and goodness that are displayed by the very fact of creation's existence, are the logic of this liturgy: it is the grateful chorus that must erupt from those who recognise they are, only inasmuch as the LORD in his ungrudging generosity is pleased that they are. This is the wholly spontaneous and necessary joy of the creature that is summoned in mercy before the presence of its Maker – necessary in that such praise constitutes the creature's conformity to its nature, spontaneous in that such conformity constitutes the creature's freedom as the creature of this God. What is more, that the cosmos in its entirety is called to share in this praise removes the possibility of such conformity and freedom being found in some end other than the LORD. As long as all things are called to worship, not one of them can be ultimate; as all things are made by the LORD, so all things are made for him, and for him only; and so the final end of each of creation's members cannot ultimately be found within creation's bounds. A key guard, then, against the idolatry that would posit just such an immanent end, is this universal doxology.

The second reason for the LORD's praise is the uniquely exalted glory of his name (v.13). There is none other like him, none that can match the perfection and bright beauty of his transcendent holiness, none that sits upon a higher throne. Hence it is fitting that kings, princes and rulers are specifically included within the summons to praise him (v.11). Before this God, there is no earthly power that can legitimately claim an absolute position, and so the proper posture of even the highest political ruler is not that of a god, but of a servant – one standing not over the people, be they man or woman, young or old, but rather prostrate alongside them, acknowledging the high glory of the one in whose hands the government truly rests.

And thirdly, the people of the LORD praise him because he has “raised up a Horn for them” (v.14) – that is, a strong Saviour, who has delivered them (cp. Lk. 1:69). The one who is so highly exalted is the very same one who has also come near in order to bring his people close to him, to redeem them, and to make them his own – the LORD of creation is also the LORD of the covenant. And in fact, when that LORD acts to execute this deliverance definitively, it will be revealed that the Horn who is raised up to rescue God's covenant people, and the Word of command through which everything has been created, are one and the same – Jesus the Word, who is the firstborn over all creation, and the firstborn from the dead (John 1:1; Col. 1:15-20).

And that is not all. In this psalm, worship rings out from what seems to be every conceivable corner, and yet when the deliverer finally comes the theatre of praise is opened even more widely. Here in Psalm 148, three spheres of the cosmos are summoned to the song: the heavens, the sea, and the earth. There is one that is missing: Sheol, the place of the dead, under the earth. Of course, from the perspective of the Psalter, this isn't all that surprising – part of what makes Sheol Sheol is the fact that it is specifically the place where the LORD is not praised (Pss. 6:5; 30:9; 115:17; cf. Isa. 38:18). And yet, as Peter Leithart has recently noticed, when in the fullness of time and in fulfilment of his word the LORD raises the Horn up, not just figuratively by really – from the dead, from Sheol, and to his right hand – then at last this fourth sphere is also burst open, and the tongues within it are unloosed, as it too is swept into the praise of the One seated on the throne and the Lamb (Rev. 5:13; cp. Phil. 2:9-11). The Psalmist asks, ‘Do you work wonders for the dead? Do the shades rise up to praise you? Is your steadfast love declared in the grave, or your faithfulness in Abaddon?’ (Pss. 88:10-11). When the Horn is raised up, the answer is finally given, in fulfilment of the deepest longing of Psalter itself (Pss. 16:10; 49:15), and what is in fact an almost universal call to praise begun in Psalm 148 is at last made complete.

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Ungodless: Being Christian in a Secular Australia

Ben Underwood explores different responses that Christians can make to secularism.

There are always cultural challenges facing Christian believers. One set of challenges for our discipleship comes from living in our secular age, where the gospel is felt to be yesterday's discredited news. How can we face this cultural situation and make progress as Christians.

A statistic: Norman Morris Roy Morgan Research, wrote in April of this year, “By Easter next year, it could well be the first time that the majority of Australians don't affiliate with Christianity.” Morgan polls from late 2011 to early 2014 had Christian affiliation in Australia dropping from 60.9% of the population to 52.6% and trending down towards 50% and under.

A story: the decidedly godless journalist Paul Toohey recounts talking to Muslim women from Afghanistan, Iran, Pakistan in Indonesia:

“Over tea served in glass cups the women were asking about Australia. [...] They wanted to know about jobs, the cost of living and their level of acceptance as Muslims, should they make it. I told them that the greatest freedom Australia offered was the freedom not to believe in God. We'd more or less got rid of him; he was not required. One woman buried her face in her hands, appalled. They all looked slightly alarmed. But this was one bit of useful information I could provide. Their acceptance in Australia, if they made it and were not to disappear into strict cultural enclaves, would require them first to accept *us*. Then one of the women said something that started them all laughing. Maybe it didn't seem such a bad idea, living somewhere godless.”

Toohey casually and unapologetically presents godlessness as the foremost cultural conviction that Australians share, a source of the freedom we cherish together. If the downward trend in Christian affiliation continues, and if Toohey's view that being Australian means being godless increasingly shape our national psyche, how will we Christians approach being in a shrinking minority of ungodless Australians?

Here are four kinds of response that I perceive amongst us.

Surrender

One response is to agree with the critics of Christianity and seek to remake Christianity to be a new thing that lines up with the new spirit of the age. I suggest this happens in liberal Christianity. People find it implausible that Jesus is the only mediator between God and human beings? Well, they are right! We Christians have to drop this myth of Christ's uniqueness and learn to see God at work in all the religions of the world. People find it implausible that there is a personal God who made the world and hears our prayers and will judge the living and the dead? Well they are right! We Christians have to drop the literal interpretations of our theology and learn to see our doctrines simply as stories which help us live lives of love, which is the real point of Christianity, not being saved from death and hell. People find it implausible that we should take the sexual ethic of the Bible seriously today? Well they are right! We Christians have to drop our backward and repressed view of sex and have the compassion to let people do what comes naturally. In this way Christians abandon Christianity and become assimilated to the secular age, preaching the convictions of a secular age in the churches, in a kind of reverse evangelism.

