

ANGLICANS TOGETHER

NEWSLETTER No.28 November 2005

ANGLICANS TOGETHER ONLINE: <www.anglicanstogether.org>

Chairman's Column

We are presently preparing ourselves for the season of Christmas. The story of Christmas demands that we take seriously that the Word of God became a human being. God's coming into the world in the form of Jesus is the decisive event in human history, indeed, in the history of creation, because the incarnation changed God's relationship to us and our relationship to God. The incarnation means that we can see, hear and know God in ways never before possible. The Father-Son relationship of God and Jesus is the key to this changed relationship. God's Son, because he is the incarnate Word, derives his identity from God. The relationship between divine and human is transformed, because in the incarnation we are given intimate, physical access to the cosmic reality of God. **This is the Good news of Christmas.**

I believe that we as Anglicans are uniquely qualified by our diversity to proclaim the love of God as expressed by the nativity of our Lord. None of us has all the answers. We need, the world needs, to hear how the Logos has brought meaning into our lives and to all who are seeking meaning and direction in this beautiful, if sometimes confusing world.

We had a very successful Annual Dinner at Saint Alban's Epping on the 14th October. The evening was completely sold out and Anglicans of all traditions enjoyed fellowship, fine food and a scintillating address by the *Reverend Dr Andrew McGowan*. *Dr McGowan* is the acting Dean of Trinity College within the University of Melbourne and the Director of the Trinity College Theological School.

Anglicans Together (AT) came into being in 1992. Since then, we have travelled through some tumultuous times in the Church. I believe that AT has been an effective voice for expressing the view of people who wish to maintain traditional Anglican diversity in Sydney. AT is a vehicle for

expressing ideas that differ from the controlling party's Puritan viewpoint.

As it is now thirteen years since AT's inception it thought that it would be wise to call a general meeting of all paid up members of **Anglicans Together** to discuss the "Future Directions" of our group. Therefore there will be a meeting held in **St James' Hall, 1st Floor 171 Phillip St. Sydney on 25th February at 2-4pm**. If you are a paid up member please make every effort to attend this vital meeting.

In addition, as I announced at the Dinner, after five years of serving as the Chairman/President of AT I believe it is now time for me to resign my position. I am honoured to have served in this position. I believe the profile of AT is now more evident than it was previously. Our membership has never been larger. I would like to thank the other members on the committee for their support.

May the Light of Christ shine in your lives this Christmas so that your lives will be a constant sign of the love of God to all people.



John Cornish

*Love came down at Christmas
Love all lovely, Love divine
Love was born at Christmas,
Star and angel gave the sign.*

*Worship we the Godhead
Love incarnate, Love divine
Worship we our Jesus:
But wherewith the sacred sign?*

Christina Georgina Rossetti

From Cathedral Organ Loft to Country Parson

"What's going on? I've heard that you are joining the opposition" emailed my cynical organist friend from Canada - an organist of the old school who had been embroiled in many classic organist/clergy confrontations. In fact, he was the kind of organist who, although a great friend, could have inspired that famous clergy riddle: **Q. "What is the difference between an organist and a terrorist?" A. "You can negotiate with a terrorist."**

I tried to tell him what was going on, and in fact, I have found that many people were asking the same question although expressed in more diplomatic terms. The most encouraging thing I found was that very few expressed amazement. In fact, one of my retired lay clerks from the cathedral told me that he always thought that was what I really wanted to do.

When I returned to Australia in 1981 to become organist and master of choristers at St Andrew's Cathedral Sydney, I could not see beyond that milestone. In the world of church music, there was nowhere else to go in this country. **As the years rolled on I believed I was in for the long haul, and I was happy with that prospect. There was never a dull moment, the choir attained international prestige with its tours and recordings and I sincerely believed, and still do, that God had called me to that task and had equipped me for it.** However, I thought that retirement would be the ultimate reason for leaving, especially as I was approaching the quarter of a century mark at the cathedral.

In the early 1990s, a colleague of mine at the cathedral school had started a Bachelor of Divinity course from the Melbourne College of Divinity. The course was so structured that most of the tuition could be done by correspondence and there was an examination centre in Sydney. I decided to keep him company as I thought it would be an interesting hobby to study theology. By doing one subject a year, occasionally two, I managed to complete the degree by the end of the decade, little realising that it was one piece of the jigsaw that would lead me to ordination. Other pieces soon became apparent even though they had been there all along.

I had always been interested in liturgy and was a great student of sermons. After all, I had heard a few thousand in my career and could always tell why some compelled me more than others. From a very young age I had somehow got into the habit of daily prayer and bible reading, later to develop into the daily office. Also, I had discovered some spiritual heroes along the way. Some had mesmerised me by their preaching, others by the depth of their prayer life and their walk with God. Some I had met, others I discovered through books. What interested me was that they crossed the borders of Christian tradition, denominations, and Anglican churchmanship. **My spiritual heroes never indicated that their way of worship and their way of expressing their faith was the only way. All they had in common was a love of the Lord Jesus.**

I discovered that a call can consist of positives and negatives. God might be opening doors or windows in one direction, but start to close them in another. So, a little less than three years ago, life began to change. I was becoming more and more convinced that worship was the primary purpose of life, both in personal lifestyle and in its liturgical, public form. **I had been deeply impressed by a comment from a London vicar at a church I once attended: "Get the worship right and everything else follows".** I was exploring the thought that liturgy and sacraments were actually gifts from God that can get us through the low times, the dark periods, when mere words and Christian fellowship can be insufficient. But I found that the cathedral was going in a different direction to where my journey seemed to be leading.

