
Newsletter

No 33

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Chair's Column

James' Jottings

Richard Dawkins and others have been saying recently that the conduct of the God the Bible describes is abhorrent - so this God is unworthy of human respect, let alone worship.

This bears on the current controversies in the Anglican Communion, which are ostensibly about the authority of Scripture.

Anglican and other Christians rightly regard the Bible as God's definitive written revelation. The dilemma is that the Bible attributes some behaviour to God which seems appalling to right-thinking people, whether Christian or not.

Dawkins and others like him are responding (in part) to the claim that the Bible is the Word of God, as though this were to be understood simplistically – as though its every word, phrase, and claim about God were absolutely and incontrovertibly true.

But these are human texts, and the human factor cannot be ignored. Every writer and editor involved was limited by the knowledge of their day, and their historical context generally. I gladly claim Scripture is inspired by God; with the important rider that sinners wrote it; sinners copied it; sinners selected the texts to preserve, and preserved them; sinners today read and study and interpret and preach it, wearing today's blinkers. Humanly speaking, it is limited and flawed at every stage. **However, God's grace and providence override its flaws. Apart from *Jesus*' own earthly life, God has always had to rely on sinners to promote God's Kingdom!**

The Bible therefore tells us definitively the truth about God - not in each of its portions, but through the general sweep of the whole canonical text. The Bible reveals truths about God which are valid in every human and historical context

While the Bible provides some broad guidance of an imperative kind (the need for justice and compassion individually and socially, as well as the obligation to worship with integrity), church history teaches us that the biblical text is no simple resource book for Christian conduct. The problems

of Christian conduct are deeply anchored in the circumstances of the Christians concerned.

Polygamy has been acceptable for Christians in some countries, and trial marriages in others, for reasons of local culture. *Dietrich Bonhoeffer*, whom many today hail as a Christian martyr, took part in an assassination plot against Hitler - against "the clear teaching of Scripture". These examples show conscientious Christians who are not deficient in their respect for Scripture, but for whom the difficulties of living by its literal text prove greater than simplistic slogans may suggest, because of the situations in which they live.

Christians have also changed their understandings of Scripture. Following *Calvin*, the Christian churches generally have sidestepped the prohibition on usury. In spite of *Jesus*' attitude to war, Christian churches generally do not require their members to be pacifists. *William Wilberforce* and others went against the letter of Scripture as understood in their day, to abolish slavery. The Scriptural arguments that slavery was an integral component of the biblical ordering of society were vigorously rehearsed again before the American Civil War.

Sometimes, according to circumstance, it is important to go against the conventional readings of the text, for the sake of the gospel. Sometimes it is important to stand by the conventional readings of the text, in prophetic witness for the gospel. The judgment is for those living there to make.

The presumption of innocence may be naïve; instead, grace requires forthright but respectful dialogue – not the current presumption of malfeasance and wilful apostasy.

The Bible speaks infallibly of God, but the delicate interplay between the biblical texts and our circumstances forbids any hasty condemnations of those who do not stick to the letter of the text. The onus is on them to show how they are striving to be faithful in their circumstances.

Nevertheless, it is important not to confuse "the gospel" with a stringent stance on the Bible's alleged infallibility of the Bible in matters of conduct. They are two separate issues.

James McPherson
Rector, St Mark's Church, Granville

WHICH WAY HEAVEN?

The Book of Revelation is undoubtedly the most difficult text in the New Testament and a book that has been fertile soil for the growth of all kinds of strange interpretations and predictions for the future.

In our own day it has spawned the very popular 'Left Behind' novels with their frightening descriptions of life on earth after God's elect are beamed upwards into heaven leaving the hapless inhabitants at the mercy of the anti Christ. Alarmed by such bizarre and unhelpful theologies many Christians past and present have simply avoided Revelation as being both difficult and dangerous and hence better left alone. To take that option is a pity because despite its strangeness this book contains passages of great beauty like the one considered in this article and also, in my view, it does have a message very relevant to Christians living today. Looking at the text before us (Revelation 21:10-11, 22-27; 22:1-5)* I want to consider the questions: "What does it tell us about heaven and does it matter what we believe about it?" But first let me give some brief background to the book.

Most scholars believe that Revelation was written towards the end of the first century, around 90-95A.D. It is a pastoral letter to Christians in Asia who are confronted with a critical religious and political situation. **Much of the imagery used in the book is taken from the Apocalyptic books of the Old Testament like *Ezekiel* and *Daniel* and these images would have been familiar to many of the hearers.**

QuickTime™ and a
TIFF (Uncompressed) decompressor
are needed to see this picture.

The author, *John*, writes to encourage Christians at a time of change and upheaval in the Roman world. The empire was troubled by war and rebellion like the one in Judea that led to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. Even the earth seemed unstable: there were earthquakes that devastated parts of Asia in the sixties and in 79 Vesuvius erupted burying Pompei and neighbouring towns and creating a pall of darkness that sent fear throughout the empire.

