

# ESSENTIALS

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**The Fellowship of Confessing Anglicans.....page 1**

*Richard Condie reminds us of the aims of FCA*

**Marriage and Christ.....page 2**

*Martin Bleby on the key to understanding marriage*

**A Brief History of Gender.....page 6**

*Daniel Patterson on queering institutions*

**Juvenescence.....page 16**

*Stephen Hale on the gift of a one hundred year life*

## BIBLE STUDY

**‘Lord, if you had been here’ .....page 11**

*Thom Bull on John 11*

## BOOK REVIEWS

*Child, Arise* by Jane Dowling — *From Strength to Strength* by Allan Blanch

*Calvin’s 1541 Institutes* translated by Robert White — *Beyond Belief* by Hugh MacKay

*William Cooper, Gentle Warrior* by Barbara Miller — *The Plausibility Problem* by Ed Shaw





# Speaking through doors of trouble



**T**he Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse continues its work in Newcastle as this issue of *Essentials* is being prepared. All dioceses of Australia have been affected by the Commission and its requests for information and its public hearings. It is painful to hear how the Lord's sheep have been so badly abused and mistreated. As well, some feel as though it has sucked the oxygen out of the leadership of the church.

There is a strong motivation to retreat from it all: not to hear any more reports; to retreat to whatever spiritual comfort zone we prefer and get on with an un-engagement with the bad world out there.

Child abuse is not the only stress point for us. The ongoing debates about marriage, sexuality and gender add further motivation for us to keep our heads down. What seemed to be a simple matter of redefining marriage turns out to be part of a much larger social reconstruction of identity and human relationships. Where did this come from some of us ask? And what do we do with it?

In this issue we have some helpful examples of how to apply the scriptures to these issues. It is encouraging that applying the scriptures is still a good idea. More than a good idea. We should expect that the Creator who has revealed himself in word and deed, and spoken by his Son, should have provided sufficient revelation for us to be able understand how to respond to these changes.

But it is apparent that applying the scriptures is not always a simple matter. This is partly because often 'the issue is not the issue'. That is why thoughtful analyses of the issues, such as we have in this issue of *Essentials*, need to go hand in hand with applying the scriptures.

Although it feels that we are reacting in these debates, they are also exposing open doors for the gospel as they reveal how some people are thinking. It may look a lot like Romans 1 but Romans 3 still describes what God can do. And wants to do. And is doing through disciples who have the scriptures and the Spirit.



Dale Appleby, WA  
Editor

## Comments Invited

**If you have** a brief, reflective, good humoured, candid, generous, shrewd or even witty comment or question (of one hundred words or less) that you'd like to share with the *Essentials* readership regarding one of the articles in this issue please send it to [essentialised@gmail.com](mailto:essentialised@gmail.com) by October 31.

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# The Fellowship of Confessing Anglicans



**Richard Condie reminds us of the aims of the Fellowship of Confessing Anglicans Australia (FCA-AUS)**

Richard Condie is the Bishop of Tasmania and the Chair of FCA Australia

**FCA Australia** is part of a world-wide fellowship of Anglicans who confess the *Jerusalem Declaration* as a contemporary statement of orthodox Anglican faith. It was born out of the first Global Anglican Future Conference (GAFCON) which was held in Jerusalem in 2008. FCA/GAFCON is a movement within the Anglican Communion to continue to reform the Anglican Church by the biblical gospel.

FCA has two main aims. The first aim is to promote orthodox Anglican faith and practice. We believe this orthodoxy is summed up in the *Jerusalem Declaration*, and is also upheld in a plain reading of the Fundamental Declarations of the Constitution of the Anglican Church in Australia. FCA-Australia intend to meet this aim through conferences, papers and lectures where we try and contribute to educating people in this faith. We believe doing this will help heal, reform and revitalise our mission in the world.

Our second aim is to provide fellowship for orthodox Anglicans who find themselves in a minority position in their own dioceses due to actions of others who depart from orthodox faith and practice. It is no surprise that there is a growing tide among Anglicans around the world to pursue theological novelty, and try to make it normative. The most glaring example is the re-writing of the biblical ethics of sexuality, but there are many other examples as well. When this novelty becomes the norm, it puts pressure on those who uphold the orthodoxy expressed in our first aim. In some cases, working in a diocese that teaches as truth, what you (and the long history of Christian thought) consider to be error, or calling good what you

consider to be sin, will be an unbearable burden. FCA has pledged to stand with people in this position.

Providing this fellowship may be as simple as recognizing as Anglican those who still hold to Anglican formularies where the prevailing culture has long since abandoned them. FCA-Australia recognises the Anglican Church in North America (ACNA) as authentically Anglican sisters and brothers, even



Photo: Russell Powell

though they are officially out of communion with Canterbury.

FCA-Australia shares a lot in common with EFAC, but is different in two respects. First, it is intentionally a broader tent than EFAC, in that it embraces all orthodox Anglicans including those who don't identify as evangelical. In fact globally, there are as many orthodox catholic Anglicans as part of FCA as there are evangelicals. And second, FCA is less focused on equipping for ministry than is EFAC, and is more focused on the structures and governance of the Anglican communion than is EFAC. We believe both fellowships are complementary.

Membership is open to all who can give their support to the *Jerusalem Declaration*. Details can be found on the FCA website: [www.fca-aus.org.au](http://www.fca-aus.org.au)



# Marriage and Christ



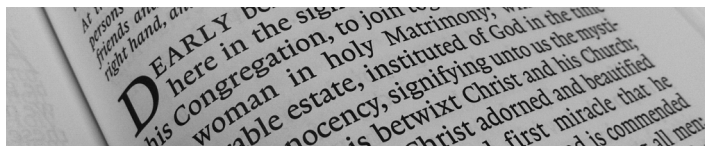
Martin Bleby, ordained as a priest in the Anglican Church, has served in country, outback and metropolitan South Australia.

**M**arriage, in the words of the marriage service, 'is an honourable state of life, instituted from the beginning by God himself, *signifying to us the spiritual union that is between Christ and his Church*'.<sup>1</sup> Is the linking of our marriages to the relationship of Jesus Christ with his people just a nice idea, an interesting likeness, a helpful symbol? Or is there more to it than that? Could the relationship between Christ and his Church be a key to understanding what marriage is really all about, especially in these days of contesting uncertainty as to the true nature and value of marriage? Might it take us further—even to the heart of the purpose for which all things exist?

## Christ and his Church

In the Bible, God's purpose for his creation culminates in the marriage of Christ with his Church. In the new heaven and new earth, God's people are depicted as 'a bride adorned for her husband', and we hear that 'the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready'.<sup>2</sup>

Paul the apostle links marriage in this age with that ultimate marriage of Christ with his people in Ephesians 5:31–32. First he quotes God's institution of marriage in Genesis 2:24: 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two will become one flesh'. From the context, we would expect him to say that he is applying this text to the marriage of a man and a woman. But he goes on to say: 'This is a great mystery, and I am applying it to *Christ and the church*'.



Paul is saying that when God in the beginning instituted marriage between a man and a woman, what God had in view was the relationship that would come to be in the end between Christ and his people. It's as if God was thinking: 'What can I do, to give these human creatures of mine a taste of how much I love them? I'll make them male and female, and bring them together in a fruitful, devoted and life-long union.'

American theologian Jonathan Edwards (1703–1758) came to this conclusion:

'The end of the creation of God was to provide a spouse for his Son Jesus Christ, that might enjoy him and on whom he might pour forth his love. . . . heaven and earth were created that the Son of God might be complete in a spouse . . . There was, [as] it were, an eternal society or family in the Godhead, in the Trinity of persons. It seems to be God's design to admit the church into the divine family as his Son's wife.'<sup>3</sup>

Geoffrey Bromiley sees this union with Christ as 'the prototype of the marital union', not the other way round, since God 'made marriage in the image of his own eternal marriage with his people':

In creating man—male and female—in his own image, and joining them together so that they become one flesh, God makes us copies both of himself in his trinitarian unity and distinction as one God and three persons and of himself in relation to the people of his gracious election. Hence 'We know the true reality of marriage from God's way of dealing with us and the inward and eternal fellowship that he establishes'.<sup>4</sup> Every marriage is intended to be a reflection of, and can be a participation in, this great reality that will culminate in the union, in Christ, of God with his people.

## Christian Marriage

What are the implications of this for marriage as it has taken shape in Christian understanding and practice? Marriage is 'the legal union of a man with a woman for life'. The word is also used for 'the legal or religious ceremony that sanctions or formalises the decision of a man and a woman to live as husband and wife'.<sup>5</sup> Elements that make it a marriage, as distinct from other forms of union or relationship, are that it is between a man and a woman, by the consent and decision of both parties; it is recognised and affirmed by the wider community according to the law of the land, and it is witnessed to in a formal ceremony. These elements are common to humanity across most cultures.

Marriage, according to law in Australia, is 'the union of a man and a woman to the exclusion of all others, voluntarily entered into for life'.<sup>6</sup> This understanding of marriage largely accords with Christian belief and practice. Since the New Testament trains husbands to love their wives, and wives to love their husbands,<sup>7</sup> a Christian definition could be expanded to be 'the union *in mutual love* of a man and a woman, to the exclusion of all others, voluntarily entered into for life'.

