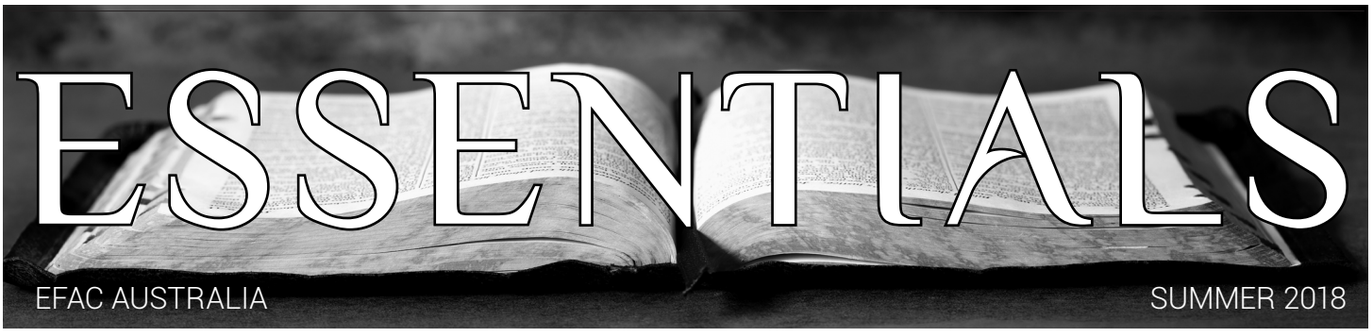

Bible Study: Who's Building Your House?

Adrian Lane on Luke 6:46-49

Book Reviews

Known by God
C.S. Lewis: A Life
A Secular Age
Christianity's Dangerous Idea
Biblical Authority After Babel

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

Our friends across the Pacific

Australia has an important relationship to the USA, and Australian Christianity has an important relationship with US Christianity. Sometimes we have been on the whole very positive about things American that wash across to our shores, sometimes we are rather more negative. Almost always reaction is mixed: as a body we might simultaneously wonder at the mysteries of American Way, or resist what we feel is an alien and unhelpful influence, or rejoice at a great help from a good-hearted ally with much to offer, or deplore the baggage we feel they sometimes encumber us with. Our two feature articles touch on ways that US Christianity impinges upon Australian Christianity. The first is Tony Nichols' personal account of the visit of Billy Graham in 1959 (the 60th anniversary of which approaches). As Tony testifies, plenty in the churches, including influential local leaders, doubted and resisted the Graham Crusade then, but what a moment that visit proved to be, with so many hearing him speak, either live at the venue, or by some kind of relay, and with so many later testifying what an impact it had on their spiritual lives. Tony takes us back to the ferment and excitement of the Crusade and its lasting aftermath.

Our second feature article by Rhys Bezzant begins in the present with the dismay in some quarters over Evangelical support of Donald Trump at the US presidential election. He asks whether this should make us consider shedding the label 'evangelical', and answers with a resounding 'no', seeking instead to outline briefly the long and distinguished history and associations of the term, which transcend the political turmoil and polarisation of the moment.

Our leaders are focussed on things Australian. We return to Tasmania for a further instalment of news about the energy around the pursuit of the Diocesan Mission to be a church for Tasmania, making disciples of Jesus. We peek into the councils of the St Hilary's Network as they wrestle with a pastoral policy responding to the amendment of the Marriage Act. Third, Peter Adam honours the late Harrie Scott Simmons, an evangelical clergyman who was instrumental in his conversion, short-term discipleship and long-term mentoring into ordained ministry.

Adrian Lane opens up Jesus' call to build your life on his words in Luke 6:46-49, and then there are book reviews of books by Brian Rosner, Alistair McGrath, Charles Taylor and Kevin Vanhoozer. I hope you get leisure to read some good books over the summer. In the Caboose we note the passing of a giant of the Australian church—D.W.B. Robinson, scholar and archbishop.

In case you worried that our interview with Bishop Kay Goldsworthy last issue was meant to signal endorsement for the kind of liberal theological agenda she has shown sympathy for, let me say that that is emphatically not the case. Rather, the interview was included in an issue with an interest in what bishops have to offer by way of vision, of analysis of what the present moment requires of Christians, of programmes for what we should be doing and why we should be doing it. Bishop Richard Condie provided one offering, and Archbishop Kay Goldsworthy provided another. As I did last issue, I leave it to readers to make up their minds for themselves about the depth, wisdom and promise of these two offerings.

As always, I value hearing from readers. And if you have something to contribute to the pages of Essentials, do be in touch.

Ben Underwood - essentialsed@gmail.com

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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Making disciples every day

Sonya de Lacey

Sonya de Lacey gives us a taste of the Bishop's Training Event in the Diocese of Tasmania.

The atmosphere had an expectant buzz as 400 plus Anglicans from across Tasmania gathered for the third annual Bishop's Training Event. This year's theme was Making Disciples Every Day. It was Saturday 22 September. Music filled the auditorium. Lanyards were handed out. Resource tables were plentiful, covering topics such as: Alpha, Bush Church Aid, Church Missionary Society, Diocesan Training and Youth/Kids ministry info, Safe Church Communities, University Fellowship of Christians and Worldview College—to name just a few. The aroma of freshly ground coffee filtered through the air. This was our biggest event ever with around 350 adults, and 70+ children in the children's event and creche.

At morning prayer we gave thanks to God that we, his people, could gather together in his name. We asked the Holy Spirit to fill us and empower us to be Christ's disciples, sending us to go and proclaim the gospel, making disciples in our own neighbourhoods and to the ends of the earth. In the morning session Bishop Richard challenged us to ask the Lord of the harvest prayerfully and regularly for workers to send out into the harvest field. [1] He concluded his session by sharing a video of Patricia McCormack who goes into Risdon Prison to share the good news. This lovely story showed how God can take our brokenness and create something truly beautiful.[2]

The Rev'd Andy Goodacre shared how Jesus chose unlikely people, in unlikely places, and invested in the few for the sake of the many. [3] He shared an encouraging video from his church called: Barney's Missionary People, Seeing Lives Transformed.[4] We heard testimonies of God growing the church in Circular Head from about 15 to 20 people 18 months ago to over 90 people the Sunday before the Bishop's Training Event. Others talked about how the Holy Spirit had been preparing them for a move and how they had sold up and were now moving house to join a new church plant in Brighton. There was much to give thanks for and celebrate.

This lovely story showed how God can take our brokenness and create something truly beautiful

The singing was both powerful and beautiful. One attendee wrote, 'the very best thing about the day for me was the singing … Standing there, surrounded by the swell of sound from four hundred people all singing together, was the most uplifting, encouraging feeling. I was carried on the sound. I was buoyed by it … Saturday's singing was about being community. Being family. Singing with one voice. Joining together and making something truly beautiful.'[5]

The Bishop's Training Event, 2018, Diocese of Tasmania.

In the afternoon, everyone met in smaller groups attending 2 of 22 possible workshops. Workshops covered a wide range of ministry topics, for example: disciple-making in rural areas, connecting the church with young people, helping build disability-inclusive Christian communities, answering tricky questions in the workplace, everyday pastoral care: making disciples every day and missional communities: making disciples in the everyday.

'There is always more we can learn to help us to serve God and with the wide range of session topics to choose from there was something for everyone', said Philip Ruston. 'It was good to learn more about personal witness and that even if we've had a Christian upbringing we still have a story to tell about our walk and relationship with God.'

Steve Abbott, author of *Everyday Evangelism*, led the two main auditorium workshops on sharing our faith with others. He talked about the 'key practical biblical elements of personal witness' [6] and 'Understanding the five thresholds unbelievers cross from distrust to trust in Jesus'.[7] We learnt valuable new skills and ideas to make disciples across Tasmania.

Our vision is to be: *a church for Tasmania, making disciples of Jesus*. Hopefully we have all taken away something new which will enable us to be a blessing within our communities and to share the good news. 'I would certainly recommend the day, it allows you to see the depth and breadth of our Anglican Church community, making new friendships, renewing old ones and getting a broader view of what is happening across Tasmania,' said Heather Krause. 'It gives a better perspective regarding our faith community, rather than your head being down and just working on where you are. It is so important to raise your head and see what is happening outside of your circle, it gives you encouragement and new ideas and resources', she said.

We left, thankful for what God is doing amongst us, with new skills and ideas to make disciples across Tasmania, and keen to invite others to join us next year.

[1.] This talk can can be viewed at https://youtu.be/Ah2nlLc2kVM.
[2.] Patricia's story can be viewed at https://youtu.be/5o9_u11rteU
[3.] Andy's talk can be viewed at https://youtu.be/rxR4PgzC-U8
[4.] Watch it at https://vimeo.com/255317670
[5.] Ruth Amos at https://aquietlifeblog.wordpress.com/2018/09/24/a-most-beautiful-moment/
[6.] At https://youtu.be/gba-8nJTUsE
[7.] At https://youtu.be/W6rOvM25_as

Pastoral guidelines on same-sex relationships, marriage and gender

Stephen Hale

With the advent of same-sex marriage, churches are seeking to articulate with grace and truth a response to the various issues this presents. Stephen Hale has generously made available the pastoral guidelines that the St Hilary's Network in Melbourne has developed. Reading and reflecting on their efforts might prove helpful to others engaged in similar tasks. Stephen Hale is the Lead Minister in the St Hilary's Network.

