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God's words and Australian Indigenous languages by Peter Adam

Essentials is the journal of the Evangelical Fellowship in the Anglican Communion. Promoting Christ-centred biblical ministry.

Five centuries later

We don't manage to theme each issue of *Essentials*, but we have made a special effort this issue to honour the five hundredth anniversary of the posting of Luther's Ninety-five Theses by majoring on Reformation themes. There's a trio of feature articles by a trio of Peters. Firstly Peter Brain looks at justification by faith in the heart of the pastor, then Peter Jensen reflects on the strange and precious gift of the Bible, and lastly Peter Adam urges us to benefit from the reformation of prayer that Cranmer brought to the church in the *Book of Common Prayer*. Another Reformation feature has Paul Bartley relating how a Reformation study tour has catalysed his interest in the historical actors, aims and outcomes of the Reformation.

Our leader articles are perhaps less obviously connected to the Reformation, but consider that anxiety over guilt before God was a powerful experience for Luther, and the joyful discovery of

justification before God through faith in Christ's atoning death electrified him and his age. What, then has happened to the sense and burden of guilt in our own age, and the desire to be morally justified? Is it still with us? In our opening leader I recommend a recent essay that explores these questions powerfully, and in our second leader, Frances Cook writes candidly of the way her Bible reading helped her in her own feelings of self-condemnation.

Elsewhere in the issue, we hear from Katrina and Jonathan Holgate of their involvement in ministry to new arrivals, refugees and asylum seekers in particular; David Secombe brings us part 2 of his Bible Study there is an array of book reviews and Peter Adam rounds out the issue with a Caboose article on Bible translation and indigenous languages written for NAIDOC week. We hope you enjoy reading all this, and do email me your observations, objections,

alternatives, amens and hallelujahs — we will publish thoughtful, useful comments on the articles in this issues.

In upcoming editions of *Essentials* I am keen firstly to explore issues around the church and society — the experience of Christians in politics, the corporate world and in connection with issues our society faces (Summer *Essentials*). Subsequently I would like to dig into innovation and tradition in current church practice — what should we adopt, adapt, embrace? What should we retain, renew, recover? What is the place of buildings, liturgy, social media, small groups, music, pastoral visitation etc in the life of the local church of today and tomorrow? If you think you have the right stuff to contribute on any of those topics, do be in touch.

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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.
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The Strange Persistence of Guilt

Ben Underwood



Is guilt still a force in modern life? Ben Underwood recommends a recent essay on the persistence of guilt in the broken moral economy of the West. Ben Underwood is editor of Essentials and Associate Minister at St Matthew's Shenton Park, WA

I have a spirituality reading group, made up of fellow Shenton Park men, which I convene in order to have a chance to talk to my fellow suburbanites about deep things. Members take it in turns to choose an article, poem, book chapter, Youtube clip or immersive VR experience for us to digest and discuss. The rules are that stimulus material has to be short, and it has to raise the big questions. It's a lot of fun, and has given me an opportunity to talk of Christian things with my neighbours. The last meeting we had was my turn to choose our material, and I stumbled across a great essay, which I felt would get us going. I was not disappointed, and we had an excellent evening of robust discussion.

The essay is called 'The Strange Persistence of Guilt' by Wilfred M. McClay, published in *The Hedgehog Review* (Spring 2017, Volume 19: Issue 1). I found it online, I'm not sure how — maybe through an appreciative piece David Brooks wrote on McClay's essay. It is an essay about the broken moral economy of the West. McClay enters this topic via guilt. He regards guilt as not having merely persisted, but indeed as having 'grown, even metastasized, into an ever more powerful and pervasive element in the life of the contemporary West'. Nietzsche was wrong about guilt, and Freud was right, McClay argues. God's death did not deliver us into a new innocence. Rather, 'the price we pay for our advance in civilisation is a loss of happiness through the heightening of the sense of guilt' (Freud, quoted in McClay). This comes about because as our knowledge and power increase, so does our scope of potential and actual action and thus also our scale of responsibility increases, and with it our guilt, for all the ways we fail. McClay puts it powerfully:

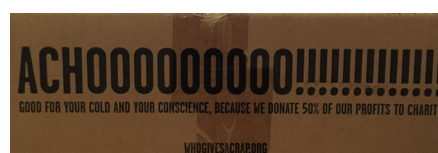
'I can see pictures of a starving child in a remote corner of the world on my television, and know for a fact that I could travel to that faraway place and relieve that child's immediate suffering, if I cared to. [...] Whatever donation I make to a charitable organization, it can never be as much as I could have given. I can never diminish my carbon footprint enough, or give to the poor enough, or support medical research enough, or otherwise do the

things that would render me morally blameless'.

What can we do about guilt? McClay argues that Freud sought to relieve his patients' discomfort by 'setting aside guilt's moral significance', his approach leading to the therapeutic age we now inhabit. In this age the act of forgiveness, for example, has become something merely for restoring the mental and emotional health of the forgiver, and the framework of justice and the moral weight of the sin that needs forgiveness has been suppressed by those seeking to 'liberate' human beings from a religious moral economy. But this has not solved the problem of guilt at all. McClay writes, 'it is impossible to exaggerate how many of the deeds of individual men and women can be traced back to the powerful and inextinguishable need of human beings to feel morally justified'. Hence, it seems to me, we find ourselves buying 'Thankyou'™ soap (pictured) which reassures me on the box that 'Not only does it contain ingredients derived from nature. It also funds hygiene and sanitation programs for people in need'. Or we choose tissues which are 'good for your cold and good for your conscience, because we donate

50% of our profits to charity'(pictured). But of course that route to blamelessness doesn't work, because it begs the question why haven't I done more, given more? How much doing and giving and renouncing can be enough for me to be morally justified in living my life, consuming the resources of the earth, inheriting the privilege of my whiteness, or my maleness, my Christianity, my heterosexuality, my class, my whatever?

McClay connects the rise of the prestige of the victim in our culture with this attempt to deal with persistent and growing guilt. The shorthand goes that a victim is innocent, not guilty, not responsible.



If the victim is flawed, it is because of the hand they have been dealt, (and were probably somehow dealt this hand by us). By identifying with and championing a victim, we can renounce our guilty identities and the victim can bestow their innocence upon us and set us free from our guilt (McClay mentions Angela Merkel's decision to open Germany's borders in this connection). Better still, if we can be a victim ourselves, our moral blamelessness is almost unassailable. In this connection McClay mentions 'the incredible spectacle of today's college campuses, saturated as they are with ever-more-fractured identity politics, featuring an ever-expanding array of ever-more-minute grievances, with accompanying rounds of moral accusation and declarations of victimhood.'

But this is not working as a means of redemption for anyone. As David Brooks puts it in his New York Times column, 'society has become a free-form demolition derby of moral confrontation', with no real way of being redeemed. We have moved from an age of confession and forgiveness to 'an age of apology and recrimination' (Thomas Berger, quoted in McClay). 'This is surely a moral crisis in the

making—a kind of moral-transactional analogue to the debt crisis.' McClay sounds a sharp warning that our secular premises and our faith in science may bring us 'not happiness but a mounting tide of unassuaged guilt, ever in search of novel and ineffective, and ultimately bizarre, ways to discharge itself.'

All this seemed to strike deep into the minds of my reading group buddies – the atheists, the admirers of Buddhism, the altruistically inclined. McClay has a paragraph on Jesus' atoning sacrifice as the grounds of forgiveness and redemption, and I had the chance to explain and recommend it to my friends, in a context where it made excellent sense. Sometimes I feel like it's hard to get people to understand sin or take it seriously. Sometimes I find it hard to do these things! I think McClay's essay helps bring the problem into focus in a very current way. Our society needs to be able to hear afresh the good news of the forgiveness of sins, or redemption, of the gift of justification, and often I do too. McClay's essay allows us to appreciate afresh why the cross might not actually be foolishness, but rather life and health and peace.

Self forgiveness

Frances Cook



Frances Cook relates how God gave her something precious and healing in the words of Paul. Frances, a missionary of CMS SA/NT, works in the Pastoral Studies Centre (CEP), Theological College of the Anglican Church of Chile.

Sometime after the deaths of my parents, I went through a period of feeling very deeply my failures in relation to them. I tormented myself with questions: Why did I do this or not do that? Why did I say that but not say this?

I had never had much time for the idea of self-forgiveness. I was not aware of any hint of that in the Bible and, anyway, it seemed logically silly. Forgiveness implies an offended person and the offender – two people, not one. However, as these questions tormented me, I really felt the need to forgive myself. My theology said I just needed to trust more in God's forgiveness, but I felt very deeply the need for self-forgiveness.

It is a really lovely thing that in the discipline of daily Bible reading, God speaks to us freshly. I was reading 1

Corinthians 4, where Paul, defending his apostleship, says that he is concerned for God's judgement, not that of his readers. In v 3, almost as a throw-away line, if the Bible could have such a thing, the apostle writes these words which were so precious and healing to me, I do not even judge myself.