I suggest that you also see the same thing in churches which preach the health and prosperity gospel. People want power to step up to a new level of material wealth, or to remake themselves as leaner, more disciplined, more successful individuals and so to reap the rewards our society bestows on the successful. Well, we Christians can help! God wants to bless people after all. So just believe in him and start living your best life now. In this way, too, Christians abandon Christianity, and become assimilated to the secular age, preaching the convictions of a secular age in the churches, in a kind of reverse evangelism. The first kind of alignment with the spirit of the age – liberalism – empties churches, but the second one – the prosperity gospel – fills them. Christians must attend to the spirit of our age, to be sure, but in order to commend the one gospel intelligibly to our age, not to remake the gospel in the spirit of our age. Let's not surrender.

Fight

Another response to de-Christianisation is to fight tooth and nail to defend and preserve Christian truths and values against any erosion or marginalisation. This fight might involve political organisation aimed to keep a distinctively Christian voice articulating Christian concerns in the halls of power, and working political leverage to get legislation that reflects Christian convictions. So, for example, the Australian Christian Lobby introduce themselves on their website saying, "The vision of the Australian Christian Lobby is to see Christian principles and ethics accepted and influencing the way we are governed, do business and relate to each other as a community." They and others use the tools of political and social activism – mobilising a base of supporters, keeping them informed, presenting

petitions, encouraging people to write to their local members. They do this to contest any legislation which might reflect values not compatible with Christian faith, and commend legislation that reflects Christian aspirations. Many Christians wish to encourage others to be active as Christian citizens and to be engaged and active politically, so that a Christian witness is preserved and we don't lose a precious Christian social heritage without a fight.

Unlike the response of surrender there is something to be said for fighting, or, put less pugilistically, for Christians being engaged as citizens, expressing our preferences to our elected representatives in the various channels that operate in our society. It seems to me that there is an art to getting this right. Although we believe that Christ is Lord of everything including Australia, others do not share this conviction, and will not feel the Christian outlook has any inherently privileged place in shaping the laws and policies of our nation. We will be expected to make our contribution to the national discourse as citizens

Who will save us and where does our power lie if we ...become a dwindling minority? Will it be in the fighters, the flighters, the culture-makers, or someone else?

among our fellow citizens, rather than as natural chaplains to the nation assuming we have a special right to speak arising from cultural precedent or divine appointment. Commending Christ to all in that situation is where the art (and the need for good character) comes in.

Flight

Some do not think fight is the way ahead, perhaps because it will never be anything more than a doomed rearguard action. Instead of fight there is flight – a bunkering down into Christian enclaves of various kinds, leaving the mainstream culture and living apart, building a whole parallel structure of social institutions, where our counter culture can survive. In "Thoughts after Lambeth" T. S. Eliot wrote, "The World is trying the experiment of attempting to form a civilized but non-Christian mentality. The experiment will fail; but we must be very patient in awaiting its collapse; meanwhile redeeming the time: so that the Faith may be preserved alive through the dark ages before us; to renew and rebuild civilization, and save the World from suicide." This gets expressed in many ways. Take education for example. The state schools are lost, we say. If our children are to escape the black hole of secularism we need to take their education back and do it ourselves. Maybe taking our kids' education means home schooling, maybe it means Christian schooling, but we need to preserve the faith while we await the collapse of the non-Christian experiment in education. Here's another example: popular music is the tool of the devil. We must delete all our secular mp3s and listen to Christian bands only. Others would say that even that's not enough. The very form of popular music is corrupt, and a properly Christian music sounds like Bach, or Handel. We need to hold onto the beauty and goodness and truth of God, and flee the culture of death surrounding us.

Like fight, there is something to be said for flight, that is leaving cultural forms and institutions that stifle, undermine or

even persecute Christian aspirations in favour of alternative forms and institutions that express Christian convictions and aspirations more faithfully. Perhaps the traps this response can fall into are fear and contempt. The fear is fear that the world will overcome Christ. But 'he that is in you is greater than he that is in the world.' We should not flee in fear. The contempt is contempt of the world: let them all go to hell. But God so loved the world that he gave his only Son. We are still to love our neighbours, believers or not, and not to despise them or withdraw entirely from them. So our alternative forms and institutions should remain in touch with the wider society for the sake of that society.

Change the world (again)?

Another response is to say, well Christendom is dead, but that's a mercy, because we are now back to purity of first century Christianity, and we can ditch the Constantinian baggage and start all over again to win the culture through authentic Christian living. The job is not a political fight nor a cultural flight, but grassroots movements with fresh expressions of church. No more denominations and parishes, it's time to learn again how to plant churches and make disciples in a post-modern, post-Christian, secular, hedonistic and individualistic age. If we are on the margins now instead of in the centre, that's ok, because Christianity works best from the margins. If the culture has turned away from God, that's no reason for us to turn away from them, but rather to engage the culture again at every level – not in a defensive stance to preserve our ancient privilege, but as people who love our culture and want to reach it and renew it. Christian ministers need initiative, they need to be innovative and entrepreneurial and to empower the people of God, who in turn need to think through how their work and gifts and opportunities can bless and influence and beautify the world and see lives and whole societies transformed again. We need networks of culture-makers, supported by patrons in the great cities of the world, sparking new cultural movements in which Christians are leading figures and the Spirit is the animating genius.

This is also rousing stuff, and has much to commend it. Perhaps the dangers here lie in despising our inherited forms, and putting too much confidence in our projects of sociological re-engineering. It is a good moment to go back to the New Testament and scrutinise our traditions, practices, aims and expectations in light of a renewed careful study of the apostles' teaching. But it would be passing strange if we decided to neglect or de-emphasise the most ancient and basic of Christian disciple-making structures and practices such as instruction in the scriptures, common prayer and praise, sacraments and designated leadership in local congregations which also maintain a fellowship of mutual recognition and help. It is also good to think carefully and creatively about how cultures are influenced and changed, but if we lay out a plan for how to change the world (based of course on the latest research and the most original and insightful analysis) we should do it with a good dash of humility. Maybe the world won't change according

to the theories of expert cultural analysts or the hunches of disillusioned mavericks.