Pressure from expressions of marriage as practised or desired by diverse cultural and interest groups raises questions as

to why marriage should be this way. Can same-sex unions be regarded as marriage? Why not polygamy (a number of wives—as found in the Old Testament), or polyandry (a number of husbands), or a mixture of both? What about arranged, or under-age marriages? Does marriage need to be permanent? Why bother to get married at all—why not just cohabitation?

In this context, Christians who want to support and commend the Christian understanding and experience of marriage need to be clear as to its basis. Is it all about the sexual relationship? Is it just a private arrangement for mutual convenience? Is it mainly for reproduction and the raising of offspring? Is it a communal construct for the better ordering of society? Is it primarily a legal contract regarding the sharing of property? Is companionship its main emphasis? Marriage based solely on any or each of these views will take on a particular character, and will have its own cut-off points. But what if marriage, more deeply than all of these, is grounded in the intentional purpose of our Creator for humanity? In particular, if the basis of marriage is the relationship between Christ and his Church, what is it about this relationship that makes marriage what Christians now know it to be?

#### *the union*

Christ became one flesh with us, and in our flesh took the condemnation due to our sin, in his suffering and death—you can't get closer to anyone than that.<sup>8</sup> So marriage is the honouring of the other person 'with all that I am and all that I have'.<sup>9</sup>

#### *in mutual love*

God's saving action in relationship with us comes about entirely by God's love—'God so loved the world that he gave his only Son'. 'Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her . . . he nourishes and tenderly cares for it' as his own body. In turn, we are to 'have an undying love for our Lord Jesus Christ'.<sup>10</sup> Hence a husband and wife are 'to love and to cherish' one another.<sup>11</sup>

#### *of a man and a woman*

The creation of human persons as male and female, differentiated and yet of the same substance, is linked in the Scriptures with us being in the image of God, and with the differentiation-in-unity within God between the Father and the Son. The coming-together of man and woman in marriage is also linked with the relationship of God in Christ with his people—markedly distinct, yet with an amazing affinity.<sup>12</sup> In reflection of this, marriage, in scripture, is between a man and a woman, not between a woman and a woman, or a man and a man.<sup>13</sup>

#### *to the exclusion of all others*

Christ, the 'Faithful and True', is single-hearted and undistracted in his saving love for his people. By the same token, we are to have 'a sincere and pure devotion to Christ'.<sup>14</sup> So marriage

has the character of 'close your heart to every love but mine', and 'forsaking all others'.<sup>15</sup>

#### *voluntarily entered into*

God is not obliged to relate with human beings, 'as though he needed anything'—he chooses to do so out of love.<sup>16</sup> In that, God has made us to 'feel after him and find him'.<sup>17</sup> Christ of his own freewill engaged in carrying out God's purpose, and we come into true freedom as we relate with him.<sup>18</sup> Before the vows are made in a marriage service, the couple are asked the preliminary question, 'will you [are you willing to] take this woman/this man...?'—of your own freewill, without compulsion.<sup>19</sup>

#### *for life*

Jesus, 'having loved his own . . . loved them to the end'.<sup>20</sup> So marriage is 'till death us do part', for 'as long as we both shall live'.<sup>21</sup>

We see then that marriage as Christians have come to understand and practice it derives from and is shaped by our knowledge and experience of Christ's relationship with us. And God's relationship with us in Christ lies at the heart of God's purpose for this world.

### **Marriage and the Purpose of God**

God purpose for the world is perhaps best expressed in Ephesians 1:3–6:



Photo by Helen Chang, used under creative commons licence. flickr.com/photos/drwofaninva/7826179356

‘the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ . . . chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless before him in love. He destined us for adoption as his children through Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace that he freely bestowed on us in the beloved.’

Note three particular elements here: Firstly ‘adoption as his children’—the forming of a family.<sup>22</sup> Secondly, holy and blameless before him’—positive moral purity.<sup>23</sup> Lastly, in love’—issuing from God’s love, resulting in us loving.<sup>24</sup>

Interestingly, these correspond to the purposes given in Christian marriage services for which God instituted marriage—having families and bringing them up, sexual purity and faithfulness, and loving companionship: Firstly: ‘it was ordained for the procreation of children, to be brought up in the fear and nurture of the Lord, and to the praise of his holy Name’.<sup>25</sup> As expressed in a more recent form of the marriage service: ‘In marriage a new family is established in accordance with God’s purpose, so that children may be born and nurtured in secure and loving care, for their well-being and instruction, and for the good order of society, to the glory of God’.<sup>26</sup>

Secondly: ‘it was ordained for a remedy against sin, and to avoid fornication’.<sup>27</sup> Modern marriage services say it less directly, yet positively, as ‘the proper expression of natural instincts and affections’ with which God has endowed us, or living ‘a chaste and holy life, as befits members of Christ’s body’.<sup>28</sup>

Thirdly: ‘it was ordained for the mutual society, help, and comfort, that the one ought to have of the other, both in prosperity and adversity’.<sup>29</sup> ‘In the joys and sorrows of life, in prosperity and adversity, they share their companionship, faithfulness and strength’.<sup>30</sup>

These three ‘purposes’, derived from the New Testament Scriptures, were commonplaces of mediaeval scholastic theology, and were expounded at length in early Calvinistic services. They were introduced into the English prayer book in 1549, and

so were included in the Book of Common Prayer of 1662.<sup>31</sup> From there they have made their way, in various forms, into later marriage services. Here they are given in the original order: family, sexual purity, and loving companionship. More recent services have reversed this order, giving priority to loving com-

## **A friend heard a colleague once say, ‘I hate Jesus, and I hate marriage!’ Interesting that she put those two together.**

panionship and the sexual relationship, with family issuing from that. Either way, they clearly correspond to the greater purpose of God for humanity, as expressed in Ephesians 1:3–6.

### **The Struggle for Marriage**

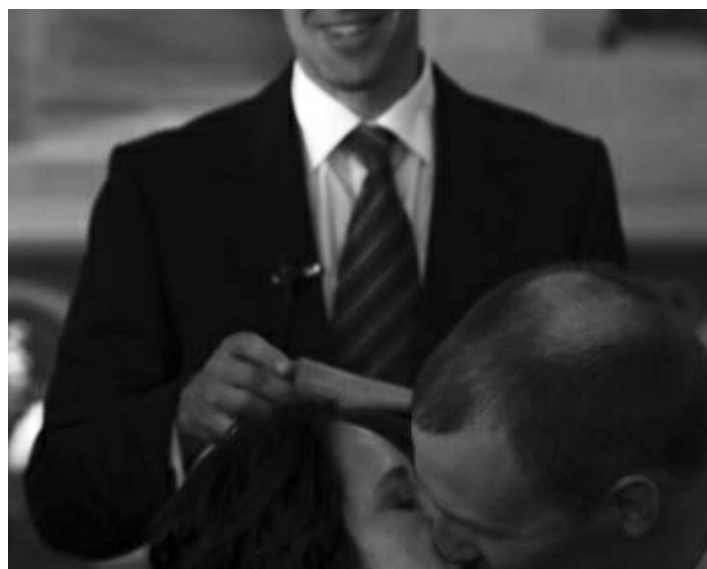
Given this correspondence, it is not difficult to see why marriage should come under attack, consciously or unconsciously, from those who at present are not aligned with the purpose of God, since it represents in practice that from which they are alienated, or against which they are opposed. A friend who works in human services heard a colleague once say, ‘I hate Jesus, and I hate marriage!’ Interesting that she put those two together. She went on to ask my friend, ‘You’re not one of those Jesus freaks, are you?’ and my friend replied, ‘Well, yes, as a matter of fact I am’.<sup>32</sup>

How should we engage in this struggle? In favour of retaining marriage as it is, it can be well argued that ‘a kid should have a mum and a dad’, and that marriage is a ‘central structure of human nature . . . which has underpinned the wellbeing of society’.<sup>33</sup> There is a place for participating in the public discourse at that level. But there is much more that we can say—and are we not called upon to do so? Why are we hesitant to speak of God in this context? Can we not say that marriage is a sacred bond, instituted by our Creator in making us male and female in the first place; that it is a living sign in our midst of our intended union with God, now and into eternity; and that to change or extend marriage to include other relationships is ultimately to undermine and discard true marriage, and all that it stands for, to our great harm?

Even better, should we not be doing all we can to bring more people through faith and repentance into that relationship with Christ, so that marriage in our community may continue to take its shape from him, and from his relationship with us?

### **The Secret of the Universe**

Is all this just fanciful, out of touch, and irrelevant to where people are in their lives today? A story to finish: A number of years ago in January we were staying at Victor Harbour, a seaside resort on South Australia’s southern coast. One after-



noon we went for a walk to Granite Island across the causeway. At that time there was a chairlift from the end of the causeway to the highest point on the island. Our youngest son wanted a ride on the chairlift, so we put him and his mate on the chairlift, to go up to the top of the hill and down again, and we stayed chatting with the chairlift operator, who seemed to want to talk with us. A very interesting fellow. He was sitting there, getting rather bored, but watching the people come across the causeway, and thinking deeply. Called himself quite a spiritual person, and told us of one or two experiences that made him think this was so. Told us how he had been in and out of churches, but

how he believed in God. I had not identified myself as a Christian or a minister—he just came out with all this. He ended up telling us about his marriage. How, when he met his wife, this was one relationship that did not chill off after a while, like all the others had, but remained and grew, and drew him out of himself into the life of another person. And he said, ‘Do you know why I think we get married? It’s not just to have children and raise a family. It is to discover the secret of the universe. I really mean, of God.’ We need to trust that the Holy Spirit is out there, bringing God’s truth to bear in the lives of people—including this chairlift operator!