My problem was not that I could not forgive myself. Rather, I was standing in judgement on myself and that simply isn't my job, any more than it is to judge others. I was not suffering from lack of self-forgiveness, but from self-condemnation, to which I had no right. With that, God healed me, beautifully! Praise be to him!

And, by the way, you won't be surprised to hear that I found God to be a very much kinder and more generous judge than me, as he sees me in his Son who died for me.

Ministries to New Arrivals

Katrina and Jonathan Holgate



Katrina and Jonathan Holgate share how they have seen ministry grow up among refugees in Perth, WA. Katrina and Jonathan were formerly at St Alban's, Highgate, and are now at St Matthew's, Guildford.

Imagine: You can't quite hear, you don't know the geography of where you are living, the rules are all different and seem to be harsh. Living here in Australia, we live with much tacit knowledge. We know how the school system works, how public transport works, where (generally) places are within your city or region. Refugees (and often backpackers) don't have this tacit knowledge that we all live with not realising what seems obvious.

Jesus taught us the parable of the good Samaritan; Deuteronomy 29:11 says that we can only have a relationship with God if we treat the alien in our camp well; Leviticus 24:22 says we must have the same laws for the alien as we have for ourselves. It seems to us that we are living outside of God's ordinances when it comes to the way we treat asylum seekers and refugees here in Australia.

In this context, we have been ministering to refugees for several years. God gave us plenty of opportunity to welcome the alien whilst we were at the Parish of St Alban's Highgate. During 'mission week' one of the younger members of the congregation suggested an outreach to some of our local backpackers. We soon discovered the local backpacker hostels were largely populated with refugees. Their most desperate need was to learn and practice English, to develop an understanding of Australian culture and, believe it or not, our colloquialisms.

The outreach to refugees developed into weekly Sunday afternoon English lessons, followed by dinner and games to promote more English being spoken whilst having fun. So great was their desire to learn, integrate and share the news of English being taught, that we had to cap the numbers of those attending each week at one hundred.

Great caution and consideration was always given around confidentiality of those attending, advertising and social media, enabling those who attended to feel they were in a safe environment. On a couple of occasions we were visited by Muslim elders to check out what we were teaching and some attendees were warned off attending, but overall the evenings were well attended, useful and great fun! As many came asking to know more about Jesus (the Messiah) we eventually taught English through the Bible, always with the option of being taught through a secular process; however, we do not recall ever being asked for the secular class.

The refugees and asylum seekers and some of the backpackers (who also attended) were intrigued by what we were doing and why, especially ones from Iran, who wanted to throw off the imposed Muslim religion that, surprisingly, they did not see as being part of their culture. Six months in we were being asked by two of the attendees for a Farsi speaking church service. Initially, we started a Farsi speaking Bible study, using dictionary apps on our phones to help bridge the language gap from English into Farsi when the need arose.

Research shows that best way to hear and to learn is in our mother tongue and six months into our Bible study, one of the attendees heard of a Farsi speaking pastor who had been praying about starting a Farsi speaking church. By the grace of God, with the blessing of the Archbishop and the support of the parish, a Farsi speaking church started on Friday evenings. We learnt to sing in Farsi and to listen to sermons, half in



Work with refugees at St Albans Anglican Church, Highgate

English and half in Farsi, news spread and we celebrated as more came seeking Christ and some missionaries returning from middle-eastern countries joined to support God's work here in Perth, which continues in Highgate today.

Relocating in parish ministry, our work with refugees and asylum seekers continues at the Yongah Hill Immigration Detention Centre. For the last two and a half years we have been attending Yongah Hill Immigration Detention Centre on Friday afternoons to run a Bible study and a Holy Communion service. The detainees love it and at times we have had eighteen men eager for Christian teaching. Security is high and we are not allowed to proselytise, so anyone who attends has chosen to join us, usually at the invitation of another attendee. As you might expect there is a constant flux of people through the detention centre and some go on to other detention centres and sometimes come back.

For the last two years we have had a particular African young man acting as a pastor to the detainees.

His knowledge of the Bible is amazing despite the fact that his English is limited, he has learnt to read the Bible in English but cannot read in his mother tongue (Igbo), which is not unusual. Some are released into community, a few maintain contact and join us in our church services on Sunday. God has moved wonderfully in this ministry. We both come out of the service at Yongah Hill inspired by their faith and enthusiasm to celebrate and praise God despite their circumstances.

Throughout all of this God has blessed and inspired us as we have sat through court and tribunal appearances, incredulous as each story unfolds, full of pain and fear, lives lost, family members tortured and individuals disowned due to conversion to Christianity. We have written letters of support and encouraged where we can. Many of the refugees and asylum seekers that we have been privileged to minister the gospel to, have stayed in contact and we use every opportunity to share the gospel along with our tacit knowledge whilst assisting them in negotiating their new environment.

STRATEGIC HOSPITALITY

Marsha Dale



Marsha Dale shares how she was challenged to 'Contribute to the needs of the saints, practice hospitality.' Marsha is an MDiv student and is in Ministry with her husband Marc at Resurrection Church, Lockridge, WA.

I heard a great pod cast on Strategic Hospitality by John Piper on the Desiring God website. In it Piper reminds us that we have freely received the liberating power of God's hospitality, making us a new and radically different kind of people. He challenges us to freely give, reflect the glory of his grace as we extend it to others in hospitality.

I love Pipers analogy...the physical force of gravity pulls everything to the centre of the earth. In order to break free from earth-centred life, thousands and thousands of pounds of energy have to push the space shuttle away from the centre. There is also a psychological force of gravity that constantly pulls our thoughts and affections and physical actions inward toward the centre of ourselves, our homes, our friends, our lives. Therefore the most natural thing in the world is to neglect hospitality.

Piper calls us to practice strategic hospitality-hospitality which thinks strategically and asks: How can I draw the

most people into a deep experience of God's hospitality by the use of my home? Who might need reinforcements just now in the battle against loneliness? Who are the people who could be brought together in my home for the sake of the kingdom? What two or three people's complementary abilities might explode in a new ministry if they had the freedom to brainstorm over dinner in my house?

Piper identifies three specific opportunities: inviting each other home, greeting and welcoming people at church, and reaching out to new groups whom God is bringing into our communities such as International Students.

I was challenged when he reminds us to 'practice hospitality ungrudgingly to one another' (1 Peter 4:9), as so often I grumble and complain when my husband springs a guest on me after the church service.

So...who is coming for lunch/dinner this Sunday?

Justification by faith and the pastor

Peter Brain



*Peter Brain rubs the Reformation doctrine of justification by faith into the heart of the pastor.
Bishop Peter Brain has just retired from the Parish of Rockingham, WA.*

Martin Luther's famous saying that justification by faith is the article of a standing or falling church has proven true over the past 500 years, but can be applied equally to those who are called to pastoral ministry.

The versical from Morning and Evening Prayer: 'Clothe your ministers with righteousness along with its response: And make your chosen people joyful, remind us that a very real benefit of justification by faith is that, when evident in the life and preaching of the minister, it will bring church members much joy'. This quote from Psalm 132:9 reminds us of the reformed nature of ministry, with the word minister replacing priest. Reformed pastors know that their standing with God is secure through faith in Christ not because of the size of the church they serve or the gifts they may have. Security in this truth will keep us from despair when there appears to be little response, from pride when there is and from using our members as fodder to feed our egos or drive our agendas. Ministers will want to live rightly in glad response to the one who has so graciously justified us through faith in Christ alone. This will bring joy to ministers and people alike along with glory to God.

Though justification is the prime and fundamental blessing of the gospel, it is not — as J. I. Packer reminded us in *Knowing God*, chapter 19 — the highest blessing. His suggestion that this highest blessing is adoption is music to the pastor's ears. It

is a marvellous thing to know that forensically there is no charge remaining against us but it is of even more comfort that, as a consequence, we enjoy a familial relationship with God as adopted children. Sir Marcus Loane captured this in his words, 'the voice that spells forgiveness will say, "you may go; you have been let off the penalty which your sin deserves". But the verdict which means acceptance will say, "you may come; you are welcome to all my love and all my presence."'

What great comfort this brings to the pastor who is down and discouraged. We can come, not as a pastor, but as a son or daughter. When we are down we are able to look up with confidence and find the forgiveness, the wisdom, the solace or the strength we need. Our Father does not answer us according to our performance, feelings or even the strength of our faith, but because, in Christ, we belong to him as beloved children.

It means too that we are wise to read the Bible — which Augustine described as 'letters from



'Clothe your ministers with righteousness; and make your chosen people joyful'

home' — not only as servants in preparation for teaching, but as children eager to relate to their Father. The experience of the translators of the AV in 1611 ('if we be ignorant, they will instruct us. If we be out of the way, they will bring us home. If we be out of order they will reform us. If in heaviness they will comfort us; if dull quicken us; if cold, enflame us'), will be ours as we read the Bible as children who love to hear their Father's voice, be it of comfort, correction or counsel.

