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

MAKING IT WORK BEYOND THE PARISH

Although the life of parishes and congregations is the fundamental expression and experience of church and the coalface of ministry, there are other levels of fellowship and ministry that arise amongst Christians. They arise, for example, from the relationships between the churches that make a diocese, and the dioceses and provinces that make a communion, these relationships being focussed and conducted through the unity and collegiality of the clergy and bishops who teach and lead these churches, dioceses and provinces.

In this issue of Essentials we hear from bishops labouring to give leadership to dioceses. I'm not sure the last time Bishop Kay Goldsworthy paid her EFAC subs (or if she ever has), but given that she is the new incumbent in the metropolitan Diocese of Perth, where I and many other evangelical Anglicans find our church home, I thought it would be good to hear from her about how she is thinking and feeling about the task of shepherding the churches and people of the Diocese of Perth. Across the continent, Bishop

Richard Condie has had more time to find his feet, set a direction and seek to lead the Diocese of Tasmania on in difficult circumstances. He contributes two articles, one on the state of the Diocese, and another on the specific, current, fraught and consequential issue of making redress in the wake of the scandal of child abusers finding opportunity in churches to assault the innocent and to escape unprosecuted. Another level of fellowship and ministry is the whole Anglican communion, which, as you will know, is being strained to breaking point by the very different theological directions in which various individuals, parishes, dioceses and provinces wish to go. GAFCON was held again in 2018, gathering together those who wish to remain where the church has historically been on issues of biblical interpretation and authority, tested at present in particular by debates over the bounds of permissibly orthodox understandings of homosexual desire and behaviour. Of course GAFCON is not about sexuality, it is about establishing and affirming the unity and collegiality of Anglicans from

around the world as we seek to do what we can to keep our communion faithful, united and vital. In this issue we include three reports from Australian participants in the conference.

The training of clergy is a key factor in the character and health of the churches, and many Australians are following with interest the establishment of ETC Asia, and so ETC Asia principal Andrew Reid has given us a report on this new venture in this issue. Bishop Peter Brain brings us resources to reflect on Jesus' rebuke to the Ephesians, 'you have forsaken your first love', and there are a clutch of book reviews to round out the issue.

I have had positive comments about the biographical piece on Peter Soedoyo by Tony Nichols in the winter 2018 issue, and I would like to be able to include such biographical sketches from time to time. If you think you could write an interesting and encouraging appreciation of the life of faith of an admirable Christian you have known, do be in touch with me.

Ben Underwood
essentialsed@gmail.com

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What is EFAC?

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

The purpose of EFAC 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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Editorial Team: Dale Appleby, Ben Underwood, Adam Cetrangolo, Bishop Stephen Hale
Panel of reference: Graeme Goldsworthy, Robert Forsyth, Peter Corney
Layout: Marsha Dale

Editorial correspondence

Ben Underwood, Editor
c/-114 Onslow Road, Shenton Park WA 6008
essentialsed@gmail.com

To notify of a change of address, contact
Rev Chris Appleby
20 Gordon St Fairfield VIC 3078
T. 9489 7127 M. 0422 187 127
cappleby@cappleby.net.au

Subscriptions, memberships and donations
Do it all now at: www.efac.org.au

We most need to seek Christ

Essentials interviews Archbishop Kay Goldsworthy



In this short interview, Archbishop Kay Goldsworthy gives us some insight into her initial thoughts and responses to the opportunities and responsibilities of her new role. Archbishop Kay Goldsworthy is the Archbishop of Perth.

Being a diocesan bishop is a demanding ministry, and all the more given the current declension in Christian adherence, belief and practice, which means that clergy and laity alike are fervently hoping that their bishops will have some wisdom and energy for the challenges Christian churches face. Kay Goldsworthy was installed as the eighth Archbishop of Perth on 10 February 2018. She is not an evangelical, but many evangelicals serve in her diocese, and as she takes up this metropolitan see, evangelicals here and across the country are keen to see what her priorities, convictions and attitudes are, and what kind of leadership she will offer.

Ess: How are you settling back into Perth?

+Kay: I am loving being back here, closer to family and reacquainting myself with people, parishes and places, as well as discovering new places and meeting new people.

Ess: What are your initial priorities as Archbishop of Perth?

+Kay: The first priority is to prayerfully listen to the Diocese. It has been an unsettling time and in God's gracious providence

these times of careful listening are allowing hope and healing for this new season.

Ess: What do you see as the greatest challenges and tasks for the Christians in the churches you oversee?

+Kay: There are various challenges for our parishes. Those in the rural and remote areas of the Diocese face particular concerns as communities and populations shrink. Many city parishes are seeking God for new direction in sprawling suburbs and communities who see the church as irrelevant. Hope is ever present even in small congregations. It is wonderful that so many men and women are in ministry formation and study. The challenge of speaking, living, being faithful to the love of Jesus are very real, and a great responsibility for all of us.

Ess: What do you think we most need if we are to face those challenges and fulfil those tasks?

+Kay: We most need to seek Christ in and for our own lives and communities, and I believe to find and celebrate the common ground of Jesus' love for the world together.

Ess: What is your vision of an ideal diocese? What will you be working for the Diocese of Perth to become?

+Kay: An ideal diocese? Where is that? Perhaps the ideal diocese is the one which follows Jesus to the cross and into the transforming love of his resurrection which is freedom from fear and freedom for life, confident in the Father's love.

Ess: What motivates you to take on the tasks of an archbishop?

+Kay: This has been an answer to a call of Christ's Church. The Holy Spirit is a wonderful and surprising motivator for us all in our ministry. I am one among many. With you a Christian, for you a Bishop.

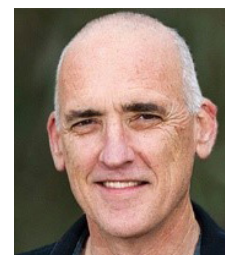
Ess: What would you like to say to the EFAC community?

+Kay: It is good to be with you. Thanks for your welcome. I look forward to us being a sign of Christ's unity and a force for his love to be known. Please pray for us all; that Jesus' love will be received, lives transformed and grace abound: 'For the love of Christ urges us on, because we are convinced that one has died for all; therefore all have died. And he died for all, so that those who live might no longer for themselves, but for him who died and was raised for them.' (2 Cor 5:14-15)



A new college in Singapore

Andrew Reid



Andrew and Heather Reid have moved from Holy Trinity Doncaster to Singapore, with Andrew accepting the invitation of Singaporean friends to be the first principal of a new theological college. Here's an orientation to ETC Asia. Andrew Reid is the Principal of the Evangelical Theological College of Asia

I still have the email. It is dated October 2000 and we were in our first year of church planting in Perth. The writer was aware of our earlier ministry at St Matthew's Shenton Park in Perth and had just started up a ministry in Singapore called Project Timothy. He wondered if I would be available to give some expositions for them at some stage in the future. While I had never had a great interest in ministry in Asia or South East Asia, my wife Heather had always been interested in ministry to Asians and particularly Chinese. However, things began to change for me as God brought a steady stream of Chinese students to our church plant intended for Aussies and they were gradually converted as Heather met with them to do ESL classes using the Bible.

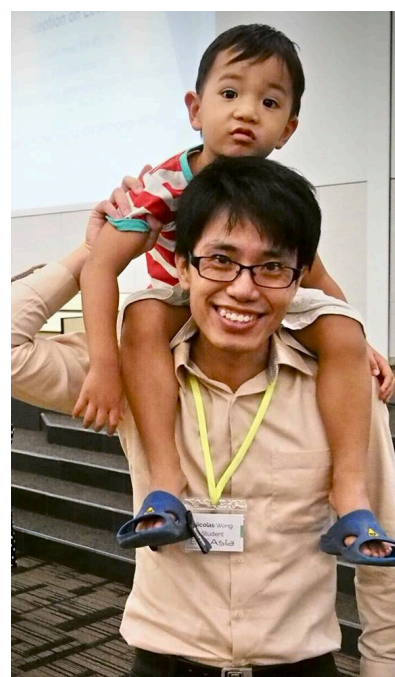
The October 2000 email bore fruit in a visit to Singapore two or three years later. When I quizzed my new-found friend on the needs in Singapore, he noted that there was a significant dearth of churches that had strong expository preaching ministries. Jokingly he quipped that what was really needed was a new Bible college to train a new generation of gospel workers. At the same conference, I also renewed acquaintances with a previous AFES student president who had taken a position at St Mary's Anglican Cathedral in Kuala Lumpur and we resolved to do whatever we could to help these gospel friends. Visits to Singapore or Malaysia became almost annual and God was at work in other ways as well. I started doctoral studies and lecturing at Ridley. Heather

started working with international students at RMIT. Our son married a Singaporean and we then moved to Holy Trinity Doncaster in 2010 (a church with a significant ministry among mainland Chinese people).