Christians were also coming under increasing suspicion from many of their neighbours and also from the political authorities. They refused to worship idols, many of their members were from lower classes in society and they followed a leader who had been publicly executed as an enemy of the state. Furthermore as Christianity grew it became more and

more a Gentile religion and was disowned by the Jewish community. At times this general suspicion developed into outright hostility and persecution - Christians were easy scapegoats as *Nero* had found during his reign. The reign of *Domitian* brought a new crisis because he developed the idea of the divine Emperor, insisting on divine honours and making everyone who addressed him in speech or writing begin with the words "*Lord & God.*" To refuse to acknowledge the Emperor's divinity was to risk imprisonment, exile or even death.

This is the context in which *John* writes and he does

John writes to give fresh interpretations of the Easter event and the reign of Christ in the light of current circumstances.

so with the intention of helping Christians to make sense of what is happening around them and to understand that God has a plan for his world which will not be thwarted by

human machinations. *John* also writes to give fresh interpretations of the Easter event and the reign of Christ in the light of current circumstances. He writes to affirm that despite the apparent chaos and confusion of our world, God remains faithful and the future is in his hands.

The passage read today comes at the end of the Book and in poetic language describes what that future will look like. Given the symbolic nature of the writing one must take heed of *Reinhold Niebur's* statement that "It is unwise for Christians to claim any knowledge of the furniture of heaven or the temperature of hell" but none-the-less some truths can be derived from the symbols. Several things stand out in this description.

The holy city comes down out of heaven from God. That is a very different perspective from the one we often have. *Eugene Peterson* puts it nicely:

Many people want to go to heaven the way they want to go to Florida, they think the weather will be better and the people nicer. But the Biblical heaven is not a nice environment far removed from the stress of hard city life. It is the invasion of the city by the City. We enter heaven not by escaping what we don't like but by the sanctification of the place in which God has placed us. There is not so much as a hint of escapism in St. John's heaven. ('Reversed Thunder', Harper & Rowe, 1988)

In *John's* vision heaven and earth are both brought together-there is no longer any separation but God dwells with his people and makes all things new-which is different from making all new things. In the new heaven and new earth there is some continuity with what has gone before.

Secondly, *John* tells us that there is no temple in the city. I'm sure Church Wardens will take comfort from that-no more worrying about dodgy guttering or

crumbling sand stone. But *John's* observation has a more serious intent. When *John* wrote the old temple in Jerusalem lay in ruins as *Jesus* had predicted. The old temple was built with walls to separate men from women and Jews from Gentiles. It represented a religious system that easily slipped into the idea that God could be contained and even controlled. It easily came to represent hierarchy and privilege. Through the centuries the Church as an institution has sometimes fallen for the same temptation. We have too easily become a middle-man between God and his people, trying to control access to him. The absence of a temple also implies an end to separation between sacred and secular zones in the new Jerusalem. God and his people are forever united.

Thirdly, the heavenly city is big and inclusive. Ancient cities had walls to protect the inhabitants from invaders: the gates were watched by day and shut at night. In God's new world the gates are never shut and people bring the glory of the nations into the city. All that is good and beautiful from the four corners of the world is welcomed – the art, the music, the diversity of culture and language, all this finds a place.

***John's* vision is world affirming rather than world denying. He pictures eternal salvation as the redemption of the world and of history itself. There are no disembodied angels constantly plucking harps but a city filled with light and vibrant life.**

Two features of the city's landscape are highlighted: the river and the tree. Both images come from the Garden of Eden in Genesis and are picked up in *Ezekiel* and other parts of scripture. The prophet *Ezekiel* saw a river flowing from Jerusalem down into the Red Sea, making its salty waters fresh and life sustaining.

In *Ezekiel's* words "everything shall live where the river runs." (47.9) The clear flowing river is a symbol of life flowing from God to his people and we are reminded of *Jesus'* conversation with the woman at the well in *John 4* where he offers her 'living water' which will never run dry.

On either side of the river is the tree of life. The roots of the tree of life like the source of the river of life are found in the garden of God. The leaves of the tree are for "the healing of the nations." What nation has ever existed that was not in need of healing? Every nation, including our own carries memories of deeds done which cry out for forgiveness and healing. Healing is possible for us and the nations because of another tree that stood outside a city, on the hill of Calvary where a man was nailed bearing the sins of the world. Throughout Revelation *John* keeps taking us back to the Lamb of God who makes our salvation possible and who through his death and resurrection begins the new creation which is finally brought to fruition in the new Jerusalem.

***John's* vision of God's future gave comfort to the embattled Christians living at the end of the first century A.D. I believe it can still sustain us today**

and yes, it does matter what we believe about heaven and the new Jerusalem. If we opt for a view of heaven as a place utterly separate and disconnected from our world of time and place then we will be tempted to ignore the problems of third world debt, the AIDS epidemic or global warming. After all, why try to save a planet which is destined for destruction? **However, if we embrace *John's* vision of a world renewed and transformed where heaven and earth are brought into glorious union, and where the resurrection of Christ is seen as a new beginning, then our attitude becomes very different.**

If we are following Christ and attempting to shape our world into his likeness then any well dug, any child fed, any Scripture lesson taught, any bridge built, any patient healed, any hurting person comforted, any relationship restored will not have been in vain.