Who will save us?

Who will save us and where does our power lie if we ungodless are become a dwindling minority? Will it be in the fighters, the flighters, the culture-makers, or someone else? As soon as you put it like that this answer suggests itself; God will save us and all his people, and the gospel is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes – Jew or Gentile. So our trust must be in God to preserve, transform and bless us who believe in Christ, and our confidence must be in the gospel as the power of God to bring salvation to the people around us and address the culture we live in.

If we do take seriously the idea that the gospel is the power of God for salvation, then we should take a moment to think through how the gospel goes to work amongst human beings. As the gospel is told, God brings human beings to a new birth by his Holy Spirit; he humbles sinners and lifts them up too as his forgiven children in Christ. They repent and confess their faith in him and he binds them together as members of one another in the fellowship of his church, and as his church gathers in local congregations he gives gifts to his people so that they can serve one another in love and grow up into Christ's likeness together. In churches we brothers and sisters are taught and nourished with the word of God, and in the world we walk in good deeds and speak the word of God. There is a new humanity in Christ; this new humanity has a counterculture, the word of God is its fountainhead and the church is its home. It is a counterculture that can also be carried everywhere we go, work, speak, write, play and rest, whether we go alone or with others. God's basic programme – whether we are in the early church, or high Christendom or the ruins of Christendom – is laid out in the New Testament, and it does not change because the culture is not as receptive to it as it may once have been. Our hope is in the old, and long, and patient work of making disciples of Jesus, through the inculcation of the truths of the gospel of grace and the disciplines of faith and repentance in the fellowship of other Christians. Political activism, Christian counter-cultural institutions and culturally engaged new Christian endeavours must cluster around and flow out of what is central: gospel ministry, church, repentance and discipleship. Rising godlessness shapes our lives and churches and the deliberations of coming synods will be shaped by it too. Will our response to that godlessness, as we contribute to those deliberations, express confidence in God and his gospel, so that our activism, our institutions and our cultural engagement as Australian Anglican churches are shaped more and more by that confidence, and less and less by any surrender to the spirit of the age?

Ben Underwood oversees the 5pm congregation at St Matthew's Shenton Park in Perth.



Making it work in the Parish

Planting a Church

Peter Carolane has led a team in planting a new congregation in Melbourne's inner-north. Essentials asked him how they have gone about it.

1. Please tell us when and how this church plant started.

1.1 Initial Research for the Plant

Throughout 2012, Revd. Peter Carolane, Bishop Stephen Hale (with assistance from Archdeacon Condie and Bishop Huggins) investigated the viability of a church plant in the inner-north. In December 2012, Peter Carolane held the first meeting for people interested in the plant.

1.2 Planning, Prayer and Vision Meetings

In February 2013, Peter formed a steering team of nine St Hilary's people who started meeting weekly to plan the launch of the church plant. Midway through the year, two extra people joined the leadership team from St Jude's Carlton.

In March 2013, a vision development day was held at Northcote Town Hall including about 25 people who inputted into the formation of the vision statement. The results from this day were further refined by the steering team and Peter (see below). Following this, Peter held monthly prayer and vision meetings at the Abbotsford Convent, and the Northcote Town Hall

2. What was your initial Vision?

Imagine a church community that cultivates an open and charitable dialogue about Jesus with the "no religion" tribes of Melbourne's inner-north *Colossians 4:5-6*

Imagine a church community whose active and transformative presence is dispersed in the neighbourhood like yeast in dough *Matthew 13:33*

Imagine a church community that nourishes spiritual seekers and inspires creatives *John 4:13-14 ; Ephesians 2:10*

...cultivating life in our neighbourhood

3. Please describe your team: paid and volunteers

- Volunteer Leadership team (see 1.2)
- One full time staff, Peter Carolane
- Lay leaders of ministries are:
 - Kids' Church: Led by Christine Andrzejewski with a team of 7
 - Music Ministry: Led by Luke Singleton with a team of 12
 - Community Groups: overseen by Tim Clare with a team of 10 leaders leading five groups
 - Sunday Service Roster: Led by Penny Van den Berg with a team of 32



- Play in the park: Led by Lee Hodson and Eliza Clare with a team of 4
 - Communications officer: Led by Andrew Watson
- 63 out of 81 adults (77%) involved in ministry leadership

4. What is the underlying theory/rationale for your team's composition and operation?

Rationale for leadership team's composition:

People who were locals
Committed faith
Keen

In some ways you have little control over who you have in your team. Sure, you can filter people out, but you might be surprised at the composition of your team. God brings all kinds of people with different backgrounds and skills.

For the plant congregation, I was also committed to recruiting:

- 1) Young parents with young pre-school kids so as to build up the children's ministry from the start.
- 2) People who could help with children's ministry
- 3) Musicians to make a strong band. Too many church plants flounder around with terrible music, and I didn't want to do that.

5. How do you get the money for your budget?

Relationship between the plant and St Hilary's

Peter Carolane and Stephen Hale developed an MOU between St Hilary's and the plant which was signed off on by the leadership of both groups.

The MOU includes important details such as:

A generous financial support from St Hilary's of \$60,000 over three years (\$30k, 20k, \$10k) plus an initial extra \$10k as seed money.

St Hilary's to manage the finances for the plant.

The plant would not be a congregation of St Hilary's but a new worshipping community under the leadership of Peter Carolane and his leadership team and would seek to become an Authorised Anglican Congregation.

Financial Giving

The leadership team started giving to the plant in July 2013, and from August others were invited to start giving. This accrued some savings and a buffer for the plant for when it took over the payment of Peter Carolane as full time minister on October 1, 2013.