The crunch came with a phone call from my Singaporean friend. He told me that the idea we joked about earlier was beginning to look feasible. In response to the growing need a group of six like-minded pastors had gathered to form a board. They had a fledgling company and potential

students. They wondered if I would come and be their first principal! After interviews, we accepted the position and we began the heartbreaking preparation to move from HTD. We arrived in Singapore in mid-2016 to join our Singaporean friends with their gospel-grounded dream. They thought they could raise enough money for a principal and two or three faculty and premises and I began the process in a new country of trying to get this done. We now have two full time faculty (in Old Testament and New Testament), a theology faculty member arriving in mid-2019, Mike Raiter from the Centre for Biblical Preaching for a month a year, and some part time, adjunct and voluntary lecturers.

I remember as we were preparing to come to Singapore, an influential friend knowledgeable about South East Asia expressed some reservations about the venture. He thought that there were enough colleges and was not sure that a new one would add anything. The irony of course is that this initiative has always been a local one—local people seeing the local need



ETC Asia student



Andrew Reid at ETC launch

and working toward making up a perceived deficit. In answer to the regularly asked question of what makes us distinctive, our response comes under four headings:

Reformed and Evangelical Theology

Although board and faculty come from diverse denominational backgrounds we share a commitment to reformed evangelical distinctives such as those found in the confessional statement of The Gospel Coalition and the Australian version of the The Gospel Coalition Theological Vision for Ministry.

Integrated Training for Expository Preaching

Too often there is a divide between training in theology and training for ministry, including preaching and other ministries of the word. At all levels we rigorously seek to bind the two disciplines together and to practise them together, particularly theological study and expository preaching.

Robust and Informed Biblical Theology

While we believe that expository preaching is the best way to handle God's word, we are also convinced that such preaching

needs to be informed by a robust Biblical theology, that is, the Bible's theological drive towards Jesus as the centre, fulfilment, and end of all God's purposes.

Challenging and Training for World Mission

Although based in Singapore, the goal of ETC Asia is to serve Asia as a whole. We are committed to mission, that is, seeing the gospel go out to all the cities, villages, and tribes of Asia.

Three other important goals are, first, to become more financially stable and continue to grow our student numbers (our first year consisted of nine full time students and five part time; this year there are about five full time and about five part time). Second, to transition to like-minded and adequately educated and trained Singaporean faculty before Heather and I finish the ten year commitment we've given. Thirdly, to form partnerships with like-minded gospel friends in Malaysia and South East Asia and see if we can help them train the next generation of theological college leaders.

GAFCON 2018 in Jerusalem

The third GAFCON has recently concluded in Jerusalem, and people you know may have returned with stories and ideas. Here three of the Australian delegates share something of the conference, its life and its concerns.

Katrina Holgate is Rector/Priest-in-charge at St Matthew's Guildford, Perth Diocese.

It is said that the Fifth Gospel is the land of Israel—the sights, sounds and smells of the land that Jesus walked. Well, attending GAFCON in Jerusalem in June was so like that description. The sights, colours, music, accents and teaching were a joy to behold, remarkable. What better way could there be to celebrate 10 years of GAFCON than to be among the 1,950 delegates from 50 countries, representing the majority of the world's Anglicans? The vibrant colours of the African women dressed so beautifully, celebrating life in their national costume, even Mothers Union representatives were wearing MU printed fabric. Chatter and laughter filled the conference centre; phones and cameras captured moments that will be remembered for years to come. The music was terrific, especially the Nigerian choir who led us to praise our Lord and Saviour for four of the five days. Each new day they led us in their vibrantly coloured costumes, which matched the celebratory conference music.

But there was serious business to be done in amongst it all, so Bible studies and teaching were very much part of the conference. We all became well-versed in the call of the conference, 'We will proclaim Christ faithfully to the nations', a call that should be on the heart of every Christian. To serve that purpose nine ministry networks were launched to be a driving

force of GAFCON into the future. These networks are:

- Youth and Children's Ministry
- Church Planting
- Bishops Training Institute
- Global Mission Partnership
- Intercessors Fellowship
- Lawyers' Task Force
- Mothers' and Women's Ministry
- Sustainable Development
- Theological Education



Words cannot fully capture the wonder and historical significance of this amazing conference, but video might add something where my words leave off. I recommend that you watch parts of GAFCON 2018 by visiting the Conference Video page in the Jerusalem 2018 section of the GAFCON website. There you will find all the videos taken in open session, as well as many of the interviews live streamed during the week. By the grace of our Lord Jesus, we were blessed and privileged to have the opportunity to attend GAFCON 2018. Praise be to God for his faithful people.

Kanishka Raffel is the Dean of St Andrew's Cathedral, Sydney Diocese.

The third Global Anglican Future Conference (GAFCON) held in Jerusalem at the end of June was a gathering of Anglican Christians (including 316 bishops, 669 other clergy and 965 laity) from more than 50 countries around the world. A truly global gathering in the City of David where Jesus preached, was crucified and rose again, and poured out his Spirit on his disciples for the preaching of the gospel to the whole world. It was a privilege and a joy for me and Cailey to be among the participants.

The conference theme was 'Proclaiming Christ Faithfully to the Nations'. Each morning began with Morning Prayer and Bible exposition from Luke 22-24, looking at the dramatic final hours of Jesus' life and the stunning victory of his resurrection. The Bible teachers for the morning sessions came from Uganda, UK, Chile, Australia and Singapore. Our singing was led by a Nigerian choir, in colourful costume and joyful praise. Our discussion group comprised members from Congo, Nigeria and USA. Plenary sessions were themed around God's Gospel, God's Church, God's World and God's Strategy. Again, we were served by speakers from around the globe - Nigeria, Rwanda, Canada. Elective seminars covered topics as diverse as the uniqueness of Christ; the clarity of Scripture; engaging with the Buddhist and Islamic worlds; marriage and sexuality; the work of the Holy Spirit; nurturing new Christians; equipping every Christian for ministry and many more.

The context of contemporary global Anglicanism is one in which issues of human identity and sexuality have come to be the touchstone for deeper issues of the authority of Scripture and the shape of repentance and godly living. Tragically, a deep chasm has been exposed. Some Anglican churches (notably in America, Canada, Scotland, Brazil and most recently, New Zealand) have rejected the teaching of Scripture on such matters and embraced understandings and practices that contradict the teaching of Scripture. Biblical Christians cannot

affirm that it is loving or faithful to distort or reject God's Word in this way. On the contrary, the truth that sets us free is precisely, the truth that God has preserved in his written Word for his people in all generations. Jesus said, 'if you love me, obey my commands' (John 14:15, 21, 23).



In affirming faithfulness in marriage between one man and one woman, and chastity in singleness (Lambeth Resolution 1.10), GAFCON represents more than 70% of the world's Anglicans and the unbroken teaching of Scripture throughout history. The departure of some Anglican churches from this biblical standard not only fails to serve and love the wider world by obscuring God's truth; but it has also rent the fabric of fellowship between Anglicans. In America and Canada, hundreds of Anglican clergy faithful to the Lord's teaching in Scripture have been deposed and removed from their ministries. Congregations have been forced to leave their church buildings. Whole dioceses have been forced to leave their denomination. Tragically, the existing global Anglican institutional structures have failed to uphold godly discipline, to correct error or defend the faithful.

GAFCON affirmed the urgency of Jesus' worldwide mission (which can only proceed on the basis of his true, holy and life giving Word); and called on those parts of the global Anglican family who have abandoned the one, holy, catholic and apostolic faith to repent of their error and return to fellowship. The conference statement, 'Letter to the Churches' reflects the contribution of every Anglican Province present at the conference and was unanimously affirmed. Can I commend that letter to your attention (find it on the GAFCON website)? It reads in part:

"The uniqueness of Jesus Christ lies at the heart of the gospel: "there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). The gospel confronts us in the midst of our confusion and sin but it does not leave us there. It includes a summons to repentance and a call to believe in the gospel (Mark 1:15), which results in a grace-filled life. The ascended Christ gave his Spirit to empower his disciples to take this gospel to the world [...] As members of Christ's body, they are sanctified in him, called to live lives of holiness and to be salt and light in the world [...] Yet faithful proclamation of this gospel is under attack from without and within, as it has been from apostolic times (Acts 20:28-30) [...] We dedicate ourselves afresh to proclaiming Christ faithfully to the nations, working together to guard the gospel entrusted to us by our Lord and his apostles."



GAFCON delegates gather on the temple steps in Jerusalem. Photo: Kanishka Raffel.

Eugenie Harris attends Geraldton Anglican Cathedral, the Diocese of North West Australia

The shenanigans that occurred in Texas when The Episcopal Church (TEC) invited a 27-member choir from Rwanda to tour are worthy of a Netflix political drama. The talented Anglican Church singers jetted in, but before taking the stage they were presented with a document that required signed agreement with TEC's inclusivity protocol.