<sup>1</sup> Anglican Church of Australia, *An Australian Prayer Book (AAPB)*, Sydney 1978 p. 548, emphasis added.

<sup>2</sup> Revelation 20:2; 19:7. The ‘Lamb’ is the figure of the crucified and resurrected Jesus Christ—see Revelation 5:5–6. Unless otherwise noted, the Scripture quotations contained herein are from the New Revised Standard Version Bible; copyright ©1989, Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

<sup>3</sup> Jonathan Edwards, *Miscellanies*, as reproduced in Robert W. Jenson, *America’s Theologian: A Recommendation of Jonathan Edwards*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1992, pp. 42–43.

<sup>4</sup> Geoffrey Bromiley, *God and Marriage*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1980, pp. 43, 56, 77.

<sup>5</sup> *The Macquarie Dictionary*, Macquarie University, NSW, second edition, 1991, p. 1091.

<sup>6</sup> Commonwealth of Australia, Marriage Act 1961, as amended in 2004, Subsection 5(1).

<sup>7</sup> See Ephesians 5:25, 28; Titus 2:4.

<sup>8</sup> See John 1:14; Romans 8:3; Ephesians 5:29–30; compare Genesis 2:23–24; Matthew 19:4–6.

<sup>9</sup> Anglican Church of Australia, *A Prayer Book for Australia (APBA)*, Broughton Books, 1995, p. 661.

<sup>10</sup> See John 3:16; 1 John 4:7–12; Ephesians 5:25, 29; 6:24; 1 Corinthians 16:22.

<sup>11</sup> APBA p. 649.

<sup>12</sup> See Genesis 1:26–27; 1 Corinthians 11:3; John 10:30; 14:28; Ephesians 5:29–30; Isaiah 46:5; Colossians 1:15, 19; Revelation 21:3.

<sup>13</sup> See Genesis 2:23–24; Matthew 19:4–6.

<sup>14</sup> See Revelation 19:11; Mark 10:32–34; 2 Corinthians 5:14–15; 11:2–3; compare Exodus 20:2–3.

<sup>15</sup> See Song of Songs 8:6–7 *Good News Bible* © American Bible Society 1976; Proverbs 5:15–23; APBA p. 648.

<sup>16</sup> See Acts 17:25; Deuteronomy 7:7–8; John 15:16.

<sup>17</sup> See Acts 17:26–27 (Revised Standard Version).

<sup>18</sup> See Mark 15:36; Hebrews 10:5–7; John 8:31–36.

<sup>19</sup> Holy Matrimony, *Book of Common Prayer 1662 (BCP)*.

<sup>20</sup> John 13:1.

<sup>21</sup> Holy Matrimony, *BCP*; A Service for Marriage, *APBA* p.649; see Matthew 22:23–31.

<sup>22</sup> Compare Hebrews 2:10, 13; Revelation 7:9; 21:7; Romans 8: 15–16, 28–29; John 20:17.

<sup>23</sup> Compare Philippians 1:10; 1 John 3:2–3; Leviticus 19:2; Matthew 5:8; 1 Thessalonians 4:3–7; Hebrews 13:4.

<sup>24</sup> Compare 1 John 4:7–10; Matthew 22:37–39; 5:44–49; Romans 5:6, 9, 10.

<sup>25</sup> *BCP*.

<sup>26</sup> *APBA*, p. 647. See Ephesians 6:1–4; Colossians 3:20–21.

<sup>27</sup> *BCP*; see 1 Corinthians 7:2, 5, 36.

<sup>28</sup> *AAPB*, pp. 560, 548.

<sup>29</sup> *BCP*.

<sup>30</sup> *APBA*, p. 647. See Ephesians 5:25, 28; Titus 2:4; Ecclesiastes 4:9–12.

<sup>31</sup> See Francis Procter and Walter Howard Frere, *A New History of the Book of Common Prayer with a Rationale of Its Offices*, Macmillan, London, 1965, pp. 612–13.

<sup>32</sup> Names withheld; used by permission.

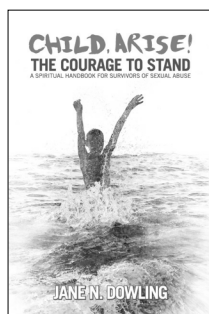
<sup>33</sup> <http://australianmarriage.org>, accessed 10 March 2016.

## Child, Arise

*A Spiritual Handbook For Survivors Of Sexual Abuse*

**Jane N Dowling**

David Lovell Publishing, 2015



**Child, Arise by Jane Dowling** is a Christian “Handbook for Survivors of Sexual Abuse”, especially abuse by clergy. The book is a gentle, almost tremulous, series of personal reflections on biblical passages, whose genesis lies in her fearful preparations to appear before the Royal Commission for Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. It is a book by a victim for other vic-

tics; by one who has spent countless hours meditating on the Scriptures and applying them to her own situation. Evangelical Christians might be surprised that a Roman Catholic author can so powerfully apply Bible passages to the painful journey of survival, without ignoring the original context of the texts chosen, and their place in the unfolding scheme of divine revelation. *Child, Arise* helps the reader feel the pain, shame and paralysis of victims of sexual abuse, but provides inspiration, encouragement and hope from prayerful reflection on the words of God.

**A.H. (Tony) Nichols., WA**

## AUSTRALIAN CHRISTIAN BOOK OF THE YEAR

*Child, Arise* was recently announced as Sparklit’s Australian Christian Book of the Year for 2016 . Congratulations to Jane Dowling and David Lovell Publishing.

# A brief history of gender and its significance

If you wonder where the current gender agenda has been forged and why, Dan Patterson is here to help explain its roots.



Dan Patterson is an Australian writing a PhD on gender at the University of Aberdeen School of Divinity, History and Philosophy. He co-ordinates [www.embraceidentity.org](http://www.embraceidentity.org)

**T**he topic of gender has recently captured the public's attention. One reason for this is the radical attempt by some organisations and theorists to "queer" gender. What follows describes, albeit in brief, the historical and theoretical backstory that has led to the development and use of queer theory to achieve this end. Evangelical responses to this issue will be greatly enriched by better understanding the history that has brought us to this point. This article is not an attempt to engage the debate, but is focussed on the more modest task of explaining the historical and theoretical parameters of the debate.

## A VERY BRIEF HISTORY

Questioning gender norms in the past has catalysed significant changes to culturally embedded gender norms. Following is a brief recount of how gender has been under question for over 100 years, and how each new wave of questioning of gender norms can be characterised by distinct emphases falling under the broad banner called feminism. The historical questioning of gender norms can be divided broadly into three feminist waves, each offering a depth of social analysis the previous wave did not achieve.

It is not accurate to say that queer theory is feminism or even a kind of feminism, but one is able to identify queer theorisation as having emerged from and in response to perceived inadequacies of a particular formulation of feminism of the 1980s.<sup>1</sup>

## First-wave Feminism

First-wave feminism is the retrospective title given by Martha Lear in 1968 to the 19th to early 20th century movement, which sought to challenge gender norms regulated by the law. In the early stages of the movement the concern centred on contractual and property rights for women. This included the call to reform the institution of chattel marriage within which the wife and children were deemed the property of the husband. Eventually, the focus turned to the political goal of suf-

frage for women. This first feminist movement was concerned with securing women's *legal rights* within the democratic nation state.

## Second-wave Feminism

Having generally secured democratic rights for women, a second wave of feminist activity began in the early 1960s and continued to the mid to late 1980s. This movement focussed on more subjective issue of gender inequality within society, and was bound to a broader social liberation movement that included the identification of oppression on the basis of race and class.

In this period feminist theorists picked up on Simone de Beauvoir's famous line penned in her 1949 book *The Second Sex*: "one is not born a woman, but becomes one." Here de Beauvoir proffered the view that "woman" was a socially constructed idea defined in relation to man. De Beauvoir argued that woman was not simply *not man*, but was something in her own right. This view did not imply a rejection of gender as biologically grounded, but identified the gender norms to be challenged as those constituting a particular cultural script that limited what women could and could not do with their lives.<sup>2</sup>

In 1963 a very influential book by Betty Friedan called *The Feminine Mystique* introduced "The problem that has no name".<sup>3</sup> This problem emerged from the silent disquiet experienced by housewives seduced by the myth that to be feminine was a woman's highest calling. Women were to marry (young), have (many) children, keep the home (tidy), and service their husband's (every) need. But Friedan observed that women's lives were not fulfilled in the humdrum of wifery and motherhood. The challenging of gender norms that followed spurned gender (and sexuality) normdriven conservatism. If, as de Beauvoir concluded, one *became* a woman, then one could *become* another woman.

But by the early 1980s little progress had been made in securing women's equality with men. Women were still subjected to poor pay conditions and were hindered by limited education and vocation opportunities. Women also lacked representation in workers' unions and so continually faced job insecurity. The glass ceiling, which remained firmly in place, is an instructive metaphor for comprehending the rise of third wave feminism that would soon follow.