Justification by faith enables us to work hard. This was summarised by Calvin who said 'it is faith alone which justifies, yet the faith which justifies is not alone.' This means we can work with confidence, neither frantically nor hurriedly, but patiently trusting God to work through us. We work not to impress others but because God's love compels us. This responsive aspect of working hard and diligently because we are saved, is captured in the words: 'I will not work my soul to save, For that my Lord has done. But I will work like any slave, For love of God's dear Son.'

This reflects the biblical imperative of Ephesians 2:10 and 1 Corinthians 15:10. We are content to get on with our work without it defining us, knowing that it is God alone who sees and knows all that we do, to whom we must give an account and who can be counted upon to sustain us.

Justification by faith means that we can cope with criticism, just or unjust, since he graciously pardons and understands our pain when we are treated unjustly. We don't have to justify ourselves. Indeed we will be able to see criticism, even failure, as ways he graciously grows us.

Justification by faith will help us to be brave in the face of opposition and suffering, just as the Reformers were. They were sustained, even to death, by their assurance of salvation, through the Scriptures they had come to love and believing prayer through our one Mediator and the warm-hearted fellowship that justified sinners enjoy as adopted children.

The Reformation: The Bible really matters

Peter Jensen



Peter Jensen meditates upon how, as we read it, the Bible is in some ways jarring and puzzling, but also infinitely precious.

Peter Jensen was Archbishop of Sydney from 2001 to 2013.

This day, as far as I am aware, I met my first Tibetan. More than that, my first Tibetan Christian. I had been praying for this over the years since 2008, aware that there is a handful of Tibetans in Australia, mainly refugees. I had acquired a Tibetan Bible from India and had vowed that I would pass it on to my first Tibetan when I met them. And so I did, to the evident huge delight of the recipient. That joy reminded me how easy it is to take the scriptures for granted and how wonderful it is that they

should be so readily available in our own tongue. This, of course, is the fruit of the Reformation. We praise God for William Tyndale for a start.

The more I read the Scriptures, the more I am filled with awe. Like the God whose Spirit inspired them, they are not to be treated lightly. Living as we do, in a society whose thought-forms are utterly alienated from God, we are frequently reminded how very strange the Bible is. I sometimes think that they are rather like a rough, irascible, shaggy unmannered uncle who comes to stay,

creating unease and curiosity in equal measure.

My reading this last year has been very Old Testament oriented. The lists of names, the strange world of the very long-lived, the wars with their huge numbers killed, the laws which deal with an agrarian pre-industrial economy, the extraordinary miracles, the stories in which relate the villainies of the great biblical heroes, the words of vengeance and pain — these and a dozen other features jar and frighten. Is God like this, this jealous God of ours?

One thing that has helped me is that I have been listening not just reading. The splendid audio book with the voice of David Suchet, brings a newness to Bible reading, which makes up for the fact that I am now reading mainly on my iPad (because of eye problems — I don't think I would do this otherwise — I am not sure it works as well as a book). Suchet reads even the lists of names with such care; with him in my ear, I had to slow down and assimilate as never before. If he took so much trouble, why shouldn't I?

But back to the God of this Bible. When we are tempted to rely solely on a handful of favourite New Testament passages (I confess; it's Romans 5:1-11 for me, every time), passages which bring us comfort and consolation and assurance, we will find that in the absence of the whole Bible surrounding the passages, even they will become clichéd and hackneyed.

Which, by the way, is a reminder of the importance of expository preaching through the biblical text. And it also reminds us that the masters of the English Reformation arranged for the consecutive reading of both Old Testament and New Testament (twice a year) with the Psalms every month. Now this, of course,

**What our
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presupposes church every day. But how many of us are actually continually reading the whole Bible, and how many of us are using the Bible in church? It is interesting to see the shrinkage of Bible reading in evangelical churches — it is odd not to have two readings for a start, and what of the Psalms? What our ancestors gave us through *The Book of Common Prayer* was the language of God both to speak to him and about him. Should our songs not be more overtly biblical? How unlike the Psalms most of them are. But I diverge.

How about this uncle, this shaggy, dangerous, difficult relative? In our frenetic, comfortable, atheistic world, he enters as an alien — thank God. It is as if we discover as time goes by the uncle is rough but strong and utterly dependable. Unlike those around us, he has experienced the world as it really is; he knows human nature for what it truly is; and he does not present the tame God of our little assurances, but the true and holy God of the universe. It is the whole Bible which is the true context for the coming of our Saviour.

In the end, it is as if the uncle uncovers the truth about us. It is not he who is the alien, but we; he is not the problem, we are. In the end, as we get over the rough exterior and our own rather respectable and superficial judgements, we find that we are in deep, deep trouble. But we also have with us the very one you want to have in a small boat on a tempestuous sea. Indeed, as he fixes you with his eyes, you see a depth of understanding and truth that you will never find in a million secular books or lecture rooms or editorials or journalistic reports. And you will see that it is God himself who is addressing you with a directness that take the breath away and with a message which will save you.



Using Cranmer as your prayer-coach

Peter Adam



Peter Adam points out that the Reformation sought to reform the praying of the church, and Peter seeks to continue that reform in our lives today.

Peter Adam is Rector Emeritus of St Jude's Carlton. Vic.

We all need help in our praying. Let's enrich our prayers by getting someone to coach us. And a good person to do so is Thomas Cranmer, the Reformation Archbishop of Canterbury. One of his most significant contributions to the welfare of God's people was showing people how to pray, and providing good models for prayer. We might no longer use the prayers he provided for us in The Book of Common Prayer (or perhaps you still do), but he can still challenge and coach us in our prayers today.¹

The Reformation was about reforming and renewing doctrine, as it was about reforming and renewing ministry, daily life, church life, education, the structure of society, and much else. It was also about reforming and renewing prayer, and this included who prayed, to whom people prayed, what they prayed, why they prayed, and how they prayed!

Daily prayer was now done by ordinary people, not by monks, nuns, and clergy. It was 'Common Prayer' for all people. People prayed only to God, and not to Mary and the saints. People prayed in their native English language. People prayed through Jesus Christ, trusting in his finished work of salvation on the cross: their only access to God was through Christ, not through Mary, through saints, or through their own good works. People prayed in response to God's grace, not in order to gain it. And people's prayers were shaped by the Bible and by the gospel.²

Cranmer's services of daily Morning Prayer and Evening

One of his most significant contributions to the welfare of God's people was showing people how to pray

Prayer provided both prayers for individuals to pray each day, and also prayers for the church to pray. Cranmer's prayers can enrich both our own personal prayers, and also our corporate prayers when we meet as a church on Sundays.

At the heart of Cranmer's approach to prayer – both private and public – was that they ought to be gospel shaped. Here is the shape Cranmer used for Morning and Evening Prayer:

Begin with a Bible verse. Confess your sins and be assured of forgiveness. Pray the Psalms. Read the Bible, and respond to the Bible. Praise God by saying what you believe. Pray for the church and the world.

This list includes some key ingredients. And this is one possible shape to your prayers or your service, but not the only possibility.

Here is an extended check and challenge list for you. Let Thomas Cranmer enrich your prayers!

End notes

1. My thanks to Kurt Langmead for help in preparing this article.
2. See Peter Adam, *The 'Very Pure word of God': The Book of Common Prayer as a Model of Biblical Liturgy*, London, Latimer Trust, 2012.