The Bible-believing choir was not able to agree and so the US Church abandoned them. No accommodation, no food, no airfares home....nothing. It required intervention at the most senior levels in the Church of Rwanda and Rwandan Government to organise their rescue and repatriation.

I include this shameful episode because it helps explain the context for the Global Anglican Future Conference in Jerusalem in June. This was the third gathering of the Gafcon movement - set up in 2008 to promote Bible-based, mission-focused ministry in the Anglican Church. It's a much-needed body providing vital Christian fellowship and support for churches in the worldwide Anglican communion that wish to remain orthodox in their faith despite threats from within and without the church.

What a joy it was to join in Jerusalem with some 2000 bishops, clergy and lay people, including many from the Global South, representing some 70 percent of worldwide Anglicans, for Bible studies, prayer, praise, discussion and deep fellowship. It was like a foretaste of the new Jerusalem in old Jerusalem. There arose in me a wonderful sense of relief to be amongst a great cloud of witnesses, united by the gospel, driven on by the desire to proclaim Christ crucified in an increasingly dark world. We may feel like our church is little and swimming weakly against the tide of the world. But Gafcon is testament that we are not alone and we should never doubt the truth of God's good Word.

The Bishop of Lango, Uganda, the Right Revd Dr Alfred Olwa opened the conference with a stirring call to take a firm stand for Jesus and the true gospel.

'None of us here can escape the responsibility of proclaiming Christ faithfully to the nations so that people — when they come to Jesus in repentance and forgiveness of their sins — will escape the judgement of God. They will escape hell.'

'We need to remember that Jesus was tried and rejected, later resurrected. He lives and is going to come back. There is only one Jesus. King Jesus. One story from our God.'

Archbishop of Nigeria, the Most Revd Nicholas Okoh followed with a warning about the need to discern and combat the false gospel. We should not 'distort the gospel in order to take away offence, for the gospel without offence is an empty gospel,' was his impassioned plea. Praise God, and pray for, the many African church leaders who have such a clear and uncompromising commitment to the gospel, despite often enduring poverty and persecution.

One of my highlights was the Mothers Union (MU) luncheon. I felt rebuked that my prayer life had been so parochial, so uninformed and unaffected by the trials of sisters and brothers in other nations. Take, for example, my prayer partner who had received word that a church elder had been abducted by Fulani tribesmen. "May he not be beheaded," was her petition to our Lord. Then there was Nigerian MU elder stateswoman Mama Gloria—the wife of Nigerian Archbishop Ben Kwashi. Her life is an extraordinary testimony to faith in the Lord Jesus. Early that morning she had become a mother again, to an 11-month-old boy, orphaned and delivered to her home when his own mother was shot dead. There are now 50 children (plus a group of older teenagers) living together in the Archbishop's residence, in humble dependence on the grace of God.

To help guide continuing reform and renewal of the movement, the conference delegates produced a *Letter to the Churches*—a pledge to proclaim Christ faithfully to the nations and guard the gospel entrusted to us by our Lord and his apostles. I commend to you gafcon.org online resources, including the YouTube channel. I have listened over and over to these magnificent talks, gaining incredible encouragement. My prayer is that you too may be spurred on, marching forward, looking to Jesus the perfecter of our faith.



A Tassie Update Bishop Richard Condie



Bishop Richard Condie has had since March 2016 to find his bearings in the Diocese of Tasmania, and to take up the challenges of episcopacy. This article is adapted from an address he gave at the 2017 General Synod EFAC Dinner, where Richard offered an account of his joint endeavours in collaboration with his clergy and people. Richard Condie is the Bishop of Tasmania

In June 2017 the Diocese of Tasmania launched a new vision for our future ministry together, but it would be a mistake to think that this was a new beginning. It is rather the fruit of a longer journey that began back in 2000, when Bishop John Harrower was appointed Bishop of Tasmania. He had a vision for 'every Tasmanian committed to Jesus Christ', and declared the diocese to be 'the Missionary Diocese of Tasmania', with every Anglican challenged to live as 'a missionary disciple'. He brought in a new era with new patterns of Christian community, an expectation of missional leadership, a stated aim to be willing to take risks for the gospel, a missional ecclesiology, and a deep culture of permission giving. The mood in the diocese moved from 'no' to 'yes'; from what was, to what could be; and from maintenance to mission. It was a time of huge change in the make-up of the clergy and in the embracing of lay ministry. John also cleared up the mess of historic child sexual abuse and internal dysfunction. He really brought in a new season of health and vitality. I can recommend following a bishop who is a missionary! Perhaps we could make bishops out of more returned CMS Missionaries to go and sort out the dioceses of Australia. So, fast forward from 2000 to 2016, and the diocese was ready again for a new phase, open to new leadership. I have never been in a place so open to being led, so appreciative of direction, and so receptive to ministry. All of which I put down to these foundations which had been laid.

A New Vision

I have had a long association with St Jude's in Carlton which has a history of strategic planning. Back in the 1990s Peter Adam used to say that it was only St Jude's and the Soviet Union that had a five year plan. So in the first 12 months in Tasmania I set about developing a plan for future ministry there. I began with my own observation, that the Diocese of Tasmania desperately needed confidence for the future. They had been hammered by sexual abuse scandals, the Royal Commission, and rural decline. And so I began to talk about confidence in God, confidence in the gospel, confidence in the Scriptures, and confidence in the Church itself. In the third week on the job I gathered the clergy together and I asked them what they thought the Diocese needed. The answer was disciple-making and evangelism. We really needed to find ways to make and grow Christians. And of course we needed leadership.

About this time *The Vine Project* came out from Matthias Media. It was a Godsend for us because it articulated a strategy about how to disciple people. Not just that we should do it, but how we could do it. So that year I bought a copy for every clergy person in the diocese, and we devoted our clergy conference to it, teasing out the practical implications for our parishes. After all this listening I wrote a draft vision for the diocese, and took it on a roadshow of consultations and focus groups. It was written and rewritten many times in the light of this feedback.

In June 2017 we launched our new vision: *A church for Tasmania*, making disciples of Jesus. That is, we want to be a church that is *for* Tasmania, for the benefit of those outside the church. We want to be *for* it, not *against* it. For business, government, arts, media, education, healthcare, families and individuals. We want to see each of these areas flourish. But with this is the conviction that the unique contribution we can make is making disciples of Jesus. There are many good things we could do as a church, but if we are not making disciples, we are not really being the church; not really doing what we can do to be a church for Tasmania. As important as indigenous issues, euthanasia, climate change, refugees, the definition of marriage, and domestic violence are, they must be in response to and as a consequence of the gospel call *to make disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ*.

Convictions

Usually vision statements have a statement of values, but we wanted to make ours a statement of convictions. Five convictions drive our vision:

1. Jesus Christ is the head of the Church...
2. And he has sent us to make disciples...
3. By word, prayer and service...
4. Supported by fruitful godly leaders...
5. God being our provider, and us stewards of his gifts.

Our mission

The mission is fourfold:

- To build a network of confident, flourishing parishes;
- To develop partnerships with Anglican agencies and schools;
- To grow missional chaplaincy in hospitals, aged care facilities and prisons; and
- To be a people of blessing in our communities.

Flourishing parishes

To accompany this mission we set a new standard for each of our parish centres. Each one should have: active disciple-making pathways; active ministry to young people and families; transformative public worship aimed at discipling; a transparent culture of safety for all; avenues of intentional prayer; a commitment to world mission; and leadership for well-trained, biblically orthodox clergy.

Some progress

Let me tell you some things that have happened over the last year. We began by employing a Director of Ministry Development. This was based on the principle of putting your best resources into the biggest opportunities, rather than the biggest problems. The Director is to focus on helping parishes achieve growth and vitality. Stephen Carnaby, a local clergy person with a strong track record of leading change, joined the team in this role. We try to quarantine him from the problems so that he can focus on ministry development.

We also established a Pathways program which is being rolled out in parishes across the diocese. It aims to help parishes work out what steps they need to have in place so that people can move from being outside the church to being disciples of Jesus. The parishes that have embraced this are already seeing growth. At the date of writing nine parishes have been through the program, and there are plans for more to join in the year ahead. We have seen growth in the use of evangelism courses, both *The Alpha Course* and *Christianity Explored*. The new rector of Wynyard ran three *Christianity Explored* courses, involving 60% of the congregation and some outsiders. Now all of them are in Bible study groups for the first time ever in the life of the parish. We put a small portion of the proceeds from sale of property into a New Ministry Development Fund. We managed to gather up enough to put a full-time rector into the parish of Circular Head. God has really blessed this ministry over the last year and a half. It has grown from about 20 people with no children to having over 90 people in the congregation a few Sundays ago, along with a thriving children's ministry.