*

21¹⁰ And in the spirit he carried me away to a great, high mountain and showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God. ¹¹ It has the glory of God and a radiance like a very rare jewel, like jasper, clear as crystal

22 I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb. ²³ And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God is its light, and its lamp is the Lamb. ²⁴ The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it. ²⁵ Its gates will never be shut by day—and there will be no night there. ²⁶ People will bring into it the glory and the honor of the nations. ²⁷ But nothing unclean will enter it, nor anyone who practices abomination or falsehood, but only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life.

22 Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb ² through the middle of the street of the city. On either side of the river is the tree of life † with its twelve kinds of fruit, producing its fruit each month; and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. ³ Nothing accursed will be found there any more. But the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants † will worship him; ⁴ they will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. ⁵ And there will be no more night; they need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever.

*Sermon preach in the Parish of Hunters Hill, Sydney
by the Rector, Philip Bradford*

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TAKING CHRISTIAN EDUCATION SERIOUSLY

The Parish of St James' King Street, Sydney has recently embarked on an ambitious initiative - *The Christian Life & Formation Program*.

Visitors to many parishes and cathedrals in the United States may well have been impressed by just how comprehensive and professional their families and adult education programs are. It seems that, for many Episcopalians, involving themselves regularly in continuing education is seen as part and parcel of being a member of the church.

In part inspired by this, the Parish of St James', King Street Sydney has embarked on an ambitious initiative, known as the Christian Life & Formation Program. Essentially, this is to be an extensive program of educational activities and other opportunities.

In introducing this proposal to the parish, the Rector, *Peter Kurti*, said –

“It will be important that we commit resources to developing an aspect of our community that I am calling Christian Life and Formation. This is essentially to be a comprehensive and integrated program of Christian Education that will provide opportunities for all members of the parish to learn about the Christian faith in such ways that the practice of Christian living is informed by theological reflection and development. The vision for the program is that it will extend from the teaching of our children in Kids@Church to the preparation of candidates for confirmation, from the answering of questions posed by those enquiring about Christianity to the nurturing of the faith and belief of those well-established in the Christian life.”

The Parish has appointed a Director of Christian Life & Formation – *Christopher Roper*. His professional background is in professional and continuing education for practising lawyers, and he also holds a Bachelor of Divinity degree from the Melbourne College of Divinity.

A Strategy Plan has been written to provide an overall framework for the roll-out of the program. It is expected the first of the courses will commence in August/September.

The proposal is that the program will encompass six themes –

➤ ***Children and young people***

➤ ***Spirituality and Christian living***

➤ ***Engaging with Scripture***

➤ ***Anglicanism***

➤ ***Christian Faith***

➤ ***Christianity and Contemporary Issues.***

The various activities and opportunities will all fit into one or more of these themes.

The overall intention is that we are more informed, articulate and confident about our faith.

In some of the debate and dialogue in Sydney, and more widely Australia, on religious and social issues, there is a need to balance what is being said by some with informed and articulate statements and arguments which reflect traditional Anglican beliefs and practices. The program will provide an opportunity for laity, and indeed clergy, to develop their understanding of the faith and be able to articulate that effectively.

The various activities in the St James' Christian Life & Formation program will take a number of forms and will be held at times to suit the variety of people who will participate.

Apart from traditional lectures, it is intended that, where appropriate, the activities will comprise seminars, workshops, quiet days, study and discussion groups, and even book clubs. Some of these will be held on week days, in the day time or evening, but others will be held on weekends. Not all of the activities will be held at St James' – **it is hoped that some will be held in conjunction with, and at, other parishes in Sydney.**

All of the activities will be open to those from parishes beyond St James', and indeed to those from outside the Anglican Church. A small fee will be charged to cover costs.

The St James' Christian Life & Formation program intends to benchmark itself against the best in the world – programs that can be found in places such as St Bartholomew's New York, St Paul's Cathedral London or the National Cathedral in Washington

The hallmarks of the program :

➤ it will be seen to be of a high quality in all its aspects

- it will be comprehensive, in that it will deal with a wide range of topics and use a range of ways to facilitate learning
- it will be accessible, in that it will recognise the range and variety of participants
- it will be deep and rigorous, in that it will treat the subject matter with sufficient seriousness to encourage deep learning
- but it will be enjoyable, in that it will provide participants with a pleasant experience
- it will be for the people of the parish of St James' but also will be by St James' for the wider church, both in Sydney and beyond, and for community generally.

For more information, or to make any suggestions, contact Chris Roper, the Director of Christian Life & Formation at St James' King Street Sydney.

(02) 8227 1305 or chris.roper@sjks.org.au

Christopher Roper AM

Christopher is the Guest Speaker at the Anglicans Together Dinner in October.

Karen Armstrong - Author and Teacher.