FEATURES

| Cranmer's prayers | Your daily prayers | Your Sunday church prayers |
|---|--------------------|----------------------------|
| Begin your prayers with a Bible verse. Hear God invite you to come to him in prayer, to welcome you into his presence | | |
| Begin each prayer with a recognition of the God to whom you are praying. Not just 'God', but, 'gracious heavenly Father', 'King of kings and lord of lords', 'God of mercy and compassion', 'God of everlasting love', 'God of truth and justice'. This will shape and encourage your prayers. | | |
| 'Through Jesus Christ our Saviour.' Remember that it is only through Christ that you can enter God's presence. So pray all your prayers 'through Jesus Christ', or 'through Jesus Christ our Saviour', or with similar phrases. | | |
| Confess your sins. Remember that the only barrier between you and our God is your unrecognised and unconfessed sins. This is true of your personal sins as an individual, and your corporate sins as a congregation. Cranmer had people confessing their sins twice a day! Better than never! | | |
| Be assured of God's forgiveness through the atoning death of the Lord Jesus, and his shed blood. Know God's love and acceptance in Christ's death! | | |
| Include the reading of the Scriptures and meditation on that reading as the foundation and fuel for your praying. Allow time for God to speak to you through his word, the Bible. Don't dominate the conversation or the air-time! | | |
| Include praise, thanksgiving, and worship, as well as intercession. Don't just do praise, thanksgiving and worship ... or just do intercession! | | |
| Remember to pray big prayers as well as little prayers. Pray for God's name to be hallowed, his kingdom to come, his will to be done on earth as in heaven, as well as praying for your daily bread! God loves big prayers, and God loves little prayers. | | |
| Pray for the world as well as for the church. Don't be selfish in just praying for your own needs or for the needs of the congregation! | | |
| Follow Cranmer's example and use Bible content in your prayers, Bible phrases in your prayers, and Bible words in your prayers. Rather than just praying that God would 'bless' people, find out from the Bible what God wants us to pray for others. Whenever you read the Bible, turn what you have read into a prayer. Whenever you pray, find out from the Bible what and how to pray in this situation. Pray the Psalms, and other Bible prayers. | | |
| Look at the ingredients of Cranmer's Collects as model prayers. [Collects are short Bible based prayers]: Take for example Cranmer's prayer about Scripture, which includes references to 2 Timothy 3, Ezekiel 3, and Romans 15. Blessed Lord, who caused all holy Scriptures to be written for our learning: Grant that we may in such wise hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, that by patience and comfort of thy holy Word, we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of eternal life, which thou hast given us in our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen. Here is another example, based on Ephesians 2. O Almighty God, who has built thy Church upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the head corner-stone: Grant us so to be joined together in unity of spirit by their doctrine, that we may be made an holy temple acceptable unto thee; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. | | |
| Make sure your prayers are theologically deep rather than theologically light! Think not only what you want to pray, but also why you want to pray it, why God wants you to pray it, and what God wants you to pray. | | |
| Don't be afraid to use a mixture of prepared prayers and spontaneous prayers. Both are equally spiritual! | | |
| Ensure that what you say and sing to God is Biblically sound, and reflects and expresses God's will. Make your prayers and songs God-focussed, celebrating the works and words of God. | | |
| Come to God with faith in him, his character, his revelation, his Son, his gospel and his promises. Here is the passage I use for my morning prayers each day. 'Therefore, my friends, since we have confidence to enter the sanctuary by the blood of Jesus...and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us approach with a true heart in full assurance of faith' [Hebrews 10:19-23]. | | |

Beginning to see how much I don't know about the Reformation

Paul Bartley



Paul Bartley reflects on his recent encounters with the tumultuous world of Martin Luther and the Reformation he sparked.

Paul is in the formation programme for ordinands in the Diocese of Perth.

My wife Peggy and I had the privilege of being supported to attend the Ridley College Reformation study tour in June to Germany, France and Switzerland. It was a special year to go, as 2017 marks five hundred years since Luther is credited with sparking the Reformation. Family and friends took care of our four small children and we flew to Germany- a first time overseas for my wife. We had both been preparing as much as the general busyness of life allowed, reading Alister McGrath¹ and Bruce Gordon² and watching Carl Trueman's lectures. This piece meanders through my reflections of Reformation study, with a focus on Luther.

Having the trip coming up certainly helped our enjoyment of our pre-trip learning. The potentially mundane watching of Trueman's lectures on Luther while washing dishes at home in Perth in the weeks beforehand was as much part of the rich experience as the lofty heights of singing 'Amazing Grace' in the monastery, standing on the very same tiles as Luther would have. What a wealth of resources we enjoy here in Australia — in our well stocked theological libraries, on the internet and in documentaries! But we loved having this time together without the kids, travelling in such stunning countryside and at locations so central to the Reformation as Luther's house in Wittenberg and St Peter's church in Calvin's Geneva.

As far as being in Europe goes, the most meaningful site for me was the Wartburg castle to which Luther was whisked away by friendly 'kidnappers' after the Diet of Worms in 1521. He had been excommunicated by the church in January, and after this imperial assembly of

Five hundred years on from those ninety-five theses nailed to the door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg, and the world has never been the same.

Worms in May, Luther also became outlawed by the state — he could now be killed by anyone without fear of punishment. But his prince was ever on his side, and had him removed from public view to Wartburg. The castle sits high on a ridge, and Luther said he was 'ensconced in the land of the birds.' Besides being a stunning castle, seeing the small room where Luther would have worked to translate the New Testament took me into his world for a moment, and the thought of Luther growing his hair and beard



Rhys Bezzant teaching on the Ridley Reformation study tour in the Town Church, or Stadtkirche, Wittenberg.

while at Wartburg in order to disguise himself as 'Knight George' engages the imagination.

With feet back firmly on the ground in Australia, my current favourite resource is Denis Janz's *A Reformation Reader: Primary Texts with Introductions*. Luther's fiery rhetorical skill is on display in the following excerpt. Luther had been under pressure from a couple of friends to write a conciliatory letter to Pope Leo X, which he did in *On the Freedom of the Christian* in November 1520, several months before the Diet of Worms. As Janz notes, it is 'laced with sly ambiguity,'⁴ yet Luther is not exactly ambiguous in his opinion on the pope's central administrative unit, the Curia. This part of the introduction is worth quoting at length:

'I have truly despised your see, the Roman Curia, which, however, neither you nor anyone else can deny is more corrupt than Babylon or Sodom ever was, and which, as far as I can see, is characterized by a completely depraved, hopeless, and notorious godlessness...

'As you well know, there has been flowing from Rome these many years — like a flood covering the world — nothing but a devastation of men's bodies and souls and possessions... and the Roman church, once the holiest of all, has become the most licentious den of thieves, the most shameless of all brothels, the kingdom of sin, death, and hell. It is so bad that even Antichrist himself, if he should come, could

think of nothing to add to its wickedness.

'Meanwhile you, Leo, sit as a lamb in the midst of wolves...'

In December, a month after publishing this, Luther would burn a copy of the papal bull *Exsurge Domine* which called on him to recant within sixty days, and in January 1521 he was excommunicated. For Luther now any ambiguity about the pope was gone: the Antichrist had indeed come.

Through my experience I have moved from unconscious incompetence to conscious incompetence — beginning to see just how much I don't know. It is an uncomfortable place. I am impressed by Luther's tenacity, and yet struggle with the civil and ecclesiastical chaos he helped to unleash. The disunity between Luther and Zwingli and the extremes of the radicals seem disappointing. Yet by failing to reform, the institutional Roman church was steadfastly opposing the gospel, and was in this way an enemy of humankind itself. Luther wanted to empower people to know God through the Bible, and to reach out in love to their neighbors, rather than to strive towards God in futile, superstitious acts. Chaos proved necessary to achieve these aims, and we know that God was at work.

The next step for me is more reading of the primary sources and looking at the English Reformation. The tour certainly supplied momentum for study, and a desire

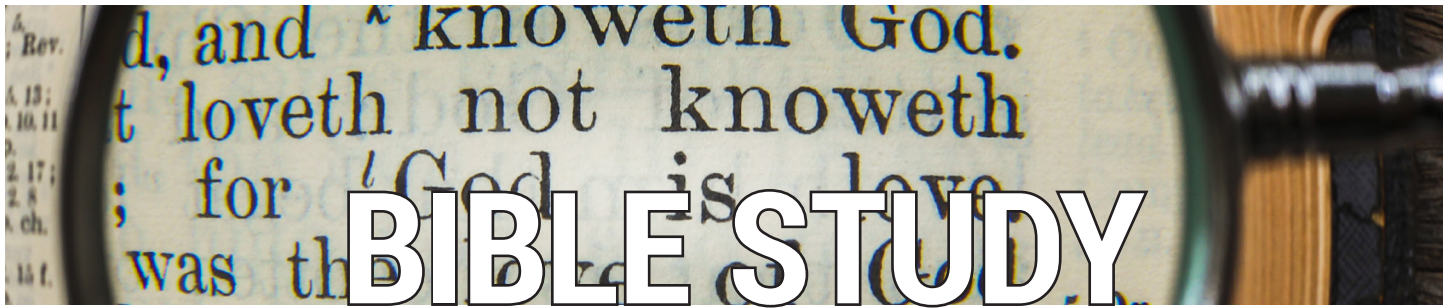
to get to know the characters and stories of the Reformation better. Being in the priestly formation program of the Perth Diocese, I see now the profound ongoing relevance of things hammered out in the Reformation. Five hundred years on from those ninety-five theses nailed to the door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg, and the world has never been the same.

End notes:

1. Alister E McGrath, *Reformation Thought: An Introduction* (Malden: Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012).
2. Bruce Gordon, *Calvin* (New Haven: London: Yale, 2009).
3. Carter Lindberg, *The European Reformations* (Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 90.
4. Denis Janz, *A Reformation Reader: Primary Texts with Introductions* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2008), 105.



Paul and Peggy Bartley at Wartburg Castle, Germany.