We have been pouring effort into our clergy as well. We now have well-established cohorts of clergy in different stages of ministry: emerging leaders, new rectors, senior ministers, 'fourth quarter' ministers, chaplains, and so on. These are peer learning opportunities that allow ministers to gather together for tailored learning, with people of the same stage of ministry. Almost every full-time clergy person now has a ministry coach, and we have trained up a dozen local coaches to support them in their ministry. God in his kindness has allowed us the opportunity to plant two new churches in Tasmania in the last 12 months. Partnership with BCA has enabled us to plant in the southern beaches south of Hobart, and in Brighton, one of Hobart's northern working class suburbs.

One of the delights of living in a small place like Tasmania is the opportunity to make a contribution to wider Tasmanian community life. As the Bishop, I have been able to have op-ed pieces in the paper on the atonement, during the Dark MoFo Festival in 2017, and more recently on redress. I've been able to contribute to community debates about euthanasia and the redefinition of marriage. It is an extraordinary opportunity that we are trying to embrace with both hands. Of course there are many challenges as well. Small churches that are struggling along in places where there is decline and the loss of industry; and we now have the challenges of funding redress, with painful property sales. But all in all we feel like the Lord is blessing this season of ministry.

I recently had the joy of reporting to our synod on this vision. We have been measuring parish performance around the seven areas that we expect our parishes to attend to. It is a simple tool of giving a red, orange or green light, against each of the criteria. I'm pleased to say, that with only one exception, each of the areas showed positive growth over the last 12 months. The old adage, 'you measure what matters to you', has helped keep us focused. I'm very grateful to God for calling me into this ministry in Tasmania, for laying such wonderful foundations through Bishop John's ministry, and preparing such a fertile field for the growth of the gospel. Please pray for us, as we pursue our vision, to be a church for Tasmania, making disciples of Jesus.

Making Redress

You may have seen media reports about the measures the Diocese of Tasmania is taking to acknowledge and make restitution for evils uncovered by the recent Royal Commission. Bishop Richard Condie explains the approach his diocese is taking and why.

The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse has done a great service to our country. With compassion and courage, it exposed the dark secrets of sexual abuse in institutions including in the Anglican Church. The Royal Commission shone its light on

the Diocese of Tasmania and we are thankful for their work bringing to light the evil deeds of the past. We may never know the full extent, but perhaps up to 200 children were sexually abused and assaulted by clergy and leaders in our Diocese. This is a tragedy of monumental proportions. We, like many

Dioceses, have done much to address this in the years since we began to acknowledge what had happened. Many years before the Royal Commission, we began to put our house in order. We have worked hard on the selection, training and accreditation of our workers, and more recently working on full compliance with their recommendations. The Diocese of Tasmania is particularly in the debt of our former Bishop John Harrower who worked tirelessly in this area, commencing his ministry with a formal apology to survivors. Right across the Australian Church we should remain grateful to the Royal Commission for exposing the breadth of this blight in our history. They have held us accountable and shown our sins for all the world to see.

It is right and proper for us to make amends for these sins. Making restitution for wrongs is a Christian idea. It first appears in Exodus 22 where if a man steals an animal and if it dies or is sold, then he must make amends by repaying 4 or 5 times the value. Or if he borrows an animal and it dies he shall make full restitution to the one from whom it is borrowed. The stand-out example in the New Testament is Zacchaeus, who when he encounters Jesus, pledges to repay four times the amount of anything that he had extorted out of vulnerable people as a tax collector. So the notion of providing redress, to in some way make restitution for the wrongs committed in the past, is our Christian duty. Providing redress payments to survivors of abuse in our church, will provide a measure of restorative justice for those survivors. It will show them the recognition that they deserve by our acknowledgement of the wrongs committed to them, and that they will find the emotional and financial support that they need.

The National Redress Scheme

In a 2015 report the Royal Commission recommended a National Redress Scheme for all institutions. Their hope was that an accessible, independent, fair, accountable, and efficient scheme would be established to allow as many survivors as possible to access redress. It was acknowledged that many survivors would not want to contact the institution in which they had suffered abuse, so it was vital to have an independent scheme. Thankfully the Federal Government announced a scheme along the lines of this recommendation in November 2016. It began operation on 1 July this year and will run for 10 years. The Redress Scheme will provide payments of up to \$150,000 assessed on a case-by-case basis, a provision for legal costs, and up to \$5,000 towards counselling. It will also provide an option for survivors to receive a direct response from the institution in the form of a personal apology. The Anglican Church in Australia has given its full support to the National Scheme and has developed a company which will provide the vehicle by which Anglican institutions (dioceses, schools and agencies) can join the scheme as a group. Many of these organisations have already indicated their willingness to join such a company and the national scheme.

The Challenge for Tasmania

In some dioceses the prevalence of child sexual abuse has been greater than others. Sadly this was the case in the Diocese of Tasmania, and as mentioned above, we may never know the

full extent of the damage done. But we do know that for every survivor who gave evidence at the Royal Commission who had previously come forward to the institution in which they were abused, there were two more who had never been to the institution. This indicates that the size of the problem is much bigger than we first imagined. We had already provided redress through a Diocesan scheme called the Pastoral Support and Assistance Scheme to 55 survivors of abuse. If our Diocese follows the Royal Commission pattern we could have 150 survivors, and maybe even more, who might come forward to an independent scheme. With an estimated average payout of \$76,000 from the Scheme, and those previously provided a payment under our old scheme being able to re-apply, the estimate of our liability under the new scheme could be in the order of \$8 million. That is the mid-point our actuaries predict, but it could be as high as \$14m or as low as \$6m. The estimates coming in from other Dioceses around Australia are truly chilling. While the larger wealthier metropolitan Dioceses might be able to fund their liabilities out of operational budgets, unless many of our rural and regional dioceses take some radical proactive action, their liability may have catastrophic effects on their future financial viability.

Collective Responsibility

I have been arguing in Tasmania that we have a collective responsibility to address this. The Diocese as a whole must respond to the challenge of funding redress. Without the cash reserves to fund it, we have had to turn to realising our assets to make sure we can meet our obligations. In June our Synod decided to divert 25% of our Diocesan and Parish investments from the previous sale of property, and 25% of the net proceeds of sale of over 100 properties towards establishing a Redress Fund.

More than once during the lead up to the Synod people expressed to me that we should not have to pay for the sins of others that we did not commit. I understand when people outside the church feel this way, but I am disturbed when I hear it from people who are members of the church. My contention is that this comment shows a profound misunderstanding of the Christian gospel. The very heart of the Christian message rests on an innocent one who suffers for the redemption of many. Jesus Christ paid for the sins of the whole world, sins that he did not commit, so that he could provide restoration and forgiveness. It seems to me the costly sacrifice that the Diocese is making is exactly the heart of our discipleship. Every parish in the Diocese will contribute in a costly way, some by losing part of their income, some by losing a much loved building, and some by making direct financial contributions which will curtail the work of ministry. The Diocese will have to make adjustments as well because the diocesan investments being levied have been supporting youth and children's ministry and new ministry initiatives.

It is a costly business, but doing the right thing usually is. Jesus called us to "deny ourselves and take up our cross daily" to follow him. In various ways we are responding to that call. We do hope that preserving the balance of the proceeds of sale of property for Parish use, will mean that we can find new

sustainable models for ministry in the places that lose buildings, and that the future sustainability of the Diocese will be secured. Already many creative ideas are emerging, but we are under no illusions that the days ahead are going to be easy.

One of our particular challenges is managing community expectations. Rural communities in particular are attached to their churches buildings and have a strong sense of community ownership, even if they never attend a service. This is intensified when a cemetery is attached to the church property. The level of community grief is understandably high. We cannot expect them to share a sense of collective responsibility for righting past wrongs.

A Spiritual Challenge

In some ways what is happening must be seen as a spiritual challenge for us. I believe that it is no coincidence that we learned of our redress obligations, and then realised the sacrifice we would need to make, just days after we concluded a season of lament and repentance for past wrongs. We had set

aside Lent this year to acknowledge before God our failures to protect children, to keep families safe from violence, our misuse of power, and our failure to care for the first people of Tasmania. I had visited 45 of our 48 Parishes during Lent to lead a simple prayer meeting, and what I witnessed over those 40 days was quite profound. People owned up to the sin and failures of the past, and prayed about their resolve to address each area positively. It seems that God has called us to “*produce fruit worth of repentance*” (Matt 3:8), in this very particular way.

While it is incredibly hard, and the media attention has been intense, we believe God is in this; that he has called us to this moment of costly obedience, and that it is a direct result of our prayers of lament, repentance and resolve. Our prayer now is that survivors of sexual abuse will find healing hope and wholeness through our sacrifice, and that maybe even some will be restored to the Lord Jesus. Whatever the cost, and whatever the outcome, we are prepared to do what is necessary to follow him.