From 1982 she has devoted her life to writing, lecturing and broadcasting on religious affairs. She was awarded the Muslim Public Affairs Council Media Award in 1999. Since September 11, 2001 she has been a leading contributor on the subject of Islam and fundamentalism.

Many readers will have some knowledge of *Karen Armstrong's* books. Some of them are quite hard going, but all are well worth the effort. **I think the best way to get them in perspective is to read her autobiography, "The Spiral Staircase" (2004, Harper Collins, London).**

As she tells her story, she explains why she wrote each of her books.

The most well known of her books, "*The History of God*" (1993, William Heinemann, London) was written after she had spent three years studying the Crusades for a BBC documentary and book. That study broke her heart, and made her begin to be able to feel again, breaching the barricades she had erected during her years in the convent to block out strong feeling. She says:

"This material was so distressing that I could not approach it in the slick, cerebral spirit that had characterised my television work hitherto."

For three years she had steeped herself in the deadly hostility that separated Jews, Christians

and Muslims. She decided to try to write about what they held in common. You will find *The History of God* a fascinating, and at times, gripping read. During the research for that book, she realised that nobody had written a life of **Muhammad** to which Western people could relate. So before she finished *The History of God* she wrote "*Muhammad: A biography of the Prophet*" (1991, Victor Gollanz: London) My Muslim friends in my Inter-faith group speak highly of this book. In the introduction to *Muhammad* she says: ***"Our dramatically shrunken world has revealed our inescapable connection with one another. We can no longer think of ourselves as separate from people in distant parts of the globe and leave them to their own fate...It is also possible for us to acquire an appreciation of other civilisations that was unimaginable before our own day."* (Muhammad, p9)**

Out of her study for "*The History of God*", and because of increasing fundamentalism in every religion, Karen wrote "*The Battle For God*" (2000, Harper Collins, London) In all of her books it is the discussion along the way more than the information she unearths which I find riveting. I am reading "*The Spiral Staircase*" again and again. There are also parts of a recent book "*A Short History of Myth*" (2005, The Text Publishing Co, Melbourne, Victoria) to which I return often.

In the years when she was still reeling from her years in the convent she wrote "*The Gospel According to Woman*" (1986, Fount Paperbacks, London). She describes it as a polemic which traced the misogyny that had been the Achilles heel of Christianity. Although it was clever, she says now that she sees it as inherently hostile to the faith.

In the crazed excesses of such theologians as Tertullian, Saint Jerome or Luther, and the lamentable neuroses of some of the women saints, Christianity appeared as unhealthy, unkind and unnatural in its rejection of women and sexuality. As I finished the book, I felt profoundly relieved to have shaken off the toils of religion once and for all" (SS, p 287).

I have to say that I found it very helpful when I first read it. Yet it is interesting to note where she has come since then. I highly recommend all these books, as well as others she has written.

*The Rev'd. Sue Emeleus
St George's, Paddington*

WALKING THE WALK

‘Walks’ People Do in the 21st Century

A City dweller’s attitude to walking is often “Why walk when you can ride?”. However, we are constantly encouraged to walk. It is the environmentally friendly thing to do in this age of polluted cities. We are told to walk for the good of our health or because by not driving our car or not using public transport we can help lower the carbon emissions in the city. On reflection it is strange that humans have to be encouraged and cajoled into walking. One of the defining characteristics of being human, in contrast to the other animals, is that we can stand upright on two legs and walk.

There are people, who for various reasons “Walk the Walk”. Their Walk is often more than a practical, functional activity. It can be liberating, or spiritual or empowering.

For the past two years there has been the -

“5 LANDS WALK”

In 2006, Gosford City Council (NSW) initiated this unique ‘Walk’ - **“5 LANDS WALK” – Connecting people to people and people to land.**

Local Community organizations and the local Aboriginal custodians together planned the event. They are interested in preserving the unique heritage of the area and helping others to appreciate its historical significance.

This year, the theme of the Event (on 23rd June) was **the Aboriginal Creation Story of Baiami the greater creator spirit and Guria, the Water (or Rainbow) Serpent.** It is timed to coincide with the northern migration of the humpback whales.

The Walk commenced at MacMasters Beach, with a colourful Opening Ceremony, featuring the local community and Aboriginal Elders. It finished at Terrigal with a procession led by a 100 Drummers and a cast of 500 forming a living image. The walking route took in many significant sites. It went past Cockrone Lagoon, Copacabana (Aboriginal Midden), Captain Cook Lookout, Winnie Reserve Hill and Winnie Bay, Avoca Beach, North Avoca before concluding at Terrigal Haven. The walk was approx. 9 km and features cultural links with Aboriginal dreaming and contemporary community art.

At the stops on the way there were Jazz Bands, Lectures, Documentary screenings and Giant Kite Flying demonstrations. Many people, young and old and families walked some part of the Walk.

