



EFAC AUSTRALIA

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# Speaking of the future

What happened at the AFC shouldn't stay at the AFC.

**T**his issue of *Essentials* seeks to capture some of the central themes of the recent Anglican Future Conference (AFC) held in Melbourne in March. We include here as feature articles edited versions of talks given at the AFC by Stephen Hale and Peter Adam. These two pieces give a sense of the burden of the conference: a concern for Anglican effectiveness in engaging with our society in evangelism, coupled with an interest in the ways that Australian Anglicans might imagine better alternatives to our current methods and structures, then plan humbly and change flexibly to meet the challenges of this historical moment. The decline of churches and the rise of a post-Christian West form a sombre backdrop in these articles. Stephen and Peter encourage us to see in the foreground the bright possibility of ministering the old gospel through changed or new means. Stephen suggests some practical and proximate ways ahead, and Peter digs into history to remind us that Anglicanism is always transitional: it has changed radically and can change again to overcome weaknesses and seize opportunities. Peter especially encourages us to trust that God will honour his Word, save his people and fulfill his ancient promises whatever the future holds.

I am pleased that we have a series of short reflections on the conference by some of those who were there. Their places of life and ministry vary widely, and they all offer distinctive observations arising from the conference. They remind us of the variety of delegates who were at the conference and the range of concerns which evangelical Anglicans have about our Anglican present and future.

The conference was jointly hosted by EFAC Australia and The Fellowship of Confessing Anglicans (FCA) Australia, and first up in this issue we debrief the AFC in an interview with conference ringmasters Stephen Hale (EFAC Chair) and Richard Condie (FCA Chair). They pack a lot of comment into a small space, and appeal to us to continue to talk and think together, wherever we are, about our Anglican future.

To this end, *Essentials* intends to publish more material from the conference in forthcoming issues, and we hope that in these pages you might find a place where the conversation about these matters continues in an insightful, useful and encouraging way, galvanising our faithful, hopeful, joyful and (may it please God) indomitable service of the one for whom we live, and who lives and works in us, Jesus our Lord and Saviour.

P.S. Don't miss Kanishka's Bible study from 2 Peter 1, and his moving account of the singular protest against Nazi persecution of Jews led by Yorta Yorta man William Cooper in 1941. You'll find it at the back, in The Caboose.

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# The AFC Debrief

In the wash up from the Anglican Future Conference held in Melbourne and jointly hosted by EFAC Australia and The Fellowship of Confessing Anglicans Australia, *Essentials* quizzed conference maestros Stephen Hale and Richard Condie about how the conference went and what it means for the future.



Richard Condie is the Chair of the Anglican Future Conference and vicar of St Jude's Carlton, Vic.



Stephen Hale is Chair of EFAC Australia and is the lead minister of the St Hilary's network in Kew and North Balwyn Vic.

**Ess:** What were your best hopes and worst fears for the Anglican Future Conference as it began?

**SH:** I hoped that it would be a significant national gathering that would offer hope and renewed commitment to mission and ministry in and through the Anglican Church. By God's grace we got there! There was an inherent tension between the twin partners in making the Conference happen. EFAC is an evangelical fellowship while FCA is very new and is a broader group who have a more particular focus. Some people didn't come because of that tension and others were anxious while there. I think we got the balance right and it was a remarkably unified and positive conference. The joint venture meant we had a genuinely national conference and with the presence of a good group of New Zealanders meant it was trans-national.

**RC:** My best hopes were that a fire might be lit under our denomination to recover a great energy and passion for gospel ministry in our nation. I was reasonably confident that the speakers we had lined up, the topics we intended to cover, and the workshops we had planned, met quite a number of the issues we need to face as a Church. I hoped and prayed that we would be united around the gospel, and take seriously what we need to do to recover and stimulate gospel witness in the world.

My fear was that because GAFCON/FCA is seen by some to be divisive that we might not hear the Spirit's voice through the conference, because we were worried about a hidden political agenda. I knew there was not a hidden political agenda, but I feared some may have thought that, and would not participate well as a result.

**Ess:** What were for you the best moments of the conference in the end?

**SH:** Ashley Null was a surprise and a delight. He opened up very familiar material in surprising and fresh ways. I've never really thought of Cranmer's liturgies in the way that Ashley explained and it has given me a whole new way of approaching liturgy. Related to this was that we decided quite late in the picture to use liturgy in each of the worship sessions. Each seemed very apt and as with all good liturgy it was both participatory as well as a great way of expressing our unity together. The three plenary sessions were excellent and involved a diverse range of input. Kanishka exposed us to some tricky but helpful teaching from 2 Peter and did it in his usual clear and positive way.

As I said at the outset we don't get together much because we are a large island nation. The best part was meeting new people and renewing connections that go back 30 or 40 years.

**RC:** When I saw that we had managed to bring together not just evangelical Anglicans, but people from all traditions and "unexpected" places, *and* that we had managed to get representation from every state and territory and New Zealand, I was really delighted. It said to me that there is a real hunger out there for direction, inspiration and encouragement. Then it was so good when the Bible was taught, and Ashley Null brought us back to our common roots, and we actually grappled with the big issues of culture.

**Ess: Was there anything surprising or unexpected that came out of the conference?**

**SH:** The overall unity was exceptional. In the past these sorts of conferences have often ended up in a dust up over something but that didn't happen.

**RC:** I was personally bowled over by the strong response to the launch of the FCA. I have been so close to it for so long, and it was wonderful to have so many at the launch and sign up on the night. If you missed out – [www.fca-us.org.au](http://www.fca-us.org.au)

**Ess: The conference was jointly hosted by EFAC and FCA. Where are these organisations overlapping in their aims and where distinct?**

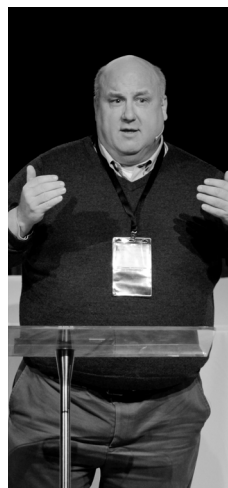
**SH:** EFAC is a fellowship of evangelical Anglican clergy and lay people. It generally is stronger where evangelicals are in a minority and therefore cherish the support and encouragement of gathering with like minded people. Generally EFAC is not involved in direct political action within the denomination yet it may also play a role in offering theological and biblical perspectives on issues of contention.

**RC:** FCA and EFAC are very close in many respects, in that both spring out of a clear view of the biblical gospel. I guess the aim of FCA is to gather orthodox Anglicans from a wider pool than just among evangelicals. In fact internationally, there may even be a majority of members who identify as “anglo-catholic” rather than evangelical. FCA is designed to be a “broad tent” to gather people with a common concern for our denomination and its future.

**Ess: Is FCA about helping disaffected people leave Anglicanism?**

**RC:** No, on the contrary, it is about helping them stay within the Anglican Church. One of the sad things that has happened internationally, is that faithful Anglicans who have not shifted in their commitment to Anglican theology and practice have been forced out by theological novelty and moral innovation which is foreign to historic Christian faith. FCA allows these people to continue to identify as Anglican even when their leaders have wandered away, and allows other faithful Anglicans to remain in fellowship with them. FCA is a fellowship of orthodox Anglicans and reform movement to help heal our denomination.

**SH:** I think it would be better to ask this the other way around. FCA is committed to helping people to stay and then support them if they, in conscience leave or are pushed out. This is not likely to be simple or straight forward. As we saw from our New Zealand brothers and sisters there were three



different responses to their crisis. Some have left and lost titles and buildings, some have stayed but are in dispute and others are staying and without contention. In saying that we have to bear in mind that the New Zealand, US and Canadian churches have a much stronger national basis than we have in Australia where we are a federation of dioceses.

**Ess: Where can people catch up on things they may have missed from the conference?**

**SH:** The main papers will be available via EFAC *Essentials*...

**RC:** ...and the conference website [www.afuture15.org.au](http://www.afuture15.org.au) has many of the workshop outlines for download, and will soon have links to the videos of the main sessions. Some FCA resources are found at [www.fca-us.org.au/resources/](http://www.fca-us.org.au/resources/)

**Ess: Where can people continue the conversation about our Anglican future?**

**SH:** Join an EFAC Branch in your city or state or start one.

**RC:** I want to encourage a grass roots movement where local Anglicans take the initiative (either under the EFAC or FCA banner, or something else) to consider what they need to do to secure a strong healthy Anglican future in their own location. Wouldn't it be great if groups of Anglicans in every diocese got to talking and praying about the future, and what changes they needed to make, to ensure it was a positive vital one. Maybe it is the reader of this article who needs to take the initiative. FCA Australia and your local EFAC branch are ready to help. Perhaps we will run some local conferences, or even another national gathering, but it would be much better if we did it ourselves.

**Ess: What and whom do you hope that conversation will include?**

**RC:** I would love to see congregations, individuals, parishes and even dioceses, having conversations about recovering

confidence in the gospel, confidence in our theological heritage, and confidence in our God to turn our church and nation around. I am praying that bishops, clergy and laity will embrace and develop these themes for themselves.

**SH:** The conference captured a sense of optimism about the future of the Anglican Church. Hopefully this will filter through and start to shape conversations at a diocesan level and beyond. This sense of optimism and hope is often missing from other gatherings and is absolutely essential if we are going to honestly address our many challenges in terms of ministry and mission.