The Anglican Future Conference 2018

September 6-8. Planetshakers Church, Southbank, Melbourne.

A conference for lay and ordained members of your church, to explore gospel and culture in our mission. Two flyers for this conference are included in this edition. We recommend you pass them on to someone and encourage them to attend. Further details of the conference can now be found at www.anglicanfuture.org.au

Keynote Speakers



The Revd Frogg Orr-Ewing,
Latimer Minster, Beaconsfield UK
Frogg recently planted a ‘minster’ church as a resource hub for mission and church planting in rural areas. He is strong on evangelism and apologetics, and has a PhD in missional church planting.



Ms Justine Toh,
Senior Research Fellow at the Centre for Public Christianity, Sydney.
Justine worked at Fairfax Digital before completing her doctorate in Cultural Studies at Macquarie University. She speaks and writes about freedom and individualism, the body as a project, and other trends in contemporary culture.



The Revd Dr Wesley Hill,
Associate Professor of New Testament at Trinity School for Ministry, Pennsylvania, USA.
Wes seeks to help his students understand how attention to Scripture formed the church’s creedal heritage and, likewise, how that heritage can now help us to read Scripture afresh as the word of the Triune God for us today.



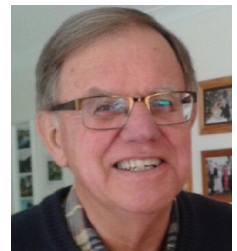
GRACE & TRUTH
IN UNCERTAIN TIMES
Anglican Future Conference 2018



Don't forsake your first love

Revelation 2:4-5

Bishop Peter Brain



'Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken your first love. Remember the height from which you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first.' Revelation 2:4-5 Bishop Peter Brain ministers in Perth, WA and beyond.

In this thematic study I hope we can reflect on these awful, and unexpected words of rebuke from our Risen Lord. There are a number of contexts that we need to consider. These include: first, our Lord's words from Matthew 24:9-14 (around 50 years earlier) with his general warning that in the last days 'because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold'; second, the privileged place the Ephesian church enjoyed in God's economy, with Paul's longest settled ministry, the remarkable public bonfire of repentance and the elder's seaside retreat, the presence during the next 40 years of pastors like Timothy, the apostle John, Priscilla and Aquila, and Tychicus and its strategic place amongst the churches in the surrounding region. (Acts 19, 20:17-38, 2 Tim 4:12-22, Rev.2-3); third, the letter we call Ephesians, with its rich teaching about God's grace and warm-hearted encouragement to continue their sacrificial love to others, not to mention Paul's prayers for their love to blossom, reminds us of their rich heritage.

Revelation 2:1-7 must be taken to heart if we are to be kept from a similar rebuke. The Ephesians were commended for all the things we labour and give our lives to in local church ministry. Their persevering hard work attracted our Lord's praise but so too their distaste for unapostolic false teaching and conduct, not once, but twice (2:2,6). Furthermore they had not grown weary in their endurance (3). They were the kind of disciples we who claim to be apostolic, evangelical and faithful to our Lord aspire to be. These contexts help us understand the surprise it must have been to hear our Lord's rebuke when read out to their church in Ephesus, not to mention the other six churches, who had no doubt benefited from and looked up to this larger church.

Since none of us wants to hear a word of rebuke from our Lord, I want to pose a few suggestive questions as to what this

forsaken first love might look like and offer some passages, mainly from Ephesians, that taken to heart could keep us from hearing this devastating word when we face our Risen Lord. Could it have come because a subtle shift over the years had seen privilege move through responsible service into pride? Reputation (Rev.3:1) as with flattery (Ps.12:2-3; Prov.28:23) is not always easy for sons of Adam and daughters of Eve to handle. These passages may help: Eph.2:8-10; 4:7,8,11,12,13.

Might the cut and thrust of calling out departures from apostolic teaching and conduct become an end in itself, causing us to love the exercise of rebuke and correction more than love for our Lord and the restoration of the errant? We lose our first love of seeing sinners established in Christ. Passages to consider: our Lord's pattern (2:5), Paul's example (2 Tim.2:22-26) and Eph.4:15; 2:1-5; Matt.5:43-48 and 11:28.

Could our desire not to rebuke for fear of losing friends mean that we love the praise of people more than that of God? Our Lord's rebuke gave his brothers and sisters opportunity to repent. Loving God and others must keep these two in tension. Passages to consider alongside the previous verses include: Eph. 5:3-14; 2 Tim. 3:1-5; Matt. 11:29-30.

Can our desire to work hard and persevere as faithful church members leach out of us the love we once had? The disappointments of church life can sour us and easily cause us to settle back expecting to be served rather than serve. When disappointment morphs into bitterness or resentment to others or to God we have entered fatal territory. How can this drift be addressed? How do these passages remind you of your first love in for what God has done for us individually and collectively? Eph. 1:1-2; 1:3-14; 1:15-23. Is God's love to terminate on us? Ponder: Eph.4:1-16; 4:20-5:2 and 5:15-21.

Strengths can easily become weaknesses. A church that has

enough people like us puts us in grave danger. What we think is loving may be self-indulgence. We no longer go out of our way to sacrificially love those who might not reciprocate. Is this dangerous territory? Ponder: 1 Cor. 11:17-34; 12:31-13:13.

Discipleship and controversies, like the one we are facing within our denomination, challenge us not only to be faithful to God and his revealed Word written, but to grow in love, both to God and the people we are part of, not to mention those whom we are to exhort and evangelise. Revelation 2:4-5 remind us how easy it is forsake this love even in the interests of Christlike discipleship, and of our Lord's desire that we grow in and maintain this love until he returns. Two couplets from Ephesians may help keep our love alive. These are the exhortations about the Holy Spirit in 4:30 and 5:18, which are congregational in context but individual in our responsibility to pursue (1:14-15; 2:22). Add the example of Paul's thanksgiving prayer for others and exhortation to continually grasp God's extraordinary love to us in Christ (1:15-19 and 3:14-21).

Is it possible that our reading of the Bible in order to persuade others to remain committed to apostolic doctrine and conduct may replace our personal Bible reading primarily to nurture our fellowship with and love of our Father, Saviour and Spirit, where we gladly welcome their nourishment and correction for us as adopted children? Nothing is so necessary for our growth in love than hearing God speak to us, whereas nothing is potentially fatal as reading Scripture for the purpose of applying it to others. What is described so wonderfully, as the sword of the Spirit (Eph.6:17-20) can focus on the sword to correct others, rather than the Spirit's way of growing our love for God and others (Rev. 3:20, Col. 3:14-17).

We are most at risk of forsaking our first love when we think; 'it couldn't happen to me or to our church or group'. To be forewarned by our Lord in the gospel and Revelation 2:4 rebuke, are a reminder of his deep love for us. In both it is clearly for our good, since he understands not only our human frailty but the pressures of decided discipleship from the world, the flesh, the devil and the church. His call to the Ephesians to repent, to 'remember the height from which they had fallen and to do the works they did at first', show us that his rebukes are always designed to restore us. His call to repent, by remembering and doing again what they did when they were first caught up in the experience of his love in Christ hold the key to our growth in love. The following practices have helped me in this challenge. I share them with the prayer that they may be of help to you.

Recalling simple (yet profound) truths through singing songs like Jesus loves me this I know for the Bible tells me so, or Wide, wide as the ocean, or Here is love vast as the ocean,

or, How deep the Father's love for us. Ponder: Psalm 100; Mark 14:26; Acts 16:25, Eph. 5:18-21, Rev. 4:8, 10-11, 5:8-10. Congregational hymn singing is like the hump on the camel; stored up praise to sustain us in dry times! And if this seems childish, see Luke 10:21, 18:16.

Looking for every opportunity of thanking God when we are recipients of his love, whether from his promises, provision, providences or people. Passages worth pondering: Psalms 95:2-4, 100:4-5, 103:8-14, 119:67-72; 103-105. We are far more likely to love God and others when we are habitually grateful to God and one-another. Consider: Luke 17:11-19, Eph.1:15-17, Col.3:15-17, 1Thess.5:16-18, Heb.12:28-29, Rom.1:21.

Sharing in the Lord's Supper gives us opportunity to remember and rejoice in God's love for us. Ponder the joys of looking back to our Lord's deep love displayed on the cross, of looking around thanking God for our brothers and sisters saved by the same grace of God we have received, of looking upwards reflecting on our loving and sympathetic High Priest and looking forward to the glorious Day of our Lord's vindication which we will share. We are more likely to go out of our way to sacrificially love our brothers and sisters when we intentionally thank God for them around his table.