Referring to the 2006 Walk. **The Rev’d Dr Jonathan Inkipin**, General Secretary, New South Wales Ecumenical Council said (in a lecture entitled “Culture & Spirituality): **“The 5 Lands Walk is a journey and discovery on both the outward and inward level. It is a community journey which provides a greater understanding of ourselves, of others and the particularities of the land itself. The Walk offers a chance to reconnect with the land, with culture, with family with Spirit of survival and growth.**

It was astonishingly moving to be present at daybreak last year, when the whales breached in the water in seeming response to our humble act of spiritual acknowledgement and service”.

“Jeff’s Walk Gulf 2 Gulf”

Currently in the centre of Australia there is a walker - **Jeff Johnson**. He is walking from Spencers Gulf in the south to the Gulf of Carpentaria.

This is truly a 21st Century Walk. Leaving Port Augusta on 5 April this year, Jeff hopes to reach Kurumba, Queensland in August. He is walking without a support backup vehicle. He carries everything he needs, including a satellite phone, radio equipment, antenna and battery. Around his neck he has a solar charging panel to power the battery.

QuickTime™ and a
TIFF (Uncompressed) decompressor
are needed to see this picture.

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TIFF (LZW) decompressor
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One of the reasons for his Walk is to raise funds and awareness for the Deaf-Blind Association (NSW) Inc.

He also has a great website, with information about his current position, photos of the Walk and how you can contact him –www.jeffswalk.com/

El Camino - the Way

All *el Camino* in Spain lead to Santiago de Compostela, the famous Cathedral city in north-west Spain.

A 21st century pilgrim, *TONY KEVIN*, tells his story in “*WALKING THE CAMINO* – a modern pilgrimage to Santiago”

Published by Scribe, Melbourne, 2007, ISBN 9781921215445 (pbk.) www.scribepublications.com.au

In 2006, *Tony Kevin* was one of the thousands of people from all around the world, who walked the *el Camino*. He chose the longest walk (approx. 1200 kilometres) from Granada in the south-east to Santiago in the north-west.

Kevin, a former member of the Australian foreign service, records his walk, which took eight weeks. As he takes us along his Walk, he not only introduces us to his fellow pilgrims and the sights and sounds of the countryside, but he reflects both on the history of pilgrimages and the complex country and nation that is Spain.

The pilgrimage has a long tradition in many religions other than Christianity. In the Middle Ages, it was a sign of faith and devotion to make a Pilgrimage, particularly to Jerusalem, the Holy City. For those not able to make that long and very dangerous voyage, there was a holy city closer - on the mainland of Europe – Santiago.

Santiago gained its status because of the myth around the life and death of *St James the Apostle* (Santo Diego). It was said that after preaching the Gospel in Spain he returned to the East and was martyred. His body (headless) was taken and buried near Santiago.

Spain has a rich history – conquests and invasions. Perhaps none more influential than that of the Moorish conquest that lasted around 500 years. Even today *Alhambra* outside Granada is an eloquent and beautiful reminder of the Moorish influence.

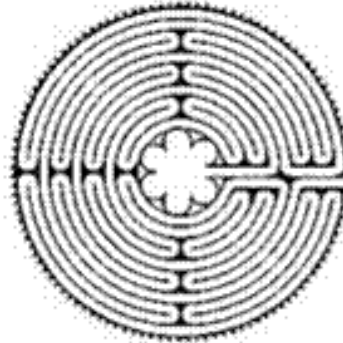
The diversity of thought and reflection in the book is seen from Chapters such as “The Idea of Pilgrimage”; “Spanish Villages”; “Spanish Politics” and “Walking with God”. In some parts the book’s pace seems rather slow – no doubt the result of walking, rather than driving!

Those who ponder the purpose of pilgrimage, or those who have a fascination with Spain and its rich and complex history of Islamic-Judeo-Christian influences as well as modern secularism, will read this book with enjoyment.

Walking the Labyrinth

Those for whom a Pilgrimage or a Spiritual Walk is not physically possible have found another walk – *the Labyrinth*.

Look closely. This is not a maze, as it may at first appear, nor are there any dead-ends.



The labyrinth path leads from the outside to the centre. Then the same route leads you out. There is only one route.

During the middle ages, pilgrims walked the labyrinths as part of their spiritual journey.

The design of the labyrinth was outlined on the floors of a number of medieval churches. **One of the most famous is on the floor of the magnificent Chartres Cathedral (1220AD) near Paris in France.** (www.diocesechartres.com)

This ancient design, based on the 11 circuit labyrinth, is speaking to many Christians today as a meditation tool and a metaphor for a spiritual walk. In the Chartres style labyrinth the walker meanders through each of four quadrants easily visible as four arms of the cross, before reaching the goal - rosette design in the centre.

Today there are labyrinths being laid out in and close to a number of churches around the world.

At Grace Cathedral, San Francisco there are two labyrinths – the outdoor **labyrinth**, made of terrazzo stone, located to the right of the **cathedral** doors and inside there is one in wool tapestry.