## What's on the AFC website now?

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THRIVING IN RURAL MINISTRY

RURAL MINISTRY PLENARY SESSION

GRAPPLING WITH ATHEISM

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DISPUTABLE MATTERS

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

HOMOSEXUALITY & FAITH

THE END OF GENDER

## I come from the Bush

Mary Lewis brings us the first of a series of short reflections on the AFC by some of those who attended



**Mary Lewis** is priest-in-charge at Roxby Downs Christian Community Church and Andamooka Community Church, Diocese of Willochra, South Australia.

I come from the Bush – often isolated, insulated and separated from the Anglican world at large in spite of technology and rapid transport. I came to Melbourne “to be part of developing a strong, faithful future for the Anglican Church of Australia”, especially in my numerically small, geographically vast and theologically mixed Diocese of Willochra. I was excited to meet people from right across the nation and saddened not to meet people from dioceses not represented. I was challenged and chastened by Kanishka’s Bible Studies in 2 Peter and greatly encouraged to the task of “speeding the day” of Christ’s return by being bold and true in sharing the gospel through the power of that same gospel at work in me and the church of God. I was delighted to renew my acquaintance with Cranmer through Ashley Null – his unpacking of Cranmer’s portrait was very engaging and enlightening - and be convinced of the “relevance and beauty of what our tradition has to offer for mission” in contemporary outback Australia. I live and work in a multicultural mission location; Simon Smart’s session was an encouragement to keep seeing the cross-cultural mission challenge of my “home” base and to live as God’s people dispersed into the places God has placed us and where he is already at work.

How do I share this vision for mission that is Anglican and culturally adaptive to the changing rural and remote context – a place of decreasing congregations, shifting populations and industries and widely dispersed clusters of unreached people? This conference has sharpened my commitment to the gospel truth having all that is needed to bring hope and transform lives and communities; it has challenged my search for the most winsome and engaging ways to help people meet Jesus; it has strengthened my resolve to keep before my Diocese our true Anglican heritage in the Scriptures and the Reformation; it has stirred me to pray for God’s kingdom to come to the Bush “as it is in heaven”.

# Encountering Critical Issues for the Church in the West

**Stephen Hale lays out a frank and wide-ranging analysis of the good, the bad and the broken in the Australian Anglican engagement with Jesus' Great Commission. He finishes by naming eight keys to a way forward.**



Stephen Hale is Chair of EFAC Australia and the lead minister of the St Hilary's network in Kew and North Balwyn Vic. This is an edited version of the address Stephen gave at the Anglican Future Conference.

**B**y any criterion the past 30 years has seen significant progress in some parts of Anglicanism in Australia. Just reflect on some of the good things that have happened in that time:

## Good things that have happened

The number of evangelical parishes has grown significantly and many of those churches have defied the general trends and grown strongly. The balance of episcopal appointments has very slowly started to change so there are now more evangelical bishops which is slowly starting to reflect the reality on the ground in terms of church attendance.

In 1975 there were two large seminaries in Australia—Moore College and Ridley College—and they both continue and are strong. Ridley in particular needs mentioning as it receives a tiny diocesan grant and has only been able to grow because of its Foundation and many generous supporters. In the west we have seen the rise of Trinity Theological College, and St Mark's Canberra has played an important role especially in rural Dioceses.

Even in places that generally function as monochrome Catholic dioceses there are growing numbers of evangelical ministries and ministers. There is an encouraging emergence of theologically orthodox gospel hearted Catholic Anglicans and that is reflected in this conference.

Miraculously, through the work of BCA, CMS and the Dioceses of NWA and NT we have healthy mission and ministry in many remote parts of Australia.

Church planting was barely on the radar screen in 1985 but has become a major focus in the past decade with many new plants in many places. City on a Hill only started seven years ago but now has three centres. Good quality Bible preaching and teaching is a key feature of the many growing churches. John Stott started the trend of what has become the norm. Student ministry has grown both numerically and also extensively and there has been a huge explosion of ethnic specific ministries due to migration and the influx of refugees. One third of Anglican attenders in Melbourne are involved with such ministries.

Christian welfare agencies offer a very high percentage of welfare delivery (unique to Australia) and the Anglican Church is a big player in this area. Alongside of this has been a rediscovery of ministries of compassion happening in and through local churches. Anglican schools have multiplied in recent decades. Committed school principals and staff as well as chaplains are in the front line of mission in our day. For most students that attend these schools this is the only interface they have with the church and where the gospel is articulated and lived out. So, there is much to be encouraged about and much more that I haven't mentioned. Yet there are many challenges before us and one big overall weakness we must address.

## Some challenges we face and our great weakness

Sadly there are many dying churches and the next decade in particular will see the collapse of many parish churches that are just clinging on at present. Radical liberalism doesn't reproduce itself—I've seen it from inside. When you're a bishop in a diocese like Melbourne you spend a lot of time in small struggling catholic church land. According to the 2014 *General Synod Report on Viability and Structures*, seven Australian dioceses are financially unviable and others are close to that situation. To quote that report, 'The Anglican Church of Australia is at a crossroads. For over thirty years it has slowly been declining and the time has come for a revolution if it is to be a strong and sustainable church for the future.' (p.8-076).

The sex abuse crisis has radically undermined our standing and credibility. A recent McCrindle Research report indicates this issue as by far the largest reason for people not

wanting to engage with the church. Parents in our context used to freely let their children attend our youth programs, now they are both cautious and suspicious.

Most dioceses internally operate in a state of semi-perpetual crisis—the tail wags the dog as the small dying or conflicted churches burn up vast amounts of time. Many are under significant financial pressure and the compliance regimes are proving hard to implement. Too many clergy are being knowingly appointed into small, conflicted and dysfunctional parishes. The consequences are totally predictable and many clergy are paying a high price for this. Not enough bishops are offering real hope or are actively giving permission to change with some outstanding exceptions, e.g. Tasmania and Canberra. Amongst more conservatively reformed ministers there is an unhealthy model of high control leadership that leads to significant disengagement by the lay members of the church.

At this conference we will wrestle yet again with issues in relation to human sexuality. Pastorally on the ground it is a major issue. You don't have to scratch too far below the surface at the church I lead to know that it is a huge cause of grief and tension for many adult members because of the choices their adult children have made. The large cohort of young adults at St Hilary's are growing up in a context where they live with the tension of what the church teaches and then what the world promotes and they see lived out amongst their friends. They tell me it's a huge barrier in evangelism because people don't want to talk with them because they assume they are anti gay. In a wider sense people who are same sex attracted have, rightly or wrongly, whether we like it or not, got the message that they are not welcome in our churches.

In the midst of this there is One Big Problem, a big weakness or failure: our lack of evangelistic effectiveness. I can demonstrate this in my own patch. St Hilary's is a network of three churches, where the people are notably gifted, capable, educated and articulate. We are well-resourced, and have been very well taught over many decades. The general outlook of our people is healthy, and positive. Most years we see a number of converts, especially among Chinese and Iranians, but very few of that number are Anglo. In my view this is our biggest overall challenge.

### **Mission in Australia is tough**

As we all know, we live in a tough context to do mission. It is estimated that only 30% of the population have any real interest in going to church or having any church connection. A TEAR report in the UK found that 70% of the popula-

tion had no intention of attending a church service at any point in the future. The Mission Shaped Church Report of the Church of England put it at 40% who are unchurched plus another 40% who are open or closed de-churched. As Timmis and Chester argue in *Everyday Church*, 'that means new styles of worship will not reach them. Alpha and Christianity Explored won't reach them. Toddler churches will not reach them. The vast majority of the un-churched and the de-churched people would not turn to the church, even if faced with difficult personal circumstances or in the event of a tragedy. It is not a question of 'improving the product' of church meetings and evangelistic events. It means reaching them apart from meetings and events. Many churches are growing, but mainly through transfer growth. It is still possible to grow a church by offering a better experience than other churches, but this is not evangelistic growth. It is possible to plant a church and see it grow without doing mission.' (p.15,16)

How should we respond to all of this?

### **A crossover era**

My overarching view is that we are living in a crossover era. One way of being church is rapidly dying and something new is emerging to replace it. There was an era when there was a way of doing church, which worked pretty well in just about every place. That era was a fair while ago but it still has a deep imprint on our psyche. We kind of think that if we could just get things back on track then it will all happen again. The reality is that we are a long way from that. We live in a post-Christian context where there is little sympathy for the Christian faith.

The era we are now in is an era of great opportunities if we are seeking to reach out in our day. At the same time it is an era of significant tension both theologically and ecclesiastically. We have a whole ecclesiastical framework set up in the Christendom era. There are churches and people scattered all over the place. We go to synods and grind our way through legislation and never-ending motions to convey our good intentions and go home knowing that not much will change as a consequence.

It is an era with a seemingly never-ending stream of ideas on the way forward. Just think of the books that have emerged in the past decade or so: *Purpose Driven Church*, *Mission Shaped Church*, *Centre Church*, *Liquid Church*, *Simple Church*, *Soma Church*, *Everyday Church*, *The New Parish* etc, etc. For the average vicar and vestry it is perplexing and overwhelming. Hitch your wagon to theory x this month but who knows? Something better may come along next month.

## Some ways forward

So, what are some of the ways forward? I have eight suggestions and there is much more that could be said.

