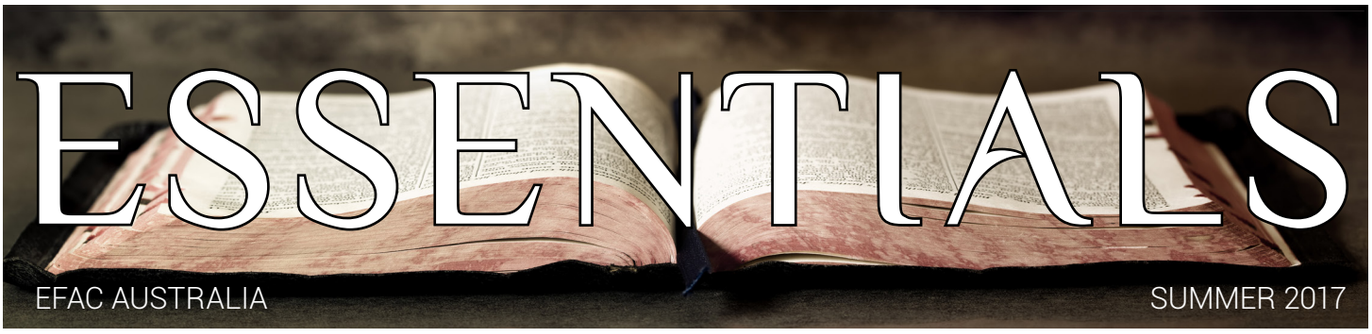

Book Reviews

Resilient
Strange Days
What Christians Ought to Believe
Phenomenal Sydney
Reformation Anglicanism
Patterns of Ministry Among the First Christians

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

Church and society

Synod season is over for another year, and I don't know if you attended one, and I don't know how you feel it went for you and your fellow members of EFAC, but Stephen Hale gives us the encouraging news of a good General Synod session for evangelicals, and a well-attended, worthwhile EFAC dinner to boot.

We could not let the 500th anniversary of Luther's Ninety-five Theses pass without one more Reformation-oriented piece, so we kick off the features section this issue with an article by Archbishop Glenn Davies, EFAC President, on the place the Reformers gave to the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

We move then from the affairs of the church to Christian engagement with the wider society we participate in. Firstly, Penny Taylor relates what it has been like to take a big step into the political arena, and run for public office as a Christian. More than that Penny writes of the valuable ways she found to engage with politicians before plunging into election campaigns.

One ongoing concern for many in our nation is the experience of Indigenous Australians after European arrivals here, and down to the present day. I had a rather wonderful opportunity to visit the Northern Territory with some fellow evangelical Anglicans in June, and I write about my encounter with an Australian experience rather different from my own. I have a go at relating something of what that was like, and I hope it is worth something to others.

In our Bible Study, Thom Bull draws intriguing connections between the Lord's Prayer and Ezekiel 36, and a clutch of book reviews follows, before Tony Nichols closes the issue with a delighted report on his recent return to Tawau, Borneo for the centenary celebrations of a school and church ministry he worked in fifty years ago. Read and rejoice with Tony to see what God has done there.

If over the summer you fall into reflections over modern parish life—the good and the bad, the new and the old, the flourishing and the failing; buildings, websites, liturgy, staffing structures, small groups, evangelistic endeavours or anything connected to how we do church these days—and if you find yourself moved to write something you think others might benefit from, then take a chance and send it to me. I'd love to see whether it could end up in Essentials soon.

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EFAC Australia membership (incl. Essentials)
$40 per year ($20 students, missionaries, retired persons). Essentials subscription only $20 p.a.

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

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

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

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General Synod 2017

Stephen Hale

Bishop Stephen Hale, Chair of EFAC Australia, judges this year's General Synod a good one for Evangelicals.

General Synod was held in sunny Maroochydore. If you're going to have to spend five and half days in Synod sessions from 8.30am to 9pm this certainly helped to make it a better experience. On four of the mornings we met in table groups to join in the Daily Office as well as respond to the four Bible Studies delivered by Bishop Michael Stead (Sydney), Dr Matthew Anstey (Adelaide), Dr Dorothy Lee (Melbourne) and Dr John Dunhill (Perth). The group I led was animated and we had wonderful interactions as we engaged with the Scriptures and prayed together. This helped set the tone for the day and was one of the factors as to why I would say it was a good General Synod. The Primate chaired well in his relaxed but clear way.

Synod dealt with a lot of legislation: the Child Safe Canon; Episcopal Standards; The Redress Scheme; screening of volunteer leaders and many other matters. Substantial motions were passed: upholding marriage as currently defined; instructing the Doctrine Commission to produce papers on a range of issues related to human sexuality; giving an apology for domestic violence; investigating and possibly commissioning research on domestic violence in churches; child safety; assisted dying; gender balance on General Synod bodies; and the Reformation.

Matters related to the Royal Commission dominated proceedings. On the one hand Royal Commissioner Robert Fitzgerald commended the Anglican Church on leading the way in establishing comprehensive policies and procedures in relation to Professional Standards. On the other hand the flow-on impact of the National Redress Scheme was sobering to consider. Of the people who have had private sessions with a Commissioner only a third had had previous contact with the institution where the abuse occurred. The Commonwealth will operate the National Redress Scheme. Once an assessment is established with an individual the institution in which the abuse occurred will be invoiced for the cost of the payment to victims plus legal and psychological costs. Given that seven dioceses are currently assessed to be financially unviable, the flow-on impact of this will be massive in those dioceses, but in reality it will be substantial in all dioceses. The consequences of the sins of the past are being visited upon this generation.

Evangelicals had a good General Synod. At my first General Synod in 1994 there were only three diocesan bishops who were evangelical: those of Sydney, Armidale and North West Australia. Today it is a very different scene. All of the clergy and a majority of the laity elected to the Standing Committee as well as the Primatial Election Board were evangelical. Many long-term stalwarts of these boards didn't seek re-election!

On the Tuesday evening we had 100 people at the EFAC Dinner. Given that the Dioceses of Adelaide and Brisbane had their own dinners this was wonderful response. Bishop Richard Condie gave a rousing address on his new Diocesan Vision. This, in fact, was probably the best speech given at the Synod!

My sense is that the future is going to be very challenging for all dioceses. Some of the structural changes that have been talked about for decades may be forced upon us. That, in itself, may not be a bad thing. God is at work in and through the Anglican Church. There is much to be encouraged about, but massive challenges also lie ahead.

Rev Dr Philip Freier, Anglican Primate of Australia presides over the Synod. Photo: Anglican Media, Sydney

Word and sacrament

Glenn Davies

Evangelicals are known for being strong and clear on the place of the Word in the Christian life. But can the Reformers' embrace of Baptism and Holy Communion remind us to be clear on the place of the sacraments too? Archbishop Glenn Davies is President of EFAC Australia.

One of the great discoveries of Martin Luther 500 years ago was the recognition of the supremacy and authority of Holy Scripture. It was this that undergirded his nailing of 95 Theses to the door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg, exemplified in Thesis 62: *'The true treasure of the church is the most holy gospel of the glory and grace of God.'* By God's grace, a fire was lit in continental Europe which critiqued the Roman Church of the day by the touchstone of Scripture, and brought the plain teaching of the Bible into the hands of ordinary Christians in their own language. Justification by faith alone was reclaimed; the priestcraft of Rome was scrutinised; and the need for human intermediaries between God and his people was refuted. In particular, the seven sacraments of the Roman Church were reduced to two (those established by Christ), namely, Baptism and the Lord's Supper. Our Anglican heritage, under the godly leadership of Thomas Cranmer, followed this Reformation lead.

The visible Church of Christ is a congregation of faithful men [and women], in which the pure Word of God is preached, and the Sacraments be duly administered according to Christ's ordinance in all those things that of necessity are requisite to the same.(Article XIX)[1]

As Evangelicals, we are shaped by the gospel, as the moniker implies. As Anglicans we are also committed to the Reformation principles of our heritage, with the Bible as our authoritative source of doctrine, confessed in the Thirty-nine Articles and given liturgical expression in the *Book of Common Prayer.*

Photo of relief at Luther's Church of Wittenberg Stadtkirche by W. Bulach

Yet, whereas 'word and sacrament' was a defining feature of the Reformation, it is often the case that many Anglican Evangelicals are more at home with the former than the latter. Perhaps it is my experience of Sydney Diocese that taints my judgment, since many ministers seem to have a less than clear understanding of the importance of the sacraments. For example, Matthew's Gospel gives us Jesus' final instructions for the making of new disciples, where administering baptism and teaching Jesus' commandments are essential ingredients of that commission. Yet if one looks at today's popular evangelistic tools and gospel outlines, there is no mention of baptism and little mention of keeping Jesus' commandments. A simple test for us all is, that when we share the gospel with others does it cross our mind to share with them the importance of being baptised or of following Jesus' commandments? Why is this the case? I fear that we have lost a precious aspect of Jesus' teaching with regard to evangelism.