We acknowledge that developing a theological and pastoral response related to human sexuality and sexual practice in our cultural setting is complex and challenging. We offer our full assurance for all who are same sex attracted that they are loved, valued and welcome in our church. Our identity as believers is founded in the new life we live as God's children. We are all one in Christ Jesus regardless of ethnicity, gender or sexual orientation.

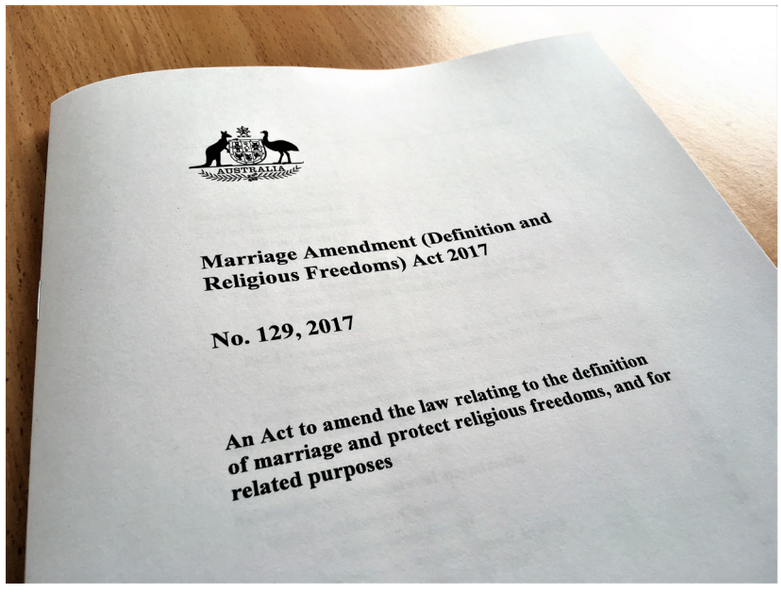
As a church, we uphold the formularies of the Anglican Church of Australia, which are grounded in the Bible's teaching. The Christian rite of marriage is between a man and a woman. Both Jesus in Matthew 19:4-5, and St Paul affirm what God has instituted across all ages in the words of Genesis 2:24: 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.' The introduction to the Anglican Marriage Service (APBA Order 2) classically states it this way,

> *'Scripture teaches that marriage is a lifelong partnership uniting a woman and a man in heart, mind and body. In the joy of their union, husband and wife enrich and respond to each other, growing in tenderness and understanding. Through marriage a new family is formed, where children*

may be born and grow in secure and loving care.'

Faithfulness in Service (The Anglican Church of Australia Trust Corporation, 2004) is the guiding policy document of the Anglican Church of Australia, especially for those who are licensed or authorised to minister, and states the formal position of the Anglican Church as 'faithfulness in marriage and celibacy in singleness'. In upholding biblical teaching on marriage, we acknowledge that it involves the costly call of celibacy for all who are unmarried.

In the person of Jesus, we find the perfect model of someone who lived and spoke with both grace and truth (John 1:14). We acknowledge that in our attempts to develop a pastoral and theological response, the church may have at times spoken the truth, but not in love, and we repent of it. We acknowledge that, in our attempts to uphold the Bible's teaching (and Anglican formularies) on marriage, we may have given the impression that same-sex attracted people themselves were the problem. This is not true, and we apologise if you have experienced this. We also acknowledge that homophobia has been a sin in our church and the wider community, and we repent of it.



In the person of Jesus we find the perfect model of someone who lived and spoke with both grace and truth'

We acknowledge that this is an issue of significant pastoral tension within our faith community as we seek to reflect on the Bible's teaching and, also, as we seek to love and support same-sex attracted family members, work colleagues and friends. We commit ourselves to holistic pastoral responses that are compassionate and positive in supporting people who are same-sex attracted.

We seek to increasingly be a faith community that rejoices in the gift of friendship for all people. We encourage mutual hospitality within the body of Christ as families and single people share their gifts and homes. We encourage all married couples and families to both welcome and include single people as part of their ongoing life. We welcome those who share their lives as companions and seek to live faithfully.

We recognise that not all in our church community hold the same views on this matter and urge each of us to interact in a respectful and open manner. We commit ourselves to ongoing study and reflection on the teaching of Scripture in these areas.

We encourage church members to engage with friends, colleagues and family respectfully and with grace, modelling Christian engagement. As Christians living in a pluralist culture we seek to support each other in upholding our right to speak respectfully and graciously. We urge legislators to uphold religious freedom and to enshrine appropriate protections for religious practitioners and institutions in any proposed legislation.

Leadership Protocols

1. Under the provisions of the Marriage Act (Australian Government, 2017) Anglican clergy are exempted from performing same sex marriages if it is contrary to the formularies of their denomination.
   The 2017 Marriage Act states:
   2A: b) to allow ministers of religion to solemnise marriage, respecting the doctrines, tenets and beliefs of their religion, the views of their religious community or their own religious beliefs;
   The Canons of the Anglican Church only allow for marriage between a man and a woman.
2. As per current practice, St Hilary's clergy and lay ministers attending any marriage where they have been invited to play a role shall, prior to accepting the invitation, inform the Lead Minister, if they have not already done so by their standard scheduling and planning discussions. Clergy must abide by current Diocesan protocols in the conduct of weddings.
3. Staff and those in elected leadership must uphold *Faithfulness in Service*
4. An individual's views on these matters are not a criterion for being on the Parish Electoral Roll.

Works Cited

Marriage Amendment (Definition and Religious Freedoms) Act 2017. Australian Government, 2017.
A Prayer Book for Australia, Broughton Publishing, 1995
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Harrie Scott Simmons - 5 September 1918 to 4 May 1999: a Tribute.

Peter Adam

Peter Adam pays tribute to a great mentor of his. A shorter version of this tribute was first published in The Melbourne Anglican, September 2018. Peter Adam is Vicar Emeritus of St Jude's Carleton, Vic.

Harrie was born in Melbourne, attended Scotch College, and was converted through the Crusaders movement by Baden Gilbert, who ministered at Montague (South Melbourne). It was a slum parish, and some of the Crusaders helped with ministry in the parish, and paid for a women's worker to assist in ministry there. Harrie also joined CMS League of Youth. He trained for the ministry at Ridley College, when Bishop Baker was the Principal, and benefitted from his Biblical preaching and emphasis on the devotional life.

Harrie was ordained in Melbourne, and served his curacies at St Andrew's Brighton and Holy Trinity Kew, and then worked as Assistant Minister to Dean Langley at St Paul's Cathedral. He then left for India in 1947, where he served at Amy Carmichael's centre for children at Dohnavur, then as chaplain at Vellore Medical College and Hospital, and then as Chaplain at Lushington School at Ootacamund.

On one occasion at Vellore, Harrie was preaching on the text 'Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world', and Dr Mary Verghese was converted to Christ. She later had a significant ministry as a surgeon repairing the hands of leprosy patients, and a vigorous Christian witness throughout her life.

Harrie Scott Simmons.

He was forced to return to Melbourne because of ill-health. Here at home he served as Chaplain at Malvern Grammar, then Chaplain at Ridley College, and then worked for the Australian Institute of Archaeology. He was also active in speaking at Scripture Union and CMS activities for young people.

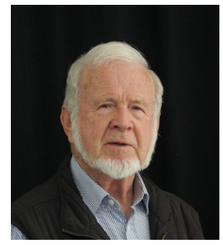
Harrie had a constant and extensive ministry praying for, counselling and mentoring young men. He was a person of great compassion and patience, deep spirituality, attractive holiness, and practical wisdom. He was a great intercessor, and you knew that once you were on his prayer list you were on it for life! He ministered to a wide range of men from all backgrounds. He was a faithful student and teacher of the Bible, and a wise evangelist and personal counsellor. He had a keen interest in people, and the gift of friendship.

I am one of many young men whom Harrie met 'by chance', and who was befriended for life. He converted me to Christ, and then met with me every Tuesday for 3 years to disciple and mentor me, both as Christian, and also then into ordained ministry. When I went to see the Archbishop's Chaplain to offer for ordination, he asked me who had influenced me most in my call to the ministry. When I told him it was Harrie Scott Simmons, he replied, 'We don't think much of him at Headquarters' [!] I am thankful that I automatically replied, 'Well he converted me so I am very thankful for him!'