### 1. Stronger parochial units

In my view we need less small churches and more churches that have critical mass and energy. There are too many churches in our major cities that are in close proximity and too many that lack the capacity to have the range of ministries that are essential in connecting with and attracting people to be a part of us. If each of those churches is seeking to re-establish itself, then almost inevitably churches will be seeking to do very similar things but totally independently. It would make more sense for these churches to cluster together and to have a team ministry or for them each to sell up and co-locate onto a site with larger and contemporary facilities.

In a wider sense there is a significant shift to larger churches taking place and in the main the Anglican Church doesn't do large churches. If we are to have stronger parochial units they need a clear vision, which is owned by the people and intentional leadership to implement the vision. We need better team leadership and ministry. Many of our churches have tired and dated facilities that need significant attention. A stronger church will have a comprehensive ministry approach and therefore the opportunity to connect with more people. Leadership of larger churches is demanding and complex and for a range of reasons we haven't been good at raising up these sorts of leaders.

### 2. A new lay revolution

Most of our churches are too staff and clergy centred. The bigger you grow the more staff you have. Responsibility is delegated to the staff and pretty soon the staff run and manage everything. The consequence of this down the track is massive disengagement. People turn up less frequently, they give financially but without any enthusiasm and they are largely passive because we've pacified them.

At St Hilary's we are bigger and more complex than we were five years ago but we have 15% less staff and wherever possible we seek lay volunteers to head up ministries. We are seeking to rebuild a sense of ownership and participation. We've got a long way to go on this project but unlocking the creativity, skill and passion of our volunteers is one of the key leadership challenges of our era.

Our people have the relational connections with unbelievers and they are in the front line of mission. Our people

are time-poor like yours are, however it is also true to say that people will give an amazing amount of time if they are motivated and given a genuine sense of freedom and ownership. They don't want to be micro-managed but trusted, supported, encouraged and released.

### 3. Localise mission and do it in community

One of the big trends globally is a rediscovery of people living their lives more closely together and seeking to connect intentionally in their neighbourhood. This may be through one of the different models of what are called 'missional communities'. These will be lay led and run. It is an attempt to rediscover what it means to be a parish by connecting locally and personally. The gospel is lived out and shared by people who are in relational connection with each other and their neighbours.

This model can also be used to connect via affinity groups or network groups where you have a shared interest or connection. We have a soccer club at St Hil's with 50% church players and 50% non-church players. For the past year or so we've developed a missional community associated with the club and they are building on the strong personal connections that the club creates. Last year we saw several people come to Christ as a consequence.

The model is also applicable in the workplace as people meet to pray and connect with their work colleagues. They support each other to be salt and light but also to offer opportunities to help others connect and hear the gospel.

### 4. Church planting and replanting

As one form of being church gradually dies many facilities will become available as a base for replants, new plants and networks of churches. The only city in the western world where church attendance has increased is London. That is principally because of the explosion of ethnic churches, but it is also because of the plants and replants of the Anglican churches in the Diocese of London.

Our major cities and provincial cities are growing rapidly and the population in our cities and inner cities is rapidly increasing. The population in the CBD of Melbourne was 2,100 in 1993, was 116,431 in 2013 and is projected to be 163,000 by 2023.

In broad terms we are too often raising up leaders to be trained for a settled church when we need more missionary pioneers to re-establish the church or start a new church. Our theological colleges need to develop alternate pathways to ministry with *in situ* learning alongside of their biblical



and theological studies. At the same time the growth corridors keep extending and we have struggled to keep up with the church plants needed in these rapidly expanding suburbs and provincial cities.

### 5. Ethnic churches

Clearly the growth in this area is a major cause for rejoicing. God is literally bringing the world to us and these are the groups who are most open to and receptive to the gospel. Having a cross-cultural mission strategy is critical to the future. It is great that Sydney Diocese is reflecting this in episcopal appointments.

### 6. Permission-giving bishops

What we most need are permission-giving bishops who are supportive and willing to go out on a limb for those who are taking risks. The bishop has a key pastoral role but also a key role as a broker and advocate. There are still bishops who play a heavy-handed part in blocking appointments and not allowing the best people to be appointed. As the General Synod Report said, 'the Diocese must make serving the front-line parishes in mission its key priority rather than the other way around.' (p 13).

### 7. Allow people to have the best training available

Australia is blessed with two of the strongest Anglican theological colleges in the world and bishops who are mission-minded will want their clergy to be formed at the best colleges. Any other organisation would want its people to have the best possible training and those options exist if people are willing to be less parochial and more adventurous.

### 8. Ride the Boomer wave

The largest cohort in the population is moving to retirement. They are gifted, experienced, in many cases cashed-up and they want to be a part of something meaningful (as well as to travel and to dote on the grandchildren). They are living longer and longer. This is a remarkable opportunity which we need to gear up now to embrace. Boomers need to be treated with respect and carefully managed. They are used to calling the shots and so they need to be trusted and actively supported.



## Fellowship and assistance



**Caitlin Hurley reflects on the challenge seen at the AFC of supporting fellow Anglicans under pressure in changing dioceses.**

Caitlin is assistant minister at Redfern and Green Square, NSW and Executive Assistant to the General Secretary of GAFCON.

The recent inaugural Anglican Future Conference was an action packed three days. A highlight for me was the Wednesday evening session *Standing with the Global Anglican Community*. Hosted by the Global Fellowship of Confessing Anglican (GAFCON) General Secretary, Dr Peter Jensen, shared how the Anglican Communion is faring around the globe. The prognosis was that it is not faring very well but that the GAFCON movement was providing a place for those committed to biblical Anglicanism to stand together and have both support and fellowship. A constant refrain from those who shared was that after leaving the their national church either forcibly or willingly their churches grew.

The most challenging portion of this evening was hearing from the New Zealand delegates about the Church in New Zealand. In New Zealand ordained clergy must submit to the authority of General Synod. This effectively means that if General Synod passes a motion the clergy are bound to that motion. Recently *Motion 30* was passed by the General Synod. This motion has allowed for the creation of a working party to provide a process for and structure by which the blessings of same-sex relationships can occur within the church. The conference heard three different responses to motion 30 from leaders within the New Zealand church. These responses ranged from a desire to work through the process until it became untenable, to an inability to submit to this motion. As a result this rector lost his license, rectory and church building. How long will it be before evangelical Anglicans in Australia are faced with a similar situation?

This is where the work of GAFCON and FCA (Australia) are immensely important. This movement in its global and local manifestations seeks to uphold the authority of Scripture and the Lordship of Christ. In the Australian context this will be achieved through promoting orthodoxy and providing recognition, fellowship and assistance to those who have been disaffiliated from their diocese because of the unorthodox actions of others. It is true that a movement such as FCA (Australia) in and of itself is not going to bring people to salvation but it can help limit the damage of aggressive secularism and culturally conformed Christianity within the church. By providing support for those committed to biblical orthodoxy, parishes and their parishioners can get on with the work of the Great Commission.

It would be interesting to see the composition of the conference. In particular what was the ratio of clergy to laity? For the Fellowship of Confessing Anglican movement to flourish in both its global and local manifestations it needs to be supported by both clergy and laity. It would also be interesting to see the age demographics. As a movement focusing on the future it would be great to see some more individuals under the age of thirty-five involved. This will involve demonstrating to my generation why a movement such as FCA is important and worth supporting.

# Imagining our Anglican future

Peter Adam delivered an address on the final morning of the Anglican Future conference, in which he sought to help us consider what the future may hold for Australian Anglicans. This is an edited and abridged version of that address.



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

**A**doniram Judson, pioneer missionary in Burma, now Myanmar, tied up, ready for the flames, was asked what he thought about his future. His reply: 'The future is as bright as the promises of God'.

God warns us in the Bible that it is foolish to assume that we know the future, or to think that we can control or create the future. Indeed the prophet Ezekiel was told to prophesy against those who prophesy out of their own imaginations [Eze 13:2].

The Lord Jesus may return today: a great plague may decimate the developed world: orthodox churches may abandon the faith: there may be a world-wide revival of Biblical Christianity: we in the West may face persecution in twenty years' time: we in Australia may have to pay rates on church property, which would dramatically change our ministry: and certainly leadership of world Christianity will be found elsewhere than in the West over the next thirty years. We do not know the future. We do know that our world is changing at an ever-increasing rate, and that living in a global village increases the possibility of radical change on a world-wide scale. There are no places to hide in a global village: our neighbours are too close, and so World War III is even more likely, as is the universal persecution of Chris-

tians, fuelled by a range of motivations, both by pagans, and by the religious.

We learn from Genesis 1 that we humans, made in God's image, have *dependent responsibility* for the world. We are absolutely dependent on God, who rules his world in power and love. But we are also *responsible to God* for this world. Both are true: we are dependent, yet also responsible to God for our work in the world. We know from the Bible that we cannot know the future, nor can we control the future. Yet at the same time, our responsibility to God includes our provisional planning for the future, even if we cannot know it, control it, or secure it.

The book of Proverbs warns us to plan wisely, an apt word for Anglicans, who are more likely to be trapped by the present than they are to plan for the future: 'Go to the ant, you lazybones; consider her ways, and be wise. Without having any chief or officer or ruler, she prepares her food in summer, and gathers her sustenance in harvest' [Prov 6:6-8].