It is little appreciated that Jesus' disciples had been practising water baptism during Jesus' earthly ministry, which laid the groundwork for the Great Commission. Indeed, the Pharisees heard 'that Jesus is making and baptising more disciples than John' (John 4:1). Note the same conjunction of 'making' and 'baptising' disciples, as we find in Matthew 28. Although the Evangelist is quick to explain that Jesus himself was not the one baptising, as that was undertaken by the Twelve, yet it is incontrovertible that water baptism

marked discipleship, as it did for John the Baptist. Hence Peter's response to the people gathered on the Day of Pentecost makes perfect sense: 'Repent, and be baptised every one of you.' Luke's record of the early church only confirms the importance of baptism as that which distinguished Christ's followers from the world.

Our catechism defines a sacrament as 'an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace given unto us, ordained by Christ himself, as a means whereby we receive the same, and a pledge to assure us thereof.' The sacraments are a sign, a means and a pledge, each established by Christ himself.

As signs, they need to bear some resemblance to that which they signify. Hence, water is used in baptism, as a sign of washing away of sins; bread and wine are used in holy communion, as a sign of feeding on Christ. They signify a reality, although are not to be confused with the reality. In this regard the Reformers were fond of quoting Augustine's dictum: 'if sacraments had not some point of real resemblance to the things of which they are sacraments, they would not be sacraments at all.'[2]

As a means, the sacraments are not bare signs, but *effectual* signs, as Article XXV declares: "effectual signs of grace and God's good will towards us, by which he doth work invisibly in us." Philip E. Hughes, my former professor, eloquently expresses it in this way: "But their efficacy is not automatic (*ex opere operato*); for the external sign by itself is impotent to produce any spiritual effect. Water cannot cleanse, nor bread and wine nourish the soul. The efficacy of the sacrament is indissolubly linked to the word of promise of which it is the sign—not, however, to the word as a mere pronouncement of a formula of consecration, but to the word as a proclamation of the gospel to those who receive the sacrament."[3]

Thirdly, as a pledge, the Reformers were accustomed not only to speaking of the sacraments as a sign and a means of grace, but also as a pledge of God's faithfulness. As Article XXV states, the sacraments 'also strengthen and confirm our Faith in him.' As the engagement ring is a pledge of a man's fidelity to his fiancée, thus strengthening the relationship, so the sacraments are a pledge of God's promise to be faithful to his people.

St Augustine's Monastary, Erfurt where Luther would have celebrated Holy Communion

The Reformers' embrace of the sacraments of baptism and holy communion were the result of a clear understanding of the teaching of Scripture and a reclaiming of the theology of the early church, which had been obscured by the teachings of the Roman Church. The conjoined use of 'word and sacrament' was based upon the teaching of Scripture, where the sacraments gave visible expression to the word of God. Bishop Jewel captures this thought in these words:"[F]irst he declareth his mercy by his secret purpose to his Word; then he sealeth it and assureth it by his sacraments. In the Word we have his promises: in the sacraments we see them."[4]

May God give us grace as Evangelical Anglicans, to follow our Saviour's instructions and echo the Reformers' teaching as we proclaim Christ through word and sacrament.

1. Article XX of Cranmer's 42 Articles (1553)
2. Augustine, Epistle XCVIII to Boniface, cited in Cranmer, Works, I.124.
3. P E Hughes, Theology of the English Reformers (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1965), 194.
4. Jewel, Works, II.1099, cited by Hughes, 197

Politics in the scheme of eternity

Penny Taylor

Public life and politics are bruising and demanding ways to serve the community. But Penny Taylor was not put off. Here she shares something of her experience in running for public office. Penny Taylor ran for the Seat of Nedlands at the 2017 WA State Election.

It's been a year now that I've been campaigning for public office. In March I stood for Labor in the seat of Nedlands in the WA state election, and as I write this, I'm a week away from the end of Local Government elections where I'm running for Mayor of Subiaco, WA. Looking back this looks like a planned progression, but I assure you it's not!

I first became interested in politics, policy and government in the mid 2000s, when living in the Pilbara, as I saw how different aspects of community life—from education to health, policing and public housing and further—were all interrelated and had a direct influence on the quality of life in our community. I had begun to write letters to Government agencies over some concerns I was seeing locally. I received little by way of reply, until once I cc'd the letter to the local state Member of Parliament. Then the replies were actioned immediately. I learnt that lesson, and from then on directed any letters to the minister and the local member. I wasn't a serial letter writer, but I did write a few each year on the major concerns our community was experiencing. As part of that advocacy, I would take the opportunity to meet politicians when they made themselves available. I met and wrote to various politicians from different parties. The politician who mainly replied was Mark McGowan, now the WA Premier.

WA was riding the mining boom but with little planning in place for the inevitable downturn. State debts and deficits were increasing and the looming GST shortfall was entirely predictable. I could see investment in buildings but not in people. It's people who change people. Government grants for capital only—and not operations—means schools and other community supports don't have the sustainable employment structures to make a real difference in our communities. This is particularly apparent in regional areas. My watching of politics from a layperson's perspective led me to wonder whether I should change from watching to doing. WA was crashing hard after the mining boom. Many people were hurting and many felt like the current government had completely stopped listening to them.

With Mark McGowan at Bert Hawke Memorial Dinner.

After prayerful consideration I decided that I couldn't just watch the State election, but I had to run in it. I chose the seemingly suicidal mission of contesting the seat I live in: Nedlands, a blue-ribbon Liberal seat in the affluent, leafy, inner-city suburbs of Perth. A senior, yet not hugely popular Liberal Minister held the seat by a 19% margin. I think the only people who thought this was a good idea were Mark McGowan and me. I braced myself for the negativity of politics and ploughed in with my extreme naivety and inexperience

As the State campaign heated up, I wrote this:

> 'No politician is the saviour of the world. No political party, nor even an excellent government can offer true salvation. Christians who serve in government are no more doing God's work than any Christian in their workplace when they strive to live according to God's word as a sinner saved by grace. But leaders and representatives have an important role in our community. There are policies on all sides of government that don't align with God's plan for this world, and I don't agree with every policy of the Labor Party. We live in a fallen world that has no hope for eternity except for the redemption offered in the life, death and resurrection of our Lord, Jesus Christ.
>
> However, I do believe that this opportunity has arisen with God's help and I believe that I can make a substantial contribution to our community through this endeavour. I presented my Christian faith clearly to Mr McGowan and he and the Labor Party welcomed me to join. Since declaring my candidacy, I frequently have had the opportunity to share my faith in a variety of settings. To date this has been an overwhelmingly positive experience, but I will be faithful to Christ even if it's difficult. You know I am a committed Christian and I will bring my

Christianity to bear in the decisions that I will make. I do believe I have come to this moment for such a time as this. Politically, some considered it practically impossible for me to win. This is one of the safest seats in WA. But nothing is too hard for God. If I win this seat in March there will be absolutely no denying that this is of God. Because I have complete confidence of my position before God, only by the redemption Christ has won me at the cross, do I dare attempt this. Without his confidence and the peace that passes all understanding, I couldn't do it. Win or lose, I belong to him.'

It was crazy and impossible but I can do all things through him who strengthens me. I had been a member of the Labor Party for a short period of time and did not enjoy any backing from a branch. The party viewed the seat as unwinnable and understandably didn't want to waste too much money on a battle they couldn't win. I did have the backing of my family, of the Leader of the Opposition and of my own convictions. I know that many people support a Party like they support a football team. You don't like everything about them, but you barrack for them anyway. And where I live, that team is the Liberal Party.

Two things happened in the campaign gave me the confidence to just do it and then keep working hard. The first was the good fortune to be seated next to the soon-to-be-Premier at an event. The second was the overwhelming positive feedback from community members. People were stopping me in the street to tell me they were so glad I was standing at the election. I had braced myself for the negativity of politics, especially in this Liberal-held heartland. But instead I found many educated and sincere people wanting a genuine candidate who listened and understood their concerns.

So. I didn't win. But I did have a sizeable swing—almost 11%, which *The Australian* said was the 'shock result' of the State Election. Overall, Labor won the election in a landslide, bringing the Hon Mr McGowan the Premiership. For me, without a faith in Jesus and the belief (relief?) of eternity this would have been a crazy, impossible venture. Instead I found it overwhelmingly positive. After it was all over, I got back to working in the family business, but I do have some observations on what's it like as a Christian when you move from advocacy and prayer, into seeking to do the work of a politician.

Firstly, realise that there may not be a rush of support for you from your fellow church members. Despite having sat in church while we all pray for Christians to enter politics, my experience was that there's not so much support once you actually do. Maybe it was because I ran for Labor, a party that has appeared to be anti-Christian to some. But maybe it is because it's easier to pray about political involvement than actually to do something about it. 'Sex, religion and politics—do we really want to have be the ones talking about these things?' asks the comfortable middle class Christian. Many people think 'Good on you', but that's it. Don't expect it to be a respected decision. The distrust of politicians (including candidates) extends into churches.