Kindness to the Wicked - Luke 6:27-49

David Seccombe

*David Seccombe returns to Jesus' great sermon as we read it in Luke 6:27-49.
David is currently locum tenens at St Alban's, Highgate, WA.*

But to you who are listening I say: love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who ill-treat you.' Luke 6:27-28

In the first section of Luke's Sermon on the Mount (6.20-26) we see Jesus preaching his gospel and dividing the people (laos) into a true and false Israel. Here, early in his ministry, he sees himself a rejected sufferer; to identify with him will bring opposition. It will also bring us enemies. In the next part of the Sermon Jesus instructs disciples ('I say to you who hear') how to deal with their opponents, and the message is clear: love them!

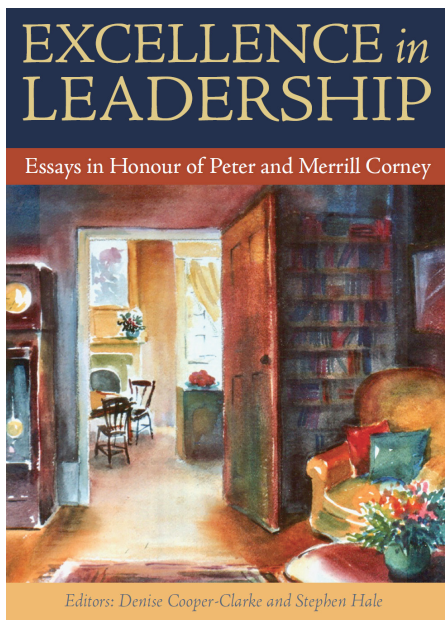
This is startling. The received wisdom said, 'Hate them!' (Matthew 5.43). There is not a great deal in the Torah which says otherwise. How can we account for what looks like a new ethic? The answer is the Isaianic profile of the Servant of the Lord. The Servant suffers grievously, but does not retaliate. This is the nature of his reconciling mission. The connection is confirmed in Luke 6.29: just as the Servant 'gives his cheek to those who pull out the beard' and entrusts his vindication to God (Isaiah 50.6), so Jesus 'did not hide his face from shame and spitting', and told his disciples to do the same: 'If someone strikes you on one cheek, turn to him the other also.' Disciples are called to be uniformly good to those who hurt them. This is what God is like: kind to the ungrateful and wicked. It was also the way of Jesus.

We should consider our own ministries. In the eyes of others we represent God; at least that is what they think we think. People's hostility towards God, even when they do not realize that they have it, will be directed at us. If we respond in kind, we can kiss goodbye any ministry we might have to that person. Our ministry is to reconcile our fellow human beings to God. So we must continue to reflect God's

goodness, and wait for God to open their eyes. In similar vein, Jesus counsels us not to judge. God foregoes judgement in the hope of reconciliation. We must resist the temptation to write people off, to decide that anyone is beyond hope. How well Jesus modelled this in his own dealings with 'sinners'!

Much of the Sermon deals with honesty over our own personal condition. Hypocrisy is one way the Devil easily destroys a ministry. How can a blind person lead another, or someone with a log in their eye extract a speck from someone else's? If we would ever teach in Jesus' mission, it is essential that we learn from him. And let us not think we can distinguish ourselves beyond him. This may be the ambition of a disciple of a Greek philosopher (or a student of a university professor). But Jesus is no master of some new speculation. He spoke as he heard from God, and his disciple will do well if he holds to the word once delivered.

But truthfully, who can live up to Jesus' life and teaching? Are we not diseased trees, and is our fruit not also defective? The only remedy for hypocrisy is to be a good tree. The law must reside in our hearts. Here Jesus points us to the ministry of the Holy Spirit, which he has come to unleash. In the meantime — as we are being transformed into what we wish to be — the rule is obedience. We may not feel much love within us, generosity may not be natural for us, judgement may boil up inside, pride may goad us, but if we are determined to follow our Master we will get some way along the right road. Following our Lord (not just calling him Lord) is the way to life. His teaching must become the bedrock of our life. To ignore it and build on any other foundation is a certain recipe for eventual disaster, for judgement comes as certainly as his kingdom.



Excellence In Leadership:

Essays in Honour of Peter and Merrill Corney

Denise Cooper-Clarke and Stephen Hale (Eds)

Acorn Press, 2017.

Peter and Merrill Corney have had remarkable ministries from the late 1960's until today. There are very few ministers who one could genuinely say shaped the nature of church life as we know it. I don't think it is going too far to say that that is true of Peter and Merrill!

The 1960's and 1970's were times of social ferment and significant change. Church life was largely denominational and uniform in that era and many churches saw the collapse of their once very large Sunday Schools and Youth Groups. Peter and Merrill were great readers of culture and social trends. They somehow sensed what was going on and forged new models of doing church that pioneered a way to respond to those changes. Those responses were innovative in their

era and then became the norm in many, many churches in the years that followed. Some of those churches probably have no idea where the ideas originated from but that doesn't really matter.

In this tribute book we have wanted to ask two questions. First, what was the unique contribution of Peter and Merrill Corney in a range of areas? Secondly, what responses should we be reflecting upon in doing mission and ministry today?

Denise Cooper Clarke opens the book by telling us Peter and Merrill's story. Most of us are probably familiar with some of it but not all of it. You'll enjoy this lovely outline. Paul Perini has penned an important chapter on following on from a great one. As the one who has followed after him I should say that is still a challenge today!

One of the remarkable aspects of Peter and Merrill Corney's ministries both prior to and at St Hilary's Kew was it's comprehensiveness. This book reflects some of the distinctive features of Peter and Merrill's ministry and that is captured in the chapters presented by our 12 contributors.

This reflects the remarkable nature of what is sometimes referred to as 'an all round ministry'. Most of us

ministers are probably considered to be strong in a few areas and okay at a range of others. When reflecting back on Peter and Merrill I think one of the features was the breadth of their interests and their contribution.

So what were some of Peter and Merrill's interests. This will be a long list and is in no particular order: Preaching, Christian education, children's and families ministries, youth ministry and outreach, leadership, women in leadership and ministry, Christian education, organisational theory and practice, evangelism and church growth, culture and sociology, psychology and well being, creativity and cultivating the arts, pastoral care and the small group movement, justice and mercy, marriage, family life, cross cultural mission, generations and cross generational ministry, camping, music, church finances, governance, politics and international affairs, ethics, global mission and networking. (Have I missed something?)

When we say an all round ministry what do we mean? The Anglican Ordinal captures it in these timeless words. 'Proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ. Seek the lost, announce God's justice, warn and correct those in error. Encourage and build up the

body of Christ, preaching the word of God, leading God's people in prayer, declaring God's forgiveness and blessing, and faithfully ministering the sacraments of God's grace with reverence and care....take part in the Councils of the Church...be a pastor... be a teacher...lead the people, love and serve the people... caring alike for young and old, rich and poor, weak and strong.' (APBA p.793) That's a daunting list and most ordinands feel the weight of it. In God's providence it is hard not to put a tick next to each of those areas when we reflect on the Corney's ministries.

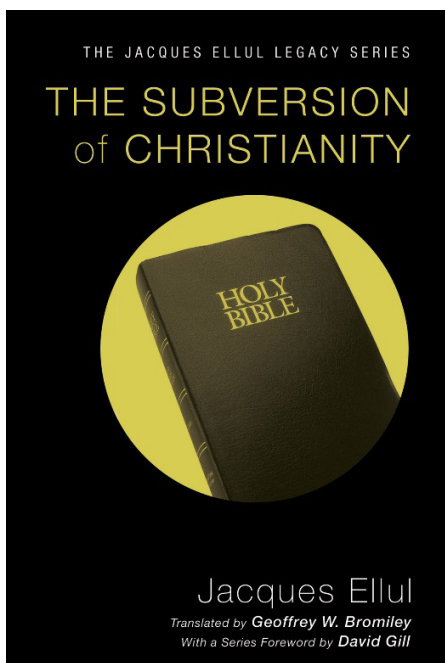
One of the most obvious ways

Peter transformed people's views of ministers and ministry was to move from a focus on Minister as Pastor to Minister as Leader. The dominant model in the preceding era was the model of vicar as *pastor parvorum*. Ministers preached the word of God and ministered to the sick and dying. It was a largely passive/reactive approach. The church was an established entity with an active constituency and the pastor was there to pastor and care for the flock. Peter through his teaching and preaching was able to re-capture a sense of the vicar being the leader of the team. The lead minister leads the staff and lay

leadership teams to fulfil the churches mission and vision. All of that seems so obvious and normal these days but was radical and ground breaking in that era.

Peter and Merrill had a vision for involving children in church and of supporting parents to disciple their children. Youth ministry and outreach was a huge focus. Contemporary worship was radical in it's era. The small group revolution was central at St Hilary's as it grew and embraced a culture of mutual care.

Stephen Hale, Vic.



The Subversion of Christianity

Jacques Ellul Trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley

Wipf & Stock, 2011

his understanding of how this came about.