It was my privilege to preach at Harrie's funeral in 1999, and St James' Glen Iris was full of men who praised God for his ministry. He had a wonderful combination of high standards for us, and deep compassion and understanding when we fell short. Harrie had a deep love of classical music, and an outrageous sense of humour. He was a poet, had a keen interest in and expertise in Egyptology, and an attractive simplicity of life.

I recently spoke at a meeting at which 48 ministers were present. I mentioned Harrie by name, and after my talks four other ministers came up to reminisce about him, and we thanked God together for him. He truly was a 'Father in Israel' to many. His life, ministry and prayers are still bearing fruit. We praise and thank God for all his saints, and especially at this time, for Harrie Scott Simmons.

'Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever.' Daniel 12:3.



The Billy Graham Crusade (1959) A personal memoir

Bishop Tony Nichols

As we approach the 60th anniversary year of the momentous 1959 Billy Graham Crusade in Australia, Bishop Tony Nichols recalls how Graham touched the people around him, and what flowed out of this Crusade. Tony Nichols ministers at St Lawrence's Dalkeith, WA and beyond.

Next year marks the sixtieth anniversary of Billy Graham's first visit to Australia in 1959 when he led 'crusades' across all capital cities over a four-month period. To commemorate the remarkable outpouring of God's Spirit in which thousands decided to follow Christ, Franklin Graham, Billy's son, will speak in each capital city in February 2019.

Billy Graham was invited to Australia by the Primate of the Anglican Church, Archbishop Howard Mowll who did not live to witness the extraordinary results. His initiative, however, launched an unprecedented ecumenical movement which saw thousands of Christians from different denominations meeting weekly for prayer for God's blessing on Australia. Over 8,000 enrolled for counsellor training in Sydney alone. Those training sessions were a great blessing to me personally, not least because we had to learn off by heart over twenty passages of Scripture. Volunteers were also organised for support roles and each of the choirs had a thousand members. The organisation was superb.

Crusade statistics have frequently been rehearsed. Attendances totalled three million. Australia's total population at the time was twelve million. Melbourne attendances totalled 719,000. The Sydney Crusade drew 980,000. In the other capitals, meetings were taken by associate evangelists with Graham speaking at the final meetings. In Perth, the attendance was 106,800. A broader radio audience heard his trademark, 'The Bible says'. Landlines relayed hundreds of services to rural communities. Of those who heard Billy Graham, over 150,000 made 'decisions for Christ'. Not a few subsequently became significant leaders, both in Australia and in overseas missions.

Some colourful stories made newspaper headlines: 'Thug Gives Up Revolver', 'Burglar Hands over Tool Kit'. Businesses

reported an epidemic of repayment of bad debts. Enrolments in Bible Colleges doubled over the next four years. Churches which supported the Crusade were undoubtedly revitalised.

Not all church leaders supported the Crusade. The Bishops of Newcastle, Canberra-Goulburn, and Rockhampton derided Billy Graham's simplistic use of the Bible. But many of their flock heard the gospel for the first time in language they could understand and confessed faith in the Lord Jesus.

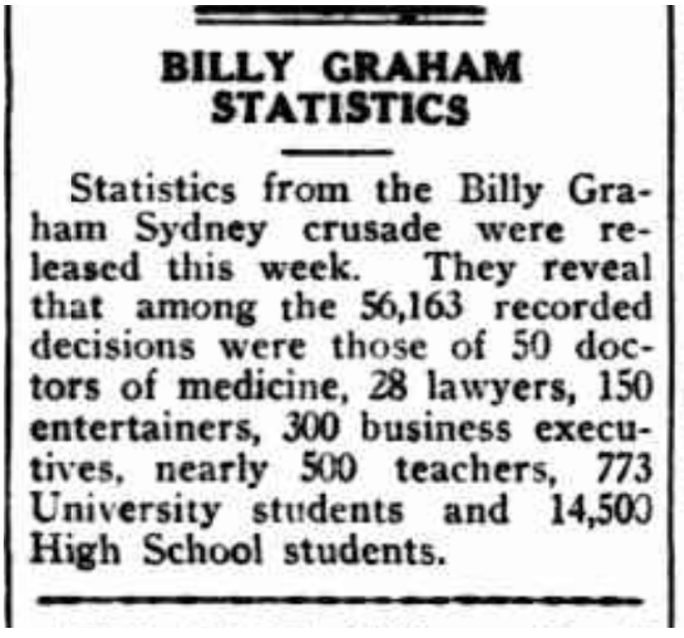
'I was denounced from the pulpit before an astonished congregation'

My home parish of St. Augustine's Bulli did not support the Crusade. The rector was a good man, but he, and all members of the Parish Council, were members of the Masonic Lodge. So an older layman, Bill Lackenby, and I organised a bus for the four weeks of the Showground meetings in Sydney, 70 km away. I still do not know how we paid for it. Astonishingly, the parish received about 200 referrals, almost all non-church goers. The rector fell ill and a young curate from Moore College, Reg Barker, was recruited. He faithfully visited all who were referred. The parish experienced new life and to this day is a vibrant fellowship. Our elder son and his family moved to the district ten years ago and are keen members of 'Bulli Anglican', as it is now known.

God's blessing was also evident among the students of the University of Sydney where about 700 made commitments to Christ during the Crusade. The Evangelical Union organised Bible study groups. I was charged with the task of forming two such groups in the Faculties of Vet. Science and Pharmacy. One afternoon, Billy Graham actually came and preached on the lawns of the University. Inevitably, pranksters did their best to disrupt his address. They rang triple zero to report that the Uni was on fire. We could hear the sirens of fire engines coming from all over the city. But Billy persevered with good humour.

Emotionalism was a predictable explanation for the impact of Billy Graham's preaching. Certainly, to hear thousands of voices singing 'Just as I am, without one plea' and to see hundreds of enquirers coming down quietly from all over the stands was unforgettably moving. But the power was in the clear proclamation of the gospel. The most remarkable evidence of this for me occurred in the following year, 1960, when I was appointed to Temora High School in country NSW.

In Temora, I threw myself into the life of St. Paul's, the local parish—youth club, Sunday School and parish council. I was unaware of a looming crisis. No church in Temora had supported the Billy Graham crusade. However, two laymen had organised a landline relay. The rector was vexed because a number of his congregation claimed to have come to Christ through Billy Graham's ministry—and that via a crackling landline in a cold Shire hall. A year later he was still ridiculing their experience and sought to counter Graham's 'The Bible says' with homilies that regularly questioned the reliability of Scripture.



BILLY GRAHAM STATISTICS

Statistics from the Billy Graham Sydney crusade were released this week. They reveal that among the 56,163 recorded decisions were those of 50 doctors of medicine, 28 lawyers, 150 entertainers, 300 business executives, nearly 500 teachers, 773 University students and 14,500 High School students.

Victor Harbour Times, Friday 5 June 1959.

As he could not be persuaded to respond more pastorally, I commenced a Bible Study with 27 people aged 17 to 79 years. We met every Friday night for almost two years in the home of the oldest member, Mrs Donaldson, until I left for CMS service in North Borneo. It was a wonderful fellowship, but it was grievous that we did not have the blessing of our parish priest. In fact, I was denounced from the pulpit before an astonished congregation and told to leave. I declined to do so and begged for an interview. He reluctantly agreed. I turned up with Bible and prayer book, but no meaningful discussion occurred. I was henceforth tolerated.

That was a traumatic experience for a 22-year-old, and it was perhaps strange that it did not alienate me from the Anglican Church. Rather I saw so many of God's people as sheep without a shepherd and had a growing sense of his call to the ministry of that Word that Billy Graham had faithfully proclaimed.

Trump makes us ask again

Rhys Bezzant

If evangelical votes have been credited as part of Donald Trump's victory over Hillary Clinton in the last US presidential election, does this damage the evangelical brand? If so, is it time to drop the moniker? Rhys Bezzant asks us to treasure the name 'evangelical' and its story. Rhys Bezzant is Dean of Missional Leadership and Lecturer in Christian Thought at Ridley College, Melbourne.

No doubt you are hearing this question too: why is it that so many evangelicals voted for Trump? Many used this term to describe their voting choices in the US, even if amongst the unsophisticated media pundits it meant simply 'white, non-Hispanic Protestants'.[1] Of course, if your politics don't align with Trump, you might be asking the question to distance yourself from those Christians who take on this label. There are however many who vote Republican, but have serious questions anyway about whether the evangelical brand is damaged. The populism of American presidential elections is often a bellwether for other countries too. Many nations around the world are experiencing either discomfort with, or disdain for, the international order, and are making their opinions known through the ballot box. Here is not the place to canvass the economic drivers which lead to different kinds of extreme politics, or to analyse the strategy of fear-mongering adopted by world leaders. But here is the place to ask the question whether the word 'evangelical' is past its use-by date. I say it is not.