Secondly, I learned that political parties simply reflect their membership. This means that if Christians are positive contributors and active in political parties then perhaps political parties will reflect this in their policies. I say 'perhaps', because as church attendance has dwindled, so has membership of political parties. And parties aren't about recruiting members, they are about recruiting volunteers and winning elections. It's a very different brief to churches.

Thirdly, I have learned not to underestimate the power of a well-written factual letter. Politicians can better help those who make it easy for them to be helped. They're human too and encouragement and support (and dare I say love) is always welcome in the face of constant negative comments and scrutiny from the public.

But my story doesn't end with the State election. I'm in my second election campaign for 2017, for, even after the State campaign ended, many people continued to raise their concerns with me (even though I did point out I wasn't the person to see). Not a week would go by without someone stopping me to say I should be running for local government. I have served as a councillor before, in Port Hedland, and so I know local government, but the persistent encouragement of others gave me courage and confidence to seek election as Mayor of Subiaco. I was having trouble not advocating on local issues and for good governance anyway, so it made sense.

This campaign too, has its serendipitous moment. As my penchant for politics was becoming known in Christian circles, I was given the unexpected honour of being invited to pray at the Governor's Prayer Breakfast and sit next to the former WA Premier, the Hon Colin Barnett MLA.

After that encounter, Mr Barnett unexpectedly came out supporting me for Mayor of Subiaco. I love that Local Government is independent! In this election I do have the backing of my family, many in my church and in the community. My electorate is well-educated and kind. The negative campaign tactics have been much worse in this local government campaign, but it makes me more disappointed about my community than for myself. There's a job to do. The

With the former WA Premier, the Hon Mr Colin Barnett at the Governor's Prayer Breakfast.

Mayoral race is simply a job interview where the good people of Subiaco are the ones who decide who should get the job. If I don't win, I've had an amazing learning experience and have met many wonderful people. If I do win, I will seek to do my best to serve my community as Mayor of the City of Subiaco. Whether I win or lose, my life is for the Lord.

I know many of you have been praying for more Christians to enter politics. I know this because I've been sitting with you when you've been doing it. Well, God works in mysterious ways and even I didn't see this as a possibility 12 months ago. At every step of the way there has been prayerful consideration and a genuine desire to serve Jesus in this world as he sees fit. I'm not alone in seeking to serve Christ in this way. Thank you for your prayers for Christian politicians (we hope to see them answered!) and thanks for your encouragement to us as we work for better government for the common good.

Postscript: Penny Taylor was elected Mayor of Subiaco on October 21 (Ed.)

Northern encounters

Ben Underwood

Ben Underwood reflects on his recent, very cross-cultural exposure trip. Ben is Editor of Essentials and Associate Minister at St Matthew's Shenton Park.

I've just returned from a place of warm tropical waters, populated by friendly dark-skinned people who speak their own exotic languages, but are ready to welcome an outsider, switching to distinctively accented English. In some ways it felt slightly Polynesian, and I met Fijians there. In other ways it felt Melanesian, and I met a Papua New Guinean there. But it was neither Polynesia, nor Melanesia. It was not even overseas. It was Australia. In particular, it was Yirrkala, on the Gove Peninsula, in Arnhem Land, where the Indigenous people are called the Yolngu people.

Although Yirrkala is a modestly-sized place, (809 people at the 2016 census), it punches above its weight in a cultural sense. You may know the band Yothu Yindi, and their front man Mandawuy Yunupingu, who was Australian of the Year in 1992, and who comes from Yirrkala. But you may not know of his father Mungurrawuy who was a signatory to the 1963 Yirrkala Bark Petitions[1]. These were 'the first traditional documents prepared by Indigenous Australians that were recognised by the Australian Parliament, and are thus the first documentary recognition of Indigenous people in Australian law.[2]' They are a protest against the Government's action in excising land from the Arnhem Aboriginal Reserve in order that mining rights might be granted to the bauxite mining company Nabalco, and the petitions are a turning point in the story of the recognition of the claims Indigenous people have on the lands they have lived on for millennia. The originals of the petitions are in Parliament, but I saw replicas at the Buku-Larrnggay Mulka Centre, a gallery and museum of art by artists from the Yolngu homelands within a 200km radius of Yirrkala. That art centre is packed with intricately worked bark paintings, larrakitj (memorial poles), woven baskets and yidaki (digeridoos), and as I walked around I saw the address labels on the items: they were headed for galleries in Switzerland, Germany, New York and Sydney. These are works that command a sophisticated international following. This place packs a cultural punch beyond its modest size.

The coming of outsiders to the lands of the Yolngu people has had great effects, especially the coming of Western settlers, missionaries and their descendants who have brought Western thinking and practice to the Yolngu, including Western industry and religion. This raises a great many issues. For example, in the museum (mulka) section of the art centre there is a two-panelled artwork, which used to be in the Yirrkala Church across the road from the Centre. The two panels represent the two halves of the Yolngu view of the world, dhuwa and yirritja. Everything (including each Yolngu clan) is either dhuwa or yirritja. Dhuwa and yirritja are themselves divided into six subdivisions, and so the two panels of this work are also divided into six subdivisions, each sub-panel painted by an elder from that division. They are magnificent pieces of work: detailed, varied, textured representations of the world and its ways according to the knowledge of the Yolngu people. The panels were installed in the Yirrkala church, but were removed after some years by people who felt they were too bound up in a spirituality alien to the gospel to be fittingly displayed in a church. The group I was with was fortunate to meet one of the local elders, Djapirri Mununggirritj, a woman with a local and national profile who is also a lay leader in the Yirrkala church, and whose father was one of the artists involved in painting the panels. She is among those who would like to

see the panels back in the church. Her account of the panels—which were installed when she was a girl—is that their production and installation in the church, with a cross set between them, was a kind of covenant-making act on the part of the Yolngu people, bringing their twelve painted panels into the church to create a memorial to God's dealings with them, as Israel brought twelve stones from the Jordan to make a memorial to God's staunching the flow of the Jordan for them to cross (Joshua 4). But even as she offered this view, she acknowledged that not everyone shared her view on the meaning of the panels. When art is somehow connected to a worldview, law and spirituality supported by ceremonies both open and hidden, what are Yolngu people who have embraced the gospel of Jesus' Lordship to do with that art, that representation of ancestral law and knowledge of the cosmos? And what are the chances of the church getting the panels back from the museum? The Buku-Larrnggay Mulka Centre staff member who talked to us about panels envisaged the panels remaining where they were permanently. The church had removed them, and had lost them now to the care of the centre with its government support. Replicas in the church? Yes, gladly. The originals? That's another question.

Praying at Gunbalanya. Photo: Australians Together

Why am I telling you all this? Well, I was invited to go on a trip to engage firsthand with Indigenous Australians in the Northern Territory, and I was invited because I am a minister in a church. I was invited by Australians Together[3] , a not-for-profit enterprise which aims to promote mutual understanding and better relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. Australians Together advocates listening as the best first step for Australians to take towards these aims. As a result of this trip, I have made a beginning on listening, and have no doubt a lot more to do. This article is several things. First, it is a way for me to show my appreciation for the gift that was given to me in being able to go on the trip. Second it is a way for me to process for myself some of what I heard and saw, to reflect on what I experienced and upon my reactions to it, and thirdly, it is a way to pass on to a wider audience the impressions I gained. They are first impressions, and first impressions can be misleading. With that caveat in place, I proceed, hopefully with humility and caution.

One impression I gained was that the life of Indigenous communities is varied and complex. The trip did not start at Yirrkala, but at Jabiru, the mining and tourist town in Kakadu National Park. On the first evening we met people living in the camps around Jabiru, and talking to them it was clear that the young and the old were suffering various health problems. When we drove into the camp the next day wrecked cars, rubbish and broken furniture dotted the camp. One woman we met here was a capable, articulate woman who had a job, but no home of her own. She was further coping with her household possessions being destroyed after she had sought to defend a widow from others who had a grievance with her. She was hoping to move her family away and was facing a fair bit of uncertainty and trauma.

By contrast, we also visited the Buntiji Clan estate which includes the Ubirr Rock Art sites north of Jabiru, and met Jonathan, a son of Bill Neidjie, a traditional owner of the land there, and Dionne his wife. Jonathan spoke about his father's life, which moved between the worlds of the settlers and the traditional ways of life. Bill learned to hunt and live off the land, and was passed the Gagudju law by the generation before him through teaching and ceremony. But he also worked with the settlers, alongside buffalo hunters, timber millers and pilots of coastal luggers. He served in WWII, surveilling Japanese plane movements, his unit even shooting a plane down. Bill's successful land claim means that the Bunitj Clan has title to their ancestral lands, and a stake in the revenue generated by tourism in the Kakadu National Park which Big Bill was instrumental in establishing. The family run a business taking tourists up a section of the East Alligator River to see its fearsome crocodile inhabitants and its varied flora and fauna. Our Indigenous skipper and guide commented on local language and uses of the plants and animals of the area as we passed them. Jonathan's family have a couple of houses, in lovely bush settings. Jonathan carries on his father's ambitions, although it is a challenge to pass on the old ways to the youth who are attracted to a more global culture of video games and hip hop than hunting and ceremony. Like many others, Jonathan wishes young men would pull their pants up from hanging halfway down their bums.