Finance

During the vision series in February 2014, Merri Creek Anglican (MCA) called for the congregation to sign up to financial partnership. By June, MCA is receiving \$10.5k per month (via mainly electronic transfer including small cash offering of about \$500 per month) = roughly \$126k per year. With the current reserves of about \$45k and the St Hilary's giving of \$30k + \$10k (seed), MCA is financially stable and in a good position to make more ministry decisions that might incur cost.

The next major expenses will be a vicarage in the inner-north, children's worker, setup verger, and office rental.

An attractive office has been offered to MCA in Merri Street Brunswick. This is looking likely to come through.

6. What strategies are you working with?

The Community Groups represent our main strategy for discipleship and mission. They call people to commit to each other as their primary spiritual family. As members disciple each other, people are motivated to mission. Community groups directly achieve the following aspects of our vision:

- (1) dispersed in the community like yeast in dough
- (2) charitable dialogue with 'no religion' tribes
- (3) nourishing spiritual seekers

Getting a network of Community Groups established is challenging for a church plant. We have three main obstacles to overcome:

- *unfamiliarity with each other, so feel awkward joining groups*
- *confusion about what Community Groups are, so feel nervous to commit*
- *finding a monthly rhythm that works for the group members*

We believe, however, that these obstacles are surmountable through prayer, patience and persistence. Already we are seeing signs of progress.

Where are the community groups now?

Five groups with leaders

The groups are in their early stages and taking baby steps

Some congregation members are still trying to work out which group to join

Each group is experiencing different levels of energy and clarity of mission

What to expect in the next six months?

Most groups will continue to make adjustments to their approach, and may look very different by the end of the year. Some groups might choose to stop altogether for various reasons, and the members have the option to join other groups or start a completely new group.

If a group folds or merges with another, we should not think this is failure or a sign Community Groups don't work. An entrepreneurial culture of mission and discipleship includes allowing some of our plans to fall over and others to soar. The



young adults group, for example, was originally going to be a group that met in (and reached the customers of) a particular cafe, that didn't work out, then it was going to be a musicians based group, but we couldn't get that happening, then we changed it to be a young adults group - and now its happening.

Most groups will focus on community building before they start attempting mission

Some groups will be strong from the start and find a natural energy and opportunities for mission

The group leaders will start meeting in June for coaching and accountability

We will start to hear stories during Sunday services of God working through the groups

Where do we hope to be at end of the year?

Each group finding healthy stability

At least 80% of adults in groups

The members of the group committing to each other as 'spiritual family'

Each group giving mission a go

Stories of God moving through the groups

7. What is your relationship with the Diocese?

Merri Creek Anglican is an unofficial Anglican church - another way we think of it is a trial congregation

We have full support from the diocesan leadership including the Archbishop, Registrar, Bishop and Archdeacon, Regional Council and local parish of St Philip's Collingwood

We have submitted papers for the approval of Merri Creek Anglican to become an Authorised Anglican Congregation. This means we are not classified as a parish with geographical boundaries as such but a congregation who is reaching a specific group of people and therefore is going to be authorised. Once we are authorised, then we will be able to get an ABN, and open our own accounts etc. We will also be required to have two synod representatives.

Where do we hope to be at the end of the year?

Merri Creek Anglican will have been an Authorised Anglican Congregation since July/August

8. What challenges have you found in leading this plant?

I have found people to be very supportive.

Challenges have included:

Working on my own after working in a large staff team at St Hilary's

Not having an office yet (working from home and cafes)

Knowing how to motivate people to get involved in Community Groups when they are busy professionals with little kids

Managing expectations for what kind of church we can be at this early stage

<http://www.merricreek.org/>

Book Reviews

Christ Died For Our Sins: Essays on the Atonement

Edited by Michael R Stead

ISBN 9781921577185

Barton Books, 2013

Reviewed by Ben Underwood



This book of essays on the atonement has been produced by the Doctrine Commission of the General Synod of the Anglican Church of Australia. As Philip Freier remarks in his introduction, 'The Doctrine Commission reflects the theological diversity of our church' (2), and if that leads you to expect some theological tussling in the book, you would not be misled. However, in publishing these essays the Commission wishes firstly to highlight the unanimity shared by its members on substantial points regarding the atonement (2). And the points of agreement articulated are substantial: that the atonement is grounded in God's love, not his wrath; that Father and Son are united in the atonement; that sin makes the atonement necessary, that the atonement demonstrates God's justice; that it depends on more than Christ's death; that no single image is sufficient to encapsulate it (2-3). The commission wishes also to identify clearly points of difference and to model respectful dialogue over those differences (142). The most contentious point is penal substitutionary atonement, the idea that Christ's suffering and death was our deserved punishment diverted onto him by God, and this disagreement is the subject of a dialogue between John Dunnill and Peter Adam in a dedicated chapter of the book. Aside from the debated differences over penal substitution, there are also conflicting views expressed about the universality of the benefits of Christ's atonement, and whether the wrath of God has any proper place in an account of God's action in the atonement.

Since a stoush is more interesting than a survey, I will focus in this review on the main controversy in the book, hoping that iron will sharpen iron. Bluntly put, there are those who believe the atonement is legitimately, importantly and perhaps even essentially characterised as penal substitution, and those who reject this. Not all contributors seem keen to tug on a team guernsey, but here Peter Adam captains team Penal Substitution (PS) and John Dunnill captains team No Penal Substitution (NPS).

Adam kicks off with an exposition of three principal New Testament images of Christ's atoning death (sacrifice, paschal lamb and righteous sufferer). Adam sees all these images presenting Christ's death as a propitiatory, expiatory, substitutionary sacrifice achieving forgiveness of sins,

redemption from evil powers and the justification of those otherwise under judgment. This atoning work is founded on the triune God's holiness and love, and the biblical images which describe it are revelatory, combined in complementary ways and irreplaceable. Adam asserts that this view is biblical, and reflects the historic faith of the church and the liturgy of our Anglican tradition, and he garners a range of quotes to back this assertion. He avoids using the term penal, but the chapter is not less than a presentation of the cross as penal and substitutionary. In chapter 10 Adam seeks 'to present a theology of penal substitution which is Biblical, theological and defensible.' (143). To defend the 'most debated point [...] the notion of Christ suffering punishment within his sin-bearing sacrifice' (146) Adam argues that this is a necessary understanding of Christ's work, because the penal curse of the holy God upon lawbreakers is death and Christ breaks the curse of God for our salvation by undergoing it himself in our flesh, dying accursed by God instead of us (146-7).