Being attentive to Bible passages that bring before us both the grandeur and obligations of God's love are most helpful. Here are seven sets of verses that keep on encouraging and challenging me: Set 1—Matt.5:43-46; 20:28; 22:37-39; 25:31-46. Set 2—John 3:16; 13:34-35; 14:15-21; 14:23-27; 15:9-17; 19:25-27; 21:15-19. Set 3—Romans 5:1-8; 8:28-39; 12:9-13; 13:8-10. Set 4—1 John 2:3-6; 3:1-3; 3:11-20; 4:7-21. Set 5—1 Thess.1:2-5; 3:6; 3:12; 4:9-10. Set 6—1 Peter 1:22-2:3; 4:7-11; 2 Peter 1:3-11. Set 7—1 Tim. 1:12-17; 6:6-11; 6:17-19; 2 Tim. 1:7; 1:13-14; 3:1-5.

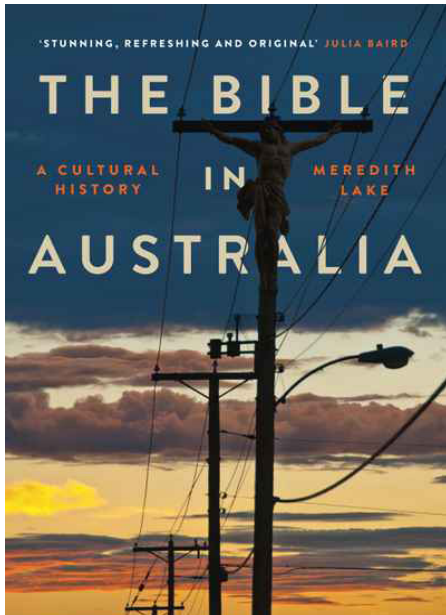
Our son's athletic coach reminded them that "practice makes permanent, not perfect. Only perfect practice makes perfect!" If we fail to consider how we can stir up one-another to love and good deeds or are cool toward God, we don't get better at doing it. We get worse. Coolness, selective discipleship, sullenness and carelessness easily take over from zeal, warmth, servant hearted thoughtfulness and initiative. The older I get, the harder it is for me to think more of others needs above my own. This study is for me and I trust may be of help to you. The best way not to forsake our first love is to do the opposite, actively to cherish both God and others. 1 Thess. 3:12 makes this plain: 'May the Lord make your love increase and overflow for each other and for everyone else, just as ours does for you.' Overflowing love is the only sure way for our love to increase. This should not surprise us since this is the kind of love that God has lavished on us (Eph. 1:8, 1 John 3:1).

Adopt a Bible College student in PNG

The Anglican Relief & Development Fund is asking gospel-focussed parishes and individuals to support a student to study at the Christian Leaders Training College in the PNG Highlands, starting in 2019. Students combine studies in farm management with Bible study, church leadership and evangelism. A 3-year bursary costs A\$3k annually and a student can be supported in whole or in part. Further information: kim@ardfa.org.au



Anglican Relief and
Development Fund
Australia



The Bible in Australia - A Cultural History

Meredith Lake

University of NSW Press, 2018.

Meredith Lake has provided a fascinating and authoritative account of how the Bible, in the hands of preachers, immigrants, suffragists, unionists, politicians, writers, artists and indigenous Australians, has played a contested but highly significant role in the nation's history. Her opening allusion to the Bra Boy's tattoo arrests the reader and illustrates how, in twenty-first century Australia, the Bible still 'floats in fragments across the surface of the popular consciousness'. She then retraces the ebb and flow of Australian culture: the arrival of the First Fleet and the tragic encounter with indigenous people; Federation and the ascendancy of civic Protestant nationalism and White Australia; the 1950s—presided over by Prime Minister Robert Menzies, for whom the Bible defined the Australian people. This culminated in the remarkable 1959 Billy Graham Crusade's interdenominational meetings attended by over three million people, while a broader radio audience heard his trademark 'The Bible says'.

However, the cultural revolution of the sixties was reflected in the media landscape, public schools, and growing multi-culturalism. Television soon eclipsed reading as a leisure activity. Church decline, especially in the British-origin Protestant denominations, accelerated shrinking Biblical literacy. Roman Catholic numbers, however, boosted by immigration, have been more stable and now comprise the largest Christian denomination. New migrant groups such as Korean and Chinese, have bucked the trend of declining church affiliation. Pentecostal churches, led by Hillsong, attract a younger generation and have planted over a thousand congregations. Nevertheless, survey comparisons suggest that the proportion of regular Bible readers has dropped by more than 75% since the sixties.

Biblical literacy is also seen to have plunged because Bible reading has disappeared from radio and from public schools. NSW schools are the exception. Lake does not attempt to analyse possible reasons (In fact she seems studiously to avoid any mention of the Diocese of Sydney or Moore College). She does make the telling comment that in the same-sex marriage postal survey debates, the Australian Christian Lobby preferred the terminology of rights and values rather than the language of the Bible.

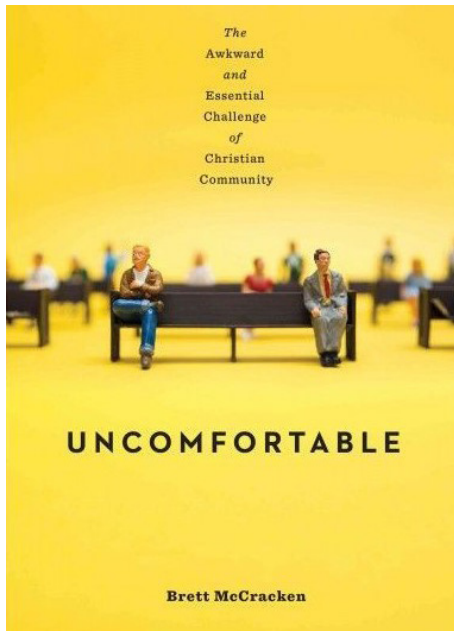
The book's attention to the plight of Indigenous Australia is comprehensive, drawing heavily, but not exclusively, on John Harris' magisterial *One Blood*. One question not addressed is: Why were colonial relationships with Aboriginal

peoples so disastrous, given the different story in the case of Maori and Pacific Islander peoples?

One lesson this reader did learn is that the Bible played a key role in nourishing the cause of Federation—an achievement which now we do not even commemorate, but which was by no means a foregone conclusion. Both before and after 1901, the Bible was cited profusely in debates by both believers and non-believers. In Lake's words, 'The Bible stretched like a canopy above the forest of Federal feeling'.

In summary, Lake argues convincingly that, while current levels of Biblical literacy are at an all-time low, the Bible has a powerful history in Australia. 'In various cultural and theological guises, it has informed efforts to educate the young, to extend the franchise, to meet the challenges of poverty. It has been applied to the formation of trade unions, schools and charities, as well as all manner of religious institutions. In the hands of indigenous Christians, the Bible has nourished movements for justice, for land rights, and for recognition and reconciliation' (p.365).

Anthony H. Nichols, WA.



***Uncomfortable:* The Awkward and Essential Challenge of Christian Community** Brett McCracken, Crossway, 2017

a true, unified, and eloquent witness to the distinctly alternative vision of life that Jesus offers. And this will only come with a renewed commitment to the local church in all of its uncomfortable but life-giving glory.’ (p.37)

Instead of being like the culture around us, this book calls Christians to ‘debunk and destroy the toxic consumerist approach to church’ and be willing to commit to ‘the nearest non-heretical, Bible-believing church where we could grow and serve—and where Jesus is the hero—however uncomfortable it may be.’ I think every Christian should read it.

The book starts with an outline of the author’s dream church. I found myself agreeing with every sentence. It went on for pages. I was constructing in my head a brilliant church with fantastic, purpose built spaces, wonderful music (just my taste) and super encouraging Christians connecting well with the local community. And then he explodes this fantasy by saying this is exactly what we cannot be doing. This consumerist mindset has infiltrated the way we approach church and it is poison. If we always approach church through the lens of wishing this or that were different, or longing for a church that ‘gets me’ or ‘meets me where I’m at’ we’ll never commit anywhere (or, Protestants that we are, we’ll just start our own church). But church shouldn’t be about being perfectly understood and met in our comfort zone; it should be about understanding God more, and meeting him where HE is. (p.24) I was soundly rebuked. And hooked.