Yet it also warns us that we cannot control the future, an apt word for the arrogant: 'The human mind may devise many plans, but it is the purpose of the LORD that will be established' [Prov 19:21].

We must *plan*, and we must *trust*. We should imagine our future, but hold our imaginings and our planning in open hands, trusting that God will achieve his gospel purposes, and that Jesus will indeed build his church.

It is a privilege to address this topic in this forum. It is too often the case that we only have the energy to respond to present pressures and problems, and so we are reactive rather than proactive. It is good for us to spend some time imagining our future, so that we can prepare for it, and focus our energy on achieving it. Decisions made today shape our future ministry. Humans naturally underestimate the damage they can do: and we also underestimate the good that we can do by God's power and in his plan. As we think of our future, we have three great needs:

**F**irstly, we need to know that Anglicanism is capable of radical change. What is Anglicanism? Does it have a future? Is it worth investing in its future? These issues are matters of current debate, not least among Australian Anglicans, including Bishop Tom Frame, and Dr Bruce

Kaye, and Archbishop Geoffrey Driver, whose recent books have stimulated my thinking.<sup>1</sup>

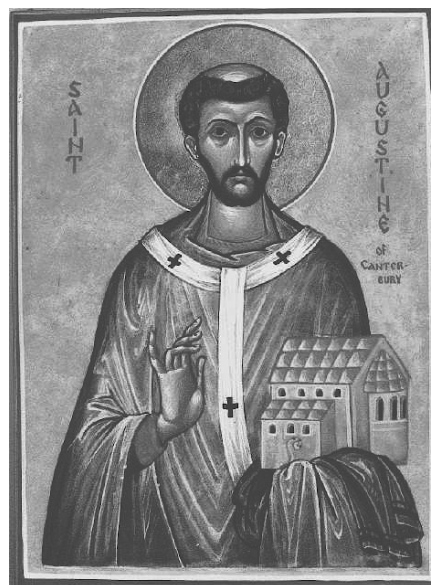
When thinking about Anglicanism our natural tendency is to universalise our present experience, and assume that what we see is what has always been the case. Parishes think that what the last Vicar did is normative Anglicanism. That is not so. Anglican more broadly think that what happened in the 20th century is normative Anglicanism, but that it not so. But Anglicanism is not unchanging. It is contextual and transitional. It is always changing. Here are some examples.

We might think that dioceses and parishes are the essential structure of Anglicanism. That is not so. The early Celtic church in England was based primarily on monasteries and itinerant evangelists and teachers, not dioceses or parishes. The monastery was the base for evangelism, education, and pastoral care. This changed with the arrival of Augustine in Canterbury in 597 AD. He was sent by Pope Gregory to bring that church into line with Roman customs, including geographical dioceses and parishes.

And after the diocese and parish system was set in place in Europe, by the early 1100s it was no longer capable of evangelism and education. So the preaching orders, such as the Franciscans and the Dominicans, were set up, not by bishops but by concerned clergy and lay people. They were independent of dioceses, bishops, and archbishops, and still function that way in the Roman Catholic Church. The Roman church has two distinct forms, and one of those forms comprises a variety of movements or 'religious orders', as they are known. We Anglicans would call them 'voluntary societies'.

Although these preaching orders were abolished in England at the Reformation, both the Church of England and Anglicanism more broadly have been profoundly affected by our own voluntary societies, including many evangelical societies. So the Anglican Church has in fact been pluriform: dioceses on the one hand, and voluntary societies on the other. In Australia these include the Church Missionary Society, Bush Church Aid, and ecumenical societies such as the Bible Society, Scripture Union, the Australian Fellowship of Evangelical Students, the Gideons, World Vision, TEAR, and many more.

You might think the Anglican Communion is essential to Anglicanism. That is not so. It was an invention of the 19th century, and was, at least in part, an ecclesiastical reflection of the British empire. National churches are what matter in Anglicanism. No international association of churches matters in Anglicanism inasmuch as no such association has any power to dictate to Anglican national churches.



"Augustinus von Canterbury" by NN - Ökumenisches Heiligenlexikon (public domain).

For the 'Anglican Communion' was to a large extent not the product of the evangelistic energy of the Church of England, but came from the evangelistic activities of voluntary missionary societies. Some of these were evangelical, such as the Church Missionary Society, and others were high church, such as the Universities Mission to Central Africa. It was these societies which provided effective international sharing of resources, prayer, and fellowship, before there was anything called the Anglican Communion.

The initiative to evangelise the inhabitants of India did not come from leaders of the Church of England. It came from a group of concerned evangelical clergy and laity, members of the Clapham Sect. Similarly the initiative to plant the gospel and begin Anglican ministry in Australia with the arrival of the First Fleet did not come from the Archbishop of Canterbury, but from people such as John Newton and William Wilberforce.

You might think that the Archbishop of Canterbury must be the leader of what we call 'The Anglican Communion'. But this is not so. The idea is based on the notion of geographical origin, the idea that the Church of England originated in Canterbury, and therefore all Anglicans originate from Canterbury. There is no evidence that the geographical origin of the Church of England was Canterbury: and Canterbury was not the powerhouse that created Anglican churches around the world. And in any case, an accidental event of history can never become the proof of necessary truths of revelation.

You might think that the creative energy for Anglicanism has come 'from above', from Archbishops and Bishops. That is not so. The great and effective movements for reform within Anglicanism have been initiated 'from below' rather than 'from above'. These included Wycliffe and Tyndale and the translators of the Bible into English. The Bish-

ops burnt the first translators and their Bibles. The Reformation was exceptional in being both a reformation 'from below' and 'from above'. But it certainly would not have been effective without the costly and sacrificial movement 'from below'. Similarly, the Evangelical Movement, the Oxford Movement, the East African Revival, and the Charismatic Renewal were fuelled 'from below'. Such movements have usually been persecuted by the hierarchy, then grudgingly accepted, and then celebrated.

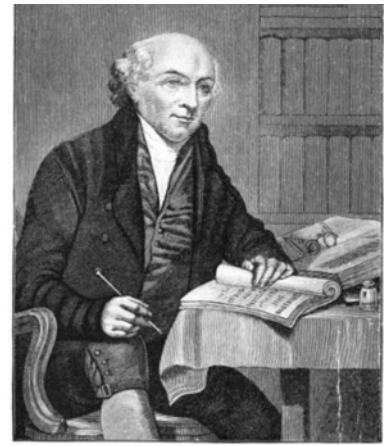
So historically, structures have changed, and new structures have been created, to enable people to be converted, churches to be planted, and people groups and nations to be evangelised.

One of the great contributions of the Baptist William Carey was that he realised that the Baptist churches of England could not evangelise the world, without what he called a 'means'. Carey, later missionary to India, wrote his *Enquiry Into the Obligations of the Christians to Use Means for the Conversion of the Heathen*, which led to the founding of the Baptist Missionary Society in 1792, and the founding of many other missionary societies in following years. A 'means' is an organisation, a structure: voluntary societies are 'means'.

*The Evangelical Fellowship in the Anglican Communion* was a movement 'from below', set up by John Stott and others to offer support, encouragement and resources to Anglican evangelicals throughout the world. *The Fellowship of Confessing Anglicans* was also set up more recently to serve the Anglican Communion, by providing alternative structures for those who held firmly to Biblical and creedal Christianity. Both are 'voluntary societies' of the Anglican Communion, set up to provide what was lacking in that Communion, and to correct some unhelpful tendencies in that Communion.

You might think that it is impossible to have more than one Anglican diocesan structure in one place. That is not so. In Europe there are two different structures of Anglicanism. One is the Diocese of Europe, which is part of The Church of England. The other is the Convocation of Episcopal Churches in Europe, part of The Episcopal Church of USA. Perhaps this is an instructive model for the future. There is room for two different expressions of Anglicanism in the same place. Anglicanism is more flexible than first appears!

You might think that the continuation of Anglicanism is essential. That is not so. Effective mission is always contextual, and so church life must always be in a sense 'transitional'. However Anglicanism is also 'transitional' in another sense to do with its self-understanding.



"William Carey" by George Smith (Public Domain)

*I am very old & young*  
W Carey

I have always valued the modest claims of Anglicanism: it does not claim to be the only church: it does not claim to be the best church: it does not even claim to be a necessary church. The idea of Anglicanism as transitional has been prominent in Anglican ecclesiology in the 20th century. It is the idea that Anglicanism could one day be absorbed into a larger fellowship: it could, on the one hand re-amalgamate with the Roman Catholic Church. On the other hand, it could join with other Protestant churches to form a new church, a new denomination.

This happened in India and Pakistan. There Anglicans joined with other Protestant churches to form the Church of South India, the Church of North India, and the Church of Pakistan. There are no 'Anglicans' left in India and Pakistan: they have all joined with other churches to form a larger church. Those churches are not considered part of the Anglican Communion. So, on the global scale, all Anglicans in every place could decide to join with other Christians to form a new church, and 'Anglicanism' might cease to exist!

Of course our flexibility is our weakness, as well as its strength. Anglicanism was able to be Reformed in the 16th century, but then lost its gospel clarity in the 17th century. It was renewed by the Evangelical Revival in the 18th and 19th centuries, but then compromised by the rise of Liberalism in the 19th and 20th centuries.