Team NPS counterattacks with two main lines of objection to the use of *penal* and *substitutionary* in speaking of the atonement. First, they object that the PS understanding of sacrifice is distorted and illegitimately conflated with notions of ransom or punishment, and second, that the notion that God punished Christ in our place is unworthy of God and unnecessary. On the first count Dunnill objects to sacrifice being understood as *substitutionary*. The sacrificial offering 'represents me in this action, but it is not my "substitute", for I am still involved' (150). Dunnill is, however, happy to think of a substitution or exchange when the atonement is described in terms of a ransom, but he thinks it incoherent to fuse these separate images into a thing called 'substitutionary sacrifice' (107, 151-2, 158). Further to this first line of resistance, Dunnill objects to *sacrificial* death being equated with *penal* death, arguing that these are two quite different things. Even a propitiatory sacrifice, Dunnill says, is a symbolic gift that has no true connection with any kind of legal punishment. He goes so far as to say 'there are in fact no examples of "penal-sacrifice" in the Old Testament.' (150). Jesus' death may be a sacrifice, even to some degree a propitiatory one (115), but that is not to say Jesus is punished by God in any sense. The New Testament may say Jesus became a curse for us, but it does not say God cursed him instead of us (152). There is nothing in the New Testament to require us to think of *Father punishing Son* in our stead on the cross.

The second line of objection from team NPS is a moral one. The PS notion that God punished Christ in our place is unworthy of God. The God who sets things right by requiring the infliction of a punishment involving suffering and death has a destructive violence in him that it is claimed must be expressed somehow. How can this be the God of light and love? Dunnill grants that it is 'possible to present penal substitution in a way which is in accord with Biblical witness and a defensible theology', indeed it 'contains essential elements' in its 'passive sense' (157), but its 'active sense, according to which God the Father directly and

actively imposes on the the Son the pain and penalty which was our due [...] glories in violence [...] presents an unbalanced focus on legal offence', and shifts "wrath" and judgement into the personal "unmitigated" frenzy of an angry God [...] turning God into God's dark shadow'.

These debates about penal substitutionary atonement and the involvement of God in redemptive violence are hot right now, and several books and collections of essays have been published lately in different corners of the English-speaking world.¹ Charles Taylor argues that in our culture

'the idea of human flourishing according to the modern moral order has no place for violence and rage, but only for pacific mutual benefit. [...] So in this anthropocentric climate, where we keep any idea of the spiritual, it must be totally constructive, positive. It can't accommodate Kali, and is less and less able to allow for a God who punishes. The wrath of God disappears, leaving only His love.'²

This rings true, and it is difficult to articulate the atonement persuasively in a culture like this, and Dunnill expresses his desire to find a way in the first chapter he writes, exploring Ian McEwan's novel *Atonement*. His resistance to penal substitution comes across at some level as a desire not to speak about God in an objectionable and unnecessary way. On the other hand the desire of Adam and team PS seems to be to resist the cultural anthropocentrism and preserve the biblical testimony to God's wrath at human sin, the penalty of death to which sin makes us liable (since lawbreaking is one way to characterise sin) and the way the judgment of God which would otherwise impose that penalty upon us is dealt with for us by Christ in his death, so we sinners may be justified before him.

There is far more in the essays than I have indicated – I have focussed on the sharpest dispute. In two chapters focused on the OT Michael Stead and Glenn Davies work the ball up the field for team PS, arguing that the Bible itself fuses the originally separate semantic fields of atonement and redemption and their associated terms *pace* some critics of penal substitutionary atonement. Dorothy Lee, not decked in any obvious team colours, writes deft surveys of the various ways that the imagery and detail of the Gospels, John's Epistles and Revelation suggest understandings of the achievement of Jesus' death and resurrection. (They suggest a universal atonement to her – 90, 96). John Dunnill treats the Pauline writings and Peter Adam tackles Hebrews.

Later, the ball goes to Andrew McGowan, for team NPS, who argues that sacrifice had no single meaning to the ancients, and it was not until the Christian invention of sacrifice as simply

'atoning death' that any sacrificial language of the death of Christ seemed necessarily to cast it as expiatory. Heather Thomson receives the pass from McGowan and underscores the enormity of the idea that God could be 'engaged in the same murky business as causing death and suffering in the name of "justice" as were sinful humans' (190). By considering Jesus' death from the standpoint of his resurrection, Thomson presents an account of atonement without wrath or punishment coming from God, who is all and only love, grace and hospitality. Just before the whistle, Mark Thompson makes a last run for team PS, examining Cranmer's exposition of the death of Christ. He shows that Cranmer taught that Christ 'paid a sufficient ransom for our sins'; 'whose bitter and grievous passion is the *only* pacifying oblation, that putteth away from us the wrath of God his Father' (212); whom God sent, 'to make a sacrifice and satisfaction, or (as it may be called) amends, to his Father for our sins, to assuage his wrath and indignation conceived against us for the same' (214).

It is good to see such a central topic as the atonement engaged with at such length by the Doctrine Commission, it is good to see the real mutual engagement at the point of sharpest dispute – which must be instructive for everyone – and it is good to see such a cohort of evangelicals on the General Synod Doctrine Commission, making their case. May God bless the labours of the Commission to the growing benefit of his people and especially the Anglican churches in Australia.

Ben Underwood oversees the 5pm congregation at St Matthew's Shenton Park in Perth.