For Ellul the first Christians were attacked by the political power of the Roman Empire as dangerous. They were rejecting and questioning all power, desiring a transparency in human dealings that manifests itself in bonds of family and social relationships of a completely new kind. Then the change as Christians move to obey the ruling powers and actively support those powers against all that threatens them in the political, economic and social areas.

The Christians and the church wanted an alliance with this world whose powers could be used in service of the gospel, the church and its mission. But the exact opposite happened, with the church and mission being penetrated by the worldly power and completely turned aside from their gospel truth.

For Ellul everything goes back

to a change in the understanding of revelation in the transition from history to philosophy. The theologians are in the Greek philosophical circle with its metaphysical problems. So answers are sought by way of ontological thinking, and theologians now regard the biblical text as departure points for philosophy in intellectual, metaphysical, and epistemological questions. The biblical texts are used for the theologians' philosophical needs rather than listening to the biblical text.

Everything in revelation is formulated in an antithetical way, a dialectical way, uniting two contrary truths that are the truth only as they come together. Paul says about salvation that we are saved by grace through faith but we are then to work out our salvation. This appears contradictory and we are tempted to say that we are either saved by grace and our efforts are worthless or we are

Jacques Ellul's book is driven by the question of, 'How has it come about that Christianity and the Church has given birth to a society, a civilization, a culture, that are completely opposite to what we read in the Bible?' Ellul's answer to his question is that Christian practice has constantly been a subversion of the truth in Christ. Then Ellul sets out

saved by our works and we do not see how grace does anything.

This way of understanding is contrary to the Western world for we think analytically and are unable to accept the existence of opposites or hold together logically exclusive ends. We have a primal desire for unity, we try to reduce diversity to one, hence Greek philosophy as an expression of the human spirit that cannot tolerate diverse things that cannot be classified.

Another factor in Christian practice being a subversion of the truth of Christ arose in the very quick uptake of the gospel by the many poor, slaves, urban proletariat, and a few women in high society. At the end of the third century Christianity had become fashionable and the desire for success was in the church yet society was inverting Christianity instead of being subverted to it.

The church became wealthy with investment power. Wealth makes

possible the doing of good works. The commands of the gospel are expressed in the rendering of service and the display of generosity in social action.

For Ellul there are two damaging consequences of this Christian practice subversion, expressed in resacralisation and morality.

Christianity desacralizes the world with radicalized transcendence since the break between God and the world can only be healed by Incarnation, God can only be known in Jesus Christ, the Word, living not ritualized.

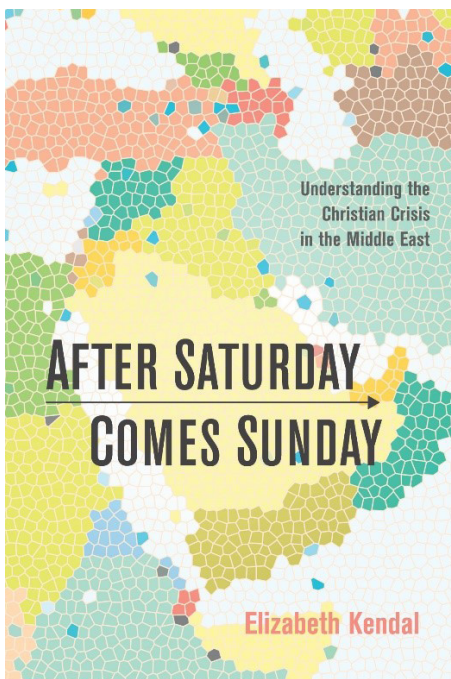
When Christianity defeated the religions of the Roman pagan, its traditional form of the sacred was transferred to the conqueror as temples became churches with the division of sacred and “pro-fane” (Latin *profanum* means “before the sanctuary”).

In the Medieval church this resacralisation is shown in the sacrament that works autonomously depending on neither celebrant,

recipient, nor God’s action. The water of baptism is efficacious washing away original sin, and infusing theological virtues once and for all and receiving the indelible character of belonging to Christ. Faith is not decisive, as the church ritual brings transformation.

Secondly, as Christianity brought the population of the empire to the church there was little hope that they could all live as if they were in the kingdom of heaven. They would have to be trained and their manner of life controlled by morality. This is the very opposite of what was intended by Jesus and by God’s revelation in Israel. This morality corresponds to the society of the day, with conduct conforming to a certain moral code. The criterion of the Christian life, piety and prayer, were now all transformed into moral rules. The Christian now appears as a moral system, rather than a living faith in Jesus Christ.

Ross Jones, WA



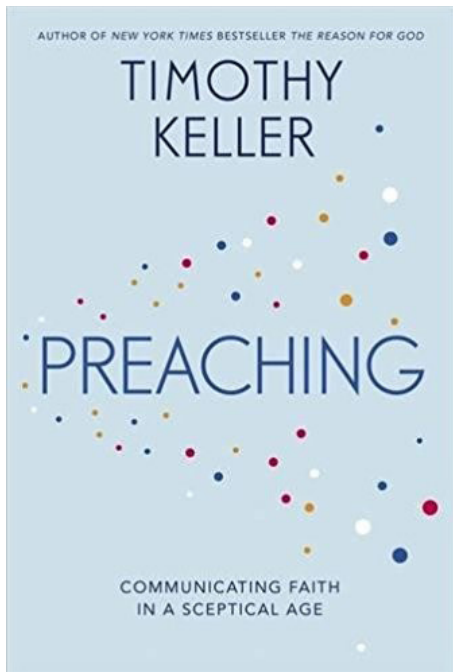
After Saturday Comes Sunday *Understanding the Christian Crisis in the Middle East* Elizabeth Kendal, Wipf and Stock, 2016

The post-Christian West is in decline. Revived Islam is on the rise. The Middle East has become ground zero in a battle for civilisation. Indigenous Christians—Arabs, Armenian, Assyrian and Copts who lived in this cradle of civilization long before the Islamic conquests, are targeted by jihadists for subjugation, exploitation and liquidation. Millions have been driven out of their homeland or slaughtered, their fate ignored by the West’s “progressive” elites who are increasingly hostile to Christianity and delusional about Islam.

Elizabeth Kendall not only exposes

the extent of this genocide in the ancient Christian heartland, but also provides a cogent and readable explanation of the context, history and ideologies that underlie the crisis. Of particular interest for this reader, is her lengthy citation of President Putin’s speech of September 28 2015, which gives a lucid account of the state of the Middle East and a moral justification for Russia’s stance, in contrast with the folly of US policies and the duplicitous role of Turkey (pages 220-226).

Bishop Tony Nichols, WA



Preaching:

Communicating Faith in an Age of Scepticism

Tim Keller

Hodder, 2015

The best synopsis of *Preaching*, actually comes from Timothy Keller himself, tucked away in the book's appendix: 'This volume is far from a complete textbook on preaching. You will have noticed I've spent most of my time on why a certain kind of preaching is needed and what that preaching looks like in principle and in example but relatively little time on how to prepare a good sermon. A manifesto, not a manual, as I told myself many times in the writing of this book' (p. 213)

That is exactly right. In *Preaching*, Keller is articulating his preaching philosophy rather than giving a step-by-step guide. The result is a highly stimulating book that reflects the distinctive strengths and weaknesses of Keller's own preaching.

The book is divided into three sections. Part one: Serving the word; Part two: Reaching the people; and Part three: In demonstration of the spirit and power.

Part one is a stirring call to preach Christ as the centre and heart of the whole Bible story. It's hard to read this section without catching Keller's joy and enthusiasm for preaching Christ with creativity, and passion.

A unique mark of Keller's preaching is his ability to draw parallels between the Old Testament and the person of Jesus and the gospel message. The first three chapters give many stimulating examples of this and provide a useful breakdown of how he thinks about this task. However, as with Keller's sermons, sometimes it feels like the connection to Jesus is somewhat alien to the original text. I was also unconvinced by his suggestion that we 'preach Christ through instinct' (p.86). I suspect that will look more like flights of fancy or invalid allegorizing in the hands of less experienced preachers.

A feature of Keller's ministry in New York City and across the world has been the way he engages with culture and it's on this topic that his manifesto really works.

I intended to read through this part quickly, but found myself pouring over Keller's summary of five modern cultural narratives, and not simply for the sake of growing as a preacher. I found myself grappling with the profound forces that have shaped my own (late) modern worldview and understanding more of how Jesus fulfils those deepest of longings. In some ways I felt I was being preached to even more than being taught how to preach. The book is worth the price for this section alone.

Unfortunately, the final section concerning the work of the Spirit in the preacher and preaching was disappointing. Keller's concluding exhortation is to 'preach from the heart' (p.206). However, his explanation of what this means feels overly simplistic and not particularly biblical. Furthermore, he suggests the evidence will be that 'you will not be insecure or nervous', which

seems unlikely in reality and an unkind gauge by which to measure a preachers' spiritual integrity.