However the Anglican Communion as presently run seems to express some of the worst features of an English identity, described by the English novelist John Fowles:

'Perhaps all this is getting near the heart of Englishness: being happier at being unhappy than doing something constructive about it. We boast of our genius for compromise, which is really a refusal to choose; and that in turn contains a large part of cowardice, apathy, selfish laziness...' <sup>2</sup>

Over thirty years ago I decided to respect people who left the current structures of Anglicanism, and to hope that they would respect me if I stayed.<sup>3</sup> In my study of those who left

the Church of England in 1662 and those who stayed, I indicated my respect for those who conformed, and for those who became 'nonconformists', and recognised how God worked for gospel good among both groups of people.

Matthew Newcomen, Vicar of Dedham, was one who resigned in 1662. In his final sermon, he preached these words:

'It hath been all along, a Merciful Providence of God, that when some of his servants could not satisfy their consciences, and come up to the things that have been imposed upon them, without injuring their Consciences; yet others have had a greater freedom given them, that they could yield: and if not so, what would have become of the people of God? Therefore, in those things, achieved there may be some providence of God, for good to you be in it.'<sup>4</sup>

We need the ministry of EFAC, continuing to support evangelical Anglicans, whatever their ecclesiastical connection. And we need the Fellowship of Confessing Anglicans, for those Anglicans who need new ecclesiastical structures for fellowship, support, and encouragement. Even if you do not need FCA in your context at present, you may need it in the future, and others need it now. We in the West may feel that we do not need larger fellowships to belong to, but they are of particular value to Christians who face constant persecution.

Anglicanism has constantly changed its shape, and style of ministry. Anglicanism is a mixture of the good gifts of God and human sinfulness. God in his mercy has used, is using, and will use Anglicanism: God does not need Anglicanism, in any form: but God in his mercy may continue to use those called Anglicans for his gospel purposes in the world. Anglicanism is still changing, and we are all part of those changes.

**O**ur second great need is that we need the Spirit's clarity about God's purpose for his church in the last days. If we try to imagine our future without reading the Bible, we are sure to be confused, deceived, and destructive. The detective writer P.D. James, who was herself a devoted member of the Church of England, has one of her characters describes Anglicanism in these terms:

'Some of the girls practised a religion. Anglicanism...was accepted as a satisfying compromise between reason and myth, justified by the beauty of its liturgy, a celebration of Englishness; but essentially it was the universal religion of liberal humanism laced with ritual to suit each individual taste.'<sup>5</sup>

I attended a funeral in one of our Anglican parishes late last year. The Bible reading was from John 14. The reading finished half way through John 14:6. So the first half of the verse was read: 'Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life"', but the second half of the verse was not read: 'No one comes to the Father except through me'. What futile arrogance to edit the words of the Lord Jesus in order to change his theology!

As God has given us 2 Peter to show us what life will be like in the last days, so he has shown us from Paul's letters to Timothy and Titus what ordinary churches of the post-apostolic age should be like. Here is a checklist. Whatever the future of Anglicanism, these must be its primary features:

We need to believe, teach, and implement the gospel in our church, and proclaim the gospel to the world. [2 Tim 3:14-16, 2 Tim 4:5]

We need theological clarity about the content of the gospel from the Bible. [2 Tim 1:13-14].

We need godly, stable and able ministers of the gospel, who do not engage in abusive behaviour [Titus 1:5-9]

We need an effective team of gospel ministers around the world, both imported and indigenous. [2 Tim 4:9-21].

We need effective training for gospel ministry, and to raise up the next generation of gospel workers. [2 Tim 2:2].

We need people in ministry who know the gospel from the Bible, and are trained and equipped by the Bible to do their ministry. [2 Tim 3:15-16]

We need to know that our greatest problem and limitation is our sin and our sinfulness; as we need to know God our saviour, and his transforming gospel. [Titus 2:12-14].

We need to rebuke and correct error in life or theology. [2 Tim 2:14-19]

We need to be able to distinguish between fellow leaders who do call on the Lord out of a pure heart, but whom we must correct with gentleness [2 Tim 2], and those corrupt church leaders who have the form of godliness but deny its power, of whom Paul says, in 2 Tim 3: 'have nothing to do with them'.

We need to pray for the world and the church, that the gospel may be proclaimed to the whole world. [1 Tim 2:1-7].

We need to be willing to suffer for the gospel. [2 Tim 1:8].

I love Cranmer's ordination services, not least because the instrument or means of ministry is the Bible handed to every candidate. But I would like to add one question to every ordination service. Not just, 'Do you believe the gospel?', but also 'Are you willing to suffer for the gospel?' All ministry involves suffering, as indeed Paul wrote, 'all who want to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted'.

Ministers who are not willing to suffer for the gospel, will not defend the gospel. We must prepare ourselves, our children, our churches and our converts to stand firm.

**O**ur third great need is absolute trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, as the Saviour, Lord, and Judge of his church. If we try to imagine our future without reading the Bible, and without trusting in Christ, we are sure to be confused, deceived, and destructive. God gave us Paul's letters to Timothy and Titus to teach us what ordinary churches of the post-apostolic age should be like. So too he gave us the book of Revelation, to increase our trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, whatever our future. Revelation begins with a vision of the Lord Jesus Christ in 1:12-18.

Notice two important features of this vision. Firstly, he is seen 'among the golden lampstands', and as 'walking among the golden lampstands'. Like the high priest in the Old Testament sanctuary, Christ walks among the golden lampstands, and walks among them to tend them. In that sanctuary, the golden lampstands in the holy place were a reminder of the glory of the presence of God. In this vision, the seven golden lampstands are the seven churches addressed in John's letter. Christ walks among his churches; he sees and knows them; and he speaks to them; with a specific message for each of those churches, a message which is also what the Spirit says to all the churches.

The speaking of this message is the second important feature of this vision: 'coming out of his mouth was a sharp, double-edged sword' [1:16]. Christ is present among his churches, and he speaks these powerful words to them, and so to us. Christ walks among his churches even today. He walks among our churches: he knows them better than do. He knows our works: he knows our good works, and he rewards them: he knows our bad works, and he condemns them. He warns us of our dangers, he encourages us in our strengths, and invites us to trust his promises.

We need to know that the Lord Jesus Christ is the glorious and sufficient saviour and redeemer of his church, that he is the glorious and sufficient Lord of his church, and that he is the glorious and sufficient Judge of his church. If we do not know this, we might despair, we might give up, we might try to control, we ourselves might try to save the church, to rule the church, to secure the church, or to judge the church. But this is Christ's work, and he does it as he walks among his churches, to tend them, correct them, and care for them. He sees, he knows, he saves, he warns, he judges, and he rewards.

We do not know what our world will be like over the next fifty or a hundred years, or until the return of Christ, nor do we know the future of the Anglican Communion, or the shape of future world Christianity. We do know that no prayer is wasted, because 'the prayers of the saints rise to the presence of God'. We know that no good work is wasted, because the Lord Jesus knows our good works, commends them, and rewards them. We know that no sin is unknown to Christ, or unnoticed or ignored by him: he rebukes our sins, and invites and commands us to repent.

We know, too, that no repentance is wasted, because we are 'set free from our sins by the blood of the Lamb who loves us'; that no suffering is wasted, for followers of the Lamb will suffer, and will conquer by suffering, and by not holding their lives dear even unto death. We know that no ministry is wasted, because Jesus knows our good works, and commends and rewards them, and because he is worthy of our service.

We do not know the future of Christianity in Australia. Will we face virulent persecution? Will we become a flourishing persecuted church? Will we see widespread revival? Whatever the case, we do know that no personal repentance, self-denial or self-restraint is wasted, for 'those who wash their robes will eat of the tree of life, and enter the city'. We know that no self-sacrifice is wasted, because when Christ comes 'he will bring his rewards with him'. Not even our weak ministry is wasted, because we are the armies of heaven, following the Lamb, praising the Lamb, witnessing of the Lamb, conquering through the Lamb, and one day ruling with him. No careful tending of the Church is wasted, because Christ walks among the churches, tending them, caring for them, rebuking them, and encouraging them, and because when he returns the Lamb's bride will 'be ready, clothed in fine linen, and adorned for her husband'.

Whatever the future holds, we know that no speaking, teaching, or preaching of the Bible is wasted, because Jesus Christ who tends the churches 'has a voice like the roar of many waters, and his words are like a two-edged sword', and his words are 'what the Spirit says to the churches'. We know that no martyrdom is wasted, because 'those who conquer will sit with Christ on his throne'; that no endurance is wasted, because 'those who endure will eat of the tree of life in the paradise of God'; that no service, suffering, or sacrifice is wasted, because the slain Lamb has conquered, and is 'worthy of all power, wealth, wisdom, might, honour, glory, and blessing'.

We do not know the future of Christianity in the two-thirds world. Will those churches lapse into liberalism or

legalism? Will they be taken over by syncretism or the prosperity gospel? Will they re-evangelise the West? Will they lead a world-wide revival of Biblical Christianity?

We know that Satan's work is to spread heresy and persecution, but we also know that 'we conquer by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of our witness, and by not loving our lives even unto death'. We know that no evangelism is wasted because there will be 'a great multitude that no one can number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, crying with a loud voice, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne and to the Lamb"'.<sup>1</sup>

We know that no cleansing of the church is wasted, because one day we will be revealed as the bride, the wife of the Lamb, as God's holy city, having the glory of God radiant as a rare jewel, and the dwelling place of God and the Lamb. We know no suffering is wasted, because one day 'God will wipe away every tear from our eyes'.