A chance meeting with the *Dean of Bathurst*, after attending a Sunday service at All Saints Cathedral during school holidays early in 2003 was the next part of the jigsaw. It led to a further meeting in Sydney. It seemed that the *Bishop of Bathurst* knew that I had a theological degree and had suggested to the dean to ask if I would consider the idea of coming on board as director of music and Precentor of the cathedral, possibly in an ordained capacity. This led to a meeting with the bishop who encouraged me to consider ordained ministry. **If so, it was made clear this would mean going through all the 'hoops' - examining chaplains, diocesan panels, psychological assessment, tri-diocesan panel, 'checkups' with the archdeacon and bishop in between, and so on. It was a real journey of discernment.**

So, the pieces gradually came together. There was never any rush. The Dean, the Bishop and the Archdeacon (now Assistant Bishop of Bathurst) were insistent that the calling had to be clear, that the journey of discernment could be terminated at any time by either party, and also that the timing of any move must suit my family, especially the fact that my youngest was entering the last couple of years of school. I was also instructed to enrol in a CPE course (Clinical Pastoral Education), a part-time course that I have only just completed.

And so, I depart the glories of a metro political cathedral music tradition, and move to a country parish which is in need of some musical missionary work. All Saints Cathedral is very much a parish church when it is not hosting some diocesan service. I will be the Precentor, having oversight of the music and the liturgy, and I will also be Assistant to the Dean in his pastoral role. **Earlier this year I was ordained deacon and on Saturday December 3rd at 11.00am will be ordained priest in All Saints Cathedral, Bathurst. I then commence full-time work there.** It will be an adventure. There is no rigid job description - that will evolve as time goes on. In so many ways it is a journey into the unknown. *Please pray for me.*

The Rev'd Michael Deasey

Vale Earle Backen

Artist and Anglican layman

Earle Backen, was born in Albury in 1927 and grew up in Wagga Wagga. He studied in Sydney with ***Dattilo Rubbo*** and then with ***John Passmore*** at the Julian Ashton Art School. **In 1954 he was awarded the NSW Travelling Art Scholarship and studied in London and Paris. In Paris he learned the technique of printmaking at S W Hayter's famous Atelier 17 and developed a love of that city which saw him return on very many occasions.** Back in Australia he taught at the National Art School (in the East Sydney Technical College) where he established the print-making studio and later at the City Art Institute. As a teacher he inspired generations of young artists. In January 2003 he received an AM for his service to art as a contributor to the development and understanding of contemporary art, both as an artist and as a lecturer.

Earle is said to have been one of the finest and most respected Australian print makers of his generation. However he also became known for other works, including his fine classically-composed still lifes. Earle's work is to be found in most national and regional galleries and he has won many awards and prizes.

A lesser known aspect of Earle's artistic endeavours was his interest in religious art. He was a long-standing member of the ***Blake Society for Religious Art*** and served as a judge for the Blake Prize in 1965, 1975 and 1978. The combination of his interest in religious art with his own faith can be seen in no better place than at Christ Church, St Laurence where he was an active parishioner. **Earle's work as an iconographer is displayed in the 14 pieces of his Orthodox icon series which are in many respects the culmination of his career.** They were dedicated at Christ Church on 15 August 2005, less than two month's before his death. His other works at Christ Church include the Triptych of the Incarnation (1987) and the icon, St Laurence and Christian Witnesses, Saints and Martyrs (jointly with ***Alan Oldfield***, 2003). In addition to his own works, Earle undertook the formidable task of restoring the Lo Schiavo mural in the sanctuary in 1975. Earle's own deep spirituality was engaged in other ways too, leading the meditation group at Christ Church and organising the walking the labyrinth meditation on a number of occasions during Holy Week.

Earle took his religious and artistic interests beyond Christ Church in ways too numerous to mention. An icon of Christ graces the wall of the All Souls' Chapel in the Church of St John the Divine, Croydon, Victoria. The triptych in the 1858 Anglican Christ Church, Istanbul was restored by Earle in 1993. He was an active member of the Anglican parish of St George's, Paris during his frequent stays in that city. Earle was also an oblate of the Order of St Benedict. ***Father Michael King OSB*** preached the homily at Earle's requiem at Christ Church.

Earle died on 3 October 2005 after a long illness with cancer. His deep spirituality, his tremendous sense of humour and his commitment to the Anglican Communion will be greatly missed.

Joseph Waugh

ANGLICARE and the 'Robinson' Connection

Martin Robinson stepped down in May 2005 from The Council of the Sydney Anglican Home Mission Society (Anglicare) after nineteen years' involvement, sixteen on the Council and the last twelve years as Chairman. Martin has reflected upon the period of his involvement:

When it is noted that **Anglicare** employs about 1200 people and another 2000 assist as volunteers, I reflect that I am one of those volunteers. It has been a privilege and a joy to be so involved with such a wonderful organisation.

In many ways it is surprising, for I had little knowledge of **HMS** at the time (1987) when **John Livingstone** asked me to join the Careforce Committee soon after he had become Director of Welfare Services for **HMS**. However I found I was learning about my own heritage. My grandfather, **Archdeacon R. B. Robinson**, had been General Secretary of **HMS** 1935 to 1948, and was **Archbishop Mowll's** right-hand-man at a time of great expansion of the work of **HMS**. **Archdeacon Robinson** was also involved in the beginnings of **Chesalon**, along with one of my predecessors in the Parish of Killara, the **Rev'd Norman Fox**. **For me, as for those men, there has never seemed to be any tension between gospel ministry and the "acts of mercy" carried out by HMS (Anglicare).** However it is important to explore this question in the light of the current Diocesan Mission.