Like any technical word, we need to get behind popular usage to find out what generated its adoption in the first place. Only then can we decide whether it is worth junking. And as an historian, I want to help us understand that technical words are valuable because they summarise a story, and alert us to debates and decisions, of which we are beneficiaries, even when the narrative has got confused in the meantime. The word 'evangelical' contains the beautiful resonance of gospel-centredness, and in the Reformation it meant something like Bible-focussed. However, with other descriptors arising to summarise Protestant convictions, like Lutheran or Reformed or Anglican, the word 'evangelical' in the eighteenth century was used again in a fresh way.

In the 1700s, when Enlightenment philosophers pushed God out of the world, and instead taught that human beings have the capacity to make sense of their experience without him, conservative Protestants began to call themselves 'evangelicals' because they wanted to remind their listeners that God was not distant but close, and that we can experience him being near through the ministry of the Holy Spirit. The language of regeneration became a hot-button issue. Not that the likes of John Wesley or George Whitefield or Jonathan Edwards had given up on the doctrine of justification by faith. Far from it. But they did turn up the volume on the language of being born again. Remember: many nominal Christians upheld justification in their statement of belief, but they didn't act like it was true in their heart. If you want a succinct definition of being evangelical, this is it: the protection and promotion of vital piety in the modern world. After the 1730s, being a conservative Protestant needed a modern theological defence. As Doug Sweeney so eloquently says, being an evangelical is being a conservative Protestant 'with an eighteenth-century twist.' If you prize vital piety, or a real experience of the Lord, or a personal faith, you can call yourself an evangelical.

President Donald Trump.

The world was changing dramatically around the time of the Great Awakening. Early capitalism was creating a new kind of economy, which was no longer defined by face-to-face encounters of producers and buyers. Now, more impersonally through money exchange and not bartering, a worldwide

commercial economy was born. Mobility of goods and of people was essential for this early globalisation to thrive. The postal service was created for carrying letters and parcels, and personal identity was no longer defined by your village or locality. No wonder itinerancy flourished, with preachers travelling throughout countries or across the sea to make converts. As offensive as it might have been for Whitefield to come to town and win souls to Christ without asking for permission from the settled pastor, it worked. And he used the postal system to encourage advance publicity, and reports of his work travelled around the world quickly. There was a new sense of space and time amongst citizens of the eighteenth century, and in the experience of the newly regenerate too. One of the most frequent words used to describe a conversion was 'enlargement.' When you are converted in the fields and not in a church building, God somehow seems bigger.

This openness to God's active presence in the world has made evangelicals more open to cultural movements of their own day, for good or for ill. Our evangelistic commitment means that we get close to the people we are serving—as the Apostle Paul suggests we should in 1 Corinthians 9—and our evangelistic flexibility enables us to apply new cultural means for traditional Christian ends. This sometimes gets us into hot water. We have felt the fear of the French Revolution and have grown more conservative. We have reacted to the teachings of Darwin and have instead pursued a vision for history that is not based on gradual evolution but rather apocalyptic intervention. We have brought flowers into church as a result of the Romantic movement, and we have savoured the imaginative beauty of C.S. Lewis's children's books which were composed in contrast to a world where technology seemed out of control. After World War II, we had to rethink what Christian civilisation might look like after old norms had come tumbling down.

One of the ways to respond to a post-Christian world is to engage through politics. This has been one of the chief strategies for evangelicals in the US, given Americans' commitment to participatory democracy and power pushed down to the most local level. They elect their police chief, whereas Australians do not. They have a nervousness about big government, going all the way back to Thomas Jefferson, whereas we recognise our need for governments to help a small population cultivate a big and sometimes brutal land. Christian witness in the realm of politics is certainly one possible path which evangelicals have taken, but our very own tradition alerts us to the fact that there are options too.

... please don't ignore our story, the history of one of the most powerful Christian movements in the modern world.

George Whitfield.

Evangelicals over the last three hundred years have reshaped nations through local revival tents, prayer meetings, petitions to abolish slavery, involvement in trade unions, establishing hospitals or orphanages, grassroots protests against racism, conventions in the mountains or missions at the beach. We have built publishing houses and published magazines. We have welcomed the nations who have come to us, as well as sending our own to serve our neighbours overseas. As we adapt yet again, this time to a post-Christian and yet strangely pre-Christian society, evangelicals will pursue vital piety in a number of different ways, through our speaking gifts and our service gifts, as Peter summarises so well (1 Peter 4:10-11). Our individual contexts will vary, and our responses will no doubt also be carefully calibrated to needs and opportunities.

But in all this, please don't ignore our story, the history of one of the most powerful Christian movements in the modern world. And to remind us of the story, let us keep using the word 'evangelical.' It may not be perfect, but if we did jettison it, we would still have to find another term to capture the wonderful ways that God has worked amongst conservative Protestants since the eighteenth century. We can hold this story of vital piety, or the power of godliness, in trust for the sake of the universal church. In fact, we must.

[1.] See John Fea, *Believe Me: The Evangelical Road to Donald Trump*, p. 193

Who's building your house?

The Parable of the two builders: Luke 6:46-49

Adrian Lane

Adrian Lane serves as the Victorian Regional Officer for Bush Church Aid.

46 'Why do you call me, "Lord, Lord," and do not do what I say? 47 As for everyone who comes to me and hears my words and puts them into practice, I will show you what they are like. 48 They are like a man building a house, who dug down deep and laid the foundation on rock. When the flood came, the torrent struck that house but could not shake it, because it was well built. 49 But the one who hears my words and does not put them into practice is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation. The moment the torrent struck that house, it collapsed and its destruction was complete.' Luke 6:46-49

Here we have two men, each building a house. Both are listening to Jesus' words. Both hear exactly the same words. Furthermore, both houses look exactly the same. Ultimately both houses face the same flood. One man's house isn't even shaken, while the other man's house is swept up in the torrent, collapses into wreckage and is carried off downstream, totally destroyed in one quick gulping swoop. Could this be us? I don't know if you noticed or not, but both men call on Jesus as Lord. One isn't some godless atheist or follower of another religion.

Why does one man's house stand, while the other's is smashed to smithereens? 'The answer is obvious,' you say. 'One man built his house on a foundation, while the other didn't.' Of course, but why? Is he just cheap? Not wanting to pay the price for a solid house? Is he lazy, cocky or cavalier? 'This'll do. A flood? The last one was 70 years ago!' Or perhaps that's where most people are building their houses? 'Everybody else is doing it this way' No doubt the river flats look attractive and comfortable, with plenty of grass and trees.

'Get real,' you say. 'You need a house with a proper foundation.' Why would anybody build a house without a proper foundation? But we do! We're doing it all the time. I'm reminded of those who want sermons to be short. I'm reminded of bishops who ordain clergy without proper training; of students who want to cut corners in their studies, to get through college in a few less years. I'm reminded of ministers who want to build churches on the back of a cool website, or new branding, without the challenge of sacrificial repentance as people turn from their old ways of living for their passions to living holy lives for the glory of God.

So let's build with a foundation. What's my builder going to say? 'Good. But there's a few issues we need to talk about.' My heart sinks—I was all excited! All ready to go! 'The first issue is cost. We'll first have to dig down to the rock and anchor the structure. That means earthmovers and diamond drillers, and they don't come cheap these days, what with all the health and safety. And even then there's always the chance of an injury. And of course, I can't guarantee the cost—never know what we might find. May end up being a bit more expensive than you'd first imagined. Then there's the time. It'll take a while. Actually, you won't see much for a while. Getting all those foundations in, all the pipes and lines. The wife and kids will probably get a bit stroppy waiting. "Do we need all this, Dad? Joey's house didn't take this long!"'

In the end, it's going to look the same as if I'd built on the flats. And I've got a lot less dough and time left over. In fact, I haven't got any dough or time left over—it's taken all my dough and time. But this is the man who hears Jesus' words and puts them into practice. He's in it for the long haul. Like those stone homesteads out in Western Victoria built high above the river. They've lasted so long they're now classified, listed, for good. The tall trees all around them all tell the same story: we've been here for generations, we've survived. No, more than that, we've prospered.

One thing worth noting here is the power of Jesus' words. They will equip the listener to withstand a mighty flood. We're not talking about military, political or economic power here. We're talking about the power of words. This is an extraordinary claim by Jesus: that his words, when acted upon, will save from the coming flood.

So this parable is a great call to action—to put into practice Jesus' words. But you can't put into practice words you haven't heard. So this parable is also a great call to listening: careful, eager, undistracted listening. Hungry listening. Is your listening hungry? Are you hungry for Jesus' words? Or have you heard them all before? And you're only thinking of the shopping list of things you need to do for the rest of the day. And of course, you can't have listening without someone speaking, teaching, declaring the words of Jesus. So obviously this parable is a great call to preaching. How much speaking, teaching, preaching goes on in your church, in your Bible Study, in your family or household, to help people hear the words of Jesus and put them into practice?

Just before we conclude, we should check what those words are. Perhaps you noticed that this parable comes at the climax of an amazing sermon. 'Love your enemies…Do good to those who hate you…Bless those who curse you…Pray for those who mistreat you…Do not judge…Forgive…' And there are plenty of words to come: 'Hate your father and mother…Stay with the wife of your youth…Take up your cross…'. It's impossible!