Another story, different again, was told to us through serendipity, rather than planning. While my group was in the art centre at Yirrkala, a local delivering work to the gallery overheard two of us mention God in their conversation, and he introduced himself, telling them that he had become a Christian about four years previously. He invited the whole group to come and hear his story. So that afternoon we went and sat under a tree next to his house overlooking a beautiful beach and listened as he shared many things about his life. He had been born in Sydney to an Indigenous mother and a white father, which made it hard for him to be accepted and belong in either world. Worse than that, his father was violent and loveless, and so he grew up alienated and filled with rage and pain. Crime was the only thing that dulled his pain, even

though he knew it was wrong. He spent eleven years in gaol, lasting at most two weeks free after any given release. Although he felt that to be imprisoned was to be his lot, seeing the Bible in his cell he decided to give God a go. Having cried out to God to do something for him, he experienced a rebirth, and weeks later he walked out of Darwin gaol and never went back. Returning to East Arnhem Land he lived for a time in a mixed way, on one hand living for God, and on the other indulging in marijuana and gambling. Eventually burdened and disillusioned by this life he and his housemate resolved to get to church, at which point a white Pentecostal pastor in a van appeared and asked them if they wanted to go to church! Now he is an elder in the church, and zealous to reach people living the life he used to live. No two lives are alike, and this is of course true for the lives of Aboriginal people as well.

Aboriginal people also face complex issues as their culture changes under the continuing pressures of evolving circumstances. The interaction between Christian faith and the old ways is a case in point. Pentecostal Christians tend to tell this story about the old ways: they must be abandoned as idolatry. A local pastor from the group Yolngu for Jesus spoke forcefully about the need for Yolngu Christians to disengage from the ancestral tribal law and its practices. (He felt 'tribal law' was a better descriptor than the more commonly heard term 'culture'.) This meant for him not attending the main ceremonies of community funerals, and, since he was the son of a tradition owner (a clan leader), this was a step that made him a target of threats and discontent, and put enormous strain on his relationships with family. Other Aboriginal Christians were happy to engage with traditional culture and ceremony to a greater or lesser extent. The attitude of Djapirri Mununggirritj to the traditional art in the Yirrkala church panels, mentioned above, is perhaps an example of an alternative to zero tolerance for expressions of tribal belief integrated into Christian practice. In these attempts to critique and reform culture by the gospel, Indigenous Christians face the same tasks as any other Christians do.

This point was reinforced by Greg Anderson, Bishop of the Northern Territory, when we met him in Darwin. Greg spoke about the many challenges of evangelism and discipleship in a culture which has been described as 'Fourth World'. This term denotes the uniquely difficult situation of indigenous cultures dominated by a different ethnic mainstream, often the aftermath of invasion or colonisation. Greg's observation was that the popular 'three-self' missionary strategy has not reached its objectives in the NT, and that we have by no means plumbed the mystery of why Indigenous church life moves in such crests and troughs. Being sure abstract concepts like grace are being internalised by Aboriginal hearers is hard when our literacy in their culture is still rudimentary at times. Greg felt non-indigenous partnership in the work of mission with and among Indigenous Australians has a place for some time yet, and benefits will flow both ways in this event.[4]

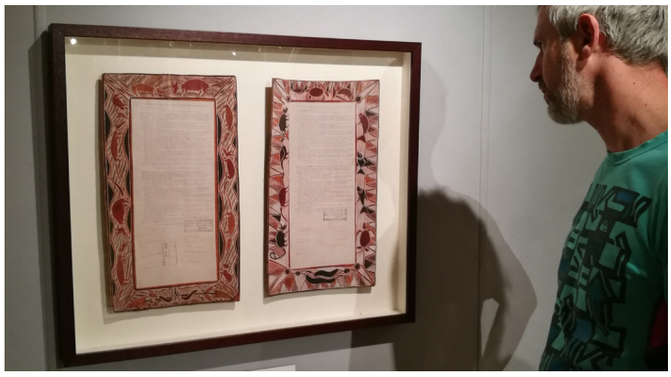
Yet another complex issue is the fit between a traditional economy, and the culture that makes it work and a western economy, and the culture that makes that work. Indigenous culture has a strong and definite ethic of your responsibility to share what you have, and to give upon request to people in certain relationships to you. This strong ethic of sharing in the clan it is radically different to the western ethic of private property, and a person's right to dispose of what is theirs as they see fit. Further, Indigenous culture expects you to honour certain cultural obligations as a priority, obligations which may arise unpredictably, and be somewhat open-ended in the time they will require of you. Funerals are a well known case. They may last days, and may require travel into the bargain. Big Bill Neidjie's funeral went for a month and a half, and brought people from Elcho Island and all over northern Australia. Again, it is obvious that this contrasts strongly with a western sense that your obligation to a job, and your employer and fellow workers, means a day is a reasonable length of absence for a funeral, but not weeks. Western economic activity relies on a reliable workforce to make its large co-operative enterprises productive. It seems to me that there is still plenty of work to figure out how these two cultures of obligation can be integrated in such a way that Indigenous people can escape suffering because they are caught awkwardly between the two sets of expectations.

There are many other issues that cluster around this intrusion of the West upon the Indigenous culture. It seems to me that the old way was a mobile life that consumed what the land and water yielded as it became available. Indigenous culture learned not to waste anything, learned to promote the growth and yield of the land in season (by burning, or conserving, for example). You took what was available as it was available, feasting when

On the Buntiji Clan estate. Photo: Ben Underwood

there was plenty, conserving the resource that is the land with its flora and fauna.[5] The Western way is a way that seeks to take a harvest from the land and store up these resources for the future, consuming them bit by bit from our store rather than bit by bit directly from the environment. It developed in a different world, where you laid up for long winters of scarcity, as well as feasting in season, and this storing up of the products of labour has become concentrated in the institution of money. Stewardship exists in both cultures, even if it takes different forms in the different cultures, however we were confronted at times by a boom and bust existence in Aboriginal communities where the skills of stewardship seem to have been lost among some. One of our party who had lived in Jabiru told of a woman having thousands in the bank one week, and asking him for money for food the next week. We were told by an ex-participant in the card games that went on in picnic shelters next to the oval at Yirrkala, that the bets mounted up to hundreds of dollars per hand, and you could make or lose thousands in a few moments. Our western sensibilities reeled at this, but people in our party felt uneasy about expecting Indigenous people to behave just like us. We did not want to be guilty of white paternalism, and yet we were confronted by a boom and bust existence that seemed fraught with vulnerability and limitation to at least some of us. The traumas of Indigenous peoples being disrupted, dispossessed, reduced, institutionalised and turned out again to make their way in a society that was not always helpful or hospitable is no doubt a large part of the story.

Lots of outsiders, moved by the problems they see afflicting Indigenous communities, want to know what can be done: how can the problem be fixed? Churches, governments, individuals, charities and agencies have been and still are working hard to 'close the gap' and reset the relationship between Indigenous Australians and non-Indigenous Australians. It is obviously a gnarly problem that defies good intentions, money and sacrificial commitment to Aboriginal people by parties on both sides. Someone once came to our church staff meeting and argued that it was the moral issue for Australians that demanded our engagement with it as an absolute priority, because it was our history, our mess. This got my back up. Was there no freedom for Australians to make it their priority to help the homeless, or those caught in sex-slavery, or the newly arrived refugee, or those starving in famine overseas, or those who need the gospel, or persecuted Christians, or Bible translation or a myriad of other efforts we might make to love our neighbour? Why did the situation of Indigenous Australians demand that I get personally involved in making things better? We did not thrash this issue out fully, but one thing is true—I remember that staff meeting! And it made me think about the situation of Indigenous Australians, and how it is the product not just of some long ago moment in 1788 when the First Fleet landed, but of a rolling and growing experience of western settlement, and consequent displacement and alienation that has been ongoingly traumatic and the effects of which are not but by any means past. 'The past is never dead. It's not even past' seems an apposite quotation for us to meditate on.[6]



Replicas of the Yirrkalla Bark Petitions on display at the Buku-Larrnggay Mulka Centre. Photo: Australians Together

And yet the future does lie before us and we can hope and pray that progress can be made, that bridges can be built, that wounds can be healed, that cultures can adapt to one another, that wrongs can be faced, owned and turned away from, that forgiveness can be received, that mutual respect and friendship may grow and that we can in time look back on a shared past that has more good stories and fewer bad ones in it than it does at the moment. It seems to me that there are powerful voices in our culture urging us in this important direction. It also seems to me that there is a special opportunity for Christians to form relationships with Indigenous people who are also our Christian brothers and sisters, and that our common sharing in Christ might be a thing that positions Christians well to build relationships of trust and understanding across the Indigenous/non-Indigenous divide. Australians Together seem to me to be getting into that endeavour with thoughtfulness, commitment and care.