No suffering for Christ is wasted, no sacrificial service for Christ is wasted, no worship of Christ is wasted, because he is 'worthy to receive all power, wealth, wisdom, might, honour, glory, and blessing', because he 'was slain, and by his blood he ransomed for God people from every tribe and language and people and nation'.

Adoniram Judson said, 'The future is as bright as the promises of God'. St Paul wrote, 'All the promises of God find their yes in Christ'. I urge you to trust Christ as your saviour. I urge you to trust Christ as the powerful and effective saviour of his Church. I urge you to trust Christ as the powerful and effective Lord and judge of his church.



<sup>1</sup> As has Ephraim Radner and Philip Turner, *The Fate of the Communion: the Agony of Anglicanism and the Future of a Global Church*.

<sup>2</sup> John Fowles, *Daniel Martin*, pp. 71,2

<sup>3</sup> Peter Adam, *Gospel trials in 1662: To Stay or To Go*, London, Latimer Trust, 2012.

<sup>4</sup> As quoted in Anne Whiteman, 'The Restoration of the Church of England', 21-88, in Geoffrey F. Nuttall and Owen Chadwick, *From Uniformity to Unity, 1662-1962*, [London: SPCK, 1962], p.21.

<sup>5</sup> P.D. James, *Innocent Blood*, London, Sphere Books, 1981, p. 100.

## Our past and our future



**Jude Long's plenary reflections on the AFC asked us to attend to our relationship to Indigenous Australians.**

**Dr Jude Long** is Principal of Nungalinga College, Darwin, NT

**T**he reminder that the Anglican Church can and has changed in the past, and that it should be transitional and must be adapted to local need and opportunity, is very timely.

We all approach these issues from our own context and my context is very different to most people here so I bring a different perspective.

I have been concerned that the first peoples of this country, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have been hardly mentioned in this conference with the exception of Mark's panel comments yesterday until that beautiful story by Kanishka this morning (about William Cooper). I confess that before I went to Nungalinga I probably would not have noticed, but now that omission is painfully obvious.

Looking to the future is great but you bring the past with you. We are all complicit in a terrible corporate sin against the first peoples of this land. Without recognition, repentance, reparation and change, that sin will continue to pollute all we do. You cannot walk freely into the future with the mud of the past stuck to your feet.

As we look to the future in this continent of Australia, can we listen to our first peoples, learn from them, allow the flavour and content of our Anglicanism to be changed by this unique context? Can we take small steps to engage with our Indigenous peoples? Even just a small thing like singing some worship songs in an Indigenous language can open doors to more changes.

Related to this is the distribution of resources. Paul took up a collection for those suffering in Jerusalem and the sharing of resources was a mark of the early church clearly demonstrating the love of Christ. Those of you from down south would find it hard to imagine the challenges faced in a place like the Northern Territory. In the Northern Territory we have lots of Indigenous clergy, but they are not paid. We have a theological college that can't fit the students in who want to learn the bible due to lack of teachers and funds. We have people who long to read the Bible but cannot access it in their own language. We have communities where not only do they not have Internet access, but the only way you can contact them is to ring the public phone in the street. I could go on and on, but I think my point is made.

As we look to an Anglican future can it please be one where we actively seek to address injustice, care for the poor and marginalised, where those hungry for the word of God are fed, and the last become first and first become last. Perhaps if our church looked more like this some of those other contextual issues that make it hard to share the gospel may disappear.



# BIBLE STUDY

## 2 Peter 1:1-4

<sup>1</sup> Simon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who through the righteousness of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ have received a faith as precious as ours:

<sup>2</sup> Grace and peace be yours in abundance through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.

<sup>3</sup> His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. <sup>4</sup> Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature, having escaped the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.

*New International Version*

**Peter's second letter** is short and full of urgency. It is urgent for at least four reasons: firstly because the apostles and eyewitnesses of the life of Jesus are dying out; secondly because there are false teachers who reject the testimony of the apostles; thirdly because these are the last days, the season of God's patience when he calls on everyone to repent, and finally because Peter himself, the slave and apostle of Christ, is nearing death. As the aging apostle nears the end of his life, he does not give up the commission given to him to feed the Lord's sheep, to feed his lambs.

What is the food to which Peter directs the sheep? Where are they to find pasture for their souls and food for the journey when the apostle is with them no longer? Peter's top priority for believers is the knowledge of God through the Lord Jesus Christ. Peter means believers to feed on Jesus. Through the knowledge of Christ, grace and peace are ours in abundance (v2). Through the knowledge of Christ, grow in grace (v3).

When Peter talks about knowledge he doesn't mean mere information, philosophy, an intellectual stance towards Jesus. He means close and vital relationship with

Jesus. To know God through Jesus is to have come into relationship with him through faith and repentance.

Knowing Jesus is of first importance. Can you imagine a church that doesn't know Jesus? Can you imagine a ministry that doesn't know Jesus? Can you imagine a gospel that doesn't know Jesus? What a parody of faith, what a parody of church, what a parody of mission when the knowledge of Jesus is lost! That's the threat that Peter wants to counter in this letter.

**N**otice **here** that God is a giver and notice the gifts God gives: Peter writes to those who have *received a faith* (v1). God's divine power has *given us everything we need for a godly life* (v3), and through God's glory and goodness he has *given us great and precious promises* (v4).

But now notice how it is that God's people come to receive these gifts. Grace and peace be yours in abundance *through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord* (v2). His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life *through our knowledge of him who called us* (v3).

Knowing Jesus is the essential and sufficient foundation of the Christian life. Not having Bible information, not keeping religious rules, not being moral, not ecstatic experience or institutional authorization—no, the gifts God gives come on account of what *he* has done to secure them, and are given to those who enter into relationship with him. Even the faith that saves is something we receive on the basis of the righteousness of Jesus—it is all of grace, even faith and repentance.

It is the stunning life and ministry of Jesus which is planted like a great flagpole in history, that summons all those who will come, to know God through Jesus and to receive from him all that God has to give—grace and peace, everything needed to live the godly life, his very great and precious promises.

To say that God has given his people a faith is to say he has called them into relationship with himself—through



Jesus. To say that he has given them grace and peace is to say that they have received forgiveness and reconciliation — through Jesus. To say that God gives his people everything necessary for the godly life, means that God produces in his people the life that pleases him, produces in his people the likeness of Jesus. To say he has given his people great and precious promises is to say that Jesus is the hope of his people, he has secured their future and they live in the light of what is promised but not yet seen. To say that God's people participate or fellowship in the divine nature is to say that they are no longer prisoners to corruption but adopted children in the divine family, sons and daughters in fellowship with the Father through the Son by the Spirit.

**If you are** at all like me, you have come to this conference, partly to get a break from the relentlessness of caring and feeding and guarding the flock of the Chief Shepherd. We count it a privilege, we count it the highest privilege—but in the midst of tears and prayers and doubts and death—we wonder, how will we rise to this task and how will we keep at it? But brothers and sisters, take courage! His divine power has given his people everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of Jesus who called us by his own glory and goodness. Jesus, for his own glory and in accord with his own inexhaustible goodness saved us for himself. The faith we have, we *received*—because it was him who chose us before we chose him. And all those who are his have received a faith as precious as that of the apostle himself. We are in no different a position than the first generation of believers in Christ, for he has given us everything we need through our knowledge of him.

So do not neglect the knowledge of Jesus in his righteousness, grace and peace and in God's very great and precious promises. It can happen can't it? We can be so busy with ministry we lose touch with Jesus. Those chilling words that Jesus speaks in Matthew 25: 'Away from me. I never knew you!' Do not neglect the knowledge of him who called us by

his own glory and goodness, and do not hesitate to offer him to others. We have nothing to offer as ministers of the Lord Jesus other than the Lord himself. But as people receive and respond to him they receive everything they need for a godly life.

And if you are at all like me then you have come to this conference slightly overwhelmed and slightly intimidated by the opposition and the indifference of the world around us to the message we proclaim and the offer that we make. But do not doubt for one moment that in the face of secularism and skepticism and consumerism and hedonism and pluralism his divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of Jesus our Lord.

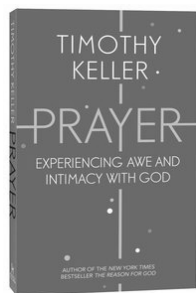
There is one who can lift our eyes to things we cannot see, there is one who can answer the doubts and fears of the human heart, there is one knowledge of whom is such comfort and joy that he makes the pleasures of the world dull and tasteless, there is one whose freely bestowed grace and peace is more valuable and more beautiful and more satisfying than all the glitter and technology with which we adorn our lives, there is one whose singular life lays claim to human hearts, one heart at a time. All we have to offer the world is Jesus; but Jesus is the answer to all the world's longings. The knowledge of Jesus: that's powerful knowledge.



**Kanishka Raffel** is rector of St Matthew's Shenton Park, WA. This is an extract from the first of his Anglican Future Conference Bible Studies.



# BOOK REVIEWS



## **Prayer**

*Experiencing Awe and Intimacy with God*

**Tim Keller**

Hodder, 2014.