When Keller finally does get practical his instruction to 'choose a theme for the sermon' takes us a long way from preaching 'the central idea of text' (p. 218). Such as when he commends preaching John 2:1-11 with the focus on verse 5 'Do whatever he tells you' to suit a particular context.

However, these weak points don't undermine the usefulness of the book for the preacher. Keller's breadth of reading makes *Preaching* rich with ideas. He pulls key insights from C.H. Spurgeon and C.S. Lewis along with Friedrich Nietzsche and Charles Taylor, so that it feels like there are discoveries, new and old, waiting on every page.

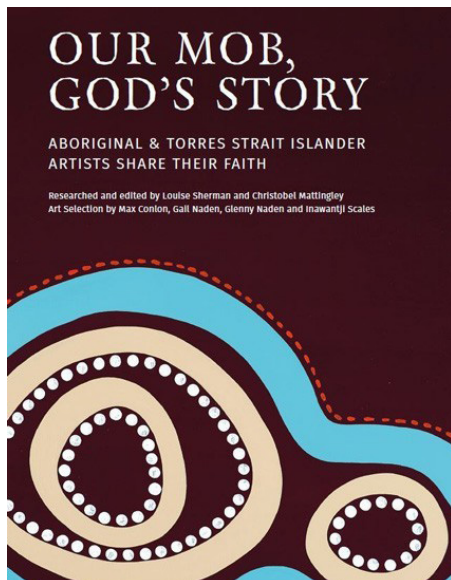
Indeed, there is a great little window into Keller's own preaching ministry later in the book when he exhorts preachers to speak memorably with fresh insight and asks:

'How will you do this? I'm afraid the answer is volume. If you read a couple of books on a subject or text, you will have only one or two great, surprising insights. If you read a dozen books, you'll have a lot more.' (p. 177)

Keller's book is evidence of this truth.

Overall, Keller's *Preaching* won't help the beginner much, and actually contains some pitfalls for those without an existing method of sermon preparation and a strong foundation in Biblical theology. However, it is a brilliantly communicated exegesis of our culture which will undoubtedly help many who take time to reflect on Keller's insights and imitate his Christ-exalting approach to preaching.

Jeff Hunt, WA.



Congratulations to the Bible Society for this stunning collection of indigenous

Our Mob, God's Story

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Artists Share Their Faith

Louise Sherman and Christobel Mattingly (Eds)

Bible Society Australia, 2017

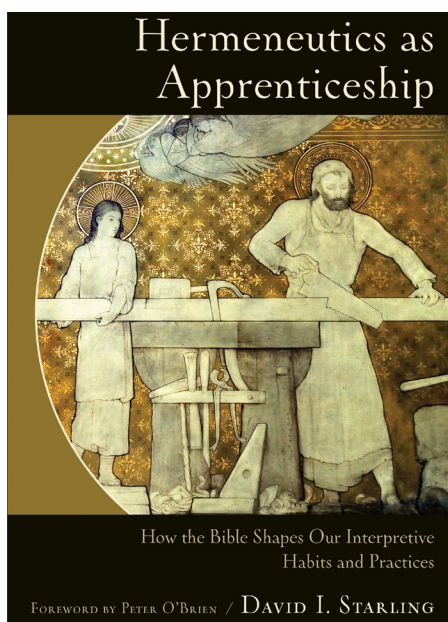
paintings from over thirty locations across the Nation. Aboriginal and Torres Strait artists were invited to submit paintings depicting a Bible story, with a short statement describing its special significance to them. Over 300 paintings were submitted, and as a result, more than 65 artists share their vision of Christ.

Safina Stewart's beautiful "Seven Days Of Creation" opens the Old Testament section. Those based on the New Testament are introduced by Margy Adams unique figurative style and depicts key events in Christ's life

from his nativity to his ascension. Traditional styles (e.g. Kunwinjku, Walpiri, Pitjantjatjara) are mingled with more contemporary expressions, but the linguistic heritage of every contributor is supplied, as well as their personal reflections.

This inspiring collection illustrates what the recent Census indicated – that Christian faith is more alive in the indigenous communities than in the dominant white society.

Bishop Tony Nichols, WA



The Reformation claim that Scripture is perspicuous and is its own interpreter has come under serious criticism in the light of the plurality of evangelical interpretations. Starling provides a helpful summary of recent debates.

Hermeneutics as Apprenticeship:

How the Bible Shapes Our Interpretive Habits and Practices

David I. Starling,

Baker Academic, 2016

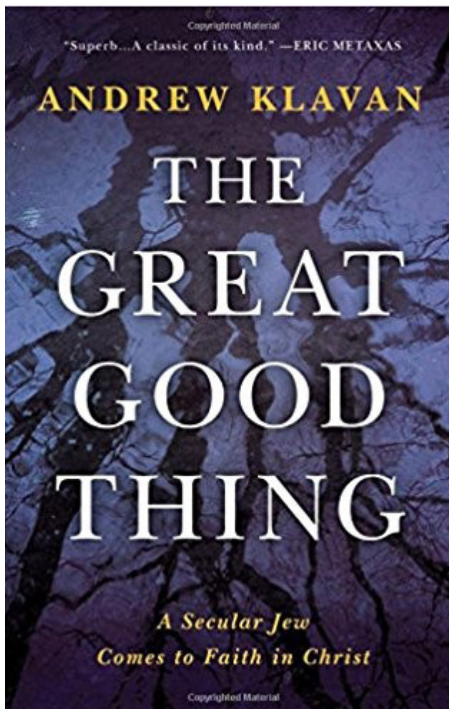
He adds to the traditional images of the hermeneutical circle and spiral by suggesting a third metaphor of the snowball.

But his own preferred image is that of 'apprenticeship' by which he commends the inner-biblical practices of the writers of Scripture as a model for the contemporary interpreter. Their stance and method should be normative for us. As their apprentices in the reading of Scripture, we learn how to understand Christ in the light of Scripture, and how to understand Scripture (and all things) in the light of Christ.

Starling then illustrates such apprenticeship by examining the internal hermeneutic revealed in fourteen stimulating case studies

from Deuteronomy to Revelation. In the process, he demonstrates that the claim that 'Scripture interprets Scripture' must include an awareness of the intertextual relationships between the biblical books and the interpretive work of the biblical authors themselves.

Bishop Tony Nichols, WA



The Great Good Thing:
A Secular Jew Comes to Faith in Christ
 Andrew Klavan
 Nelson, 2016

Andrew Klavan is a successful American writer of crime fiction, young adult fiction and screen plays. In *The Great Good Thing*, he leaves fiction for spiritual memoir, recounting his life from his childhood in Great Neck on Long Island, to his baptism at forty-nine in a Manhattan church. I am a bit of a sucker for spiritual memoir, and I am always looking out for a good one. *The Great Good Thing* did not disappoint – Klavan is a capable storyteller, with a story to tell.

God's dealing with him unfolds in the telling from his childhood in a Jewish family in a new-money Jewish neighbourhood across youthful ambition, anger, questing and despair, through engagement with literature, the Bible, love and marriage, psychotherapy and five epiphanies to his eventual conversion and baptism.

Klavan's father was a successful breakfast radio personality, his mother aspired to WASPness, while he lost himself in boyish dreams and tried to negotiate the tensions of his family's aspirations, anxieties and expectations for him and for themselves. He had a pretty ambivalent experience of

being Jewish, and some contact with Christianity through a Yugoslavian Christian *au pair*, Mina. Christmas with Mina made a vivid impression on him, but he really approached Jesus Christ through an immersion in Western literature. In search of a personal philosophy Klavan watched tough-guy movies and read tough-guy books. Disappointment with many of these tough guys tooling about in their ruined worlds led him back, via Raymond Chandler's Philip Marlowe, to the old European ideals of honour, goodness and heroism, which emerged in a culture and were expressed in a literature formed by the Bible and by Jesus of Nazareth. So he read the Bible (provoking an explosion when his father discovered what he was doing), and Klavan testifies that, 'the Bible made perfect sense to him from the very beginning' as a story (p104), as 'a completely cogent description of how a loving I AM would interact with a free humanity' (p 106). Still, he did not believe the story was true, and so set off through his youth, resisting and bluffing his way through conventional education, finding in the woman who became his wife a lodestar for his life, trying to amass experience and develop a voice and a career as a writer, coming to a point of crisis as he realised he had serious problems and needed to process some of the trauma of his upbringing or go crazy.

A great turning point comes when his brother has an emotional breakdown, prompting Klavan himself to seek psychotherapy, through which he found radical emotional healing that drew him back into joy from the edge of suicide. Five epiphanies followed – a comment made by a baseball player in a post-

match interview that spoke into his crisis, a cathartic personal outpouring to his therapist manifesting later in weeping, a mystical experience at the birth of his first child, a sudden heightening of awareness, vividness and clarity one afternoon, precipitated through Zen meditation, and an episode of hilarity and laughter during therapy that marked an emergence from grief, or at least a laughter even in the heart of mourning. Klavan felt that these amounted to a revelation of the presence of God in the world and to him.