The week we went to the Northern Territory was NAIDOC week, and it had a focus on language, and keeping it strong. It was really something to hear Aboriginal languages spoken as first languages all around you in the NT, and there is no doubt that language is culture, the best medium of culture. Further than that, learning someone's language conveys respect and opens the door to seeing the world in which that language is spoken. If you want my idea for a way to open a door of listening, understanding and legitimation of Indigenous cultures to mainstream Australia, here is one: teach an Aboriginal language to every school student in Australia for at least a year, with the aim of thereby further opening the ears and the minds of non-Indigenous Australians to the voices and perspectives of Indigenous Australians. Discuss.

1. http://www.australia.gov.au/about-australia/australian-story/bark-petition-1963 accessed 11 July 2017
2. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yirrkala_bark_petitions accessed 11 July 2017
3. http://www.australianstogether.org.au/
4. See, Greg Anderson, The Fourth World in the First World: Missiology and Aboriginal Churches in the Northern Territory (2016, Mathew Hale Public Library).
5. See, e.g. Bill Neidjie, Gagudju Man (2007, Gecko Books)
6. From Requiem for a Nun by William Faulkner (1951, Random House)

The why and what of assured prayer:
The Lord's Prayer and Ezekiel 36

Thom Bull

Thom Bull is the Senior Minister of Ellenbrook Anglican Church, 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 Luke 11:1-13, Jesus gives his famous teaching on prayer, instructing us in both what we should pray for, and why. The 'why' is grounded in the character of God, in vv 5-13. Unlike the friend who will help you out simply to get rid of you, and like a father who knows how to give good gifts to his children (only more so), the heavenly Father is concerned, faithful, generous and kind, and can be relied upon to provide. And because that is who God is, Jesus says: ask, seek, and knock. The Father's character is such as to guarantee us of our receiving, finding, and having the door opened.

This assurance of the Father's hearing and answering is, however, closely connected to Jesus' teaching here on the 'what' of prayer. The bold, even extravagant prayer promises of these verses are, it must be remembered, not a blank cheque. Rather, they presuppose and exist in the closest relation to the very specific things for which Jesus has taught his disciples to ask. Of these requests, there are six. The first five come in the Lord's Prayer, in vv 2-4. Disciples are to ask that the Father's name would be acknowledged as holy; that his presently contested rule would be fully established on the earth; that their bodily need for food would be met; and that their spiritual need for the forgiveness of past evil and protection from future evil would similarly be provided. The sixth and final request, for the Holy Spirit, is communicated via the promise of v13. These six petitions, then, are those to which the prayer promises attend. Knock on these doors, and God will open them.

Now as a collection of individual petitions, these six requests appear, at first, to be a slightly random, disconnected grab-bag of items—all good things to ask for, to be sure, but not necessarily forming a greater unity. On a second reading, a delightful comprehensiveness may be noticed—these requests marry a centring on God's glory and fame with the reality of individual need; they stretch from the cosmic, universal and eschatological to the most basic, personal and immediate; they hold together both the physical and the spiritual as spheres of divine concern. And yet, going a third step, an even deeper, unifying relationship is evident amongst these petitions, which can be appreciated by turning to Ezekiel 36:22-32.

Ezekiel 36 comes from the lowest point in the life of Israel. Having persisted in rebellion against the LORD and repeatedly refused his call to repentance, the people have been exiled to Babylon, as the corpse of the kingdom they had once been. But out of the valley of the shadow of death, God promises his people, through his prophet, that a restoration is coming. The New Age, the Age of the Kingdom, dawn, when once again Israel will be the LORD's people, and he will be their God (v 28). And, as we hear the LORD's description of what he will do that day, we find that it is extremely suggestive as background to Luke 11. For instance, when the LORD's rule is re-established, he will summon the grain and make it abundant, and lay no famine on the people (v 29)—they will have their daily bread. He will sprinkle clean water on them, to clean them from their uncleanness and their idolatry (v 25)—their past and present sins will be forgiven. He will take away their stony hearts, give them hearts of flesh, and cause them to walk obediently in his statutes (v 26), transforming them such that they are protected from future temptation and evil. This transformation will be brought about through God's own Spirit, whom he will put

within them (v 27). And the LORD will do all of this, not for Israel's sake, but for the sake of his own holy name, to vindicate the holiness of his name—that is, to hallow it—before the nations (v 22).

The connections are immediately obvious, and they reveal that the petitions Jesus teaches his disciples to pray in Luke 11 aren't a set of discrete, disconnected requests. They are, rather, one large unified prayer to God, asking him to do the very thing he has already promised he will do in Ezekiel 36: bring the new age of his Kingdom, with all its blessings, upon a broken, guilty, and hungry world.

And this, in turn, further grounds the assurance Jesus gives of receiving an answer to these requests. It's not only because God's character is that of a generous Father; it's also because to pray Jesus' prayer is to pray the concrete promises of God, which he will be faithful to fulfil. It is to pray, therefore, beautifully within the divine will; and, for that reason, it can be prayed with certainty of receiving the Father's 'Yes'.

Resilient:

Your Invitation to a Jesus-Shaped Life
Sheridan Voysey, Discovery House, 2015

The art of pairing a wine with a meal is supposedly a relatively recent phenomenon. Historically, local food would be matched with local wine without much room for choice, but the luxuries of modern life have birthed a booming industry in the search of paired perfection and the ultimate dining experience

I wonder if we do a lot of the same when it comes to pairing the right devotional commentary to Scripture. Does the devotional content enhance the experience of God's Word? Is it a helpful companion or a distraction? Is the overall result more nourishing or vainly exotic? What is the ultimate Bible dining experience? What a luxury to have so many good books available to us that we can think in this way!

Thankfully with Sheridan Voysey's devotional book *Resilient*, it is easy to see that Scripture came first and his reflections flowed secondarily. The book came about because he committed to reading the Sermon on the Mount every day for a month, an experiment that tripled in length, and captivated his journaled thoughts enough to make the ninety short reflections that comprise it.

The book is organised into 6 sections and roughly follows the flow of the Sermon on the Mount: Your Invitation, Your Calling, Your Relationships, Your Practices, Your Choices and Your Resilient Life. In that sense, the clear theme of resilience only climaxes towards the end, just as it does with Jesus' closing analogy of building a house on the rock. Yet the resilient life is consistently built up every step of the way.

The whole collection is meant to be read slowly. This is a good thing, drawing us back to the Sermon that our wayward hearts love to ignore. The extreme challenge of each individual instruction from Jesus is hard to embrace, let alone to absorb it all at once, so to be guided deliberately through it by Voysey's awareness of the implications is helpful. This slowing down gives space for new insights into our present context and stops the powerful ethical impact from getting lost in the rush. He raises the challenge of Jesus by helping us see it more clearly.

Far from being a harsh call to a self-reliant holiness of living, the book is full of grace. He writes with a compassion that can only come from someone who knows the transforming work of the gospel and he works hard to make sure the reader doesn't miss the grand narrative of God's love. It is the kind of thing that comes from someone who has actually done the hard yards of sustained reflection on

the glorious Word of God and the lived experience of a Jesus-shaped life.

Voysey has a knack for sensitively navigating topics that many Christians have strong opinions on. People are very quick to give up on a devotional if it starts to push controversial buttons at whim (I should know, I've lost track of how many such books are on my shelf with their unsubtle agendas left unfinished). Voysey writes carefully, respectfully, is informed by good scholarship and acknowledges a variety of Christian experience. Typically this is achieved by leading with a story rather than leading with an assertion and it is an effective strategy that builds trust and respect with the reader.

My main worry about the book is the title. I read it because anything to do with resilience draws my attention these days out of a fascination with the buzzword it has become. The Western cultural narrative seems preoccupied with the silver bullet of resilience as it seeks desperately for anything that will plug the hole of widespread anxiety and fragmentation. There is nothing wrong with the word and what it represents, only that the book deserves to last longer than the buzzword is likely to and I hope it doesn't detract from the impact it should have once we've all jumped on the new flavour of the month.

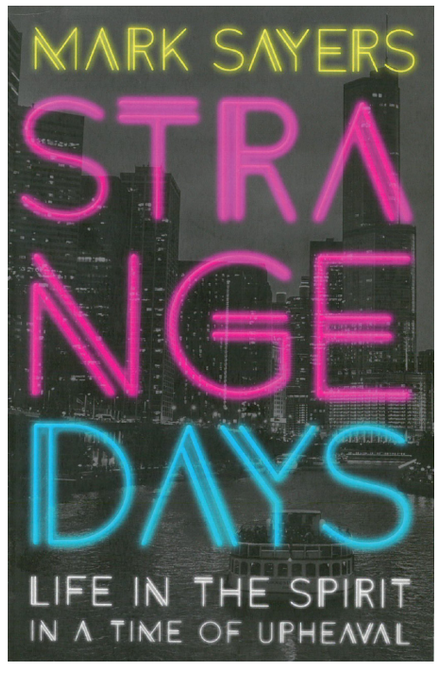
Both endeavours of pairing wine with food and devotionals with Scripture are notoriously difficult. One might find that they have found the textbook perfect combination only to hear scathing critique from the person sitting next to them. Welcome to subjective taste and personal preferences! Nevertheless, I think this is a satisfying, enlivening and ultimately productive combination. Bon appetit!