The ceiling is a metaphorical barrier, an unseen cultural reality, restricting who or what one might become. It eludes one's grasp, operating without reason or explanation to keep certain people in their place. That it evades being named otherwise than as a metaphor (glass ceiling) aptly demonstrates how resistant to defeat it is. This inaccessible and therefore unassail-



able structuring of society, inhibited (and arguably still inhibits) women's equality with men.

While first and second wave feminism achieved much with regard to legal rights and equality with men, their ideas and theories did not have the potency to break through the social structuring that kept women, and the increasingly visible and vocal sexual and gender minorities (gays, lesbians, and gender non-conforming people) in their place. Third-wave feminism would emerge in part as a reaction to this failure.<sup>4</sup> What was desired was a powerful *method* that could be deployed to undermine the norms informing the society forming structures.

### Third-wave Feminism

Third-wave feminism was coined in 1992 by Rebecca Walters to describe a new wave of feminism that emerged in the mid 1980s.<sup>5</sup> It was consolidated in the early 1990s, and continues to the present. Like the two previous waves of feminism the third wave targeted gender norms, but not those concerning women's rights, as slaves to be liberated from the law (first-wave), or equality with men, as actors to be liberated from following a social script (second-wave). Third-wave feminists fought for *liveable lives*. Interestingly, defining what is a liveable life is not the primary focus of third wave feminism. The emphasis is on who or what decides is a liveable life.

Engaging in the current gender debate, however, requires an understanding of the kind of politics involved. The third-wave feminist focus has led to a clash of two forms of "minority" politics—identity politics and queer politics—that are difficult to identify separately.

In the 1970s and 1980s *identity politics* was the means of creating social change. This form of collective politics relied on minority groups becoming a movement which could then raise

### **"Engaging in the current gender debate requires an understanding of the kind of politics involved"**

its voice to influence policy and law makers. This kind of minority politics still operates, where those who comprise an identity-driven group work together to define themselves, not according to the views of the prevailing power structures, but by how they see the identity they collectively inhabit. There are currently many feminist, LGBT, disability, and minority race movements reflecting this kind of politicking.

During the 1980s, however, the original identity politics movements, especially those concerned with women, gays and lesbians, began to fracture internally, as it became evident that the respective movements did not, and could not, speak for their constituents. For example, the term "woman" meant something different for a heterosexual married woman than a woman who was a lesbian, or even a woman of African de-

scent. The concept of "Woman" had been defined by a particular "Woman", usually white, middle class, and heterosexual, which marginalised many other women who did not or could not fit within the definition.

With the realisation that identity terms did not have representational coverage, the very idea of identity, and therefore identity politics, was thrown into question. This is the beginning of *queer politics*, which is essentially a more fundamental level of criticism of the linguistic concepts that structure gender. The term "woman", for example, could not be used to describe all women because there was no definition of woman that could possibly represent all women. "Woman" or "Man", it was argued, were not universal categories, ideals, ahistorical givens to be assumed, or an essential experienced gendered reality. "Woman" and "Man" were constructions in binary form (Man/Woman), inseparable, self-informing and selfreinforcing, words to be assumed, a myth that society had come to believe deeply, a myth that structured how society would understand a good, valid, and morally right human gendered and sexual existence. The deconstruction of the established meaning of words is the basis of queer politics.

Queer politics is developed by queer theorists, like Judith Butler, drawing on twentieth century French theorists, like Luce Irigaray, Michel Foucault, and Jacques Derrida. They viewed the person (called a subject) as a product of language, who was in constant production. Language was a tool used by the powerful to make and regulate subjects. If one was to seize control of language then one had secured the means to (re)produce and maintain one's self, including their sexuality and gender. This deconstruction or queer theorisation of language enabled one to reject being defined (subjectified) by the law, medicine, the church, a social script, nature, or a collective identity. Instead one now had the tools (language) and the possibility to construct (re-subjectify) one's self. A liveable life was now perhaps possible.

### QUEERING INSTITUTIONS

In order to understand the word "queer" in this context it is important to highlight what the term queer does not mean. Firstly, the term queer in this context is not a synonym for homosexual. Nor is queer to be narrowly associated with "camp" or effeminate personalities, or pejoratively as weird. Secondly, while it can be the case, the term queer should not be understood as necessarily being concerned with the promotion of gender diversity or, more dramatically, the eradication of gender. With these two clarifications in mind the possibility is raised that the term queer is not necessarily a word to be avoided simply because it describes lifestyles which one believes are contrary to Scripture.

The term queer is difficult to describe, explain, and comprehend because it, by definition, resists definition. In brief, queer describes an action, something done, a *method of action that undermines institutions which perpetuate norms*. Queer-ing pro-

duces “outcomes” through a process of deconstruction or breaking down. These outcomes are not, however, the positive production or creation of something in particular, but what is left over after bringing down a system that determines what is normal.

The result of queering, it is argued, cannot therefore be known until after the queering process occurs, which also means that one does not queer something to achieve or create a particular outcome. Queering focuses on eliminating the violence that results from imposing on people ways of living or being—norms. For example, theorists who seek to queer the



Judith Butler. By University of California, Berkeley.  
commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=31967265

institution of capitalism do not offer alternatives. Their goal is both more modest and more radical: to undermine the institution in question that structures “normal” lives, in order to reveal new ways of living apart from or even within the institution itself. These possibilities come to light incrementally as the institution under question crumbles.

Queer theorists see gender as an institution, by which they mean a social convention or arrangement sustained by a set of accepted determinative ideas—norms. It is for this reason that gender must be queered because it is a harmful institution that forcibly frames (constructs or makes) society’s subjects. Queer theory seeks to undermine (deconstruct) the view that the only valid existence is that which falls within the boundaries set by the institution of gender that is ordered by nature or biology. That is, queer theories reject bio logic: that the body (man/woman morphology) has inherent meaning demanding one to act in a certain way in society (masculinity/femininity), and is desirous of and sexually active with the other kind of body (heterosexuality). Put crassly, queer theorists reject the *fact* that men have a penis, are masculine, and desire and have sexual relations with women; and they reject the *fact* that women have a vagina, are feminine, and desire and have sexual relations with men. Human gendered and sexuality experience, they argue, is much more diverse. Queering gender is therefore an attempt to reveal and legitimise other liveable gendered and sexuality realities apart from or besides those prescribed by the bio-logical man/woman gender binary.

By calling gender a constructed and an enforced myth, and exposing the violent nature of it (which will be addressed later),

gender as bio-logical is slowly undermined—queered. Through queering gender, we learn that man and woman may be something other than that which we have always been *told* our bodies naturally tell us. Politically, the body loses its inherent significance, thereby relinquishing its capacity to tell society how each member of society should understand him or herself, and how each should act socially and sexually.

## Norms, violence, and institutions

Gender is a harmful institution because it frames society’s social subjects according to a particular set of norms. The queer theorist’s goal, therefore, is to break down the institution of gender by undermining the norms that constitute it. It is for this reason that queer theorists target norms.

Norms function like the law, which invokes punishment—a “violent” consequence— if not upheld. But if the law is a myth, then any form of prosecution for transgressing the law is without warrant. Applying the analogy to gender, if gender is a myth then any form of “prosecution” for transgressing gender norms is without warrant. The perpetrated violence against those who do not comply with gender norms is therefore unjustified.

Further to this, as a form of law, gender norms are regulating mechanisms policed by an institution. Throughout his work, Michel Foucault argues that the church, legal, and medical institutions have assumed the maintenance and enforcement of gender norms. Therefore norms are the grounds by which those who transgress gender norms (bodily<sup>6</sup> in some cases and psychologically<sup>7</sup> in others) are punished by social structuring institutions.

Take for example the regulation and prosecution of homosexuality in Australia’s recent history, which might be used as evidence of the narrative of the transition of institutional violence. The colonies received their law from British law, which had its origins in ecclesial law. In Britain, The Buggery Act (1533) was pushed through parliament by Reformer, Thomas Cromwell. This was the first time sodomy, qualified as an unnatural act against God and man (theologised bio-logic), had been removed from the jurisdiction of the ecclesial (church) court. The punishment was death by hanging.<sup>7</sup> In 1788, British laws, along with their ecclesial backing and founding, were transferred to the Australian colonies. Engaging in buggery or anal sex (un-natural sex) was a capital offence until 1899, which in Victoria was not repealed until 1949. Punishment became life imprisonment, which was slowly reduced until the law was repealed in full beginning in the A.C.T. in 1973.<sup>8</sup> Carbery speculates that the lighter prison sentences were due to a social conscience change as the view of homosexuality as a sin, immoral, and against natural order changed to seeing it as something more akin to sickness in need of medical treatment.

This resonates with the wider sociological trend of the impact of Freud’s psychology and the waning influence of the church on society. Thus the decline of the legal regulation of

homosexuality did not result in its wholesale deregulation, but rather its transferral to the medical institution for (re)regulation. Throughout the mid 20th century, while having escaped the gallows and imprisonment, homosexuals throughout the world were involuntarily committed to psychiatric institutions where they were castrated, given aversion therapy, electric shock treatment and/or, at times, lobotomies.<sup>9</sup> The link between gender norms (law), violence (punishment), and institutions (regulator) is evident in such narratives.