**T**im Keller continues to churn out books at a terrific rate and distill his years of life and ministry into readable volumes that reflect his wide reading and thoughtful engagement with past writers and present experience. I was curious to read his book on prayer in particular because I had come across him mentioning a watershed in his own prayer life, where he learnt to pray in a way that he had not hitherto. Indeed he opens chapter one with the line, 'In the second half of my adult life, I discovered prayer. I had to.' (p 9) For Keller teaching the Psalms, the events of 9/11 in New York where he ministers, a sick wife and being diagnosed with cancer himself were all catalysed by his wife's request that they pray together every night into a new commitment to pray and to pray better.

Keller decided to learn from old books, not new ones, and he found help in writers like Luther, Calvin, John Owen and John Murray. For his own book he has read more widely and, typically for Keller, interacts with fiction writers, poets, general theorists of prayer, philosophers, the-

ologians, popular authors, and of course, the Bible.

The book is in five parts, that move from our consciousness of our need to learn to pray and the promise that prayer holds for us (Part 1), through theological exploration of what prayer is (Part 2), to a primer on prayer guided by Augustine, Luther, Calvin and the Lord's prayer (Part 3). Keller is keen to say that prayer must be our response to God who has already spoken to us, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Prayer may be a human instinct, but true prayer is the gift of the Holy Spirit by whom we call God Father.

Keller is also keen to say that prayer is more than simply bringing our requests to God, but that prayer can be an experience of sweet communion with God. Hence Part 4 is entitled Deepening Prayer, and has chapters on meditation on Scripture as a discipline ancillary to prayer and on prayer as a sweet encounter with God. Keller is not mechanical or presumptuous about this, but wants to encourage us not to leave our affections behind in prayer, and pray only

with our minds, or as a duty. He wants us to learn to pray with spiritual intensity, open to a sense of God.

The fifth part of the book is Doing Prayer and runs through the practice of praise and thanksgiving, confession, petition and patterns for daily prayer times. Keller makes comments on the classic 'quiet time' that I was disciplined in. He wants to broaden the quiet time's emphasis on study and petition to embrace meditative reflection on the Bible and heart-affecting encounter with God in adoring prayer. He also prefers a twice a day pattern, morning and evening, with brief prayer at other times, rather than a once a day pattern. He outlines a structure for such prayer time under the headings Evocation, Meditation, Word Prayer, Free Prayer and Contemplation.

Praying requires faith, persistence, discipline, thoughtfulness, open heartedness and more faith. I find it good to keep reading books that put the promise and practice of prayer before me. Keller's book is an engaging mix of the personal, theological, biblical, historical and practical. I found his emphasis on the practice of biblical meditation, and his recommendation of a structured twice-daily practice of prayer stuck in my mind as particular challenges to my own discipline of wrestling in prayer.

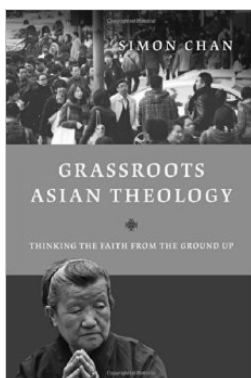
**Ben Underwood, Shenton Park WA**

### ***Grassroots Asian Theology***

*Thinking the Faith from the Ground Up*

**Simon Chan**

IVP Academic 2014.



**S**imon Chan is Earnest Lau Professor of Systematic Theology at Trinity Theological College in Singapore. This book is an attempt to identify and discuss grassroots theologies in Asia. In doing so Chan aims to draw from Catholic and Orthodox sources because “they offer a broader and more solid basis for contextual theologies compared with what goes on in much of mainline Protestantism and evangelicalism today.” (8). His method is to use traditional theological loci and sketch elitist theologies and compare them with the writings found in sermons and other grassroots sources. This opening statement gives a clue to the critique he offers of the old European liberal theology that sometimes seems to masquerade as Asian.

Chan dislikes the terms ‘Western’ and ‘Eastern’. Too often they just disguise one’s likes or dislikes. His presupposition is that “an Asian theology is about the Christian faith in Asia.” (10). This means that the apostolic tradition is normative. To start a new trajectory apart from this tradition

produces a gnostic church which, while appearing open and tolerant to other faiths is incapable of serious dialogue with them.

Chan wants to develop contextual theologies that are true to the lived experience of ordinary believers. This “ecclesial experience constitutes the primary theology of the church.” (16). He takes this approach to avoid two pitfalls: it avoids conceiving theology as purely objective facts or propositions; and it does not consider individuals as the primary agents of doing theology.

He distinguishes ecclesial experience from cultural experience, and in so doing provides helpful critiques of various liberationist and other culture-specific theologies. This section of his opening chapter is worth the price of the book, as it helps undermine the false claims of much of what has posed as Asian theology. He says it is elitist theology with an enlightenment base.

He has quite a bit to say about Folk Christianity, especially the Pentecostal-charismatic version. It is “an example of perhaps the most successful contextualization of the gospel the world has ever seen.” (31). He sees that it has much in common with folk religion in general. He offers a helpful critique of it and shows how it sits in a ‘middle zone’ between ultimate questions handled by the ‘high religions’ and the observable world handled by science. To label it syncretistic and superstitious is to fail to see how it has adapted to its environment. Chan acknowledges that this is complex but claims “that folk Christianity has more to teach us about Asian theology than what elitist Asian theologians are saying.” (35).

He takes up the question of social engagement, which elitist theologians

regard as the main subject and shows that there are other ways than direct engagement. He uses Barth and Tillich as different models of social engagement to discuss how Christians are engaging on the ground (he prefers Barth’s approach). All of that is in the first chapter.

The rest of the book uses the traditional centres of God, Humanity, Christ, Holy Spirit etc. to discuss how grassroots theology deals with its contexts. So the doctrine of God is discussed in relation to an Asian Islamic context (such as Malaysia), an Indian Hindu context, Chinese religions and God in relation to primal religions.

The strength of the book is that it is earthed in the real world of Christianity in Asia and grapples with the ways in which Christianity has been adapted and shaped by its contexts and the challenges it poses to those contexts. The book is a theological book because it keeps on going back to the apostolic tradition of the scriptures to evaluate and critique. It will be very helpful to anyone who is involved in an Asian context, whether actually in Asia or in an Asian expatriate context.

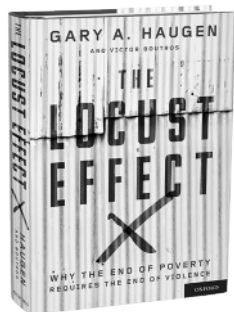
**Dale Appleby, Willleton WA**

### ***The Locust Effect***

*Why the end of poverty requires the end of violence*

**Gary Haugen & Victor Boutros**

OUP 2014.



**I**n 1875 trillions of locusts weighing 27 million tons bore down on 200,000 square miles of the American Midwest and wiped out every living plant. Gary Haugen and Victor Boutros show that a similar effect is happening to the world's poor. As much as they try to work, save for their children's education, buy small houses (or rooms) to live in, their efforts are consistently and effectively thwarted by an epidemic of violence.

The authors don't focus on war zones or civil conflicts, although these are devastating enough. They illustrate in pitiful detail the ordinary criminal violence that afflicts the world's poor – especially in developing countries.

Sexual violence (a “medical emergency” according to *Medicine Sans Frontiers*), slavery (there are more slaves in the world now than there were during the whole period of the 18th century slave trade), land grabbing, arbitrary detention and torture are some of the features of this violence.

One of the chief reasons it continues mostly unabated is that the poor do not live under the protection of the law. For a number of reasons: the pub-

lic justice system in the developing world is broken. The police are under trained, under resourced, under paid, and scarce. There are too few prosecutors. There are not enough judges and the court systems are dysfunctional and hopelessly back logged.

Numerous reports by the United Nations, the World Bank and others, report the locust effect on real capital earnings (GDP reduced by up to 14%); human capital (9 million years of disability adjusted life years lost each year); social capital (destroys social fabric and relationships); mental illness.

One big reason the criminal justice systems of the developing world are dysfunctional is that they are carry-overs from the colonial era when police forces were developed to protect the colonial powers, not to care for the ordinary people. The amazing thing is that in many countries no changes have been made after independence.

Private justice systems, (private security, alternative dispute resolution) are being used by elites in the developing world to protect their people and property. Public justice systems continue to decline in usefulness. The biggest obstacle to change is that the elites benefit from the broken public justice system because it protects them from being held accountable.

The massive global movement to address poverty in the developing world over the last 50 years has not made a meaningful effort to address the problem of criminal violence against the poor. Overall almost nothing has been spent on helping criminal justice systems that benefit the poor. So it hasn't been tried and found wanting it has been found hard and left untried.

However there is good news (sort of). The kind of corruption and dys-

function at present in the criminal justice systems of developing countries is pretty much the same as it was in US Japan France and other countries 100 years ago. This is normal. But change happened because of: local ownership and leadership of intentional efforts to change; each situation needed its own specific solutions; community leaders and reform minded elites played a critical role; the priority was to prevent violence; building a well resourced law enforcement capacity was risky; change can happen quickly but usually in punctuated bursts. So there is hope.

The authors provide worked examples of changes that have happened. The authors are part of the International Justice Mission which arose out of a Christian conscience but works with all kinds of people in all sorts of communities. Structural Transformation is one of its methods where coalitions of local people work together to bring about change. Collaborative Casework is an aspect of this. IJM and others have seen wonderful changes take place in a variety of countries. This part of the book is a very encouraging contrast to the horror of the first few chapters.