Indeed, we can't hear the words of Jesus and put them into practice. *On our own.* When we do try, in our own strength, it only leads to a focus on ourselves. It only leads to pride and self-righteousness. Or despair. Cry unto God! Plead with him, that by his Spirit he may have mercy on you and transform you. Plead with him, that by his Spirit, he will enable you to listen and put his words into practice. And know this: if you have asked the Lord to build your house, it will stand. Do not fear. When the flood comes, as it surely will—there will be a judgement day—the house built by the Lord will stand. Indeed, only those houses built by the Lord will stand. So, who's building your house?

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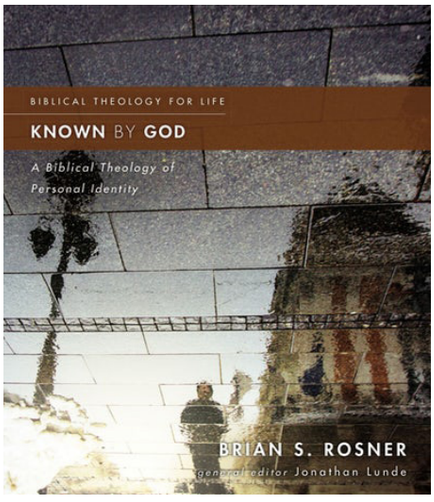


Known by God

A Biblical Theology of Personal Identity

Brian Rosner, Zondervan, 2017.

This remarkable book combines Biblical truth, personal honesty, theological reflection, Biblical theology, contemporary relevance, and pastoral usefulness! Brian Rosner points out that though 'self-knowledge' is frequently recommended, being known by others is vital for human life, and being known by God is of central importance. And again, while we might rightly focus on 'knowing God', the deeper truth is that God knows us.

He shows us the ways in which we naturally define and understand ourselves, and then shows us what the Bible teaches about human identity. Next, he unpacks the rich Biblical theme of being known by God in the Old Testament and in the New Testament. This includes belonging to God, being chosen by God, being a child of God and being remembered by God. It also includes being known by Christ, being known by God in Christ, and recognising our family likeness to God and to Christ. He then explores the themes of shared memory and defining destiny, as we are shaped by the incarnation, death and resurrection of Christ, and await our resurrection bodies. Rosner then reflects on how being known by God shapes our lives in humility, comfort, direction and purpose. The book concludes with 8 things we should do if we want to know ourselves as we are known by God.

Known by God is based on a simple Biblical truth, and shows us its richness, diversity, and power. It provides deep insights into many Bible passages, and is profoundly personal and pastoral. Its intellectual and academic integrity is communicated in a very accessible way, and it is a joy to read. It is so helpful to see that being known by other people is such a precious experience, and also so good to be reminded that as we are known by God we are not just individuals, but part of his family. Very good!

I have read the book three times, and found it very stimulating and encouraging. It prompted some more ideas. These are not criticisms of the book, but my own reflections on continuing the trajectory of the book.

The eight things we should do if we want to know ourselves as we are known by God are:

1. Get baptized;
2. Attend family gatherings;
3. Read and hear the Bible;
4. Pray to our heavenly Father;
5. Sing the faith;
6. Say the creed;
7. Take communion; and
8. Live the gospel [pp. 246-60].

I agree with all of these, and do them! I also find it helpful to do things that are in the world as well as those in the church. So I know myself to be known by God in the beauty and power and diversity of creation and nature; in the joys and frustrations of daily work; in the joys and sorrows of my body; in the gifts of God seen in the lives of unbelievers; in music and the arts and architecture; in machines; and in small acts of kindness in daily life. I know myself to be known by God in his world, as well as in his church family.

The book helpfully focuses on the comfort and joy of being known by God, and it rightly also shows us some of the consequent challenges to our natural ways of thinking and behaving. However there is one aspect of being known by God which does not receive much attention, but which is of vital importance to me. It is that God also knows the secrets of our hearts and lives, he knows our sins and our secret sins. 'Almighty God, unto whom all hearts be open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid'. And on the last day, on the day of judgement, these secrets will be revealed. For example,

'Be on your guard against the yeast of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy. There is nothing concealed that will not be disclosed, or hidden that will not be made known. What you have said in the dark will be heard in the daylight, and what you have whispered in the ear in the inner rooms will be proclaimed from the roofs' Luke 12:1-3.

'But I tell you that everyone will have to give account on the day of judgement for every empty word they have spoken. For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned' Matthew 12:36-37.

'For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ. If anyone builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, their work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will

bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each person's work' 1 Corinthians 3:11-13. See also 2 Corinthians 5:10.

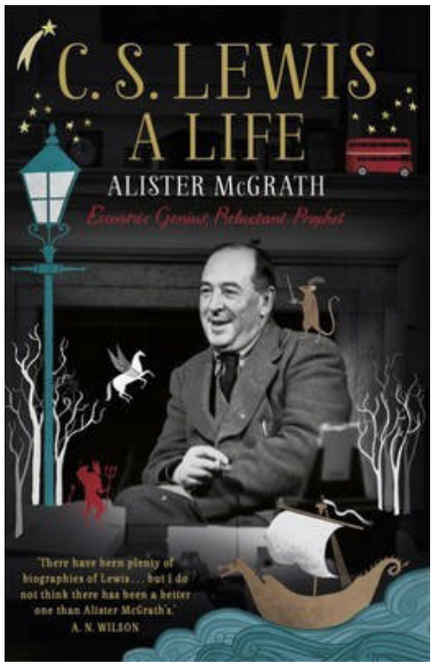
'For we must all appear before the judgement seat of Christ, so that each of us may receive what is due us for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad' 2 Corinthians 5:10.

'Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it … And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books' Revelation 20:11,12.

There are some sins which attract me so powerfully, that it is only the fear of God that stops me. The only cure for hypocrisy is the fear of the final judgement. For me, loving God and wanting to please him is not enough. I need to fear him as judge, as well as trusting him as saviour. This, for me, complements the insights of Rosner's wonderful and generous book.

Peter Adam, Vic.

(This review first appeared on The Gospel Coalition Australia website)



C.S. Lewis

A Life: Eccentric Genius, Reluctant Prophet
Alister McGrath, Hodder & Stoughton, 2013

I confess: I have never been a big fan of C. S. Lewis. My early attempts at reading his apologetic writings foundered on the register of his prose. In my undergraduate evangelism, I was trying to present the truths of Christian faith in a vernacular that could easily be understood. Lewis seemed to move in a different direction. So I was taken aback then when I lived in a graduate student dormitory at Yale and got to know a non-Christian friend who voraciously read anything by Lewis that I could lay my hands on. The time had now come to get serious with the Apostle to the Imagination.

So I read the biography of Lewis by Alister McGrath, called *C. S. Lewis: A Life*, published by Hodder & Stoughton in 2013. Though intimidating by its size, I discovered that its thick pages, frequent photos, and penetrating analysis of Lewis's life and times made it a much easier read than I anticipated. In fact, McGrath has inspired me to dig deeper. It takes the normal shape of a chronicle, starting with Lewis's birth in 1898 and early life in Northern Ireland, and ending with Lewis's death in November 1963, the same day on which JFK was assassinated. McGrath alerts us to the fact that Lewis disengaged from Irish politics in the 1920s when his identity was increasingly English. His service in World War I and call to explain Christian faith on the BBC during the darkest days of World War II portray him not as an absent-minded professor but as profoundly immersed in the vicissitudes of the life of the nation.

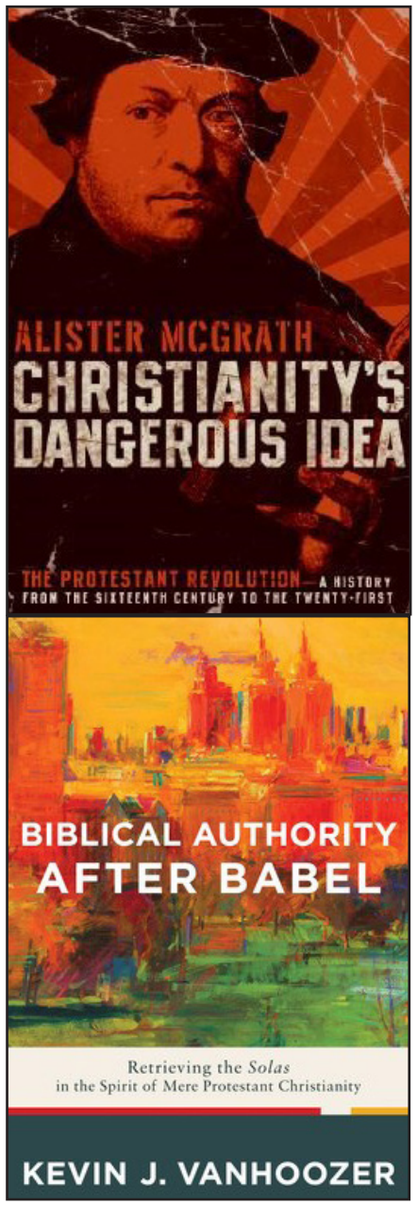
There is also here no avoidance of the bizarre relationship which Lewis enjoyed with Mrs Moore, nor of the strange way that his later marriage to Joy Davidman began: after the ceremony, Lewis headed back to Cambridge and Davidman to their home in Oxford. It appears to have begun as a relationship of convenience for an American, whose Communist leanings closed off job prospects at home. McGrath quotes Jacob: Lewis was 'an American divorcée's sugar daddy' (p. 331). Joy's literary inclinations however gave Lewis much stimulation and encouragement in his writing in the last years of his life, and Lewis's account of Joy's untimely death remain some of the most moving in twentieth century literature.