While hangings and lobotomies are not carried out on those who do not fit gender and sexuality norms in Australia today, gender theorists still observe different kinds of violence. For the right to impact school settings on these issues, studies describing such violence are appealed to by organisations like Safe Schools Coalition.<sup>10</sup> The implication is that the education institution regulates and prosecutes oppressive and violent gender norms. The focus of such organisations is therefore the queer-

## “gender must be queered because it is a harmful institution”

ing of gender (and therefore sexuality) as bio-logical. The aim is to perpetuate the claim that gender is a myth, a socially constructed idea, to be eradicated on the grounds that it perpetuates stigma, exclusion, harassment, bullying, etc.

Queering gender is also seen in the medical institution. The most recent revision of the Diagnostics Statistics Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM), which is the most prominent medical resource used by the medical profession to identify psychological disorders, renames Gender Identity Disorder as Gender Dysphoria (the condition when one's gender self-identification does not match their body). The change in *language* is an attempt to distance the diagnosis from the notion of disorder, with the thought that the term “dysphoria” would better characterise the feelings of those affected, thereby reducing the attached stigma (violence).<sup>11</sup> A cursory inquiry shows that the name change is not simply relabelling, but a substantial reconfiguring of how gender is conceived.

In the DSM-V, terminology has been revised to disconnect gender from biological sex. One no longer has a “sex”, but an “assigned gender”. This means that someone who is diagnosable with Gender Dysphoria no longer identifies only with the “other sex”—implying that there are only two—but identifies with the “other sex” or “some alternative gender different from one's assigned gender”.<sup>12</sup> The issue then is not whether one's perceived gender is congruent with one's biological sex, but whether one's perceived gender is congruent with the gender one was assigned at birth. The possibility enabled by the revision becomes clear: if gender is assigned, then gender can be reassigned. The term “assign” is a metaphor that renders gender

(boy/girl) identification at birth *provisional* pending either confirmation or replacement at a later stage.

This example is not a comment on the often debilitating condition called Gender Dysphoria<sup>13</sup> or the broad phenomenon called Transgender, but is an observation of how gender within institutions can be queered through undermining the language used to describe it. If gender as bio-logical is a myth then the changes made to the DSM-V would seem appropriate. If, however, gender is not a socially constructed myth, then the theorisation behind the language change in the DSM-V, as well as the language found in the Safe Schools Coalition program, inaccurately and inadequately describes and treats the kinds of gender and sexuality confliction that characterises human bodies.

### AN IMPORTANT CONSIDERATION

An evangelical Christian response to the queering of gender in society must include a treatment of queer theory's foundational claim: that gender, traditionally understood, is a socially constructed myth and therefore violent. The difficulty with addressing this claim is that some aspects of gender are God-given and not socially constructed, while other aspects of gender are socially constructed, mythical, and violent: first and second wave feminism rightly recognised this. The fact is, gender is still the location of terrible violence. One current, highly complex example of gender violence is the placement of a transitioned male-to-female transgender person in a maximum security male prison in which she was raped over 2000 times in four years.<sup>14</sup> It can be argued, therefore, that gender norms are mythical and still operate in ways that result in dreadful violence.



Adam und Eva (detail) by Otto Mueller - Städel, Public Domain, commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=27248828

But the fact that gender norms *can* result in violence does not necessarily render gender norms mythical thereby necessitating their abolition. It is undoubtedly lamentable that some individuals experience various forms of violence. An evangelical response to queer theory requires serious rethinking about how the church can offer an alternate vision of Christian human flourishing that includes a norm driven notion of gender, while avoiding having those norms re-framed from being a God-given good into a “law” that is enacted “violently”.

What does it mean to hold up Adam and Eve as gendered humans *par excellence*? That Adam was a man and Eve was a woman, and were perfect flourishing human creatures as God intended is without question. We trust the words of Scripture,

and are encouraged by Jesus' reference to Adam and Eve in Matthew 19 to instruct on marriage. Adam and Eve are instructive, but what instruction do they give?

As humans *par excellence*, referencing Adam and Eve in discussions about gender can function *like* the Old Testament law. The Law functions by describing how one ought to live, but in doing so, also reveals those who are transgressing the Law. Applying this metaphorically, as perfect creations, Adam and Eve not only serve to describe a flourishing gendered and sexual life, but in this fallen age function as the ideal against which imperfect gendered and sexual humans are identified.

But who can live up to the Adam and Eve gendered and sexual ideals? This is not an insignificant question. Through the Law, as Scripture reminds us, comes not righteousness, but the "knowledge of sin" (Rom 3:20). Reflect for a moment on John 8 in which Jesus confronts the Pharisees who were about to stone an adulterous woman. Jesus calls the Pharisees' to acknowledge their own fallen-ness and in light of this to carry out their role of regulating the law. They put down their instruments of violence (stones), and walk away: not together, but one-by-one. As individuals the Pharisees were as guilty as the woman, able, yet now unwilling to carry out the role of punishing the women who transgressed sexuality law.

Turning to Jesus, he did not stone the woman according to the law, or condemn the Pharisees who indicted themselves, but instead showed mercy to all. This display of mercy, however, does not assume a neglect of the law or that Jesus refused to make the "hard call" that the law had been transgressed. In the last verse of the text, Jesus calls the woman back to a holy (sex) life: "Go and sin no more." This is the heart of the gospel: for the person who responds to Jesus' call to repent and follow him, Jesus would take on himself their penalty for transgressing the law. It is for this reason that Jesus could utter the words, "I have not come to abolish the law, but fulfil them" (Matt 5:17).

To extend the metaphor, the Adam and Eve pre-fall ideal is not to be the measure by which some "perfect" humans are able to judge others who transgress God's intentions for human life. Rather, the Adam and Eve ideal reveals that we all fall short of God's intention for a flourishing gendered and sexual existence revealing the universal need to encounter Jesus, to receive his mercy and grace, and to embrace the call to live as God intends.

With this in mind, how might we conduct discussions about gender and sexuality in a new way? How can our discussions be renovated by acknowledging the possible façade behind which we present ourselves as perfect models of gendered and sexual human flourishing? How does the realisation that first and foremost we need mercy compel us to extend the mercy given to us by Jesus? And how can we hear and communicate to others the call to embrace God's picture of human flourishing as *particular* created gendered and sexual beings? How can we

communicate God's intention for human flourishing without turning it into a "creation law"?

By approaching discussions about gender and sexuality in this way, queer theorists are not afforded the opportunity to control the terms of the discussion. This account repudiates the view that traditionally held Christian ideas about gender and sexuality are mythical, inherently violent, and in need of eradication. Rather, this account seeks to honestly acknowledge the way we tend to use gender norms to "prosecute" those who transgress God's intentions for human flourishing. Moreover, we are challenged to show mercy and call people back to God's intentions for human flourishing as gendered and sexual human beings. This, as we have seen, provides opportunity for a genuine gospel-encounter with Jesus.



<sup>1</sup> In this article I am specifically referring to Anglo-American queer theory.

<sup>2</sup> Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex* (New York: Vintage Books, 1973), 301. Later, Judith Butler famously picks up this quote to develop her more radical distinction between sex and gender, which would become the theoretical background for her very influential book *Gender Trouble*. For Butler's treatment of de Beauvoir, See Judith Butler, "Sex and Gender in Simone De Beauvoir's *Second Sex*," *Yale French Studies Special Addition*, 72, Simone de Beauvoir: Witness to a Century (1986).

<sup>3</sup> Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique* (New York: Norton, 2001, 1963), Chapter 1

<sup>4</sup> See Rebecca Walker, "Becoming the Third Wave," *Ms. Magazine* 1992, 39–41.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> I.e., Intersex, and those with conditions like Androgen Insensitivity Syndrome. <sup>7</sup> I.e., Gender Dysphoria and Transgender more broadly.

<sup>7</sup> "[T]he offenders being hereof convict [sic] by verdict, confession, or outlawry, shall suffer such pains of death". Henry VIII in Kenneth Borris, ed. *Same-Sex Desire in the English Renaissance: A Sourcebook of Texts, 1470-1650* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2004), 82.

<sup>8</sup> Graham Carbery, *Towards Homosexual Equality in Australian Criminal Law: A Brief History* (Parkville: Australian Lesbian and Gay Archives, 2014), 2.

<sup>9</sup> Gisela Kaplan and Lesly J. Rogers, "Race and Gender Fallacies: The Paucity of Biological Determinist Explanations of Difference," in *The Gender and Science Reader*, ed. Muriel Lederman and Ingrid Bartsch (London: Routledge, 2001), 332–33.

<sup>10</sup> For six such studies see Joel Radcliff, Roz Ward, and Micah Scott, "Safe Schools Do Better: Supporting Sexual Diversity, Intersex and Gender Diversity in Schools," (Safe School Coalition Australia, 2013), 6.

<sup>11</sup> [www.dsm5.org/Documents/Gender%20Dysphoria%20Fact%20Sheet.pdf](http://www.dsm5.org/Documents/Gender%20Dysphoria%20Fact%20Sheet.pdf) A. Lawrence, Archives of Sexual Behavior (2010) 39: 1253–1260. [http://www.annellawrence.com/gid\\_in\\_dsm-5.html](http://www.annellawrence.com/gid_in_dsm-5.html)

<sup>12</sup> DSM-V, 452.