A fundamental ambiguity has characterised the history of HMS (Anglicare) over the last 20 years, aspects of which may have become apparent only in the latter part of the period.

On one hand the management, professionalism, and standing of the organisation and its work have gone from strength to strength, in keeping with the size of Sydney. In **Anglicare** we have a significant institution. The unifying management structure embarked upon by **Bryce Wilson** has been brought to high effectiveness under **Howard Dillon**, who retired last August. The strong investment climate from 1993-2001 helped in this, and in enabling the organisation to reposition itself in the public's awareness, as well as in the Diocesan scene, through the adoption of **ANGLICARE** as a trading name. Our professionalism, acknowledged by incoming CEO **Peter Kell**, is of a very high order indeed.

However, these factors have exacerbated the other side of the contradiction in the failure of **HMS (Anglicare)** to capture the heart of the whole Diocese's confidence. The more financially astute and professional we have been, and the more the confidence with which we are held by the society at large, the more we have been held in suspicion by significant opinion leaders in the Diocese. This tension reflects the combination of two factors i) The modern Sydney evangelical's reserve about "good works" and ii) the trend in a growing diocese to delegate governance away from the Archbishop.

These factors are fully understandable, but there can be no justification for the Synod and the Diocese Leadership to allow an organisation like HMS (Anglicare) to become marginalised from the mainstream of Diocesan life.

It is vital that **HMS (Anglicare)** be owned by the Diocese: its leadership, the Synod, and other opinion leaders. Concern in recent years has been that these have been divided in their attitude to **HMS (Anglicare)**. A large part of the Diocese is strongly supportive and proud of **Anglicare's** work, but an equally significant proportion is negative, declining even to distribute materials. This tension was experienced personally by the former CEO - **Howard Frederick Dillon**, a true son of this Diocese (as reflected in his Christian names). He exercised a significant ministry in the Melbourne Diocese, but experienced constant criticism and resistance to promotion in that Diocese because he came from Sydney. Yet when he returned to Sydney was viewed by many with suspicion because he had achieved significantly in Melbourne!

Much of the last decade has also seen HMS (Anglicare) cope with regionalism and consequent loss of the critical strategic function of Parish Support and Development. (See Box "Bishop Donald Robinson - A Comment"). Despite this, **HMS (Anglicare)** has built up a major Diocesan Services division, which serves us all through Hospital and Prison Chaplaincies, Emergency Response, Research and Counselling Services. **I leave the organisation at a time when it must review all its activities, not only in the interests of effective alignment with the Diocesan Mission, but because it can no longer afford to maintain several programmes in the absence of new financial sources.**

Part of me is reluctant to leave at a time of engaging with such challenges. However, I believe that securing the close alignment of **HMS (Anglicare)** with the Diocesan Leadership, as

evident in the appointment of Peter Kell, his membership of Standing Committee, and in particular, the willingness of the Archbishop to resume the role of Chairman, is a significant corrective to the Diocesan trend over the last 20-30 years. It is the one most critical development I could play a part in bringing about.

Martin B. Robinson
Rector, St Martin's Killara

Bishop Donald Robinson – A Comment

From its foundation in 1856 until the period of Archbishop Mowll and R. B. Robinson, 'Parish support and development' (though not by that name) was virtually the sole purpose and function of The Church Society/H.M.S. It was not supported financially by Synod, but by the parishes of the diocese which gave their offertories on Trinity and Advent Sundays. New ventures of the Mowll era diverted attention from the original purpose of the 'Church Society', so much so that when the need for a New Areas church drive arose in the 1960s, this was undertaken quite apart from H.M.S., and a new organisation was established.

When the New Areas Committee asked **Archbishop Robinson** to launch an Archbishop's Appeal for a million dollars for more churches for new areas, **Archbishop Robinson** took it up, but, after a further investigation in 1983 revealed a more extensive need, he launched the Vision for Growth programme with a fixed time frame and an appeal for \$7 million. However he requested H.M.S. establish a **Parish Support and Development Department** to assume responsibility for the continuance of parish support and development when the VFG programme ran its course. The course was for H.M.S. to resume its original purpose of promoting church growth.

It is disturbing to note that the **Parish Support and Development Department of H.M.S. and its "critical function" have apparently been "lost"**. The new Diocesan Services Division of H.M.S. (**Anglicare**) does not sound like a replacement either of the Parish Support and Development Department or the original purpose and function of the Church Society/H.M.S.

Donald Robinson - 17.4.05

the children. The prayers continued while the brothers took him out of the church. He died 15 minutes later.

At the memorial service we prayed for the woman who caused his death. She had been asked to leave by the brothers when she had disrupted prayers the day before. She bought a knife and carried it into the church with her.

The weekend at Mittagong in September was a month after his death. 80 people attended – the largest group yet.

The focus of our reflection for the weekend was **Brother Roger's** letter, entitled 'A Future of Peace'. The section that struck me most forcibly said " 'Happy the simple-hearted!' Yes happy those who head towards simplicity, simplicity of heart and simplicity of life. A simple heart attempts to live in the present moment, to welcome each day as God's today." At the time I was struck by it because it sounded like my father, the same age as **Brother Roger**. But thinking about it now, it characterises **Brother Roger** himself. He simplified his life and called others to join him, that they might "share with the least fortunate in order to alleviate suffering where there is disease, poverty, famine,..."

Brother Roger has left a legacy of a style of worship and a way of life - all of which is simple and beautiful.