GPS: God's Plan For Salvation

Allan Chapple Aquila Press 2014

ISBN 9781922000965

Reviewed by Neil Walthew

Allan Chapple's book, *GPS - God's Plan for Salvation* is a guidebook or map to the whole sweep of salvation history presented to us by God in both the Old and New Testaments. It is the product of many years of teaching the big picture of the Bible and as such is a very accessible book for the person who has never read the Old Testament in detail and who wants to know more so as to understand the New Testament better, through to the person who would want to use the book as a resource to teach others.

In the introduction Allan makes it clear that he sees the Bible's centre of attention is Jesus. The Bible is the word of God about the works of God. Three words to sum up the Bible are Creation, Covenant and Christ. So having set the centre, Allan's



1 E.g. *Atonement and Violence: A Theological Conversation*, Ed. John Sanders (Nashville TN: Abingdon Press, 2006), *Pierced for Our Transgressions: Rediscovering the Glory of Penal Substitution* by Steve Jeffery Michael Ovey & Andrew Sach (Nottingham: IVP, 2007), *The Atonement Debate: Papers from the London Symposium on the Theology of Atonement*, Ed. David Hilborn, Justin Thacker & Derek Tidball (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008)

2 Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2007), 649.

book now begins by taking the Old Testament, literally in your hands, and showing the relative parts that make up the Old Testament, later Allan will do the same with the New Testament. He then makes a simple diagram of the Old Testament using events around entering and leaving the land either from or to Babylon/Assyria and Egypt. The books of the Old Testament, significant Old Testament figures and dates are then placed on this diagram.

Working our way through the Old and New Testament Allan chooses to focus on the covenant with Abraham, Israel and David and finally in the New Testament seeing the new covenant in Jesus, which is where the previous covenants have pointed us. As we look at each covenant and how each is focused into the next, we also learn how God relates to us, and how we respond, using memorable couplets: Grace - Faith, Saving love - Serving love, God's work and word - Recognising God's worth.

As GPS now turns its attention to the New Testament, the Old Testament is characterized as Preparation for Jesus and the New Testament as Proclamation of Jesus. The Patterns, Promises and Prototypes of the Old Testament all point to Jesus. As Allan points out these are identified by the New Testament itself and not arbitrarily picked out.

The map of the New Testament is defined by the first and second coming of Jesus. Allan progressively builds up the picture of salvation in Christ helping us to understand the characteristics of this salvation, our responses to Jesus and how this looks, set between the two comings of Jesus. The already and not yet nature of salvation is examined and what this means for the Christian.

From the point of view of a parish minister the genesis of the book from a course run many times means the book is written in a way that is easy to teach to others. GPS encourages the reader or learner to engage with the Biblical text. The use of simple diagrams are helpful and could be put on PowerPoint as they give a clear summary of the points made in the text of the book. The questions at the end of each chapter are also a good resource, either for an individual reader to revise or as a resource for an instructor using the book either in a growth group or larger learning group in a church.

The clear nature of the book and the consistent focus on Jesus as the goal or focus of Scripture means this is a book that can be highly recommended. It is a useful book to give to someone wanting to understand the Gospel better or to read the Old Testament more meaningfully. Equally it can be used as already mentioned to teach a course in the parish. GPS is worthy of adding to your church resources.

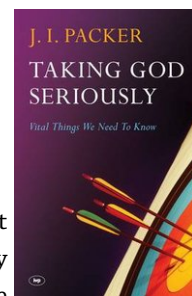
Neil Walthew is Rector of the parish of Wanneroo in Perth and Chair of the WA Committee of BCA.

Essential reading for Essentials readers:

Taking God Seriously: Vital Things We Need To Know,

by J. I. Packer. ISBN 9781844746095

Reviewed By Steven Daly



My title overstates my position. I do not think J. I. Packer's new book is literally essential reading. Nevertheless, I would like to heartily encourage you to buy this little volume (totally 175 pages and 8 chapters) and read it carefully. It is a wonderful little book and a great resource to have at hand.

J. I. Packer's new book is several things at once, and it is hard to answer the question 'what is this book about' succinctly. In the Preface, the author tells us at some length that his book is about catechesis—"... intentional, orderly instruction in the truths that Christians are called to live by, linked with equally intentional and orderly instruction on how they are to do this."

However, the book is not really about catechesis. The author does not provide us with a defence of catechesis as a teaching method in comparison with other teaching methods, nor even an outline as to how to conduct catechism classes. Indeed, beyond the Preface there is hardly any discussion of the concept of catechesis at all. I understand from others that catechism classes traditionally revolve around the memorization of answers to set questions, such that Christian doctrine is memorized and understood according to set wordings. But I have no direct experience of this myself—having been raised in a non-church family and having been disciplined since conversion in churches that concentrated on small group Bible studies augmenting weekly expository Bible preaching sermons—so my questions about catechism, and its place in discipleship, were left largely unanswered.

Therefore, whereas the author tells us that his is a book about catechesis, it doesn't seem to be so. Certainly, however, it is a book about Christian doctrine, which presumably in turn would form the content of a catechetical exercise. The book thereafter is a collection of teachings on various doctrines. The unifying theme is the author's belief that the doctrines he writes on are the very doctrines that Bible-believing / Protestant / Evangelical Christians worldwide are not taking seriously enough.

And a list of the chapter headings will tell you exactly the topics Dr Packer chooses to teach on:

1. Taking Faith Seriously
2. Taking Doctrine Seriously
3. Taking Christian Unity Seriously
4. Taking Repentance Seriously
5. Taking the Church Seriously
6. Taking the Holy Spirit Seriously
7. Taking Baptism Seriously
8. Taking the Lord's Supper Seriously

So here's the beauty of the book: Whenever you might want to study or be refreshed in your thinking or prepare to teach

others, with respect to those doctrines, J. I. Packer's book is a wonderful resource. All for the price of about three cups of coffee, at your local Christian bookshop.