<sup>13</sup> S. Giordano, *Children with Gender Identity Disorder: A Clinical, Ethical, and Legal Analysis*, Routledge Studies in Health and Social Welfare (Abingdon: Routledge, 2013), 61.

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.news.com.au/lifestyle/real-life/news-life/a-transgender-woman-talks-about-life-in-amale-prison/news-story/a6da09f95a36857eeee95f16028b06eb> [Last accessed on 26/07/2016]



# BIBLE STUDY

## John 11

**“Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.”**

John 11:32

**M**ary’s words to Jesus when he finally arrives in Bethany, three days later than requested and four days after Lazarus has been put in the tomb, carry all the pain and disappointment of one who feels that the Lord has completely let her down. Martha manages to retain some hope in Jesus’ ability to do something for her brother, though she doesn’t seem to know what, exactly (11:21-24); Mary, though, voices no such hope: We called you, you didn’t turn up, and now it’s too late.

What Mary and Martha don’t know, however, is why Jesus didn’t come earlier, as soon as they sent word to him of Lazarus’s illness. It wasn’t, as they might imagine, due to distraction, or procrastination, or laziness; it was in fact, paradoxically, due to love: “Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. So when he heard Lazarus was sick, he stayed where he was two more days.” (11:5-6.) Notice carefully what is being said there – it’s not despite the fact that Jesus loved them that he waited (though some translations, most notably the NRSV, render it this way); it’s specifically because he loved them that he waited. Out of his love for this family, Jesus didn’t come immediately, arriving in time to heal Lazarus’s sickness. Rather, he hung back longer where he was, on the other side of the Jordan, so as to allow Lazarus to die.

And this raises the obvious question of how that could possibly have been the more loving course to take. Surely the more compassionate response would have been to act immediately on Mary and Martha’s message, spare them from grief and spare Lazarus from death. What kind of love would stand back and allow this horrible thing to take place? The answer is given to us by Jesus himself: it is a love that intends to display a greater glory. When he is informed of Lazarus’s illness, right before John tells us that love motivated his delay, Jesus says “This sickness will not end in death. No, it is for God’s glory, so that God’s Son may be glorified through it” (11:4). Jesus will love Mary, Martha, and Lazarus, not by keeping them from such a painful event, but by letting it come, because he deems that they will more clearly see who he is as he rescues them from the midst of the mess, than if he keeps the mess from overwhelming them in the first place. And giving them a clearer view of who he is – that is the most loving thing he can do for them, or for anyone.

Of course, as Jesus arrives in Bethany, all this is hidden from Mary. Jesus doesn’t explain his purposes to her. She doesn’t see someone acting out of love towards her and her family, she only sees a Lord who apparently shelved her request, neglected to show up when he

was needed, and failed her brother. But in a few moments she will accompany him to the tomb, and as he calls the dead man out, she will see the fuller glory of the one whose word can not only heal the sick, but can give life to the dead – the word of the one who has life in himself (5:25-26).

Now at this point, it would be tempting to draw a simplistic theodicy from all of this – to see tragedy as something purposed by God in a straightforward way for his glory, and therefore as something which, while we might not recognise it at the time, is essentially good. We ought to resist that temptation. The fact that Jesus weeps and feels rage in the face of death (11:33, 35) shows that death remains in itself an unqualified evil, even as Jesus uses it as the occasion of his glory. Rather, as Jesus allows Lazarus to die and then raises him, that death comes to magnify the Son’s glory, not as we might – as a willing and obedient servant with a positive place in the Father’s purposes – but rather as, in those purposes, it is entirely trampled down. It is only in its defeat and negation that death serves the glory of the Son. And indeed, the defeat which begins beside the tomb of Lazarus will be concluded in several chapter’s time, after the Father has glorified his Son in his death, and he himself emerges from the tomb – this time with the bands of death left behind (cp. 11:44; 20:6-7), and its power definitively broken.



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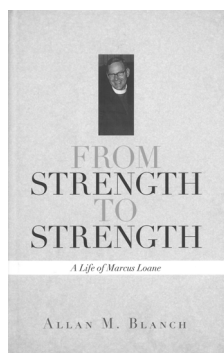
# BOOK REVIEWS

## ***From Strength to Strength***

*A Life of Marcus Loane*

**Allan M. Blanch**

Australian Scholarly, 2015



The King's School in Parramatta. A graduate of Sydney University and Moore College, he was ordained in 1935 and married Patricia Knox in 1937. After active service in World War II, including in Papua New Guinea, he lectured at Moore College, where he would

Blanch writes with elegant, austere prose. Deeply and meticulously researched, it is a warm and admiring account of Loane. The book does occasionally alert the reader to some of Loane's errors (such as the time he harshly chastised a member of Synod whose innocent comment he had misunderstood). However, the book is overwhelmingly positive toward its subject, written by an intelligent admirer.

**H**aving recently attended WA Baptist leader Noel Vose's funeral, it's easy to come away with the impression that, compared to the War Generation, we are spiritually stunted. There was something about that generation's combination of scholarly earnestness and personal piety I fear we (or at least I) am in danger of losing. And, if I may begin a positive review of an excellent book rather negatively, the question of what happened to our piety is one that has haunted me since reading Canon Allan M. Blanch's account of the life and work of Sir Marcus Loane in his new book, *From Strength to Strength: A Life of Marcus Loane*.

### **Sir Marcus Loane (1911-2009)**

For those who do not know his name, Sir Marcus Loane (1911-2009) was an Australian pastor, author and leading Anglican churchman who served the Christian community with distinction from the 1940s to the 1980s and into his retirement (or "retirement"). Born a third generation Tasmanian, the family moved to the Australian mainland in 1912, where they would eventually settle in Sydney and where Loane attended

eventually served as principal from 1954-1958. He was succeeded in that role by his brother-in-law D. B. Knox.

He was made an assistant bishop by the then Archbishop of Sydney Howard Mowll in 1958, and served both Mowll and Archbishop Hugh Gough until, in 1966, he would follow Gough as Sydney's Anglican Archbishop from 1966-1981 — the first Archbishop of Sydney to have been born in Australia.

### **Telling Loane's Story**

In 2004 John Reid published a lively and readable a biography called *Marcus L. Loane: A Biography* (Melbourne: Acorn Press). However, at less than 150 pages, it always seemed incongruously small and slight for so towering a figure as Loane. It was clear in 2004 that another fuller biography would still be required.

Rev. Allan Blanch's 400 page biography has now stepped into this historiographical gap with grace and power. Blanch is well positioned to write this work. He was himself ordained by Loane in 1966, and served in several leading parishes in the Diocese of Sydney, including the parish of St Barnabas Broadway 1974-1982.

### **Loane the Anglican Evangelical**

Marcus Loane's life and work held together a tenacious loyalty to Anglican forms and order with an unimpeachable commitment to evangelicalism. He was insistent on clerical dress, refusing to take questions from clerical members of Synod not wearing clerical collars. Once in the 1970s he summoned the book's author, then rector of St Barnabas Broadway, to his office after introducing bishop Robinson at an F. F. Bruce evening lecture without wearing a clerical collar. He saw the *The Book of Common Prayer* as not just a bulwark for orthodoxy within the Anglican communion, but as a pure well of reformed and evangelical spirituality. He nevertheless moved freely in interdenominational circles and was warmly received and appreciated by non-Anglican evangelicals and in the wider Christian community.

In a way that people in my generation find hard to fathom, he was also able to hold together a deep loyalty to British culture, society and monarch with a similarly unimpeachable claim to be Australian.

One of the more controversial episodes of Loane's life was his decision not to attend the ecumenical service at the Sydney Town Hall on the occasion of Pope Paul VI's visit to Australia in 1970. It was a decision for which he received praise among reformed Christians including Francis Schaeffer and Martyn Lloyd-Jones, and severe criticism from both fellow Anglicans and the secular press. Interestingly, Loane was later to say that he found more understanding for his decision among Roman Catholics than among Anglicans (p. 246). What Blanch makes clear is that it was a decision made on theological principle without any personal animosity or bigotry.

Blanch's book also records some fascinating incidental anecdotes, such as the time Marcus and Patricia Loane travelled with John Stott the 100-plus kilometres from their home in Sydney to the

Blue Mountains, only to discover Loane had left the keys to the house back in Sydney. Stott eventually managed to break in through a bedroom window to open the house.

What emerges most clearly from Blanch's biography is the picture of a pastor. Despite holding senior office and despite a prolific publishing record, Loane operated fundamentally as a minister of the word of God—visiting the sick, leading people to faith, preaching the word of God and praying for the people in his care. (On visiting the sick, Loane—normally a stickler for the rules—would happily ignore the advertised visiting hours in hospitals in order to pray at people's bedsides.)

**I don't know** if my sense of the gap between the piety of Sir Marcus's generation and my own is actually true.

Perhaps the nature of biography is that Loane was singular within his generation? Perhaps for every Sir Marcus or John Stott or Leon Morris, there were thousands of ordinary Christians of that generation whose personal spiritual lives were as modest and meek as my own? Or, perhaps Loane is an example of intelligent piety we can and should seek to recover? Whatever the case, the combination of warm personal knowledge of God with serious minded reading of scripture is an intoxicating thing to see. More of that, please.