**Holy Spirit, you live in every human being
And you come to place in us
These essential realities of the Gospel
Kind-heartedness and forgiveness.**

**To love and to express it with out life,
To love with kind-heartedness and to forgive:
There you enable us to find
One of the wellsprings of peace and joy.**

Prayer of Brother Roger, Taize.

The NSW Ecumenical Council organises a weekend every year led by Brother Ghislain from Taize. For information: the Rev'd Dr Ray Williamson, NSW Ecumenical Council (02) 9299-2215. Visit the Council website at: www.nswec.org.au or the Taize website at: www.taize.fr

Contributed by Kerin Brown, Parishioner, St Alban's, Epping.

TAIZE WEEKEND

Mittagong Marist Farmhouse

"Brother Roger's memorial service is at St Mary's Cathedral. Are you going?" Said the email. I thought: "how sad I am for the brothers – **Brother Roger** is dead". When I asked for more details - "Hadn't you heard? **Brother Roger** was assassinated!" I couldn't believe it! How could this be? Gentle, saintly 90 year old **Brother Roger** was knifed while at prayer in his usual spot with

MARCUS LOANE AND THE CHURCH DOCTRINE OF MOORE COLLEGE

In 27 short chapters *John Reid* has brought together a very readable biography of *Marcus Loane*, who became Archbishop of the Anglican Diocese of Sydney in 1966. This is quite a masterly overview.

John Reid has given those of us, who have lived through the last four decades, a handle for assessing both the strengths and the weaknesses of a shy, essentially humble Christian who became Archbishop of the most powerful Diocese in Oz.

Marcus has been an example of outstanding personal self-discipline, physical endurance and resilience in his commitment to Christ. As an army chaplain, he won the admiration of the troops among whom he served in Papua New Guinea 1942-44.

After returning from PNG to be Vice-Principal of Moore Theological College, Marcus developed his remarkable gifts of juggling the demands of academic writing, lecturing, preaching, administration, and chairing Synod with clarity and fairness. Pastoral visiting and personal letter writing has always been a priority for him.

He won respect by his personal grace and rectitude.

As Primate of the Anglican Church of Australia from 1978-1982, he used that position to urge all Christians to be involved in evangelism. His own understanding of the evangelistic imperative was strongly influenced by the 18th and 19th century English “evangelicals” *who “combined with their proclamation of the Gospel both a missionary and a social justice concern”*.

***Marcus* was not an adventurous thinker or a pioneering leader. But once he came to recognise the need for change, he implemented it adroitly – as was the case with the change of name from the “Church of England in Australia” to the “Anglican Church of Australia” in 1981.**

The publisher’s dustcover prompts the reader to be discerning: *“Sir Marcus L Loane was the first Australian-born Archbishop of Sydney. A conservative evangelical, during his 15 years as archbishop the seeds of many recent changes in the diocese were planted – not at his instigation and not all to his liking”* And it tells us that, *“John Reid studied under Marcus Loane at Moore College in the 1950s and worked closely with him as an assistant bishop in the 1970s.”*

John Reid has avoided writing a hagiography. But the reservations, blind spots or failings that John touches on are never fleshed out.

After re-reading this biography carefully a second time, I have a sense of deep sadness. In *Marcus*, we potentially had a really great leader. Born in Tasmania in 1911, he was never able to capitalise on the fact that **he was the first Australian-born Archbishop**. His election could have marked a moment of fresh impetus in the long process of the church becoming rooted in the soil and

spirit of Australia, and not remaining largely an alien collection of institutions transported from the other side of the world. He fumbled that ball and dropped it in the middle of the 60s!

Marcus was intellectually rooted in the past and the British protestant tradition. He was too much an establishment figure, unable to grasp the seismic shifts in Australia and the world. He did not empathise with the dam-breaking movements in theology. In the 1960s, what Biblical scholars and theologians had been uncovering over the previous century, began to escape the censorship of theological colleges;

These were published in popular forms, and were discussed openly on radio and television, and in some parishes. **The task confronting the church was to enable Christ, the Word of God, to be incarnated in a world that was post-Holocaust, post-Hiroshima, gripped by the Cold War, and shaken by the unquenchable impatience of post-Colonialism.** The illusion of “Christendom” had been destroyed by two World Wars. The longing for a clearer expression of Christian unity-in-action had been tried and tested during those decades. Out the ashes of Europe particularly the ecumenical movement was beginning to forge new understandings of “Church” and “living by faith”.

Marcus did not comprehend how deeply people were rejecting the church as an institution. Ultimately his model for evangelism was more of the same: to use 20th century technologies to recycle and turn up the volume of old style evangelism.

Perhaps *Marcus* would have become the leader we needed if it had not been for another factor. Coming into Sydney Diocese in 1962, after ordination in Chelmsford Diocese, I was surprised to find how inter-meshed and inter-related were so many of the church leaders in Sydney. In the biography there are references to these family links and the debts of “spiritual gratitude” between people

From the early 1960s (not later, as *J Reid* seems to suggest: pp.107-109), the *Revd Dr Broughton Knox*, Principal of Moore, and the *Revd Donald W B Robinson*, Vice-Principal, began propounding a major change in teaching about “the Church”.

“In Knox’s view, the Church was to be seen only as the gathered people of God when they physically met together for ‘fellowship’ in the local congregation, or as the gathering of all the redeemed in Heaven.

Such a view of the Church would mean that all denominational structures and agencies in the community must be regarded as nothing more than the corporate activities of individual Christians with gifts or interest in that area.”