What McGrath does so well is take a break from the narrative from time to time to insert chapters on particular writings of Lewis. There is analysis of Lewis's philosophy, his approach to apologetics, and most interesting of all reflection on Lewis's creative pieces. I loved reading about how the Narnia series was composed, and how it doesn't so much establish one on one correspondences with our world, as an allegory might, but intends rather to provoke us to ask which story about Narnia is true, the interpretation of the Witch or of the beavers. We have a role to play in working out the meaning of it all.

Fascinating was the insight that perhaps Lewis sets up the whole seven books of the series each to represent a planet, with its own distinctive contribution to make, without instructing us to read the seven in a particular order. Drawing on medieval precedents—Lewis was after all a professor of medieval literature in Cambridge—he could create a deep unity in the chronicles while giving a distinct feel or atmosphere to each part. These books don't just give us apt quotations for sermons, but build an imaginative yet Christian world to inhabit, even if only temporarily.

Perhaps I shouldn't have been surprised by the joy I discovered in reading this biography of one of the twentieth century's great apologists. I am a reluctant reader no longer. Lewis helps us live in a world dominated by technological capacity for evil by nurturing the power of the imagination, and by teaching us of the possibility of mere Christianity, which points us to Jesus, not just the institution of the church.

Rhys Bezzant, Vic.



Christianity's Dangerous Idea:

The Protestant Revolution—A History from the Sixteenth Century to the Twenty-First
Alister E. McGrath, Harper One, 2007

Biblical Authority After Babel

Retrieving the Solas in the Spirit of Mere Protestant Christianity
Kevin J. Vanhoozer, Grand Rapids, Brazos, 2016

These are two books which should be read together. First, McGrath: *Christianity's Dangerous Idea* is a large book and a big read, but, for anyone interested in the history of non-Catholic Christianity it is profoundly interesting. McGrath is a meticulous scholar and his research has taken him all over the world. It is a book of scholarship but not written for scholars but rather an attempt to identify the inner principles and dynamic that have driven the vast array of non-Catholic ministries since the Reformation.

The dangerous new idea is of course the principle that all Christians have the right to interpret the Bible for themselves. This was the idea that drove first Luther in Germany, then Tyndale in England to translate the Latin Vulgate version of the Bible into German and English respectively. But who now had the authority to interpret the Scripture as they read it their own language and who had authority to define the faith of the church? Institutions or individuals? Who has the right to interpret its foundational document, the Bible? Uncharted and dangerous waters lay ahead.

McGrath's model for the growth of Protestantism is a biological one. He sees Protestantism as a micro-organism, 'capable of rapid mutation and adaptation in response to changing environments, while still maintaining continuity with its earlier forms.' (p4) While no model is perfect, 'mutation' seems an apt description. The pre-Reformation church already had an appetite for reform and it is 'increasingly clear that attempts to depict the late mediaeval church as morally and theologically corrupt, unpopular, and in near-terminal decline cannot be sustained on the basis of the evidence available.' (p8). McGrath establishes early in his narrative that the Reformation itself was no straight-line historical process. The Benedictine priest Zwingli, captivated by the simplicity and vitality of the apostolic age, came to Zurich in East Switzerland in 1519 to commence a new and liberating way of reading the Bible directly without reference to papal or churchly authorities. He seems not to have even heard of Luther at this time. Calvin's situation in France, then Geneva was different again. He was first a scholar and second a clear-headed leader and organiser. He had no particular interest in Luther's powerful mantra of 'justification by faith alone'. On the more radical side Anabaptists of various kinds were seeking a far more thoroughgoing local detachment from a traditional top down authoritarian structure of church leadership. Thus Protestantism never has had a singly unifying theology or leadership other than being against Roman Catholicism. In the 21st century, as theologians and church leaders from Catholic and other denominations have drawn closer together, Protestantism has had to look elsewhere to a degree for something to be against.

Some of the most useful material covered by McGrath is his account of the ultimate failure of the English Puritan rebellion against Anglicanism followed by the foundations of American Protestantism; the debates within Protestantism about predestination and Arminianism; the impact of Protestantism on culture including the development of the Arts and Sport; and Protestantism's 19th century missionary explosion and the 20th century recognition of the need for indigenisation.

McGrath's rationale for a new history of Protestantism is based on radical developments in Protestantism following the cataclysm of two world wars in the 20th century. 'Protestantism itself has changed, decisively and possibly irreversibly, in the last fifty years, in ways that would have astonished an earlier generation of scholars and historians.' (p. 9) McGrath identifies in particular, the rise of Pentecostalism within Protestantism. Nigeria alone, today boasts more Protestant believers than the combined total of Protestants in the USA, Britain, Canada, Australia and New Zealand combined. Thus the centre of Protestantism has shifted to the South with over 500 million adherents in Asia, Africa and Latin America. When the Pentecostal phenomenon is combined with the non-denominational megachurch movement sweeping through Western Protestantism and the subsequent decline and struggle of traditional authoritarian based denominational structures, the arrival of

a rejuvenated and aggressive Islam, and the constant incoming tide of political secularism in the West there is certainly a place for a new history of Protestantism.

McGrath has produced an exciting book that in the end encourages rather than dismays. He cannot, even in 500 pages, cover everything. One looks in vain for references to P. T. Forsyth, Francis Schaeffer and L'Abri, Ridley and Moore Colleges, the Keswick movement, Leon Morris and the mid-20th century explosion of brilliant Biblical commentaries, James Barr's critique of fundamentalism, the rise and fall of evangelical television spruikers/Crystal Cathedral etc, the 20th century assault on secular philosophy (Alvin Plantinga, Roger Scruton, Herman Dooyeweerd and Nancey Murphy et al), Hillsong, the Stendhal/ Sanders/ Crossan/ Borg/ Wright debate about 1st century Judaism and Paul to name a few. But this is nit-picking. McGrath's book is worth reading for the vast reference list alone.

Biblical Authority After Babel

Kevin J. Vanhoozer is research professor of systematic theology at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in the USA. He writes prolifically from a reformed position but with a broad sweep covering theologies, theologians and literature from many fields and approaches. His general editorship of *Dictionary for Theological Interpretation of the Bible* is an impressive gift to theological scholarship. *Biblical Authority After Babel* obviously takes its title from the Genesis 11 story of the Tower of Babel built by mankind to reach up to God. God was not pleased with their arrogance and came down and confused their languages so that they could not complete the tower.

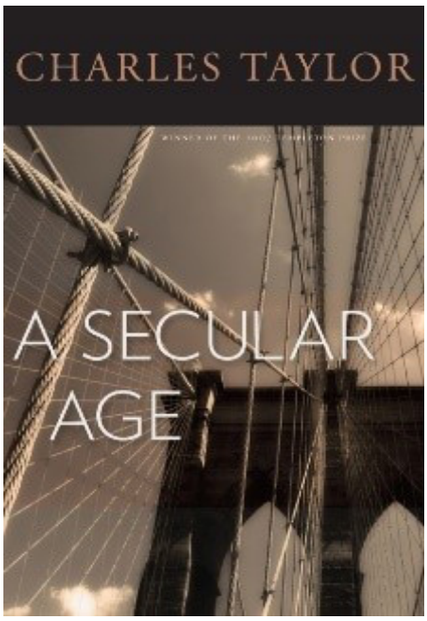
Vanhoozer is responding particularly to Alister McGrath's claim in his recent book *Christianity's Dangerous Idea* that the Protestant Reformation's emphasis on the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers led directly to the notion that every Christian has the right and authority in the Spirit to interpret the Bible for themselves. Thus according to one way of reading McGrath, the Reformation set loose interpretive anarchy upon the world, a Babel of scepticism and schism which divides, confuses and continually multiplies into the many thousands of denominations and Protestant ideologies in the world today. At the same time Vanhoozer takes issue with other historians who argue that Protestantism, by its removal of any magisterial shared framework for the integration of knowledge, has been responsible for the gradual secularisation of the modern world—see, for example, Brad Gregory's *The Unintended Reformation: How a Religious Revolution Secularised Society.*

Vanhoozer states early on that 'there is no merit in giving pat answers to complex questions' (p9), and this book is certainly no easy read due both to Vanhoozer's carefully worded and detailed writing but also to the double layered layout of the book found in two over-arching themes. The first is Vanhoozer's attempt to use retrieval theology to analyse again the fundamental theology and thinking of the 16th century Reformation. Retrieval theology 'is the name for a mode or style of theological discernment that looks back in order to look forward' (p23). What Vanhoozer seeks to retrieve are the four classic Reformation *Solas* and their true intention and meaning. *Sola* is the Latin for 'alone' and Vanhoozer deals with grace alone, faith alone, Scripture alone and in Christ alone. He adds his own fifth *sola*—for the glory of God alone. He has a final chapter in which he attempts to synchronise Protestantism with Evangelicalism and in a sense to retrieve the term Evangelicalism, a term increasingly confused and under fire.