The authors say that what needs to happen now is to transform the conversation about global poverty so that violence is seen to be a devastating factor; integrate expertise about criminal justice into the conversation; experiment with Projects of Hope which will provide models, examples, and hope for other communities. Especially using versions of Collaborative Casework.

An amazing book. Worth reading, discussing and working out what to do.

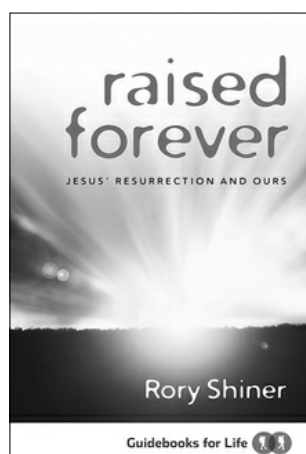
***Dale Appleby, Willetton WA***

### ***Raised Forever***

*Jesus' Resurrection and Ours*

**Rory Shiner**

Matthias Media, 2014.



**A**s one would expect from the author of *One Forever* – this is a good book. The introduction is grabbing and gripping. The first chapter on Acts 17 is a touch wordy, but gets you out of today's mindset of 'of course 1st century simpletons believed in the resurrection, they hadn't invented test tubes yet'. Chapter 2 brings the resurrection back into the Old Testament and the hope of Israel, carefully balancing on the one hand the lack of direct resurrection prophecies and on the other hand the meta-story of Israel being one of a resurrected people. To combat the resurrection-sceptic, chapter 3 gives the evidence for an empty tomb a fresh coat of paint that is a model for how to handle this topic in an apologetics series. There is a surprising omission of Lazarus, and the need for personal belief in Jesus as the resurrection and the life (John 11:25-27). I wonder if the book would have a sharper evangelistic edge if personal judgment and

need for repentance was clearer in the first half of the book (p36-38).

The second half of the book is where Shiner starts to shine. He is strong on the centrality of the image of first-fruits for understanding Jesus' and our resurrection, doing a good job of unpacking 1 Corinthians 15. My favourite quote of the book: 'Investing a life in sin is like investing money in VHS video shops' (p.100). It's here, where Shiner links theology, humour and real-life-insight, that this book repays reading. There is also some now-and-not-yet stuff thrown in for good measure.

An interlude provides a gentle rebuke and reminder that we're not really going to heaven forever. This is NT Wright for dummies, seen in the multiple references to his work. It helpfully tells you not just what not to believe about heaven, but what to believe instead. And this is done in such a way so as to not crush the hopes of the average church member, but re-educate them on what the Bible is really on about. Do not read this book if you want to keep your false notions of the afterlife intact. Mine are now shattered on the floor where I read it.

Creeds, Calvin and the Christian life are in view as the book closes. Especially balanced is the treatment of 'labour in the Lord'. *Raised Forever* gives us resurrection-motivation for gospel centred work in all we do, in or out of a pulpit. The implications for ministry are spelled out helpfully in *Conversion as Resurrection* (142-6).

I have two questions from reading this book, and then a comment on who it is great for.

Question 1: There's that intriguing verse in Romans 4:25, that Jesus was raised for our justification. Here's my question: can we have a bit more on that? Can there be more on 1 Cor. 15:17

and the relationship between the cross and the tomb? Because while there are many books on the cross that don't do enough to the resurrection, I was hoping this would be a book on the resurrection that didn't short-change the cross.

Question 2: why is Shiner so sure that we'll be 'building cities, making music, enriching communities' for eternity (p139)? Revelation is pretty clear that the city is already there (Rev. 21-22), the song sheet is already printed (Rev. 19) and the community is going to be rich already (21:18)! While the book rejects unbiblical claims we have about the afterlife, it's possible that it gets replaced with an equally non-biblical (but not necessarily unbiblical) one.

These were two distractions for me from an otherwise excellent book. It was on our high school camp bookstall this summer. It should be on your church bookstall too for the newcomer and senior leader. And it should be on our bookshelves as well, to ensure that we are teaching rightly the great hope we have in the risen Jesus, because the 'same power that raised Christ from the grave is with you all the way' (p.151).

***Ed Surrey, Shenton Park, WA.***

## A cracker, a treasure trove, a particular joy

Tim Watson had a good time at the Anglican Future Conference. He shares what he especially appreciated.



Tim Watson is the Deputy Principal of Roseville College, a K-12 Anglican School for Girls in Sydney.

What a cracker of a conference. And what a keynote speaker, Ashley Null—never has a surname been such a misnomer—it was a treasure trove he opened and held up for us. Would that we be worthy of our fathers, those who struggled to cut through the thicket of tradition and the trappings of the church to release the Lamb of God, the Lion of Judah found in the unfettered Word of God.

In unpacking elements of our church history the past was remembered so that the future may not be forgotten—the future we have in Christ. It was a delight to examine the way the past plays out in our present and future selves. And this is true of us individually and as a denomination, a point of reflection not to be overlooked.

We look to the Scriptures, we look to the formularies, and we look to our current practices, context and culture as we seek to be authentically Christian, authentically Anglican followers of Jesus. It was this of which we were reminded.

As we think on our future we can't forget our past, nor must we be trapped by it—the formularies are directed by and direct us to the Scriptures, the Scriptures direct us to the Lord, and the Lord directs us to the harvest.

A particular joy for me was to go to the *Discipling Believers* workshop with Kara Hartley and Pete Smith. Pete was my Bible study leader in my senior years at school, and being at the workshop felt like I was the “here's one that I prepared earlier” example.

Harvest where you are. Go out to the harvest. Harvest across cultures. Harvest across cities and across organisations. Invite people to the banquet to which we have been invited. Staging posts ought to include schools, parachurch organisations, small groups, universities, and yes, churches. It was lovely to hear Peter Adam talking about the role of the church beyond the church.

Let us be us, real us, broken and contrite, but saints in the service of the King.

Let us be serious about what we believe and clear about what we know. Let us profess the hope that is the only hope as we offer the kingdom to those in need of the King. Come Lord Jesus.

## Creative, humble advocacy

Kanishka Raffel recounted the striking and moving story of William Cooper—a story he learnt from *The Centre for Public Christianity* website—during his third AFC Bible study.



William Cooper (b.1860–d.1941)

William Cooper was an Aboriginal man of Yorta Yorta descent born in 1860 who grew up on the Maloga mission on the Murray River as a child. He became a Christian in his twenties. His grandson, Alfred Turner (“Uncle Boydie”) is still living and recalls that his grandfather was a man who would read his Bible daily and had a great confidence in the resurrection, a great expectation of the new heavens and the new earth and a great sense of accountability for his life when the judgment came.

Cooper has become famous because in 2008 he was honoured by the State of Israel at the seventieth anniversary of Kristallnacht—the night in November 1938 when across Germany, Jewish home and businesses were trashed and burned, Jews were turned out into the streets mocked, beaten and killed. About one month after Kristallnacht the 77 year old Cooper led what the Jerusalem Holocaust Museum Yad Vashem describes as the only citizens’ protest anywhere in the world at the time against the treatment of the Jews by the Nazi regime in Germany.

Cooper led a delegation of about twenty mainly Aboriginal people who marched from his home in Footscray to the offices of the Reich’s Consul in Collins St, Melbourne to present a letter protesting the treatment of the Jewish people by the Nazi government. The Consul General refused to meet the delegation of the Australian Aboriginal League that Cooper had helped create some years before, but the protest was reported in the Melbourne *Argus* newspaper.

Earlier in 1938 an international conference had met at Evian in Switzerland to discuss the issue of the flood of Jewish refugees escaping Germany. The Australian government had inexplicably resolved at the Evian Conference that Australia would take no Jewish refugees from Germany or Austria, but two days after Cooper’s protest the Minister for the Interior, Jack McEwen announced that Australia had changed its position and would now take 15 000 Jewish refugees.

At the time Cooper protested the treatment of the Jews in Germany he, along with all other Aboriginal people, were not citizens of Australia and would not become so until nearly thirty years after his death, but Cooper had advocated for the rights of his people since his twenties and in 1937 presented a petition to the

King seeking parliamentary representation, the vote and recognition of Aboriginal land holdings.

In 2010 Cooper's great-grandson re-enacted the march from Cooper's home to the German Consul General. The letter was received this time and the German government invited his family members to present the letter in person to the Chancellor who held a reception in his honour and offered a formal apology to his family. And the Yad Vashem memorial in Israel has

established a Professorial Chair in Holocaust Studies that bears his name.

An amazing story of a very ordinary man, who was seized by the story of the Exodus and lived in light of the new heaven and the new earth that he was eagerly looking forward to. A remarkable Australian; living the life of an ordinary Christian.

He understood 'living in between'—no triumphalist utopia, no miserly withdrawal. Creative humble advocacy. I find that deeply impressive. What kind of people

ought you to be since everything will be destroyed in this way? You ought to live holy and godly lives. (2 Pe 3:11)

References: Christianity, C. f. P. (2013a). Kristallnacht protest. 2015, from <https://publicchristianity.org/library/kristallnacht-protest#.VSS81mOVq3d>  
Christianity, C. f. P. (2013b). Life and faith: William Cooper. 2015, from <https://publicchristianity.org/library/life-and-faith-william-cooper#.VSS73WOVq3d>

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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:
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  - b) for articulating gospel distinctives in the area of faith, order, life and mission by consultations and publications.
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