***John Reid* does not probe deep enough. *Marcus Loane* acquiesced in what was happening. He did not**

act decisively in response to this disruptive novel doctrine. Perhaps “the ties that bind” got in the way.

This ultra-physical & congregational view that “**the church only exists when it meets**” was in full flight by 1963, with *Don Robinson* going to Perth to lecture to the Graduates’ Fellowship of the evangelical Inter-Varsity Fellowship. The novel theory was based on a very selective Biblical word study of one Greek word, “ecclesia”, in the New Testament, and then declaring that this image of “ecclesia” is the criterion for definition. It ignored the other 95 images used in the New Testament to describe the life and inner nature of those who follow Christ, who are spiritually joined to God through Christ, and how they are to express this in the world. Adequate theology cannot be based on such selective literalism and reductionism.

Don Robinson’s resulting booklet “**The Church of God: its form and its unity**” amounted to a tendentious argument against striving for greater unity among Christians and churches. What we are witnessing today is only the continuation of such attempts by some to impose their limited literalistic reading of selective texts upon others. It was an argument for individualism and fragmenting denominationalism. I doubt whether many recognized then, that the novel theory (“*the Moore College doctrine of the church*”) was in reality simply an ecclesiastical version of the excessive individualism sweeping the Western world in the 1960s.

I remember sharing a lift with *Marcus* when he said to me with sadness in his distinctive timbre, “*I feel like a stranger now when I go through the gate of Moore Theological College*”. *John Reid* relates that “*throughout his years as Archbishop, [Marcus] was never invited to preach in the college chapel*”. We may well ask, what lay behind this exclusion of an Archbishop from the College where he had served as an outstanding teacher and pastor? Is it not the attitude that only those deemed by the holders of power “to be likeminded” have a right to be heard? That attitude is now flourishing. *Marcus* was one of its victims. It is destroying the Diocese of Sydney from within.

Marcus L Loane – A Biography by John Reid,
Acorn Press, Hardcover, 154pp, index, RRP \$34.95

Reviewer: The Revd Clive H Norton actively retired.

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ANGLICANS TOGETHER FORUM

Saturday 25th February 2006 2-4 pm

St James Hall, 1st Floor 171 Phillip Street, Sydney.

All current financial members of **Anglicans Together**
invited to attend

St John the Evangelist, Gordon:
Traditional and vibrant

The congregation of St John’s Church, Gordon, has a clear idea of the type of churchmanship it favours: one that ensures a continuation of the solid Anglican style beloved by several generations of its

predecessors. The persistent strength and growth of this parish in many aspects of Christian life attest to the wisdom of its preference for ecclesiastical continuity, albeit with a vibrant tinge.

One can analyse an individual Anglican church in the Diocese of Sydney in various ways: its geography, demography, history, built-fabric, format of services, attendance numbers, finances, clergy, lay organizations, missionary outreach, and (indefinably, but outstandingly most important) its success in encouraging the people whom it touches to lead lives that reflect the teaching of Christ.

The Parish of Gordon corresponds closely to the geographical postcode 2072, of the suburb of Gordon. It is, as such, the smallest in area of the Upper North Shore suburbs with Anglican churches and its relatively sparse population - just over 6000, reflects this.

The area has a proud religious history. From about 1829 the rector of St Ann’s, Ryde, conducted monthly services in a weatherboard schoolhouse on the site of the present Gordon church. The parish of Gordon was proclaimed in 1835, covering the district between Willoughby and Hornsby, with rectors and assistant priests from North Sydney and Hornsby conducting services there. Parishioners paid for a small stone church (now the chapel), designed by *Edmund Blacket*, in 1872. They built the rectory and a church hall in the 1890s, after which the parish had its own rectors. An early outstanding incumbent (1893 to 1922) was *Rev’d Robert Raymond King, MA* - a direct descendent of *Governor King*, a brother of *Rev’d Copeland King* (the co-founder of the New Guinea Mission) and *Miss Esther King* (founder of a children’s missionary order within the Australian Board of Missions). *King* also built Anglican churches in Turramurra, Lindfield, St Ives, Pymble, and Roseville; so Gordon was subdivided to create these separate parishes. *R. R. King* ensured the Anglican tradition provided the mainstream of Christianity in the Upper and Middle North Shore and supported the creation of outstanding Anglican schools – Abbotsleigh for girls and Barker College for boys. He decided the liturgy at St John’s would reflect traditional Anglicanism.

St John’s Church occupies a prominent position on the Pacific Highway at the highest geographical point in Gordon. Its fabric comprises the church, chapel, crypt, offices, two halls, rectory, cemetery, car parks, and gardens. The church is built of brick, long and broad rather than high, and has a heavily beamed ceiling, an elevated choir, capacious sanctuary, proportionate pulpit, classical stained glass windows, a gallery, and a steeple with bell (that summons worshippers each Sunday). The sandstone chapel is small, but personal and has a particularly holy ambience. It contains the font (a marble replica of the famous angel font designed by Thorvaldsen for the cathedral in Copenhagen). The crypt, halls, and offices are well maintained and used

intensively. The rectory, a two-storey Federation-style building with verandas, can comfortably accommodate a large family. The cemetery and associated columbarium contain the graves and niches of past parishioners, including pioneers of the North Shore and Australia generally. Broad gardens with large trees and shrubs surround the complex and provide a relaxed but orderly atmosphere typical of the suburb of Gordon.