Why is this volume such a good resource? Because Dr Packer is most assuredly a genius when it comes to articulating orthodox Christian doctrine. And I don't think I'm overstating his giftedness, in using the word genius. When it comes to Christian ideas, Christian truth, Christian words, Dr Packer knows exactly how to explain it, how to articulate it fully and clearly. His talent for this is breath-taking. It is to this book that I will go, again and again, when I want to remember exactly how to teach others what the word 'faith' means, or how Christian unity is to be rightly understood, or how to explain the changing nuance in meaning between mystery and sacrament and ordinance as ways of referring to Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

What J. I. Packer is offering us are the essentials, doctrinally speaking, of our biblical faith; which is why I, in turn, am presuming to suggest that this is essential reading for you too.

The style of language is often polemical. It is clear that the author sees himself as a one speaking prophetically to the global church—calling her to return to her Lord wholeheartedly, in pursuit of truth and holiness—and as one who doesn't have much time left. He has spent his life training others in Christian theology and is well aware of the fact that those who are currently in church leadership positions are not the same age as of his children, but rather as of his grandchildren or even great grandchildren. And whilst the context of an Old Testament oracle may have been the threat of the Assyrians or Babylonians, and this context forms the basis of the message, so too J. I. Packer's context is the current state of the worldwide Anglican communion, which is suffering "convulsions" (his word) over homosexuality—whether or not same sex unions can be blessed. This topic continually re-surfaces throughout the book. So, for example, of 19 pages dedicated to "Taking the Church Seriously", eight pages are given to the presentation of a doctrine of the Church (from Paul's Letter to the Ephesians) followed by 11 pages on the schism caused by the homosexuality issue within the worldwide Anglican communion. Whilst in agreement with the author, the book does feel unbalanced.

I found the chapter entitled "Taking the Holy Spirit Seriously" to be the weakest of the eight, because I was not convinced that that was what the author was doing, especially as the task he set himself was to tell us "vital things we need to know." Without doubt, this chapter teaches many wonderful truths about the person of the Holy Spirit. But, just as it is good to know about the internal workings of the high-bypass turbofan, yet that is not essential to travelling by jet airliner, so too Dr Packer teaches us things that are good to know, but not essential. By way of conclusion, he offers us five signs of the Holy Spirit being taken seriously (the pursuit of holiness, renewal, doctrine, evangelism and worship) but these signs are identical to those one would expect where the focus was on either of the other two persons of the Holy Trinity. Along the

way, J. I. Packer has told us that, "Distinctive to the charismatic movement was the Pentecostal idea that God is restoring in the modern church most if not all of the apostolic sign gifts (prophecy, tongues and interpretation, and healing), plus Spirit baptism with tongues, as on Pentecost morning—a claim that many Christians, like this writer, find dubious" (p 110). If that was indeed the distinctive charismatic idea, I'd find it dubious too. But seeing as it is not, I find the author's significant misrepresentation / misunderstanding of it surprising, coming as it does from a mind of such undoubted brilliance. The bulk of the chapter, thereafter, is an explanation of how the Holy Spirit talks to us. That's good to know. However, it is about the gifts of the Spirit, and especially how the Spirit of God talks through us that Paul considers essential; and it is that that he wants to make sure we are not ignorant of (1 Cor 12:1-3). There isn't a single reference, anywhere in the entire volume, to 1 Corinthians 14, and that, specifically, is disappointing, especially from one who implicitly wears the prophetic mantle.

The chapter that I found most illuminating was the final one—"Taking the Lord's Supper Seriously." J. I. Packer sets himself this challenge: That his readers "should discover that the Catholic heritage, taken as a whole, has been more right than wrong, whereas the evangelical heritage, taken as a whole, has been more wrong than right." What did he teach and was I convinced by it? Well, I don't want to spoil the ending for you, so buy it and read it for yourself. Suffice to say, the chapter greatly added to my appreciation of the biblical meaning of this mystery / sacrament / ordinance and for that I'm grateful.

Revd Dr Steven Daly

is Rector, St Barnabas Anglican Church, Leederville. WA.

Codex Sinaiticus: The Story of the World's Oldest Bible.

DC Parker. The British Library/
Hendrickson 2010.

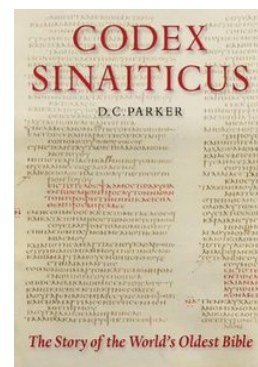
ISBN 9780712358033

Reviewed by Dale Appleby

One of the experiences I remember well is seeing Codex Sinaiticus in the British Library some years ago. What it is, why it is important, and how it got to the Library is told in this very interesting book.

In one way the book is the report and promotion of the collaboration of four groups in the research, and making available to the world, of Codex Sinaiticus. The project came together in 2005 when the Archbishop of Sinai, the British Library, the Leipzig Library and the National Library of Russia, St Petersburg agreed to collaborate in making their different portions of the Codex available to the world.

This book is a report of the collaboration and an introduction to the Digital Project which now has the whole of the Codex viewable by anyone with access to the World Wide Web [codexsinaiticus.org].



At present the Codex is found in Leipzig (eighty six pages); in the British Library (694 pages); St Petersburg (parts of eight pages); and St Catherine's (parts or all of thirty six pages – found along with other manuscripts in a room in the monastery in 1975).

For many people it is Constantin Tischendorf who is associated with the story of the Codex. But the story is much more complex and interesting. David Parker is Edward Cadbury Professor of Theology and Director of the Institute for the Textual Scholarship and Electronic Editing at the University of Birmingham. He tells a fascinating story not only of the coming together of the Digital Project but the whole story of the manuscript.