Klavan began to pray, and found it an overwhelmingly rewarding experience, spending longer and longer at it each day. Eventually he came to the conviction he should be baptized. Apart from reading the Bible privately, Klavan had previously 'haunted churches' for a time, and given it up, but more significantly had struck up a friendship with a Christian pastor in New York, Doug Ousley, and had learned much from him. The urge to be baptised caused Klavan to try to define his theology. 'For me to accept baptism', he writes, 'the Jesus story had to be true on every level, not just as myth, but as myth and history combined. That was the whole point.' (p246) The soul-searching this prompted brought him to the conviction that the tomb was empty, and the story was true, and that 'somehow, once again, by the hilarious mercy of God, I had made my way to the great good thing' (p263).

Klavan's story is wrenching, full of pain and difficulty as he deals with the emotional fallout of his upbringing by a father often competitive, aggressive and disappointed with his sons, and a mother guarded and distant from

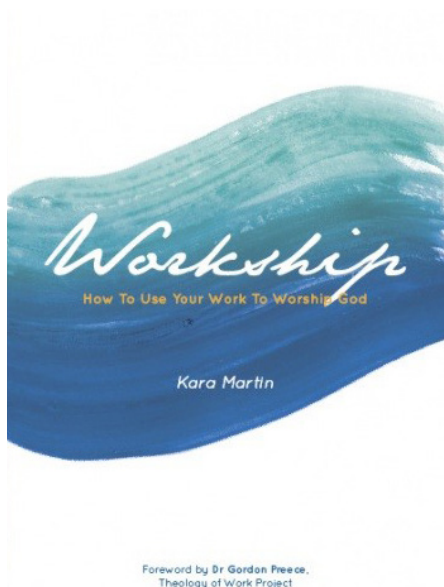
BOOK REVIEWS

her sons. He must also deal with his Jewishness, and the great hurdle this presented to him accepting Christ. His father sickened and died as he was preparing for baptism, and he never told his father of his intention to be baptised – he could not bring himself to bring such sorrow on his dying father. Klavan is intelligent, reflective, passionate and candid in this memoir, and I found it an affecting read. He is dealing with the road to faith, the pre-Christian experience which had

to be cut through, overcome and transformed in order that he might believe. He does not much let us in on the ongoing process of Christian growth post-baptism, although there are evidences here and there of the ways his new Christian perspective has reframed the way he looks back on the ‘epiphanies’ he experienced. As a story of adult conversion out of a secular outlook long inhabited, I found it worth reading, in that it makes me think about a real experience of conversion

as told by the convert, which in turn makes me think about all sorts of theological issues connected to how God does reveal himself to us and bring us to salvation through faith in Christ. It is of course also a deep encouragement to hear of any person being brought from darkness into the kingdom of God’s grace. That’s a great good thing, to be sure.

Ben Underwood, WA



Workship

How to use your work to worship God

Kara Martin

Graceworks, 2017

The title *Workship* encapsulates Kara Martin’s application of Romans 12:1-2 to the whole life of the Christian, not least one’s attitudes and habits in the “secular” workplace. Many others have written on this theme, not least our own Robert Banks. The strength of Martin’s book is that it provides not only biblical principles, but also stories and practical examples that illustrate

both the realities of the workplace and possible Christian responses.

Workship is presented in such an accessible way that it would be a helpful workbook for individual and group study. It is also a profitable read for pastors who need to reflect on the challenges facing many to whom they preach.

Bishop Tony Nichols, WA

2018 Anglican Future Conference

EFAC and FCA Australia

The 2018 Anglican Future Conference will be held from 7 - 9 September 2018 with a commencement service on Thursday evening 6 September 2018. The Conference will be preceded with a range of Ministry and Mission Intensives. Each Intensive will run during the day and will be led by experienced leaders in key areas.





God's words and Australian indigenous languages - NAIDOC 2017

Peter Adam



Peter Adam looks at the effect of the loss of indigenous languages and God's desire to communicate to his people.

One of the many destructive actions of the British in taking over Australia was the suppression of indigenous languages. Superior power meant that the subject people had to dispense with their own culture, including their native language, to live in the new world of their conquerors. The policy of assimilation was a polite version of this political reality. Use of native language was discouraged if not forbidden. Children separated from their parents were raised to speak English, and forget their native language.

The loss of native language has a drastic effect on people. It means a break-down in intergenerational communication and common life. It means a loss of history, a loss of identity, and a decrease in communication. It frays family life. It is as serious as the loss of land, loss of life-style, loss of skills, and the loss of birds and animals. We have apologised for 'the Stolen Generation'. We have not yet apologised for the stolen land, the stolen culture, or the stolen languages.

It is an even more serious crime, when we think of God's desire to communicate to people in their own native language. We believe that God accommodates himself to us in his verbal revelation, by speaking in comprehensible human language. What grace! What kindness! What mercy! And God's words are so powerful and he is so compassionate and gracious, that his verbally inspired Scriptures can be translated into any human language, and still function as God's powerful, life-giving, converting, and communicating word! As Augustine observed, God seems

especially close to us when he speaks our own language.

The translatability of the Bible was one of the great discoveries and contributions of the Reformation. It signified that God came down to speak to everyone in the Bible. It had a profound effect on gospel progress, as it had a profound effect on all cultures, languages and nations which received translated Bibles. It promoted education in reading and writing, the study of languages, and the idea that great ideas could and should be entrusted to ordinary people, not just the elite. It promoted the democratisation of education and learning and knowledge. And if God speaks to us in our own language, then he can hear and understand us when we pray in our own language! Praise him!

The idea of God speaking in native languages is pervasive in the Bible. We might have thought that the story of the tower of Babel means that God does not like the many languages of the world. That is not true. The wonderful discovery of the day of Pentecost was: 'we hear them telling in own languages the wonderful works of God' [Acts 2:11]. When Ezra taught the Law in Nehemiah 8, the Levites walked among the people to ensure that they understood what they were hearing, and this probably included translating Hebrew into Aramaic. [Aramaic, similar to Hebrew, but a different language, was spoken by many Jews in later Old Testament times and in New Testament times].

One remarkable feature of Jesus' ministry is his use of both Greek and Aramaic. I think he spoke both languages. [Lots of debate on this question!]. But notice that when he

called a dead little girl to life he used the Aramaic words ‘Talitha koum!’ [Little girl, get up Mark 5:41], and when he prayed for the deaf and dumb man he uses the Aramaic word ‘Ephphatha!’ [Be opened 7:34], no doubt because this was their native language. Most movingly, when he was praying for himself in the garden of Gethsemane, he prayed, ‘Abba, father’ Mark 14:36], using the Aramaic and Greek words for Father. And when he was crucified, he prayed, ‘Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?’ [My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Mark 15:34].

Interestingly, Paul uses the Aramaic word ‘Abba’ in the context of prayer, echoing Jesus. ‘We cry, Abba, Father’. And he points out that such prayer is prompted by the Holy Spirit. [Romans 8:15, Galatians 4:6]. Greek-speaking and Aramaic speaking believers can pray in their own languages. *And in the song of praise to the slain and risen Lamb in Revelation we read these words:*

*You are worthy to take the scroll
and to open its seals,
because you were slain,
and with your blood you purchased for God
people from every tribe and language and people and
nation [Revelation 5:9].*

It is precisely because we believe that the Bible is translatable into any language that people have worked to translate it into the many languages of the world. And although there were many indigenous languages in Australia, faithful Bible translators, both missionaries and indigenous people worked hard to do the same task here. That meant finding out the words and structure of language for each language and then producing a faithful Bible translation. The by-product of this work was the

preservation of many languages which might otherwise have been lost. It was hard work, and the first complete Bible in Kriol, was only published recently [Kriol is not an original indigenous language, but a constructed common language created by indigenous people].

There is currently a movement to recover and teach indigenous languages in schools. We should support this movement, as we should support the ongoing translation of the complete Bible into the indigenous languages of Australia.

Here in Australia we recently celebrated NAIDOC week [National Aboriginal and Islander Day Observance Committee]. NAIDOC began as a day of prayer in 1938, prompted by William Cooper, a significant indigenous Christian leader. You will find his letter on Wikipedia, under the history of NAIDOC.

The theme of NAIDOC week this year was indigenous languages. Believers in the God who speaks have every reason to support Bible translation into our native languages. Let's support Bible translation into indigenous languages, and let's pray that God will raise up young people to commit to that ministry.

*From all that dwell below the skies
Let the Creator's praise arise
Alleluia!
Let the Redeemer's name be sung
Through every land by every tongue.
Alleluia! [Isaac Watts].*

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