Sunday morning services consist of sung Holy Communion from *The Book of Common Prayer* at 8am, and a choral Family Eucharist from *A Prayer Book for Australia* with active youth involvement at 9.30 am. A contemporary service is held at 6pm. Services emphasise dignified worship as befits a holy place. The structure of the church and the clarity of the service booklets welcome and guide those who are not conversant with traditional Anglican services. The clergy wear vestments; processions occur with incense at festivals; members of the servers' guild (appropriately attired) assist the clergy. A talented organist and well-rehearsed choir greatly enhance the beauty of the services. There are also weekday services.

The present incumbent, Rev'd Keith Dalby was installed in late 2004. He is well placed to continue the fine tradition of his predecessors. Before coming to St John's he was a submariner in the Royal Australian Navy, then trained for the ministry in Adelaide. He served as rector of two parishes in Ballarat Diocese. He has a supportive wife, Alice, and an understanding of youth as he has a family of teenagers and children. He has a dynamic, but thoughtful, style and a gregarious but dignified personality of the type traditionally associated with evangelical high-churchmen - but that one so rarely sees nowadays. These characteristics all bode well for the future of the parish.

The parish has very many voluntary organizations: churchwardens and council, choir, servers, women's groups; song squad, men's fellowship, Sunday school, sidesmen, welcoming committee, Bible study and prayer groups, flower guild, opportunity shop workers, cemetery group. The parish has recently focused upon its present activities and its future by undertaking a ***Healthy Churches Check*** in which parishioners met throughout two Saturdays to brainstorm innumerable ideas and issues.

St Johns has always supported missionary activities to the maximum of its financial ability. It has, in fact, never been a wealthy parish, but manages to make regular donations to several evangelistic bodies, pay its Diocesan assessments, maintain its historic fabric, make occasional improvements, and still balance its books. It has traditionally given money to support distant missionary efforts rather than to acquire real estate beyond its fences. This approach, though worthy, has perennially impeded its ability to employ a curate or full-time assistant priest.

Parishioners now realise that if parishes such as St John's fail to train new priests in their own successful style of churchmanship they can hardly expect future generations of missionary activity to flourish. They are now giving renewed consideration to such issues.

Finally, one must address the question of the success of this parish in encouraging those associated with it to lead lives that reflect the teachings of Christ. This is an issue that few of us from the parish can reasonably address. This assessment more properly belongs to others. Our task is to strive to achieve it.

Charles George
Lifelong parishioner of St John's, Gordon



John McIntrye, Rector St Saviour's Redfern, South Sydney since 1990 has been elected **Bishop of Gippsland** in Victoria.

Ross Hallett Saunders, Priest died on 5 November 2005 – aged 79 years.

Ross (ordained 1952 in Sydney) had a full and varied career. He was a religious and radio broadcaster, teacher and ACC Committee member. He received his MA in Ancient History (Macquarie University 1988) and lectured at St Andrew's Greek Orthodox Theological College, Tyndale College and Macquarie University. He was author of "*Outrageous Women, Outrageous God: Women in the first two generations of Christianity*" and "*Were You There? People of Christ's Passion.*"



ANGLICANS TOGETHER ANNUAL DINNER

The Guest Speaker, **Andrew McGowan**, Trinity College Theological School, Melbourne gave an interesting and provocative address titled: "***Stranger than Fiction: Truth and fantasy in literature and theology.***" The address considered the place of 'truth' and 'imagination' in literature - 'fact' and 'fantasy' in the writings of *J. R. R. Tolkien, Dan Brown and LaHaye*. In reference to reading ***The Bible***, McGowan stated: "The spectre of an inadequate view of scripture lurks over the contemporary crises of Christianity in general and Anglicanism in particular." "Unless we can read the Bible with the sense of joy, play, openness - and critical acumen – we bring to any other book, then we may acquire plenty of Bible facts – but we may miss the truth along the way."

Address is on the website: www.anglicanstogether.org

The Challenges of ECOTHEOLOGY

As an academic discipline, **ecothology** has been around for several decades. Having arisen in the nineteen-seventies in North America, it remains a significant voice there in theological circles. It is of perceived importance in Great Britain, where a specialised journal, *Ecotheology* (formerly *Theology in Green*) has been in publication for more than ten years. The claims of ecology on theology have been recognised in the Roman Catholic Church. Pope John Paul II called for an **“ecological conversion” in Christian attitudes to the environment, and proclaimed St Francis of Assisi as patron saint of ecology.**

The welcome to **ecothology** in Australia has been slower and more muted. In Australian society the Christian church is perceived as having little interest in environmental matters. Articles and programs about threats to the environment fill newspapers and regularly appear on television screens. **Yet the church, generally speaking, is seen as indifferent to such matters. Ecology and theology are not seen as natural bedfellows. In most people’s eyes Christianity is not particularly green: it has little of importance to say about the environment.**

In point of fact, the environmental situation of some sections of the contemporary Christian church in Australia is not so depressing as these perceptions might lead one to believe. Things are changing, but we have a long way to go. The term **“ecothology”** is alien to the thought patterns of most Australian Christians.

It appeared in the United States in response to a celebrated 1967 article by **Lynn White Jnr** in *Science*. **White** suggested the Judeo-Christian inheritance, through its biblical interpretation and theological traditions, (particularly in the West) might well be implicated in the generalised environmental crisis of our time. Verses such as Genesis 1:28, with their encouragement to propagate and dominate, were adduced to illustrate this point. Since 1967, **White’s** suggestion of Christianity’s guilt has been embraced by various individuals and groups. It has been accepted in many university Schools of Environmental Studies. **Christianity is seen in such quarters as part of the problem rather than as part of the solution.**

If the Christian church is to respond to the intellectual and social questions raised by environmental issues, it must take seriously the challenges posed by ecothology. Unless it does, it will continue to be seen as having nothing useful to say about the environment. Indeed, the uncomfortable words of **Ludwig Feuerbach**, the 19th century German philosopher, will remain without refutation: **“Nature, the world, has no value, no interest for Christians.**

The Christian thinks of himself and the salvation of his soul”.