Mark Juers, Vic

Strange Days:

Life in the Spirit in a Time of Upheaval

Mark Sayers, Moody Publishers, 2017



In *Strange Days*, Mark Sayers starts with a personal story that captures the uncertainty and fear of our modern world. After smoothly flying to Europe over various conflict hotspots he finds out:

'Another Malaysian Airlines jet has gone down—shot down, I'd later learn, over a conflict zone. The plane had been traveling opposite of mine, at roughly the same time, filled with fellow Australians and other nationalities. Torn from the sky. That thin skin, that fragile membrane of security peeled away. I shake my head. The world is going mad.'

It's a compelling opening. Despite all the benefits of technology and travel, life appears chaotic and insecure. What are Christians to make of this age of terrorism and political dysfunction? How should we respond to the flood of social media and radical changes of globalization? Strange Days aims to help Christians think about this world in flux. Sayers writes:

'My goal is to grasp our cultural moment, to help you understand its landscape. There is a pattern to the chaos, and what is more, there is a door out, into the holy expanse that is life in the Spirit.'

The book does this in 3 parts. Parts 1 and 2 consider the Biblical and historical patterns of chaos. Part 3 then explores the Christian response to this time of upheaval: the 'Life in the Spirit' of the book's subtitle.

Is this book brilliant or flawed? I found it hard to decide. Sayers' dense writing, so arresting in the introduction, became wearying as the book went on and I wished for a more plain style, even if it took more words. Some sentences offered profound insight into our culture and context, but it seemed that every sentence was written as if I should consider it profound, until I couldn't tell if it was anymore. The book interprets the upheaval of our times as a striving for a sense of place, but I found myself questioning whether this interpretive lens was correct. Surely it is unlikely that the chaos of our world can be neatly slotted into a single overarching narrative?

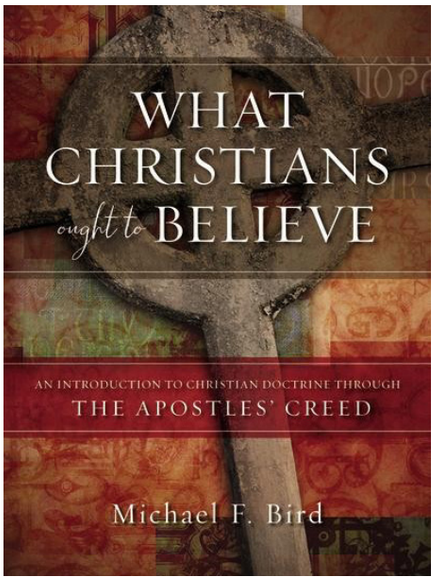
Unfortunately, that narrative is assumed more than argued for. The book gives only sixteen pages to Part 1, which means the biblical data that the rest of the book builds upon is poorly sketched. Was Cain's building of a city in Genesis 4:16-17 really 'an attempt to carve out meaning and legacy apart from God'? Perhaps, but the point isn't adequately explained. Much of the use of the Bible felt deductive rather than inductive. As a result, I found myself unconvinced that the categories of place, sacrifice and purity really provided the right lens through which to see our tumultuous world.

There are both strengths and weaknesses in Sayers' historical analysis. The reflection on the fall of the Berlin wall and the rise of the age of optimism is excellent. It helped me understand more about the origins of globalization and the achievement culture we now live in. However, his depiction of online environments as 'non-places' is disappointing. Along with communal,

commercial spaces like cafes and airports, he presents them negatively: 'There is no shared identity there, no story in the soil, no legends of a people or group.' And yet, many in today's world feel otherwise and genuinely find a home and relationships there. Are there not some aspects of the online world that are redeemable and good for the believer? I wanted Strange Days to dig deeper into questions like this.

In the end, *Strange Days* would have been better if it had been longer. A longer book would have allowed for more detailed exegesis of critical Bible passages, more sustained and convincing arguments, a simpler writing style and allowed greater scope for unpacking complexity rather than forcing evidence to fit particular categories. Nevertheless, Sayers' final landing point is tremendous. In the midst of the confusion of our age, he directs Christians towards deep discipleship that looks to the word of God, prioritizes the fellowship of the church, rejects the influence of the world and so stands as salt and light, holding out the joy-giving gospel of Jesus.

Jeff Hunt, WA



What Christians Ought to Believe:

An introduction to Christian doctrine through the Apostles' Creed

Michael F. Bird, Zondervan, 2016

As a self-confessed fan of the Apostles' Creed, I was excited to see that Michael Bird had written this book. After reading it I am now even more excited about the book and recommend it to both fans of the Creed and those who are perhaps a little less enthusiastic in their desire to use the Creed in their churches.

What Christians Ought to Believe is remarkably readable, profoundly relevant to our time, and deeply theological as well as practical in terms of a life of Christian faith. Even if your church isn't an Apostles' Creed reciting type of church, the contents of this book will inform your mind, encourage your heart and strengthen your faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Bird uses the Apostles' Creed to structure this book, which is really a primer on the theological basics all Christians would find it useful to reflect on and know. Most chapters of the book cover one or two lines of the Creed, which is broken up into appropriate bite (or chapter) sized chunks. However before he gets to the Creed, Bird whets our appetite with three preliminary chapters. Chapter 1 gives a brief and helpful recap of the history of Christian creeds; Chapter 2 discusses the biblical canon and church creeds, how they go together and why we need the creeds; and Chapter 3 is a fascinating reflection on the first two words of the Apostles' Creed: 'I believe'. What does it really mean to have Christian faith, how do faith and obedience relate to each other, and what are we to do with doubts are big questions that are covered briefly but helpfully in this chapter. From here, Bird launches into the substance of the Apostles' Creed, which is covered in the remaining eleven chapters of this book.

Perhaps surprisingly for a book about Christian doctrine, this book is written in a chatty and anecdotal style, which I found made it both engaging and relevant. As Chapter 3 addresses the question of 'What is faith?', we're pointed to Kenny Rogers' and George Michael's use of the words 'faith' and 'believe.' The beginning of Chapter 7 recounts a late-night comedy show's take on the virgin birth. And when thinking about the return of Jesus, the 'end of the Christian story', Bird compares this with the end of *The Return of the Jedi* and *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe.* Bird's anecdotes and illustrations are apt and make for enjoyable reading.

This book shows a refreshing willingness to ask the hard questions about Christian faith and about the Creed. These hard questions are addressed and honestly discussed rather than swept under the carpet. When we say we believe in 'God, the Father almighty', is this not just hopelessly patriarchal? As mentioned, the difficulty of the virgin birth is admitted before constructive discussion. During this discussion Bird reveals his view that 'no one should be yelled down for asking honest questions raised by reading the biblical texts' (p102), which is a refreshingly non-defensive approach to the Bible, Christian faith and the Creed. Bird also opens chapter 6 with the intriguing statement that 'There is sadly a major deficiency in the Apostles' Creed'. I'll leave you to discover this deficiency for yourself, but this chapter doesn't despair and ditch the Creed, but rather concludes with this lovely sentence: 'The most confronting issue about Christian faith is not any single idea—as if "Christianity" can be reduced to an "idea"; rather the most challenging aspect is a person: Jesus' (p. 96).

Bird displays an ability to unveil the beauty of many deep theological truths in this book, as well as a commitment to sharing the practical implications of how the theological truths summarised in the Apostles' Creed make a difference

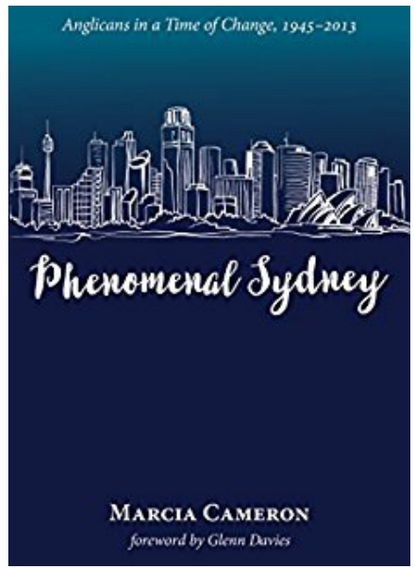
in our everyday lives of Christian faith. From reflecting on the implications of a declaration that 'Jesus is Lord', to thinking about the practical consequences of Jesus' ascension, to wondering why the return of Jesus really matters to us, Bird challenges not just what we believe as followers of Jesus but how we live as his people each day.

This book has been a delight to read. I've learnt new things, been encouraged with a deeper understanding of old truths and been challenged by the profoundly practical implications of the central truths of the Christian faith.

Natalie Rosner, Vic

Phenomenal Sydney:

Anglicans in a Time of Change, 1945-2013. Marcia Cameron. Wipf & Stock 2016.



One of the things friends and enemies alike agree about Sydney Diocese is it is different. What is it that makes Sydney so Sydney? Marcia Cameron explores this partly by analysis and partly by telling stories of this most recent period in the life of Sydney.