That would be meat enough for one book, but on top of this significant retrieval analysis Vanhoozer details and defends his version of 'the interpretative practice of 'mere' Protestant Christians' (p62), channelling C. S. Lewis at this point—as Lewis himself channelled Richard Baxter, the 17th century Puritan pastor and scholar. To do this, Vanhoozer propounds 20 theses throughout the book to delineate this Protestant interpretative practice. Sometimes these use philosophical/theological terms—such as *material principle, formal principle, the triune economy of light* and so on—which are not always clearly enunciated (to me anyway). The result of these two over-arching themes is that the reader is divided between sorting out the five *solas* at the same time as getting a handle on the twenty theses of Protestant interpretative practice and it takes care and patience to push through to the finish line.

In spite of these difficulties, *Biblical Authority after Babel* is a far-reaching and worthwhile read and indeed it provides a program for Protestants and Evangelicals to understand what they have in common and to direct their energies towards the unities of Protestant belief and practice rather than concentrating on the relatively minor issues that divide some Protestant believers. On the other hand Vanhoozer has stayed away from any actual issues in this lengthy discussion choosing rather to focus on a theoretical way forward. Much as I admire his attempt it seems to me that the book would have been stronger with at least a chapter on the hard issues. Aside from one indeterminate footnote he has avoided the same-sex attraction issue which—in the Anglican Church at least—has already caused substantial division and heartache and won't be going away any time soon. Equally the coherent and jaunty writing and podcasting output of Rob Bell's influential body of work has a vast worldwide following. In calling for a radically different approach to many conservative doctrines, Bell has attracted the ire of the likes of John Piper. Vanhoozer's model may find a way to deal with issues like these two but it would have been useful to have a chapter with attempts at a practical way forward. Vanhoozer's very impressive reading guide alone is one major value of the book. There is enough food for thought here for a solid one-year course in Biblical and Theological hermeneutics. An impressive and thoughtful book but only for those who are committed to theological analysis and prepared to stay the distance.

Richard Prideaux, Vic.



A Secular Age

Charles Taylor, Harvard University Press, 2007

It took me a couple of years to work slowly through Charles Taylor's massive tome, *A Secular Age*, before finally finishing it in 2011, but I thoroughly enjoyed the journey. It was like a good fruit cake; eaten in small slices (mostly) but each piece rich and delicious. This will be not so much a review as an impression: the book is 776 pages long, with another 75 pages of notes at the end. Taylor is Canadian, now Professor Emeritus of Philosophy at McGill University in Montreal after a long and distinguished career as a philosopher. He is also a believing Roman Catholic.

Taylor opens his book with the question, 'What does it mean to say we live in a secular age?' He is not going to give the kind of answer that some give – that is that to live in a secular age is to live in an age which has (rightly) outgrown religious belief and where more and more people have been freed (and will be freed) to live without the distortions that such illusions foist on us. He has the eyes to see that things are more complex than that.

Taylor begins by defining three senses of 'secularity': firstly the absence of religion and religious foundations from society's political structures and spheres of shared activity; secondly the declension of religious belief and practice in the population, and thirdly, a set of conditions for belief which mean that believers experience religious faith not as an obvious and axiomatic part of life, but as one possibility amongst others; perhaps as a minority view in a society more likely to think of religious faith as implausible and inconceivable. It is this third sense of secularity which Taylor proposes to examine. In particular he wants to tell the story of how Western culture got from a situation where it was 'virtually impossible not to believe in God', to a situation where not believing in God is 'easy, even inescapable' (p 25).

Another foundation Taylor lays in the introduction is his discussion of what is 'religious' and what is 'unbelieving'. Taylor is interested in where one looks for 'fullness', that is the full, rich, meaningful, admirable, empowering, joyful mode of life. Believers live, suggests Taylor, thinking of this place of fullness as located ultimately beyond this world, and the flourishing that is possible for us within our ordinary lives. Ultimately, reaching fullness is a matter of undergoing a transformation that opens us to something transcendent (e.g. God). On the other hand, unbelievers live thinking of the place of fullness as immanent within the conditions of our human lives and what ordinary flourishing we can enjoy. Living for something beyond our present life will only be to the detriment of our actual experience of fullness.

Setting up the distinction in this way does capture something deep about families of world views and approaches to life and is a helpful way to approach the matter quite generally. Taylor does not leave things there, however. His book is an exploration of the exploding gamut of believing and unbelieving postions that have arisen over the last five centuries, and the way these react to and upon one another to produce an even more complex array of moral and spiritual outlooks. Ultimately, suggests Taylor, this nova of new spiritual options underlies secularity as we experience it today. Whatever we believe, we are aware of others who believe differently—our position is just one option amongst many, and everyone's position is cross-pressured and made more fragile by the existence of the other options. This does not mean that everyone feels uncertain about their world view, but it does mean that at least some feel the pull and pressure of other positions, and can find them plausible and attractive, without adopting them (cross-pressure). It also means that we may not share the spiritual outlook of our parents or children or our siblings. (Mutual fragilisation—eg my family: my dad professes atheism, I am a Christian, my mother and one brother have become Christians since I have. Another brother would be something else again, I suspect. In another age/place, family and culture would almost certainly determine religious outlook. Not in our secular age.)

Taylor describes is book not as a continuous story and argument, but rather as 'a series of interlocking essays, which shed light on each other' (p ix). These sets of essays do move broadly forward through an historical progression, providing a loose narrative with many dimensions, beginning at 1500 C.E (!) or so and ending in the present. I cannot now come even close to summarising the various lines of argument and topics of definition and discussion that Taylor unfolds. I can say that I found just about every page and every discussion absorbing, insightful and instructive. His tone is sympathetic, his writing style is easy and conversational, his thinking is broad and deep. His discussion of the nature of religion and unbelief, of the porous self and the enchanted world giving way to the buffered self and the disenchanted world, of the modern moral order and modern social imaginaries is all rich and fascinating, and this main line of the story has plenty of fascinating side discussions about the way we think of and experience time and eternity, the nature of modern art and music, even extended discussions in later chapters of points of Christian doctrine such as the atonement and issues which surround it, or of modern atheism. As one reviewer put it, the book is 'an education in itself' (David Martin, quoted on the dust jacket), and thus even to outline and discuss the main lines of argument would take some doing.

Instead I will mention a few more of the themes which impressed themselves on me. One important thesis is that modern secularity has been constructed via a series of historically contingent religious, intellectual and cultural moves, rather than the alternative kind of view (which Taylor calls a 'subtraction story'), that modern secularity is rather the result of stripping away various wrong (religious) ideas about the human person and the cosmos in order

to uncover the true (modern, secular) sense of the human self, society and the universe. It is important to Taylor to challenge the idea that our modern, secular condition is that we have seen through to the self-evident truths about who we are and how we are related as individuals and societies, in contrast to our unenlightened forbears who believed in the Great Chain of Being, or that goals beyond ordinary human flourishing might direct us towards true fullness of life. Taylor wants to tell the story of how the outlook that seems self-evident to us was constructed through a contingent historical process.

Part 1 is entitled The Work of Reform. Taylor uses the term Reform to refer to one of the great historical and cultural forces that has shaped the western outlook, the great, multifaceted and ongoing project to make over the whole of society so that it conforms to the higher standards of an ideal whose realisation lies in the future, rather than seeing the present order as something not needing to be 'made over', but to be received and participated in as it is. The roots of Reform lie in the Middle Ages, and work themselves out in the Reformation(s) and Counter-Reformation within Christendom, but Reform spills out beyond Christianity to produce the ongoing reform movements of the present day, such as civil rights, feminism, or the normalisation of homosexuality.

He begins by seeking to help us into the sense of self and the cosmos that was shared by Europeans around the beginning of the sixteenth century. He draws the reader into imagining a quite foreign conception of the human self—a porous self, susceptible to penetration by external forces and agencies, which were features of an enchanted world. This was also a society ordered by God, making the desire for reform rather dubious from one point of view. And yet the Christian gospel contains the dynamic of Reform, as it calls people to turn away from the world and towards the kingdom of God, whose transforming fullness is yet to be consummated in history. Hence, in various ways from the middle ages, the church tried to mobilise ordinary Christians to engage in the Christian life in a more disciplined and radical way. From a political point of view, a disciplined society became desirable because it was more productive and could field more effective armies.