Ecothology challenges the church to re-examine the Bible and the church’s post-biblical traditions in the light of the present ecological crisis. Have the Bible and Christian tradition anything to say about the abuse of creation? Or is **Feuerbach** fundamentally correct in his castigation of Christian environmental indifference? Many with an interest in these issues have become increasingly convinced the Bible, along with theological thinkers throughout the ages, does have a great deal to say about respect for creation. Indeed, **ecothology** may not be so much a call for new perspectives as **a challenge to recover and reiterate traditions that have become obscured in modern Western society.** This is a perspective that **ecothology** challenges us to explore.

A second challenge concerns the role of humankind in creation. Traditionally in our thinking a hierarchical ordering of creation has prevailed, with humans situated at the peak. The rise of ecological thinking has led to this hierarchical vision being replaced by a “web of life” concept, which focuses on interdependence rather than control and dominance. How tenable in a time of ecological crisis brought about by human abuse of nature is an anthropocentric view of creation? To what extent does Christian tradition support or call into question human dominance in the natural order?

A third challenge presented by **ecothology** relates to Christology. The notion of the **“cosmic Christ”**, evoked with particular clarity in the first chapter of *Colossians*, associates the figure of Christ not just with humankind but with “all things”, which are to be reconciled to God through Christ. In Christ **“all things hold together”** - an image which evokes the “web of life” concept. The “cosmic Christ” vision serves to link creation and redemption in a way not so familiar to us. Such thinking may serve to invigorate our theological thinking.

These challenges are three of the many that arise from an analysis of the intersection of theology and ecology. Ecotheology provides not just salutary theological ferment but also the opportunity to demonstrate the relevance of Christianity and its traditions to what is perhaps the most important social problem of our age.

Professor Barry Leal

Earth Ministry Coordinator,
Sydney North Presbytery of the Uniting Church in Australia.

MU – A GIFT!

In August this year, *Archbishop Rowan Williams* wrote an article entitled "*Forget the tea and cakes. How the Mothers' Union is riding to the rescue of Africa.*" He has also described MU as the "5th instrument of unity in the Anglican Church".

It is probably correct to say the MU is present in the majority of dioceses in the Anglican Communion

Here in the Diocese of Sydney, Mothers' Union is active and it too often "rides to the rescue".

Each week there are women visiting mothers of newborn babies in maternity hospitals or serving tea and coffee to people waiting in the various Children's Courts or Family Courts. Mostly they are older women and they wear a little blue and white badge with MU on it. **They are members of the Mothers' Union - part of a world-wide organisation of over three million members who seek to share Christ's love by encouraging, strengthening and supporting marriage and family life.**

Mary Sumner founded the Mothers' Union in England in 1876, as a society to uphold Christian marriage. Her memorial plaque in Old Alresford Church near Winchester says

"endowed with special gifts of body, mind and soul she was enabled by the grace of God to quicken and inspire with her love and zeal the hearts of many in this great work throughout the world".

Mothers' Union started in Australia in 1892 with a branch being formed at *Cullenswood in Tasmania*. It started in Sydney in 1896. Of the original branches opened then, three continue at *St. Andrew's Cathedral, St. Thomas', Enfield and St. John's, Parramatta*. In 2005 there are 1200 members in Sydney in 59 branches. Branches should be a special part of a parish, giving prayer support to the Rector and all his work and providing fellowship and support to mothers of all ages. This doesn't always apply and in Sydney we have a large group of diocesan members who are unable to belong to a branch.

Hospital visiting started in the 1940's when Mrs Mowll, wife of Archbishop Mowll, realised that many women in hospital, after having a baby, didn't have any visitors because their husbands were away at war and other relatives were working or caring for other children. These were the days when children weren't allowed into maternity wards. **Nowadays about 10,000 mothers are visited each year and given a gift, a card about MU and a Gospel.** The work has grown over the years, and now as well small garments are supplied for the neo-natal intensive care units and 'Grieving sets' are made for parents to use if their baby doesn't survive.

Groups of members make all these items to be used at the main maternity hospitals.

Tea and sympathy is served at the courts in Sydney and Wollongong. This work has continued since 1972 and is appreciated by all who have endured difficult circumstances. In some cases members are accompanied by their husbands on these days (male members have been in MU for some time) - there is no sex discrimination. One older couple has written about their monthly trip to court saying how satisfied they feel as they catch their ferry home afterwards.

For the last fifteen years MU in Sydney has sponsored a parish worker for ten hours each week to work with mothers and children. The worker is appointed by the Rector and is responsible to him. Parishes that have had these workers include *Katoomba, Sadleir, Riverwood, The Oaks, Putney, Coogee* and our newest one is just starting in the *Parish of Moss Vale/Berrima*. Playgroups, Bible study groups have been started, and when they continue after funding finishes MU feels it has helped that Parish.

The question is often asked: "how is this work funded?" MU is a spiritual group, not a major fund-raising group. Members pay an annual subscription, Lots of cards and literature are sold from the MU office in St. Andrew's House. A market stall is organized each year and members give donations in money and kind.