The Grace Cathedral website has information and a number of articles on walking the labyrinth. www.gracecathedral.org/labyrinth/

The Rev. Dr. Lauren Artress is founder of [Veriditas, the World-Wide Labyrinth Project](http://www.veriditas.org), based at Grace Cathedral. Over the past several years she has introduced the labyrinth to thousands of men and women across the world,

For those not able to find a labyrinth, it is possible to do a ‘virtual’ walk of the labyrinth online. www.labrinthonline.com/chartes.html/.

BOOK REVIEW

Cameron, M. H., *An Enigmatic Life: David Broughton Knox: Father of Contemporary Sydney Anglicanism*

(Brunswick East, Vic.: Acorn, 2006). pp. viii, 343, ISBN: 0908284608, Bibliography, 328-336.

Biographies come in many different forms. Some are personal accounts of the achievements of popular sporting heroes or adventurers; some are accounts of public figures such as politicians in order to explain them to a wider public. Some are reflective serious analyses of a subject in the longer view of history. *Roy Jenkins'* extraordinary biography of *Winston Churchill* is a case in point. Some tell a lot about the times in which the subject lived and others again tell of someone who is the personification of a movement. ***Marcia Cameron's* biography has a little of each of these features, though it is too early in time for it to be a considered analysis of the subject and his time.**

It must have been very difficult to write such a book. *Knox* is regarded by sections of Sydney clergy in particular as something of a saint, certainly a hero of the first rank. To write with detachment and candour in such circumstances would be extremely difficult and to have succeeded to the degree she has is a remarkable tribute to *Dr Cameron's* skills.

Dr Cameron knew *Knox* personally and the book makes use of many conversations. Most are with friends or colleagues, as is to be expected, and others who knew *Knox* in one way or another but who stood at a little distance from him and his views. The book also relies on many archival sources and the few published works of the subject. **The use of the word "enigmatic" in the title of the book strikes a note many will recognise, but more in terms of the person than of his life.** *Dr Cameron* hints at questions about *Knox's* straightforwardness and even something a little more than that. He was not always widely trusted outside his immediate circle, but perhaps that might have been in part due to the way in which he expressed himself. It was not always easy to know where he was coming from and therefore what to expect. That can and, as the book shows was, sometimes interpreted as being something less than entirely candid.

Knox is regarded by sections of Sydney clergy in particular as something of a saint, certainly a hero of the first rank.

There are a number of themes in this book which make it noteworthy. We learn a good deal about his early life in Sydney growing up as part of an inner circle of evangelical churchmen. He appears here as something of a combination of the white haired boy and an enfant terrible. Like many in youth he could take a recently seized point to an extreme. It was a quality he did not entirely lose. His time in post-graduate study is not elaborated in terms of the content of that study and where it led intellectually, perhaps because it was not accessible. **The intellectual forces in his life seem to have been driven by his early evangelical formation rather than his encounter with the world of theology. That impression is confirmed by what could be learned from his published writings.**

He was clearly generous to those he encountered in his inner circle and encouraging to many. *Peter Jensen* speaks of this in his Foreword, and the book makes it clear he was not alone in this respect. **Perhaps it is this sense of an inner circle of friends and fellow workers that prompted the distress reported in the book at the criticism of his theology by Robert Banks.** We read of it as being felt to be some kind of betrayal. However the criticism

Banks made was actually quite moderate and the sort of thing that is common coin in the world of scholarly debate

and writing. *Knox* did not engage with this wider world of theological scholarship. The nature of his protestations against this claim, as reported in the book, only serve to confirm the point. *Dr Cameron* tells us that what "seemed to hurt most was that *Bank's* article was unfair and an attack upon relationship." That highlights in *Knox* both the lack of engagement with critical scholars and a particular formulation of friendship. It is perhaps not surprising that he felt at sea when he encountered scholarly critical engagement from *Robert Banks*. There is also a hint of a similar defensiveness in the book itself. On occasion *Dr Cameron* quotes critical remarks about *Knox* but then often softens or re-draws them.

The title describes *Knox* as the father of contemporary Sydney Anglicanism but it is actually hard to know just what Sydney Anglicanism is. The history of Anglicanism in Sydney has displayed quite significant variety and there are clearly some novelties in the

present situation. Critics from outside the diocese love to use the title, but that simply avoids serious encounter with the actual opinions of specific people.

It is adopted by some within the diocese, perhaps as a form of defence against criticism. Certainly the opinions of the clergy appear to be more monochrome than they once were and the policies of the diocese are more conforming than they once were. **It is also clear that Knox had a strong influence on the clergy. Not only was he principal of Moore College for such a long time, but he also proved in close quarters to assert a powerful influence on those around him.**

Whether or not Sydney Anglicanism can be identified with the current coalescence of opinions amongst leading clergy and some others is open to serious doubt. **Whether Knox could be described as the father of this contemporary phenomenon is probably less open to doubt.** How long the phenomenon will last is again difficult to tell, though *Arthur Miller's* "The Crucible" might be a relevant moral tale.

What is certainly true is that we are able to form better judgements about these matters because of the excellent work done by *Dr Cameron* in providing an engrossing and very illuminating biography, for which we should be grateful.