Part 2 of the Book is called The Turning Point. As Taylor see it that turning point for the western story is the emergence of an exclusive humanism (exclusive of God, that is) as a viable alternative to Christian orthodoxy for more than a very few. Taylor argues that the efforts within Christendom towards reform and discipline transformed the sense of self and its relation to the world that we share. We became buffered, disciplined selves in a disenchanted world, reimagined as a world created and beneficently ordered by God so that we humans enjoy happiness and flourishing as we engage in mutual service. Thus a providential deism emerged, that allowed the possibility of sidelining God as inessential to the achievement happiness and flourishing. With God sidelined, it could simply be that humans enjoy happiness and flourishing as we engage in mutually beneficial service. And this new exclusive humanism was able to win wider allegiance than the ancient exclusive humanisms (Lucretius and Epicureus) because it carried over, in a sense of universal benevolence, a trace of the Christian agape (love). Thus in place of the grace of God putting the love of our neighbour into our hearts we may rely upon the benevolence within our own nature, and the guidance of our reason, to impel us to mutual service.

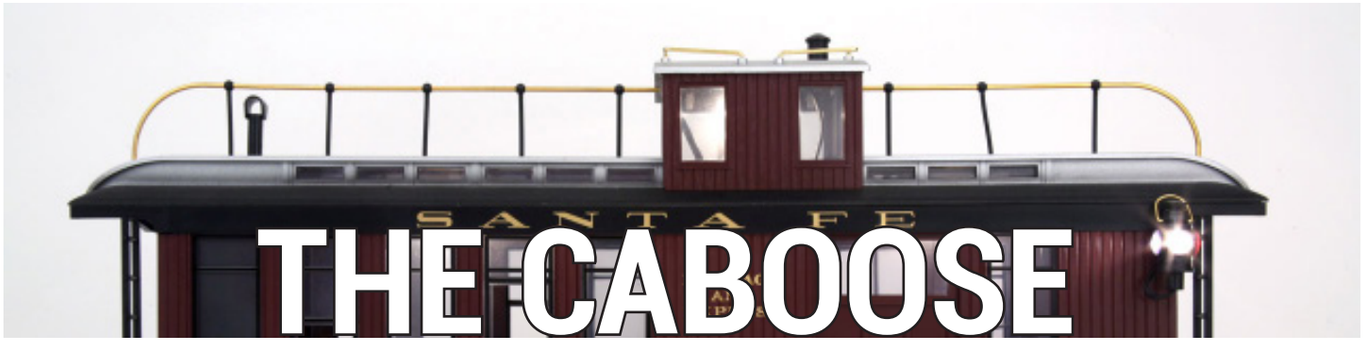
As this exclusive humanism became a viable option to Christianity in the west, it provoked many reactions, both believing and unbelieving, giving rise to new spiritual options. Unbelieving anti-humanisms arise (quintessentially Nietzsche, but many others too), as well as believing reactions that are not a return to orthodox Christianity (many Romantics). This Taylor calls the is the Nova Effect, and Part 3 of the book tells that part of the story, which covers the resurgence of piety that the nineteenth century saw with, e.g. the Evangelical Movement, as well as the renewed turning to unbelief in that century, which Taylor argues was deeper and more deeply anchored in a universe that was experienced very differently because of the reimagining of the old cosmos of Christendom.

The last stage of the story is the way that the pluralisation of religious options that were available to the elite became the spiritual condition of the whole society. In Part 4, Narratives of Secularization, Taylor explores the revolution that we have been living through since the 1960s, which has seen dramatic decline in religious adherence in terms of church going and religion in public life in many places. He dubs the last 200 years as the Age of Mobilisation, where the great social changes wrought as modernity arose through revolutionary industrialisation, urbanisation, specialisation etc compelled new religious forms, practices and polities to be envisaged and created. The Methodist movement is an important example. These religious forms were successful until the Age of Authenticity began to flower in the 1960s. In the Age of Authenticity, individual expressivism reigns, and insight and feeling by and for each individual are what counts. Being mobilised to conform to a group culture in a church and to submit to the authority of a community run counter to the spirit of this new age, and Christians find it hard to address people with this outlook of individual expressivism.

Part V of the book is a long meditation aptly entitled Conditions of Belief. I found this to be the most abstract and difficult part of the book (in patches), but fascinating nonetheless. Taylor traces out the interaction between three poles or camps of belief—believers, humanist unbelievers and anti-humanist unbelievers, and argues that far from any one camp having all their problems solved, they all wrestle with the same dilemmas, favouring different ways of seeking their resolution. Taylor wants to promote mutual understanding and sympathy in the midst of some angry and shortsighted polemics that go on in our culture. He also engages more and more with his own religious position, which I might guess could reasonably be approximated by the label 'liberal Roman Catholic', addressing his readers more and more from this perspective.

As you can see, there's a lot going on in this book and I'm not really in a position to offer him a lot of advice about all the things he's missed and the ways he could make the book better. The book contains the reflection of a lifetime. So I'll just say that I found his book a great companion for those couple of years it was my companion, and feel like it could be one of those books worth reading again down the track. He's down on Calvin and substitutionary atonement (which I'm not), but I wasn't reading him for theology I agreed with completely. I'm interested in the sociology of secularisation, and this is a very intellectual tour of secularisation—thinkers and ideas more than societies and cultures. But that's ok—I love intellectual history. I recommend this book to all and sundry. I'm sure you'll learn something. I learned plenty.

Ben Underwood, WA



Servant of the Church of God:
Donald William Bradley Robinson, 1922–2018

A series of highlights from the full tribute by Rory Shiner which you can read online at au.thegospelcoalition.org

Early on Friday 7 September one of Australia's most brilliant biblical scholars and influential church leaders went to be with the Lord whom he loved and so faithfully served. If you are an Australian evangelical, you owe him a great debt, even if you've never heard of him. His name was Donald William Bradley Robinson. He was 95 years old.

Robinson described 1947 as "the summer of his life". He travelled by boat to San Francisco, then overland to Chicago and then up to Toronto. His final destination was Boston, where he was a student representative of the International Leaders Conference of the International Fellowship of Evangelical Students at Harvard University—the conference that launched the modern form of the IFES. The meetings in Boston were chaired by the prominent Welsh preacher Martyn Lloyd-Jones, who apparently complained at the lack of a "decent cup of tea, which always makes a situation more civilised." (Feel free to take a moment to enjoy the thought of a Brit complaining about tea in Boston). It was at this meeting that the influential IFES doctrinal basis was hammered out.

Robinson was very deliberate in going to Cambridge in order to access the vibrant biblical scholarship being produced there. This is an interesting point of contrast with British evangelicalism. At the time, many British evangelicals went to Cambridge in spite of the Divinity faculty; Robinson went because of it. For Robinson, scholars such as C. H. Dodd and C. F. D. Moule were people with whom conservative evangelicals could have a fruitful and productive engagement.

Donald and Marie married back in Australia on 30 July 1949. He returned with her to Cambridge where Robinson completed his studies. They came back to Australia in 1950. They had four children, Martin, Anne, Mark and Peter. Martin was born in the UK, the rest in Australia.

After ordination and two curacies, Robinson began what was to be the largest segment of his career—teaching on the faculty of Moore College. It was there, where Robinson served as lecturer and then vice-principal, that Robinson exercised his most lasting influence. Robinson introduced the College to the discipline of understanding the Bible on its own terms, seeking to uncover how the Old Testament and New Testament relate themselves to each other. By this teaching he ignited, for example, the imagination of Graeme Goldsworthy to what we now call 'biblical theology".

Along with D. B. Knox, Robinson also made a significant contribution to the topic of ecclesiology. This project, conducted in conversation with wider developments in scholarship, theology and church life, led to an emphasis on the centrality and spiritual prestige of the local gathered church. It is profound work, which has influenced and been developed by scholars such as Robert Banks, Peter O'Brien and William Dumbrell, as well as a younger generation including Lionel Windsor and Chase Kuhn.

On 1 April 1982, Bishop Donald Robinson was elected Archbishop of Sydney. The pace of life was very demanding. Extensive travel, an ambitious programme for new churches in Sydney's west, and the regular run of an archbishop's duties were supplemented by several significant controversies. He opposed the move toward the ordination of women to the priesthood in the Anglican Church of Australia, arguing that it would represent a fundamental breach with apostolic instruction. And he opposed the loosening of traditional Anglican forms of worship and patterns of leadership within the Diocese of Sydney.

Robinson retired in 1992 and he resumed teaching at Moore College, a role he continued in until 2002. Countless scholarly works, from Peter Bolt, John Painter, Robert Banks and many others continue to grapple with and extend his biblical thought. Early in the morning of Friday, 7 September 2018, he went to be with the Lord. We owe him more than we can tell.

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