Each chapter of the book explores an uncomfortable aspect of church, starting with the gospel. He explores the ‘foolishness of the cross’ (1 Corinthians 1:18-23) and how the Christian message has always been offensive to our pride and what we think redemption should look like. He speaks passionately about how ‘Christianity is not about “your best life now”’. It’s about following Christ’s example who “came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom

for many” (Mark 10:45). It’s about commitment rather than consumerism; finding ways to serve rather than desiring to be served; filling a need rather than finding a niche’ (p.50) It’s a message we all need to be reminded of. He goes on to explore the uncomfortable but essential process of pursuing holiness and not settling for mere authenticity. He talks about the importance of holding onto uncomfortable truths such as a biblical sexual ethic, the reality of hell, the idea that the universe was created ‘and any number of other unfashionable things’. He speaks about uncomfortable Christ-like love that doesn’t just look like the passivity of niceness or tolerance. He has chapters on uncomfortable mission, uncomfortable people, uncomfortable diversity, uncomfortable worship, uncomfortable authority and uncomfortable unity. All these chapters support his idea that ‘the church that will change your life is the one that challenges you to grow rather than affirms you as you are. The church that will change the world is the one that provides a refreshing alternative to, rather than an uncritical affirmation of, the way things are’ (p.188). Indeed.

There are so many funny lines in this book. ‘Every time we sing the praise chorus refrain for the SIXTY-SEVENTH TIME as if in the Hillsong equivalent of Groundhog Day...’ (p.191) made me choke with laughter until my coffee was pouring out of my nose. It’s the delight of the self-deprecating in-joke that only Christians can appreciate (without being mean, crude or sarcastic) that makes the book so enjoyable to read.

One chapter which made me rather uncomfortable was his chapter on the Holy Spirit, ‘the Uncomfortable Comforter’. He challenges ‘charismatic-skeptics’ (such as myself) to see that ‘the unpredictable and often uncomfortable work of the Comforter need not be feared or avoided’. (p.96). What he thinks this work of the Comforter consists of though, is the problem. But I weirdly quite enjoyed the uncomfortable experience of reading

It’s always Christians who make me want to give up the faith. The dumb, embarrassing things they do. Twee women’s evangelistic craft nights. Still singing songs that should have been left in the 1970s. International Roast as the standard morning tea fare. If you can think of similar experiences and cringe, then this book *Uncomfortable* by Brett McCracken is for you. I thoroughly enjoyed this book. It is easy to read, gospel focused, culturally astute, biblically faithful, personally challenging and funny. You don’t get that combination very often in a Christian book, let alone a book about church, which is what this is. I was so excited I could barely put it down.

Uncomfortable is one of a wave of books that are trying to help Christians live in a post-Christian world. McCracken sees the answer in committing to your local church, no matter how uncomfortable and challenging that may be. His thesis is that the church is uncomfortable for a reason—it is God’s plan to place us in communities where we do the hard work of ‘doing hard things, embracing hard truths and doing life with hard people for the sake and glory of the One who did the hardest thing’. (p.26) Church may be weird, but that’s a good thing. As McCracken says,

‘The Western world doesn’t need a more muddled, confused “I love Jesus but not the church” Christianity made up of a million different opinions and to-each-his-own permutations. Rather, it needs

this chapter, as it did what I presume McCracken wanted me to do – to be challenged, to go back to the Bible, think hard and wrestle and pray. I was living out the thesis of the book while reading it. Read the book and see what you think.

The conclusion is hopeful, beautiful

and inspiring. He encourages Christians to see that to live the uncomfortable life together for the sake of Christ is worth it in the end:

‘We are, mysteriously, part of a cosmic plan God has eternally known. And we have an eternal inheritance.

The discomfort we endure in this life as a peculiar people will be a blip in the timeline of our infinite history. We will at last be the perfect church we presently long for; the unblemished bride at an unimaginable wedding feast. The dream will be real.’ **Michelle Underwood, WA.**

If God, Then What?

Wondering Aloud About Truth, Origins and Redemption

Andrew Wilson, IVP, 2012

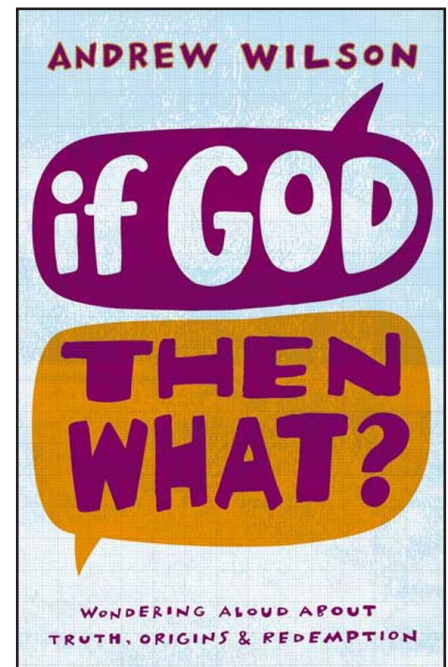
In jaunty, full caps font the testimonials on the back cover of *If God, Then What?* declare it to be ‘a real page-turner’ and ‘powerful, compelling stuff’. You can’t blame the publishers for wanting to talk it up, but I couldn’t help but feel this would be a classic case of overpromising and underdelivering. How on earth would a book on apologetics manage to be ‘dazzlingly good’ when dealing with stale, academic topics like epistemology and cosmology? Thankfully, it’s everything the cover boasts and more. The prologue begins: ‘I’ve only been in trouble with the law three times, and each time it has been in America.’ (p. 10). Wilson has a way of story-telling that draws you in and forward. The book feels conversational, but not annoyingly so, since he’s not so much trying to chat to the reader as he is wondering aloud to himself. It’s a refreshing and disarming technique. ‘A little while back, I was thinking this stuff through, and so I did a thought-experiment to see how it worked in practice, and wrote it all down. The thought-experiment was this: how do I know that I ate cornflakes for breakfast this morning.’

By addressing fundamentalism and epistemology in the first two chapters, *If God, Then What?* positions the reader simply to be open-minded about what follows as the book tackles topics including the existence of God, the human mind, the ‘problem’ of miracles and the reality of evil and death. Of course, Wilson doesn’t make the journey that joyless; the chapters have titles like ‘Galactic roulette’ and ‘A hornet in the icing’. It’s fun, pleasurable

reading that deals with huge topics in a quaint, identifiably British manner. Wilson’s writing is easy and accessible but avoids being reductionistic, and he often digresses to discuss objections or present alternative explanations in their best possible light. His arguments feel robust, and reasonable, and not easily dismissed.

Despite all the advantages of Wilson’s method and style, it’s worth considering what the book doesn’t do. While God in his kindness may achieve this, it doesn’t aim to convert anyone. Its more modest goal seems to be to open readers up to the possibility of God and that he might have done something incredible and redeeming for our world. As such, it doesn’t ever appeal to the authority of the Bible or even mention it. In this sense it fails to give readers an encounter with Jesus through God’s word. It’s also true that Wilson’s chatty, thinking-aloud device works better for the philosophical topics in chapter 1-5 than when he turns to the theological topics of sin and redemption. Somehow the truths of the gospel are too specific to just reasonably wonder your way to. Who would imagine the cross and resurrection, for example?

Nevertheless, I think this book fulfils a crucial function in the overall task of sharing the gospel. I found myself thinking of several friends who would not easily agree to read the Bible with me, but who might be willing to read *If God, Then What?* And if they did, I think they’d be disarmed and confronted, and perhaps moved to consider the possibility of redemption. As an ice-breaker for the sceptical, it’s the best I could imagine. I



think it achieves this as it has a real sense of discovery, as if Wilson expects the reader to be changed as they think these topics through. You get a sense of what the book feels like in Wilson’s own summary of the experience in the final chapter:

‘Writing this book has been something of a journey for me, literally as well as metaphorically... I peered into glass cases in Dublin, read academic tomes on first-century history in Oxford and Cambridge, reflected on what was wrong with the world in Zimbabwe, and daydreamed about what a redeemed earth might look like in Samoa, Tuscany and New Zealand’

You really do end up feeling as though you’ve travelled the world with your friend Andrew and stayed up late having conversations with him about life, the universe and everything. Ultimately, I’d love to introduce my friends to Jesus, but I can see how it could help if they chatted with Andrew first.

Jeff Hunt WA.

Impossible People:

Christian Courage and the Struggle for the Soul of Civilization

Os Guinness, IVP, 2016

The theme of this book is the necessity for Christian courage today in the struggle for Western civilisation. The title *Impossible People* comes from a term used of the reforming 11th-century Benedictine monk Peter Damian, who courageously stood for truth, integrity and the moral standards of the Christian faith at a time in the church was compromised by a culture of corruption among church leaders. Many were involved in immorality, homosexual practice and paedophilia. Simony was rife. Damien was known as incorruptible, unbribeable and uncompromising in his opposition. The authorities described him as 'that impossible monk!'