Allan Blanch has written an excellent biography of an important figure in the story of Christianity in Australia. I warmly recommend it.

**Rory Shiner, WA**

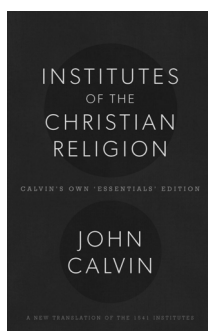
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The Gospel Coalition Australia website*

## ***Institutes of the Christian Religion***

*Calvin's Own 'Essentials' Edition*

**John Calvin, translated from the first French edition of 1541 by Robert White**

Banner of Truth Trust, 2014



attracted the attention of publishers in the USA and UK. Robert White has now produced at least four books of Calvin's sermons, the latest being his *Sermons on Titus*, also published by Banner of Truth.

Why another translation of *The Institutes*, you may ask? Most of us encountered Calvin through Henry Beveridge's version of 1845 or the two volumes by Ford Lewis Battles published in 1960. Both of these were based on the last Latin edition of 1559. All told, *The Institutes* passed through six Latin editions and three French before receiving their final form. The massive treatise of 1559 is five times the length of the concise primer of 1536.

Qualitatively however, there is no fundamental change. Scripture still determines both the content and scope of Calvin's enterprise. The grace and glory of God remain his theme. The growth from edition to edition reflects Calvin's pastoral experience, his exegetical reflection, and the unceasing pressure of theological de-

bate both within and outside the churches of the Reformation.

The French version (1541) of *The Institutes* which Robert White translates, is significant in that its target audience is no longer limited to educated Latin readers, but reaches out in a more familiar style to a broader constituency. Although it recasts the original "catechism" of 1536 into a more ambitious, thorough and methodical exposition of Christian theology, it is less daunting for modern readers, White suggests, than the final edition of 1559 has proved to be (Karl Barth called it, somewhat harshly, a "primeval forest"! ). The last chapter on the believer's walk with Christ is a model of pastoral insight and was destined to enter the last edition of *The Institutes* virtually unchanged.

Robert White's fresh translation of Calvin's French *Institutes* makes the Reformer live again. The reader will be impressed by the power and relevance of his biblical teaching for modern Christians. For the doubtful, I suggest the reading of Calvin's Preface—his appeal to the King of France. It is surely one of the most moving letters ever penned.

**Anthony H. Nichols, WA.**

**"A prophet is without honour** in his own country". Jesus' words have proved true of Jean Calvin, the greatest Frenchman. They also resonate with regard to his brilliant Australian translator, Robert White, former Senior Lecturer in French Studies at the University of Sydney. Robert who came to Christ in a John Stott mission in 1958, gained Honours in Latin and French at Sydney University before proceeding to post graduate studies in Paris in the 1960s. His doctorate from the Sorbonne was for his work on an obscure, bohemian French playwright. But it was in those years that he began a life-long study of the Reformation in French speaking areas of Europe. An extraordinarily modest scholar, we can be grateful that his specialist articles in overseas journals

## ***Beyond Belief***

*How we find meaning, with or without religion*

**Hugh Mackay**

Pan Macmillan, 2016



**A**ccording to the 2012 census 61 percent of Australians identified themselves as 'Christian'. However, only 15 percent attend church once a month or more (p. 7). Hugh Mackay's *Beyond Belief* is written for that missing 46 percent. That is, almost half the Australian population who relate to the Christian faith in some way, yet are "doubters, sceptics, heretics, agnostics and religious fringe dwellers." (p. 2) The goal of *Beyond Belief* is to provide spiritual encouragement and direction for those who no longer wish to receive such instruction from the church.

This conflicted and rapidly changing attitude to spirituality is a fascinating aspect of Australia society that deserves greater attention and research. Unfortunately, Mackay's book is undermined by a lack of detail, pop-culture theology and a fundamentally flawed process. I consistently found myself frustrated at the lack of data on display throughout *Beyond Belief*. What proportion of these 'Christian agnostics' come from Protestant backgrounds? What proportion from Catholic families? How does commitment to the tenets of faith vary between country towns and the inner-city; the old and the young? And what of those who remain committed to exclusive truth claims if, as claimed, they stretch credulity to breaking point? For instance, Mackay acknowledges the growth in Pentecostal churches but writes it off as being as much about the 'bandwagon' effect of their communities as specific beliefs (p. 7). Really? Could it not be that explicit Pentecostal doctrine is driving their growth and thereby creating vibrant communities? Mackay frequently quotes from respondents to his

research, which helps make a human connection to those who identify as SBNR (Spiritual But Not Religious). However, he does not lay out his research methods or extent, so the end result is the book feels anecdotal and partial.

Mackay admits that his book is unlikely to appeal to

either committed Christians or atheists, and he certainly makes good on that admission. His analysis of Jesus' teaching manages to present him as a secular humanist whose goal was to dismantle the stuffy institutional religion of his day. His reading of the Sermon on the Mount is particularly galling. I don't mind him creating a secular spirituality based on pop-psychology but would he mind not using Jesus to endorse it?

He clearly esteems Christian ethics, especially Jesus' 'Golden Rule' but wants to provide a spiritual option for those who find the Christian worldview unreasonable when it accommodates miracles, a resurrection and a virgin birth. He therefore discards the Bible's truth claims in favour of myth as a means for reinterpreting the Christian faith in a way that is acceptable to modern sensibilities. However, even though Mackay acknowledges it, he ignores the fact that abandoning the historicity of Jesus' resurrection for a mythical interpretation undercuts the ethical framework of Christianity entirely. (p. 216) After chopping down the apple tree Mackay's conclusion is to tell us to go on making cider, because it's delicious and refreshing and he likes it a lot and other people like it too.

*Beyond Belief* is also undone by its fundamentally flawed process. Mackay surveys the opinions of the non-church-going 'believers' and attempts to combine them with teachings of spiritual gurus (such as Jesus) into a quasi religion-for-all based on faith in something (anything) and communal compassion. But how will people have faith in something greater than themselves if the basis of this movement is their own

experiences and preferences? And how will anyone adopt a genuinely selfless attitude if it is driven by the recognition that my welfare is bound up in yours and we are all one? I fear that the conclusion that love is enough will prove to be empty or unattainable for those who adopt Mackay's way forward.

Nevertheless, Mackay's research is important. He gives a voice to people who have abandoned organized religion but still yearn for spiritual fulfilment. The chapter 'Anyone for church?' cuts close to the bone as Mackay articulates the reasons for Australians' lack of church-going. Institutional abuses, the treatment of women and a judgmental and exclusionary church culture are all highlighted as prima-facie reasons why we must explore a new spiritual path. Churches must come to grips with this new cultural landscape and Mackay's book presents these attitudes in a compelling way.

In a roundabout way, *Beyond Belief* reminded me again of the brilliance of God's grace. For the Christian, genuine humility and the freedom to love are built upon the free forgiveness offered in the historical death and resurrection of Jesus. Without such foundations they must fall. Mackay offers nothing as powerful or transformative as the doctrines he discards.

**Jeff Hunt, WA**

## ***William Cooper, Gentle Warrior***

*Standing up for Australian Aborigines and Persecuted Jews*

**Barbara Miller**

Xlibris, 2012

**I**n 1887, on the centenary of the colony, William Cooper organised a petition to the Governor of NSW asking for grants of land to be made for his tribe, the Yorta Yorta, whose country is near Echuca. He wrote to his local member, "I do trust you will be successful in securing this small portion of a vast territory which is ours by Divine Right." In 1933 he organised a petition to King George V "to pre-

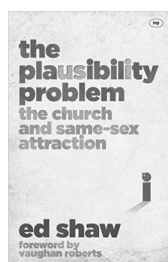


## The Plausibility Problem

*The church and same-sex attraction*

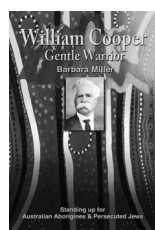
Ed Shaw

IVP, 2015



**T**his book answers a question I have been worrying about for several years as evangelical brethren have been grappling intellectually with discourse on gay marriage in relation to the church. They seem not to address the question of what positive things can be said to a strongly same-sex attracted (SSA) Christian beyond “just say ‘no!’”. How should they live as full members of the church?

The answer here is not with increasingly-accepted rationalisation, nor in covenanted relationships, but in full celibacy and warm acceptance. But the author, who is in this position himself and pastor of a congregation in Bristol, puts the heat on the church to make some significant changes so as to enable SSA celibacy rather than hinder it or degrade its proper upbeat character. He expounds nine missteps that the church has made which exacerbate the challenges for SSA evangelicals, and which drive most of them from the church altogether or into ‘affirming’ congregations. The book rings true in most respects to me, in the light of conversations I have had over the last 15 years.



the following January 26.

In 1938 he led a delegation from the Australian Aborigines League to the German Consulate to protest the persecution of Jews and Christians in Germany. He was refused admittance. This is a story that Cooper connected with eugenics and the treatment of his own people.