Bruce Kaye
Editor, Journal of Anglican Studies

Sydney MOW

AGM and PUBLIC LECTURE

The Meeting will be held on **1st September 2007**
St Luke's Anglican Church Hall, Burton St, Concord,
commencing at 2.00 pm.

Special Guest Speaker: Dr Val Webb.

Her Address:

"Imagining the Divine; Affirming Ourselves".

Val Webb grew up in Brisbane, but spent most of her life in the USA. She and her husband have now settled back in Australia.

Val's books, include "Why we are Equal – Introducing Feminist Theology", a widely acclaimed biography "Florence Nightingale – the Making of a radical Theologian" and her latest "Like catching Water in a Net – Human attempts to describe the Divine."

ANGLICANS TOGETHER DINNER

Friday 19th October, 2007

7.00pm for 7.30pm

St Albans Parish Centre.

Pembroke Street, Epping.

Guest Speaker: Christopher Roper AM
Director of Christian Life & Formation
St James' Church, King Street, Sydney.

Cost: \$30.00 pp BYO Drinks

Bookings(to be confirmed by payment)

P.O Box 79, Epping.

Phone 9876 3362.

(tables are for eight persons)

The 14th General Synod Meets

The General Synod of the Anglican Church of Australia will be held in Canberra from 20-26 October 2007.

The General Synod is the principal decision making gathering for the Anglican Church of Australia at the national level. **It is made up of representatives from each of the twenty-three dioceses in Australia on a proportional basis according to the number of active clergy in each diocese.** There are three "houses" in the Synod, bishops, clergy and laity.

The Synod will be presided over by the Primate, *the Most Reverend Dr Phillip Aspinall*, Archbishop of Brisbane.

A General Synod was first created in Australia in 1872. In 1962, the Anglican Church in Australia was established on a formal constitutional basis as a clearly autonomous part of the Anglican Communion.

As the umbrella governing body for the Anglican Church in Australia the discussions and decisions of General Synod (which meets every three years) affect the life of the Anglican Church in Australia.

For information on the General Synod Meeting see the Anglican Church of Australia website.

www.anglican.org.au/governance

CELEBRATING 125 YEARS

The year 1882 was one of growth and expansion for Churches in the Diocese of Sydney. A number of new Parishes were created and this entailed the building of new churches. Two Parishes have marked their 125 Anniversary with special celebrations.

St Mark's, Granville

St John the Evangelist Balmain North

QuickTime™ and a
TIFF (uncommented) decompressor
are needed to see this picture.

On May 3, 1882, the Dean of Sydney laid the Foundation Stone of St Mark's, Granville. The Herald reported that the choir sang Jackson's Te Deum, and a local lady pledged £50 [maybe \$40 000 today?]

The suburb then was newly marked out for development, but remained primarily a fruit farming and forestry community until the Clyde Engineering Works brought industrialisation. Granville gained national infamy with Australia's worst ever rail disaster, 18 January 1977, when 83 people were killed.

Sunday 6 May, 2007, some 200 people gathered for 1662 Choral Evensong in the presence of the Governor, with the Occasional Address by the *Revd Peter Kurti* from St James', King Street. We were unable to track down Jackson's *Te Deum*, but Stanford served well enough.

At the afternoon tea, I presented to the Governor a parishioner who was soon to have her cataracts operated on. The Governor bent down to her and said "It's wonderful what they can do these days. See my eyes? I had the cataract operation a couple of years ago, and now I can see well without my glasses." It was a compassionate and very human gesture. Call it grace.

James McPherson

Christ Church, Enmore

The Parish of Christ Church, Enmore had been instituted in 1880 and carved out of three existing Parishes, Newtown, Petersham and Cook's River.

Services were first held in a weatherboard building, known as the 'Oyster Saloon' in Fotheringham Street, Marrickville. This building was sold in early 1882. The foundation stone of the new (current) Church was laid on 4th March 1882. Three months later the Church was completed and dedicated on 18th June – 125 years ago. Enmore and Stanmore parishes merged in 1968. It is now the Parish of St Luke's Enmore/Stanmore.



The Foundation Stone for the new church to be established in Birchgrove was laid on 4th February 1882. Four months later on 16th June the church was opened.

This year, 125 years later, the Rector, *Fr James Butt* and parishioners celebrated the occasion with a Solemn Choral Eucharist. The guest preacher was *Bishop Peter Watson*. Director of Music was Andrew Pell and beautiful music was provided by the Cathedral Singers under the direction of *Dr Brett McKern*. Organists were *Dr Graeme Rawson*, and Mrs *Sian Gardner* and *Ian Cox*, the trumpeter.

A special feature of the celebration was the re-dedication of four altar panels depicting the Evangelists, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John the Evangelist. The panels, painted on zinc plate, had been part of the original high altar and given in 1908 in memory of May Hart. In 1928 they were relocated to the West wall at ground level in the Children's Chapel.

As a Thank Offering for 125 years of ministry at St John's Balmain North, they have been restored and are now hanging in a prominent place on the South Wall of the Sanctuary.