Her opening chapter is a good outline of the background and the main issues to be raised in the book. Four main characteristics of Sydney are a commitment to the centrality of the Bible; a militant faith; equipping clergy well; and a shying away from conforming to the current model of "Anglican" in the wider Australian church. Plus a few others.

This first chapter should be contrasted with the final one where Cameron refers to Wei-Han Kuan's PhD thesis that four vital contributions are required for evangelical continuity in a diocese: healthy evangelical parishes; healthy evangelical societies; a healthy evangelical training college; and a supportive diocesan bishop. All four of which Sydney has had in recent years.

Chapter Two is a helpful overview of the years between 1788 and 1945 and makes it clear that evangelicals didn't always rule. Chapter Three outlines some of the big issues in Archbishop Mowll's time including the transformation of the CENEF centre, the Red Book case, and the CESA. This chapter introduces a major sub-theme of the book – the ministry of women. When I first read the book I found this very interesting since it provided a lot of detail about things that happened after I left the diocese (and my fellow student Jacinth Myles got a good press). On a second reading it became clearer that this is a major theme of the book. Readers may be divided as to whether this makes the book better or worse. Sydney is often portrayed, by outsiders at least, as anti-women. Cameron is obviously sympathetic to the cause and does provide a lot of detail about the progress of both the debates and the actual ministry of women in Sydney diocese.

The discussion of the Constitution of the national church is good, partly because of the various interviews with key players and the use of the archives of the Australian Church Record (a significant source for the book). Cameron regards the debates over the constitution to be essentially about identity. This is a helpful insight. She says, "The threat to who we are makes Sydney defensive and also forces us to experiment." (64) This is an important bit of history and I would have liked to have been told a bit more about it.

The Gough years are portrayed as a mixed bag of some good – the Billy Graham Crusades, election of women to synod, the Archbishop's Commission; and not so good – the tensions between the Archbishop and some of the younger leaders such as Knox, Robinson and Loane. Cameron also deals well with the alleged reasons for Gough's resignation.

The Loane episcopacy outlines some of the debates – homosexuality (briefly) and women's ministry (nearly seven pages). In this and other chapters some attention is given to parishes – in this case St Barnabas and the ministries of Paul and Anita Barnett. Prayer Book revision was a big issue in Loane's time and Cameron gives a helpful overview of it, as well as his time as Primate.

John Chapman is introduced in this chapter – but only gets a few mentions – mostly in relation to his work with others such as Barnett and Philip Jensen. This for me is a major omission. I think there is a case for considering Chapman to have had a more significant influence than even Philip Jensen in the diocese. Perhaps it indicates a lack of source material – or a difference of judgment between the author and the reviewer.

The Robinson years were dominated by the debates about the ordination of women. As we might expect by this stage in the book, Cameron gives a thorough report on the progress of the debates and events. I think this section is a very helpful contribution to the history and understanding of the issue. Lay Presidency, homosexuality and the consecration of a CESA bishop also occupied Robinson's attention. Cameron has some sympathy for the Archbishop whom she describes as an irenic scholar. She admires the unity (without agreeing with it I think) with which the diocesan leadership and Moore College stood together on the question of women's

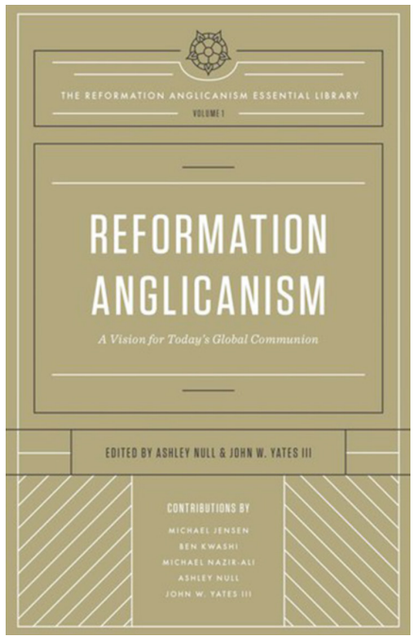
ordination, but is also sympathetic to those who had different views – some of whom moved out to other places.

Cameron identifies Harry Goodhew's time as less than happy. More about women's ordination, the Pymble matter, the Anglican Counselling Centre controversy, lay and diaconal presidency, new prayer book revision, the rise of REPA are all discussed. And a long section on Philip Jensen's ministry morphs into women's ministry and the appointment of an Archdeacon for the Promotion of Women's ministry, MOW and Equal but Different. The "Sydney Heresy" gets some good analysis.

The Jensen episcopacy is too recent according to the author to bear too much analysis but some sketches are made to do with the Priscilla and Aquila Centre and GAFCON. Cameron concludes with the comment that it is missionary and evangelistic action arising from the centrality of the Bible that sets Sydney apart; as well as its wealth, size, and positions on women's ministry, lay presidency, church planting, homosexual behaviour and so on.

Overall the book is very interesting and gains from the use of a wide variety of sources including lots of interviews. However neither the four characteristics of Sydney outlined in the opening chapter or Kuan's four identifiers of evangelical continuity are used as a structural or thematic grid for the book. Neither is Kuan's summary used as a way of drawing the threads together. The book is mostly about the archbishops, the issues they faced and what they did, and the development (or not) of women's ministry.
Dale Appleby, WA

Reformation Anglicanism:
A Vision for Today's Global Communion
Edited by Ashley Null and John W. Yates III, Crossway, 2017



Michael Nazir-Ali's excellent opening chapter, 'How the Anglican Communion Began and Where It Is Going' is worth the price of this worthy book. Starting with the Roman occupiers Nazir-Ali traces the spread of the gospel at first through Celtic Christians and later by the Roman mission. There were differences, and clashes until the Roman church got the upper hand. Ali comments, 'In short, the Roman missional strategy was to stress founding structures capable of shaping a message, whereas the Celtic way was to proclaim a message with the power to create a community.' He continues with terrific thumbnail sketches of the Reformers (who wanted to evangelise whole nations), the Evangelical revival, the spread of the gospel through missionary societies (a big section), and the various issues in church state relations. Anglican ecclesiology and unity are discussed and finally a proposal about the way forward. He says, 'Once again, it is very likely that the renewal of Anglicanism will come about not through the reform of structures (necessary as that is) or through institutional means but through movements, raised up by God.'

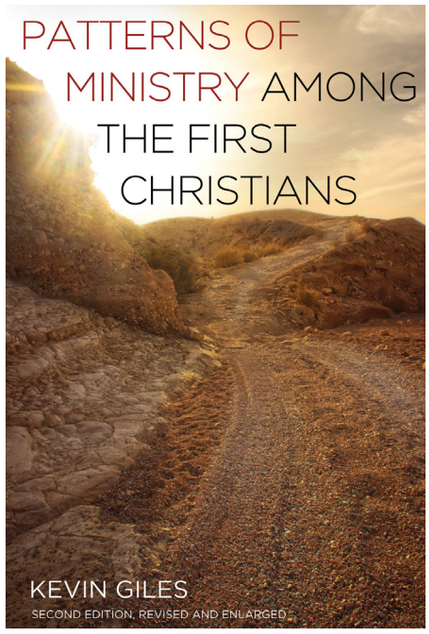
Ashley Null provides an overview of the Reformation in his chapter, 'The Power of Unconditional Love in the Anglican Reformation'. He traces its beginnings back 200 years and locates its power in the new desire to read and listen to the Scriptures, which led people to believe the promise of justification by faith and so to experience the love of God. The chapter gives a good picture of what Null calls a six-act drama: the pre-Reformation Scriptural meditation reform; an underground evangelical movement in the 1520s and early 1530s; an independent Church of England under Henry VIII from 1534 to 1547; a fully Protestant church guided by Archbishop Thomas Cranmer under Edward VI (1547–1553); the restoration of the Roman Catholic Church under Mary (1553–1558); and the restoration of Cranmer's Protestant church under Elizabeth (1558–1603). Like the first chapter this is a masterful summary of a complex picture.

The next four chapters pick up the four big themes of the reformation: sola Scriptura (John W. Yates III), sola gratia (Ashley Null), sola fide (Michael Jensen), and soli Deo gloria (Ben Kwashi). Each of these is full of interest and insight, and is made more interesting because of the use of original sources and quotes. They are not dry expositions of doctrine but a kind of devotional historical theology embedded in real world issues of the time.

In the final chapter Ashley Null and John W. Yates III offer 'A Manifesto for Reformation Anglicanism'. The foundations are in the nature of Anglicanism: it is apostolic, catholic, reformational, mission-focussed, episcopal, liturgical, transformative, and relevant. All very good. But my reading of it was that it was written from inside the reformed walls. Many of us live outside the walls in an Anglican church which ignores or denies these Reformation themes and practices. Although the keys are there for a new reformation of a captive Church, some further application to that context would have been good.
Dale Appleby, WA

Patterns of Ministry Among the First Christians

Second Ed. Revised and Enlarged. Kevin Giles,Wipf and Stock, 2017



I sometimes lament the scarcity of good theology in the field of pastoral studies, but I am pleased to say this book is an exception. The book's purpose is to evaluate the emergence, development and shape of leadership and ministry in the first and second centuries. From a contemporary and practical perspective, he is exploring the question: is the way our church is governed God ordained? In particular Giles evaluates the ministry patterns of the major denominations against those of the Bible. He questions the assumption that what we do and experience today is what the first century church did and experienced. Not because he believes there is a prescriptive pattern to be found, but rather to call into question the claims of these denominations accurately to reflect the patterns of the early church.'