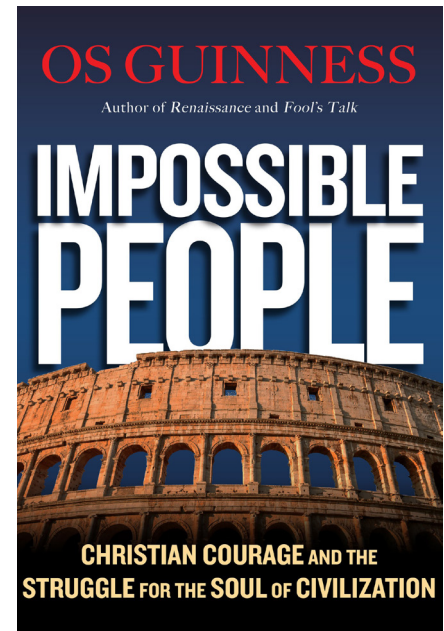
Guinness believes that Christians today have to become like Peter Damian, for we have become too complacent and compromised by our culture. He sees this moment as a crisis, a showdown, for the church, particularly the Western church and also for Western culture. What is at stake is the victory or defeat of the long assault on the Jewish and Christian faiths, the two defining faiths of the West. The attack comes from what he calls progressive secularism. This is the push to marginalise or exclude Christianity from the public square of community debate, politics, public policy and legislation. The Christian faith is the particular target because of a resentment of perceived past power over culture, public morals and values.

Guinness describes a number of other forces that are currently arrayed against Christianity. First, nihilism—the loss of a sense of ultimate meaning which in turn leads to a loss of hope and then despair. Contemporary nihilism is partly a product of postmodern relativism about truth and morality. This could lead to a social degeneration where the West collapses from within. The second force is the very opposite of the first—a new secular optimism. This is driven by an over-confidence in our increasing technological mastery and our subsequent ability to create a new world and a new

humanity—a world of automation, robotics, artificial intelligence, guided evolution and genetic manipulation. The third of the other threats is the re-emergence of cultural Marxism. Its theory of power as oppression calls for the exercise of power to be resisted and overturned. On this theory, cultural elites hold power and control the masses, not only economically, but culturally. They determine morality, social norms and values. As part of this cultural elite, the church is forcing a certain view of morality and truth on society, so its cultural power must be broken and overturned. The question of power is a recurring theme of this book and Guinness evokes Nietzsche's dictum that man's impetus is 'the will to power'. This view of power is a key reality in this struggle and only God, through the gospel, can redeem and transform it. Fundamentalist Islam is the fourth force he mentions.

Guinness avows that if these anti-Christian forces prevail, they will return the West to the philosophy, ethics and lifestyle of the first century pagan world that Christianity was born into, and which it originally transformed to become the influential force in developing Western civilisation. 'We are not simply the guardians of some of the best of the past', he writes, 'but pioneers whose task is to stand against the world for the future of the world.' Guinness poses three great questions, the answers to which he claims will decisively shape the future of the world in the next generation. These are: 1. Will Islam modernise peacefully in the end? 2. What faith or ideology will replace Marxism in China? and 3. Will the Western world recover or completely sever its Christian roots?

The third question is Guinness's main concern. In the final chapter he invokes Churchill's WWII appeal to the US to abandon its isolationism and provide the resources England desperately needed to defeat Hitler: 'Give us the tools to finish the job', said Churchill. At that time, the US did give the tools, and the Nazis were



defeated. The tools Guinness appeals for today's fight are, first, an understanding that power is a key issue behind many of the forces at play and a lively sense that unless we renew our personal knowledge and experience of God's spiritual power, we will be ineffective in this struggle no matter how courageous we are. Paul teaches that the gospel 'is the power of God for the salvation of all who believe' (Rom 1:7). Second, we need to be alive to the ancestry of the ideas around us. To counter the forces ranged against us we need to understand the ideas that generate them, so that we can confront those presuppositions lying behind the forces producing particular social effects. Third, we need probing cultural analysis. We need the ability not simply to describe and critique the culture we are living in, but also to gauge its impact on us, on our thinking and behaviour. Finally, Guinness suggests that 'what we need above all in the church today is for each Christian to have a profound personal knowledge and experience of God himself and a deep knowledge of the Scriptures as his authoritative Word. No one and nothing can replace those essentials.' This is a challenging book and will make a great resource for a small group discussion series. Each chapter ends with questions for discussion and a closing prayer.

Peter Corney, Vic.



EFAC. GAFCON.

What's the difference? Are both necessary?



Rev'd Richard Crocker, General Secretary, EFAC (Global)

EFAC had an exhibit stand at the recent GAFCON gathering in Jerusalem. Many of the GAFCON conference delegates stopped by the EFAC exhibit and the response was overwhelmingly positive. We are now in regular contact with Anglican leaders from 31 countries and many of those either have or want an EFAC chapter. They have no doubt that EFAC will benefit their churches. But upon returning to the USA we have been asked, 'Why is EFAC needed, since we have GAFCON?' or, 'Why was GAFCON needed, since we have EFAC? What's the difference? Are EFAC and GAFCON competing? Or cooperating? Or does one make the other redundant? This article addresses these questions.

At GAFCON it was obvious that GAFCON and EFAC are related on a deep level. Many of the newly announced leaders of GAFCON—the Chairman, General Secretary, and Assistant Secretaries—were mentored through, or held leadership positions in, EFAC at some point. A recent article by Chris Sugden and Vinay Samuel demonstrates that the GAFCON movement itself derives from earlier work by emerging provinces in the Lambeth Conferences of 1988 and 1998. The character, growth and maturity of these provinces, in turn, developed to a great extent from the ministry of John Stott and EFAC. It would not stretch a point to claim that the prevailing churchmanship of GAFCON 2018 was evangelical. The style of worship, the biblical nature of the week's events, the expository style of the teaching, and the extempore prayer expected in the small group times, would be familiar to those of evangelical background. This aspect made GAFCON very similar to EFAC, which is



evangelical by charter. This brings us back to the questions: 'Do we need both EFAC and GAFCON today? Is there an important difference between them?'

That EFAC and GAFCON are complementary, not competitive, becomes clear as we examine both organizations. Rev. Dr. Stephen Noll, in his Commentary on the 2018 GAFCON Letter to the Churches writes,

'The GAFCON Assembly is an ecclesial body, a confessional body (every attendee subscribed to the Jerusalem Declaration), and a missional body...So the Conference is upper-case GAFCON and the movement that spans the Conferences and the ongoing structures and relationships that give it life, this is title-case GAFCON.' (Emphasis added.)

Similarly, EFAC is confessional: it operates with a Basis of Faith that is distinctively evangelical in nature. EFAC is also missional: it works to spread the biblical gospel of Jesus Christ. And, it is ecclesial: its very name references the Anglican Communion. EFAC aims to serve and build up, by biblical teaching, the Anglican family of churches, which we understand in a wide and generous sense. EFAC is not, however, ecclesial, in the way GAFCON is. It does not gather primatial councils or appoint episcopal leadership for provinces departing orthodox beliefs. Sugden says that as a recent political coalition, 'GAFCON is rapidly institutionalizing'.¹ EFAC is

1. <https://www.efacglobal.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/GAFCON-reports-Sugden.pdf>



not; it will not match GAFCON's 'ongoing structures' beyond those minimally required by its 1961 Constitution. EFAC is, rather, a resource to leadership, wherever it may be located, encouraging and developing biblically faithful teaching and mission by its activities in teaching, theological development through the Theological Resource Network, publishing online and through partner organizations. It desires the development of the more informal fellowship or partnership envisaged in its name. Therefore, EFAC and GAFCON are complementary, not competitive, pursuing different, necessary vocations.

Structures aside, another difference is that EFAC is distinctly evangelical, whereas GAFCON is not. GAFCON includes all who count themselves Anglican, whether inside the formal charity called the Anglican Communion or not, and confess biblically faithful Anglican teaching, whatever their churchmanship. EFAC is deliberately evangelical. The recognized EFAC brand allows EFAC to minister to evangelicals both inside and outside the GAFCON network among those evangelicals who are not persuaded by the GAFCON approach. Thus again EFAC and

GAFCON are complementary, extending each other's work for the Gospel. In the USA, where evangelicals in both TEC and ACNA are part of EFAC-USA, EFAC is a bridge between GAFCON and non-GAFCON evangelicals. Historically, EFAC has also formed a bridge between evangelicals in the different expressions of Anglican life in South Africa. EFAC is active in areas not represented at GAFCON and supports evangelicals whose orthodox commitments are under pressure from unsympathetic or hostile leadership. EFAC provides a link between beleaguered evangelicals in certain provinces and the wider Communion, and a partnership between evangelicals in one place and those in another for the sake of mission.

In this world of walls and chasms, bridges are vital, and so, as a bridge, EFAC offers hope for the future. The Archbishop of Sydney, Glenn Davies, President of EFAC Australia and Assistant Secretary to GAFCON, said it best upon hearing about the relaunch of EFAC, 'It's about time!' EFAC and GAFCON have the same goal of promoting the biblical gospel of Jesus Christ, but in different ways. Both are necessary.

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