The Service was followed by a Celebratory Morning Tea. In the Parish Hall, there was a fascinating display of photos and newspaper articles, showing something of the story of the Parish of St John, the Evangelist's ministry to the district over 125 years.

The Lambeth Conference - 2008

The Lambeth Conference is convened every ten years at the invitation of the **Archbishop of Canterbury**. There are now thirty-eight Provinces within the global Anglican Communion. Archbishops, bishops, assistant and suffragan bishops are invited. It is the only occasion when all bishops can meet for worship, study and conversation.

Also invited to attend are bishops from other churches 'in communion' with the Anglican Communion, bishops from United Churches, along with a number of ecumenical guests.

In 2008, as well as the **800+ bishops** who attend, their spouses are invited by the Archbishop of Canterbury's wife to a parallel, independent gathering: the **Spouses Conference**.

The current Archbishop of Canterbury, Archbishop Rowan Williams, has called the next Lambeth Conference for July 2008. His wife, Jane, will convene the Spouses Conference.

The first invitations for the 2008 Lambeth Conference - to be held in Canterbury - were sent out by the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Rowan Williams in May. **The gathering, is set to be the largest Lambeth Conference in the history of the Anglican Communion.**

A RESOLUTION FROM THE MEETING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE OF THE DIOCESE OF SYDNEY

Invitations to Lambeth

Being aware that Archbishop Peter Jensen, Archbishop of Sydney, and his five Regional Bishops - The Rt Revd Robert Forsyth, Bishop of South Sydney; The Rt Revd Glenn Davies, Bishop of North Sydney; The Rt Revd Peter Tasker, Bishop of Liverpool; The Rt Revd Ivan Lee, Bishop of Western Sydney; and The Rt Revd Alan Stewart, Bishop of Wollongong - had all received personal invitations from Dr Rowan Williams, Archbishop of Canterbury to attend the Lambeth Conference to be held in 2008;

and also being aware that Archbishop Williams had requested a reply to the invitation by 23 July, 2007, Standing Committee engaged in a lengthy discussion about Lambeth 2008 with the Archbishop and Bishops of the Diocese.

Archbishop Jensen commenced the discussion by commenting on the present situation of the Anglican Communion as he observed it and the implications of the invitation to most Bishops in the Episcopal Church, including those who had agreed to or participated in the consecration of the Bishop of New Hampshire, but excluding Bishop Gene Robinson and also Bishop Martyn Minns.

In response to the discussion, the Standing Committee resolved the following advice to the Archbishop and Bishops:

'Standing Committee notes that disregarding the clear requests of many bishops, the Archbishop of Canterbury has issued invitations to attend the Lambeth Conference in 2008 to the bishops of the Episcopal Church of the USA who agreed to and/or participated in the consecration of the Bishop of New Hampshire.

'Standing Committee therefore -

(a) respectfully requests the Archbishop of this diocese to communicate to the Archbishop of Canterbury our dissatisfaction at the attempt to maintain union with the unrepentant while continuing to refuse fellowship to

faithful and orthodox Anglicans such as the Church of England in South Africa,

(b) respectfully requests the Archbishop and bishops of this diocese not to accept the invitation to Lambeth without making public in protest, speech and liturgical action, both prior to and at Lambeth, our diocese's principled objection to the continued participation of those whose actions have expressed a departure from the clear teaching of scripture, and who have consequently excluded orthodox Anglicans from their fellowship, and

(c) respectfully requests the Archbishop and bishops of this diocese to approach other orthodox bishops of the communion with the purpose of meeting in England at the time of the Lambeth Conference for Christian fellowship and the planning of joint action within the Anglican Communion to contend for the faith of the Apostles once delivered to the saints.'

Sourced from:

<http://www.aco.org/acns/digest/archive.cfm?years=2007&months=6&article=968&pos=#968>

LAMBETH CONFERENCE PRAYER

Pour down upon us, O God the gifts of your Holy Spirit that those who prepare for the Lambeth Conference may be filled with wisdom and understanding. May they know at work within them that creative energy and vision which belong to our humanity, made in our image and redeemed by your love through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

[\(www.lambethconference.org/\)](http://www.lambethconference.org/)

All financial members of
ANGLICANS TOGETHER INC

are invited to
THE INAUGURAL ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
2.00 pm to 4.00 pm.

Saturday, 25th August, 2007
St James' Church Hall, Philip Street, Sydney

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP OF ANGLICANS TOGETHER INC
(incorporated under the Associations Incorporation Act 1984)
39 Jamieson Street, Granville 2142

I,

----- (full name of applicant)

of (address)

hereby apply to become a member of the above named incorporated association, Anglicans Together Inc. In the event of my admission as a member, I agree to be bound by the rules and statement of objects of the Association for the time being in force.

----- I enclose payment of \$20
(Signature of Applicant) (Date)

Please provide the following information for administrative purposes.

Telephone no/s (h) ----- (w) -----

Mobile ----- Email -----

If resident in the Diocese of Sydney –

Parish ----- Member of Synod Yes/No

If resident elsewhere: Diocese ----- Parish -----