Each day members around the world pray for each other. In the worldwide '*Wave of Prayer*' every diocese is linked to another in a different country. **Sydney is linked with Portsmouth (UK), Lagos, Lagos West, Yewa, Remo (all in Nigeria), and Malakal in the Sudan.** We, in Sydney are prayed for from June 21 to 25 each year. **Prayer unites us and strengthens us.** In Sydney we have a Day of Prayer each year to pray for all aspects of church work.

MU has spread all around the world. In African countries and PNG it has a major teaching role, increasing literacy and teaching about the prevention of Aids as well as basic health and hygiene. Mary Sumner would be amazed at the spread of MU around the world. Christ's love continues to be shown by encouraging, strengthening and supporting marriage and family life.

Natalie McLeod

President, MU, Diocese of Sydney

Anglican Historical Society

Meetings - ALL WELCOME

St Philip's Church, York ST, Sydney

SATURDAY 3rd December,

SPEAKER: Dr Stuart Piggin,

"How Australian is the Anglican Church of Australia?"

SATURDAY 11th March 2006,

SPEAKER: Dr Geoff Treloar,

"Archdeacon T. C. Hammond".

From Christ Church to Christ Church

A journey of faith -

from a tiny island to an island continent

2005 marked a new milestone in my ministry. On June 19th last, in the company of the Parish family and friends from St Luke, Enmore, St Mark, Granville and some members of the Mauritian community, we praised God and gave thanks to Him for calling me to serve Him. It was the 40th anniversary of my ordination to the diaconate.

I was born in the Parish of Christ Church, Maheburg, in the Diocese of Mauritius. It was then an extra provincial diocese attached to the See of Canterbury. Anglicanism had come to Mauritius with the arrival of the British after they had captured the island in 1810. Until then it had been a French colony and was appropriately called Isle de France. At the Treaty of Paris (which put an end to the Napoleonic wars) Isle de France became a British colony and it reverted to its original name given by the Dutch. The treaty preserved the integrity of the language (French), the religion (Roman Catholicism) and the law (Code Napoleon). The Diocese of Mauritius was inaugurated in 1850 and is now part of the Ecclesiastical Province of the South West Indian Ocean since its inception in 1973.

My father was the Vicar of Christ Church; so I was born in the Anglican Church and have never left it. At that time the Diocese had strong links with the London CMS and would have had a very Anglican evangelical profile. By the time I entered St Paul's Theological College, the profile had changed.

I served the Diocese of Mauritius from June 1965 to November 1986 when we moved to Australia. **We were moving from a tiny island of 2,000 Sq kms with a population of just over 1million to the largest metropolitan area of Australia 12,000 Sq kms in area and a population of over 4 million. I experienced a ministry wilderness until 1988 and then again from 1989 to 1991, when finally I joined Fr John Kohler as Honorary Assistant at St Mark, Granville. I was home at last and was there until April 2003 – a period of 11 ½ years, the longest I have been in the one Parish for almost 38 years. For all of that time I had been a part of the experimental tent-making ministry of the mid 60's. Anglicanism was, and still is, a minority religion in Mauritius. The largest single religious denomination is still Roman Catholicism though the largest section of the diverse population is of Indian origin. The Church in Mauritius, because of its minority status, had to contend with financial challenges, hence the experimentation of tent-making ministry. This type of ministry in the Diocese is now, like the dodo, extinct.**

In April 2003, a shift in my type of ministry occurred. After more than 37 years, I was to join the ranks of the stipendiary ministry when I was licensed to be the Acting Rector of St Luke, Enmore in the inter-regnum. It all happened through a new friendship while working at the Australian Bureau of Statistics. At St Andrew's House, where I had been working for over fifteen years, I met Stuart Veitch one of the Wardens at St Luke's. It was a privilege and a blessing to have been associated with the people of St Luke, even though it was for only 9 ½ months. After 43 years of working life, I was contemplating retirement but God moves in mysterious ways.

So far nothing had indicated what was to be for me at this point in my ministry. Very often we miss the important when we use the quotation: God moves in a mysterious way, his wonders to perform. Wonder it was, and in the broadest sense of the word. **In December 2003, I accepted the invitation of Fr Adrian Stephens to be his assistant at Christ Church St Laurence. We moved to the heart of the Metropolis and I began my ministry on 29 February 2004. I am now part of a Parish, the parishioners of which cover a geographical area 2 times the size of the whole Diocese of Mauritius. I am now part of one of the finest liturgical traditions of the Anglican Communion, both in worship and music. I have really gone full circle from unknown Christ Church, Maheburg to worldwide known Christ Church St Laurence. For me CCSL is a reminder that one never stops to learn. The learning curve has been great and rewarding.**

Last April, Chantal and I were on a European driving holiday from Zurich to Paris driving through Switzerland, Austria, Germany and France. We spent a weekend in Strasburg and attended Mass at the Anglican Chaplaincy. A newly ordained German Benedictine had come to renew his vows and concelebrated with the Chaplain, Father Alex Gordon, who was moving from Strasburg to be the Provost of the Cathedral in Inverness, Scotland. At the conclusion of Mass, I introduced myself and the German Priest surprised me by telling me that he thought he had recognised me. Technology is creating a very small world indeed. The German Priest was a regular user of the CCSL website and also knew a former choir member who is pursuing a career in Europe.

There are to-day 4 million francophone Anglicans in the Anglican Communion. I have received tremendous support to go back to my roots in holding a monthly celebration of the Eucharist in French (with hymns and sermon in French) at Christ Church St Laurence. The first one was held on October 9 last; the next one on November 13 and subsequently on the second Sunday of the month at 4.30 pm

Ron Silarsah

Assistant Priest, Christ Church S. Laurence, Sydney

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