He outlines the content of the manuscript which includes parts of the Shepherd of Hermas and Epistle of Barnabas. The chapter on the Christian book in the time of Constantine shows how Sinaiticus and Codex Vaticanus were pioneers in the modern form of the book (folded pages, written on both sides and sewn together). Discussions of the roles of Constantine and Eusebius of Caesarea in the production of the Codex are detailed and judicious. Parker outlines issues to do with the canon, Greek versions of the OT and NT and the reasons why two non-canonical books were bound with the others.

The art of book making is discussed in detail, including the ink, the parchment, the layout and the scribes (three probably). Dating manuscripts, identifying scribes, working out how they worked together as a team, where they got their source materials from, and the budget, is just fascinating.

Chapters on the work of the scribes and the correctors, give wonderful background not only to the production of the book, but to the transmission of the biblical text. Parker also compares the text of the bible in Sinaiticus with the text of other manuscripts and codices.

What happened to the Codex after it was competed in the middle of the 4th century? Various other people made glosses notes and corrections to it right up to the middle ages and beyond. It seems it eventually went out of use because of the change in script in general use – not many people could read the old majuscule script after a certain time.

The history of what happened in the 19th and 20th centuries occupies three chapters. Parker serves us well in clarifying the role of Tischendorf as compared with his legend. Others had visited the monastery over the years. Nevertheless Tischendorf played a

number of crucial roles. Not only in playing a part in the transfer of some leaves to Leipzig and later the codex as a gift to the Russian Tsar, but in his amazing transcription of the text and the subsequent production of a facsimile edition. Parker makes this a very enjoyable, and clear, story.

The book concludes with the story of how the Codex came to the British Library and how the Virtual Codex Sinaiticus came into being. The book has lots of very fine colour plates of pages of the manuscript illustrating the text and one or two historical photos.

If you are interested in books, old manuscripts, history, adventure, intrigue, textual criticism, or the digitising of old texts, or Codex Sinaiticus itself, this is a great book.

***Sisters of Sinai:
How Two Lady
Adventurers
Found The Hidden
Gospels.***

Janet Soskice.
Vintage Books
2010.

ISBN 9780099546542.

Reviewed by
Dale Appleby

Janet Soskice is Professor of Philosophical Theology in the University of Cambridge. She has written a ripping story of two Presbyterian Scottish sisters who were awarded Honorary Doctorates by European Universities before Cambridge was awarding any kind of degrees to women.

Agnes and Margaret Smith were twins. Their mother died two weeks after their birth in 1843. Their father, a lawyer, brought them up in the tradition of strict Scots Calvinism, and encouraged their education, independence and foreign travel. He promised to take them to each country whose language they learnt. So they mastered French, German and Italian while still young. He died while they were still single and left them an enormous fortune. So they decided to travel down the Nile.

Soskice tells an entertaining story of their year away in Egypt and the Holy Land, being ripped off by their tour guide and being fed up with all the “true” shrines of Jesus. Their lesson from the trip was always learn the language before you visit the country. Returning to England they learnt Spanish and Greek (from JS Blackie, Professor of Greek in Edinburgh). They travelled to Greece where they spoke to

the tour guides and locals in Greek. Margaret married and while she was on her honeymoon, Agnes started to study Arabic. She wanted to visit Cyprus, and to go to St Catherine's monastery in Sinai (where they spoke Greek) on the way. They got to Cyprus but not Sinai this time.

Their story is an amazing adventure, and very well told by Soskice. Agnes also married (a keeper of manuscripts – indeed the theme of their life could be called Divine Providence) but both marriages ended with the deaths of their husbands not long after they began. The twins stayed together, now in Cambridge. Agnes learnt Syriac. In 1893 they visited St Catherine's where a friend of Agnes, Dr J Rendel Harris, had asked them to look for a Syriac manuscript. They couldn't find what he wanted but Agnes found a palimpsest of the gospels in Syriac that turned out to be older than the Curetonian.

This discovery forms the centre of the fascinating story of intrigue, adventure, jealousy, death, suspicion and rejection that is the twins' story. It is a kind of *Poirot* and *Raiders of the Lost Ark* adventure. It follows on the heels of the Tischendorf saga (Soskice offers some corrections to the story), and ties in nicely with the publication of the Revised Version and the debate about the reliability and antiquity of the Greek text that underlay it. But Soskice traces many other stories, not least the amazing scholarship of two women who had no recognised formal education. The Palimpsest was published by two Cambridge academics (part of the intrigue) with an introduction by Agnes. The twins edited a series of Cambridge University Press editions of various ancient manuscripts, as well as publishing many other books; at least nine academic publications stand in Agnes' name. She became a significant scholar of Syriac especially Palestinian Syriac (the language of our Lord, she said, and upbraided the Palestinians she met for allowing so many Arabisms into the sacred language).

Overall the twins were manuscript hunters. There is a wonderful story told in the book of their cooperation with Solomon Schechter, a rabbinical scholar, in the search for manuscripts in Cairo.

This is a terrific book. Easy to read, full of adventure and interest, covering all sorts of topics, from languages, manuscripts, university politics, women's roles, church politics, Bible, to travel, history and war. And it gives another bit of background to the search and discovery of the Biblical manuscripts.



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What is EFAC?

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

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

1. To promote the ultimate authority, the teaching and the use of God's written word in matters of both faith and conduct.
2. To promote this biblical obedience particularly in the areas of Christian discipleship, servant leadership, church renewal, and mission in the world.
3. To foster support and collaboration among evangelical Anglicans throughout Australia.
4. To function as a resource group to develop and encourage biblically faithful leadership in all spheres of life.
5. To provide a forum, where appropriate:
 - a) for taking counsel together to develop policies and strategies in matters of common concern
 - b) for articulating gospel distinctives in the area of faith, order, life and mission by consultations and publications.
6. To promote evangelism through the local church and planting new congregations.
7. To coordinate and encourage EFAC branches/ groups in provinces or dioceses of the Anglican Church in Australia.

EFAC Australia membership

(incl. *Essentials*) \$40 per year (\$25 students, missionaries, retired persons).

Essentials subscription only
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