He concludes firstly, there is diversity and development in church order in the first century and beyond; secondly, the patterns that emerge were driven by 'the need of the hour'; and thirdly, there is little correlation between church in the first century and church in the contemporary context. The book examines ministry and leadership in Jesus and in Paul; noting Jesus is far less concerned to institute leadership positions in his church than he is about defining the nature of leadership in his community, defined by costly service and not authority and control. The bulk of the book examines the biblical and patristic teaching on the major church offices: bishops, deacons, elders, apostles, prophets and teachers.

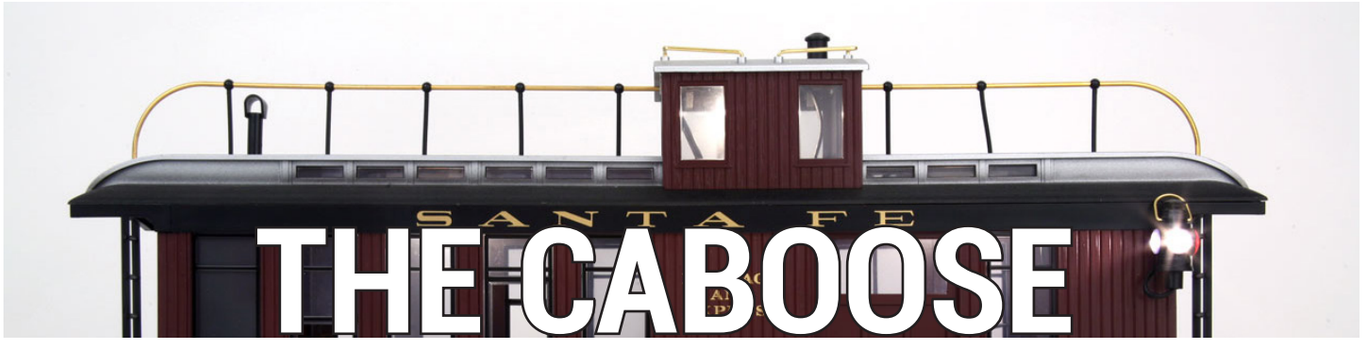
One of his most significant contributions is to carefully delineate the types of elders that existed in the Jewish diaspora of the Hellenistic period: the elders who had responsibility for the entire Jewish community of a city and the elders of each local community who were not office bears in any synagogue. So, in Alexandria and Antioch the Jewish community in its totality was governed by a council of elders, presided over by a ruler, while the synagogues were overseen by a 'synagogue ruler'. Giles demonstrates this same pattern was evident in the more mature early church. Initially, house churches were led by the wealthy home owner, who had both the large house and the social status necessary to have the credibility to lead. But as the number of Christians and house churches in a city like Ephesus or Rome grew, the Jewish system was adopted and elders were appointed to oversee the Christians in the whole city, as distinct from those who led the house churches. So, the Ephesian elders who come to Miletus in Acts 20 to meet Paul are the city elders. This has significant implications especially for those who try to emulate a biblical pattern of ministry. Apart from the question of whether such patterns are prescriptive anyway, there are several evolving patterns that were not settled for centuries (so which biblical pattern should we emulate?), and what we see in the Bible is more subtle and nuanced than we might think.

In this kind of work method is everything. The book may be less than 250 pages, but his work is detailed and thorough. Where identified patterns and trajectories are broken, he offers a detailed argument to account for the anomaly and is judicious in making conclusions. He understands the sociological nature of institutional development, and his use of church history is critical to the success of his endeavour. Understanding how and when we arrived at certain ministry patterns is vital to our ability to evaluate them. Giles' use of second and third century sources is necessarily limited, but it is certainly sufficient and provides an invaluable perspective and more complete picture. His use of history is not confined to the patristics. He offers some engagement with Reformers, especially around their contribution to our ideas of elders. No one pattern of church leadership is spelt out or prescribed in this book. Giles is reluctant to identify a singular, consistent pattern of ministry in the early church that might be emulated. He recognises the patterns are dynamic and as such are never prescriptive.

Considerable attention is given to the ministry of women, especially in the Pauline Epistles. The particular contribution of this book is the reframing of ministry roles and how they were occupied, which renders much of the contemporary debate anachronistic. Giles shows the way the contemporary debate is framed makes all sorts of unwarranted assumptions about leadership, authority, ordination and pastoral offices such that the answers are not just wrong, but meaningless.

As someone who teaches in the field of Pastoral Theology I am acutely aware of the dearth of books that address these foundational questions. Not only are there very few, but of these, very few do so with the kind of biblical scholarship of Giles who is not merely descriptive, but analytical and critical. . He will greatly assist our reading of the New Testament by alerting us to the many missed nuances, helping us see a more sophisticated picture of the life of the earliest Christian communities. In our own context, where much is disputed and many claim to have the biblical model, Giles has provided a rich resource to inform our thinking and practice.

Tim Foster, Vic



Borneo Revisited

Tony Nichols

Tony Nichols rejoices over what mighty things God can grow in half a century, even from small and threatened beginnings. Bishop Tony Nichols ministers at St Lawrence's Dalkeith, WA

From 7- 9 July, 12 former CMS missionaries returned to St Patrick's Tawau, at the invitation of Bishop John Yeo, the present Rector, to join over 3,000 current parishioners in the spectacular Centenary celebrations.

The remote small trading post surrounded by dense jungle on the border between British North Borneo and Indonesia that I had known, is now a major city of Sabah with a population of over 600,000. But the church and school ministry which was restored in the 1950s by the vision and energy of CMS missionaries, especially Canon Walter Newmarch and Principal Jim Power, has matched the growth of Tawau itself. Praise God for the faithfulness of their Sabahan successors, many of whom were converted at St Patrick's School.

It is difficult to describe the emotion of sitting down with 1500 ex-students, many of whom had flown in from other countries. Nowhere else in Malaysia would one witness Christian and Muslims (in full Islamic garb) embracing each other and recalling old times together. However, I confess, after 55 years, it was a challenge to recognise many who eagerly came up to reintroduce themselves!

The Saturday night Confirmation and the Sunday night Thanksgiving services were marathons, with choirs, indigenous dances, high tech special effects, sermons translated into three languages—all wonderfully encouraging. The St Patrick's 'House of Prayer for All Nations' seats 2,500, but there was an overflow of at least 500 on the Sunday night. I was invited to join in the confirmation of the 325 candidates, along with the seven Asian bishops present. Bishop Melter Tais, the first Kadazan Bishop of Sabah, preached a fine biblical sermon. The 40 I confirmed were all Malay speakers. I was also asked to preach on Sunday morning in Bahasa to about 200 Christians at Merotai, one of St Patrick's 12 church plants. Five of these plants are across the border in Indonesia, pastored by men whom Judith and I taught in our retirement in Bandung.

The CMS contribution was honoured and I was asked to convey that to the CMS Board. It was great that Jim and Betty Power were able to be present, escorted by Dr Barnabas Khoo, a former student. Such was Jim's impact as an educationalist that a street is named after him—Jalan James Power. His esteemed Indian successor, K.M. George also flew in from Kerala. K.M. was a CMS bursar at Moore College in 1948!

Other former CMS missionaries present were Michael and Christine Corbett-Jones, Ray and June Pearce, Sylvia Jeanes, and Ken and Janet Goodlet. Also present were David Newmarch, his two brothers and Mrs Judith Savage, daughter of the Rev'd Ken Perry. Presentations were made to them in honour of their parents' ministry in Tawau—a lovely touch.

When I returned to Sydney at the end of 1963 to prepare for ordination, the future of the region was very uncertain. The march of Communism in Indo-China and Malaya seemed relentless. There was much social unrest, Communist groups in most schools, growing Islamic pressure, serious attacks by pirate bands from the Southern Philippines (I recall 14 pirates being hanged down the road), and Indonesian guerrilla groups and gunboats. President Soekarno threatened to crush the new federation of Malaysia. One wondered whether the church was just a colonial remnant that would not survive.

Furthermore, Sabah Christians experienced a baptism of fire in the 1970s when Chief Minister Tun Mustapha expelled foreign missionaries, penalized Christians, rewarded converts to Islam with land grants, and allowed a million Muslims to immigrate from the Southern Philippines.

But the church was purified and grew. And in the Anniversary celebrations we were privileged to witness the fruit of God's word and of prayer, not only in the huge numbers, but also in the vitality and faith of our Sabah brethren. Jesus' parable of the mustard seed was very much in our minds together with the exhortation of the prophet Zechariah: 'Do not despise the Day of Small Things'.

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SUMMER 2017