Miller's book ranges over a large territory, including her own activism (she was arrested and

vent the extinction of the Aboriginal race and to grant Aborigines representation in Federal Parliament.” He set up the Australian Aborigines League in Victoria and in 1937 for the 150th anniversary of white settlement proposed a Day of Mourning to be held on

As Vaughan Roberts says in the Foreword: The author’s “sights are not set on the predictable target—compromising liberals—but on those who belong to his own evangelical tribe.” Few will be convinced of the rightness of the orthodox

Christian position on homosexuality unless they are persuaded of its plausibility. This is what the book addresses, uncomfortably. Both Vaughan and the author are part of livingout.org. The author suggests that even with some staple biblical teaching, the church is much more shaped by the world and the spirit of the age than by the gospel, and it is this which makes SSA faithfulness (more than anything else) implausible and unreasonable today.

The nine missteps he addresses are matters of church teaching, emphasis and culture, as follows: Where there is undue emphasis on us being sinners rather than saints, depraved and rebellious rather than permanently-adopted children, then how does an SSA person avoid understanding their sexuality as their identity, and being desperate? And how do we understand family? A mum, dad and 2.4 children, or in practice—not just empty rhetoric—the local church? Marriage is temporary, for this age, union with Christ is eternal. And if a person is ‘gay’, surely in this postmodern era it is natural and OK for them to express it sexually? This ignores the fact that we

imprisoned in anti-Vietnam war protests); the events to do with Kristallnacht and the various conferences to do with Jewish refugees which Australia participated in; the history of the Cummeragunja community; Daniel Matthews and the Maloga Mission; Ernest Gribble; assimilationist policies; Coopers dream of land rights; the 1967 referendum; the culture wars and recent developments in Indigenous issues including the Apology; and the honouring of Cooper in Israel. It has an excellent bibliography.

It is well researched, personal, informative and written with a strong Christian conviction. Miller has had significant involvement in Indigenous issues, especially in Queensland, as a mediator, advisor and advocate. A fascinating and broad ranging book that is worth reading.

Dale Appleby, WA

are all born with the innate ability and desire to sin, by nature, and there is no area of sin where we are not all held accountable—SSA folk and the rest of us in ubiquitous solidarity.

And surely God wants us to be happy? What’s the point otherwise? So we respond to the circumstances of life accordingly. “Today’s ruling authority is our short-term happiness—both outside and inside the church.” Shaw says that evangelicals have been more subtle than liberals in reconfiguring God to fit in with this, but real happiness in God’s purposes is through all of us being counter-cultural in many respects, not just SSA people being the odd ones out.

Arguably his central chapter is on intimacy, with both biblical example and current experience showing this is not merely sexual, even if our culture focuses it there. The church needs to witness to relationships which are so much more than sex, and thus minimise any sense of sexual deprivation by our SSA members. “Intimate relationships ... are often closed off to me by our society and sexualized culture.” “But what’s been hardest is how the church often discourages non-sexual intimacy too,” by unduly glorifying sexual intimacy in marriage. Proper intimacy outside the marital unit will strengthen marriages, and churches must promote it, not simply for SSA celibates.

The complementarity of male and female is basic to God’s creation and sexual difference is designed to help us grasp the passionate love of God for his people. “God has put sex on this planet to make us want to go to heaven”—sex as heartfelt longing, not just the practice. “Our view on the morality of same-sex unions needs to rest on this sort of solid biblical anthropology.” “But in the evangelical church, godliness is heterosexuality,” which is a very dangerous attitude, and “spiritually life-threatening for people like me.” Churches are hypocritical in seeing homosexual sex as worse than heterosexual adultery, and Shaw rightly says that SSA Christians should not be held to a higher standard than anyone

else in the church. But celibacy has an image problem, and nowhere more so than in the church today. Which is plainly irrational, given that both Jesus and Paul were single, as have been some of the most wonderfully influential Christians in recent decades.

Finally, and as a counterpoint to happiness, suffering is to be avoided. "Our Christian lives are more about self-gratification—seemingly denying the existence of Jesus' words" in Mark 8: 31-34. "Our contemporary Christian lives of comfort are not the Jesus way. He couldn't make that any clearer in these verses." So the real suffering of sex-deprived SSA Christians is actually used by God "for my good rather than as a bad thing he has cruelly afflicted me with."

In conclusion, Shaw says that "we should begin to see both the people who experience [SSA] and the controversy that it brings as a gift to the church. As a divine gift, because it's just what we needed at this time in our history to help us see the whole series of tragic missteps we have taken to the detriment of us all, as well as to the world we are trying to reach." An 18-page Appendix on the plausibility of the traditional interpretation of scripture in understanding creation, rebellion, redemption and perfection in relation to SSA earths the book exegetically, and a 10-page Appendix on the implausibility of the new interpretation of scripture complements it.

This is a book of great pastoral merit and timeliness. He makes a strong case for the church needing to be more biblical and more counter-cultural in some key respects, with the need to avoid driving out SSA members and those sympathetic to them—arguably a high proportion of those under 30 years old—highlighting the priority of this. Not incidentally, the church will then more readily be blessed by the great gifts of both SSA people and others who choose celibacy to serve it. They are a humbling inspiration, as I said to one in his 30s recently.

**Ian Hore-Lacy, Vic.**

## Juvenescence

**Stephen Hale contemplates the gift and challenge of a one hundred year life.**



Stephen Hale is the Chair of EFAC Australia

**O**ne of the big challenges for many evangelical churches at present is the large cohort of baby boomers who make up the mix of people who participate in our churches. Many churches that embraced a contemporary approach to worship in the 1980s now have a reasonable cohort of baby boomers. There are many challenges and many opportunities associated with this phenomenon. At St Hilary's we have several hundred baby boomers. What this means is that we are now seeking to minister to multiple generations in the same congregation at the same time while still seeking to be family friendly and attractive to younger families. As you are probably aware this is a big challenge! One of my colleagues Mark McDonald has done some interesting thinking in this space.

As a baby boomer myself I'd like to think that I've got the right outlook about the future so that I can continue to learn and grow as well as contribute for many years to come. I recently wrote the following piece for our church newsletter, which captures something of this unique challenge for me and many others.

**"T**he Age newspaper recently ran an article suggesting that by 2057 the average life expectancy for newborn girls born in the UK will be 100. 50 percent of today's 20 year olds can expect to live to 100. In response two English writers, Andrew Scott and Lynnda Gratton have just written *The 100 Year Life: Living and Working in an Age of Longevity*. The book is an examination of the seismic shifts that will—must—occur as the population ages. They write:

'We are saying we have a tremendous opportunity to use this amazing gift of time, but we must do so wisely and that means the deferral of gratification: saving more, exercising more and eating less.'

*The Age* reviewer writes:

'Personal reinvention in all spheres will be very much part of the new world order. *The 100-Year Life* focuses on a protracted 'juvenescence', or state of being youthful, open, flexible and adaptable to change.'

I, personally, like the idea of 'personal juvenescence'. If God blesses me with a longer life than I had previously mentally expected then one needs to be juvenescent to embrace it. It needs to be added, of course, that it is the Lord who numbers our days and none of us knows how long that will be. Not all will enjoy good health and some will face significant challenges in growing older due to health challenges. At the same time as the authors suggest we need to be thinking about these extra years the Lord may bless us with and be open to new possibilities as we move into the third phase of life 1-30 years (Childhood to Young Adulthood) 30-60 years (Adulthood) 60-90+ years (Mature Adulthood).

As a faith community we have a smaller percentage of people who in the past were referred to as 'Seniors' compared to most churches. At the same time we have quite a group of people who have retired in recent years or who are/will be retiring from full time work either at present or shortly. Over time our percentage of 'Seniors' will become larger. All of this has significant implications for the shape of our ministries as well as how we continue to renew our church's life. There are many new possibilities but also many new challenges for us as a church. One of the most obvious will be how we sustain our ministry financially. If we are to be juvenescent both personally as well as a church then we can each benefit from being mem-

bers of a cross-generational community where we mix with younger people as well as our peers. As a church we have a strategic priority called 'Boom'. The idea is to support people to pray, plan and think creatively about these extra years that God is blessing them with. We want to be a community that is committed to extending God's kingdom in all sorts of ways especially amongst those who are being given the gift of extra time in this life.

<sup>1</sup> *The Age* June 7, 2016



## Comment

In part two of Mark Thompson's paper (*Winter Essentials*) he says: "we should be seeking to understand just how much of a difference [God's word] makes for our good. God's benevolence and the goodness of his word are foundational principles when considering when to make a stand. I want to ask, 'Is this teaching, is this behaviour, drawing people away from the good God's good word which nourishes and builds his people?' 'Does it build confidence in God's good word as an instrument for good or does it undermine that con-

fidence?'" The question that immediately comes to my mind in this context (Gal 2&3) is whether the approach of so many evangelical Christians to the ministry of women in the church is building confidence in God's word as an instrument for good? Is it drawing people away from the good God's good word which nourishes and builds his people? Equally important, if not more so: is the way we treat gifted women in our churches in step with the truth of the gospel? (A more detailed response can be found on [blog.efac.org.au](http://blog.efac.org.au).)

**Chris Appleby, Vic.**

### EFAC Australia membership (incl. Essentials)

\$40 per year (\$25 students, missionaries, retired persons). Essentials subscription only \$25 p.a.

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

The aims of EFAC are:

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.



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