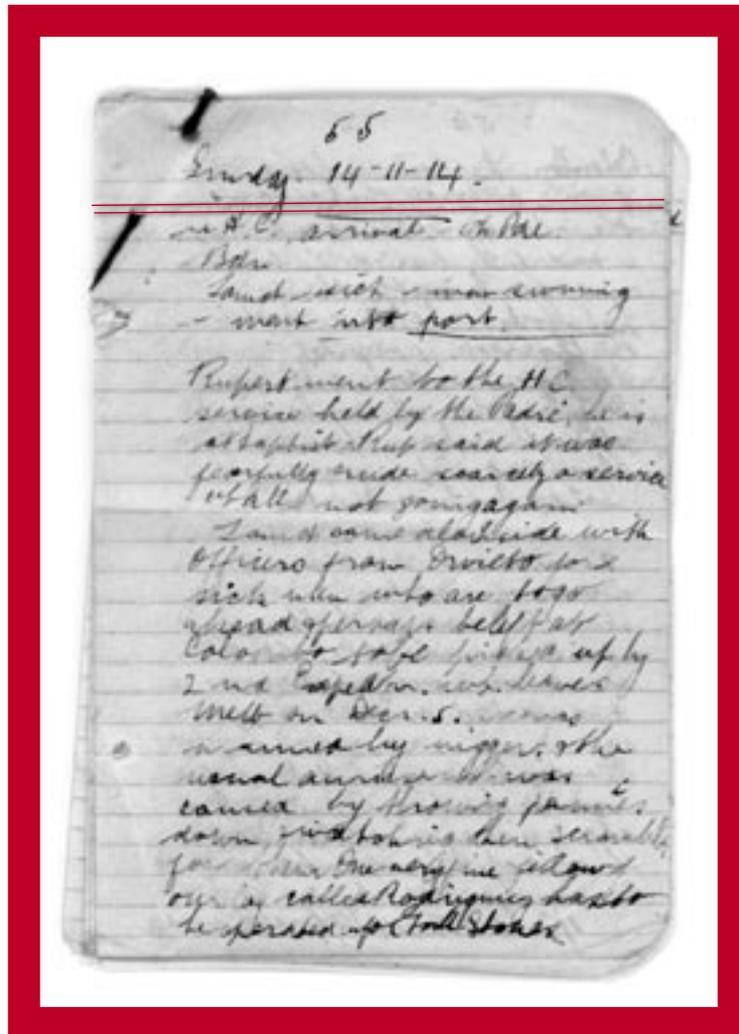


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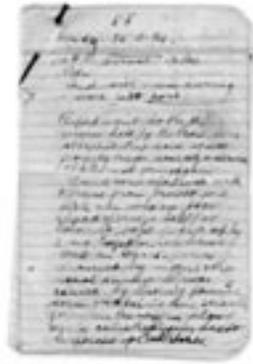
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INSIDE:

- A long farewell—Gallipoli 90 years on
- Bishop Terry Brown gives the good news on the Solomon Islands
- A Crisis of Suspicion
—truth-telling is going out of fashion

A Quarterly Journal for Australians



Cover: A page of Lieutenant Alan Henderson's diary (actual size) written on the journey to Gallipoli. See page 21.

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From the Editor

As creatures of imagination our grip on the truth is tenuous. Saying what is expedient, especially for those in leadership, is often the first step on a slippery slope to deceit, to self-deception, to delusion, where truth becomes plastic, a commodity with no integrity of its own. Dr Timothy Radcliffe OP brought a timely lecture on the crisis of truth-telling in society to the Australian Catholic University's Banyo Campus this summer. It followed hard on the heels of the federal election where truth, or the lack of it, became an issue on the hustings. This is a ground-breaking lecture because it gets to grips with the difference between forensic and moral truth, in an era when moral and pragmatic forces are often seen to be at odds (or bizarrely coupled) in public life worldwide.

Bishop Terry Brown may well lie low during slow news months like January in future. His acute remarks on the Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands (RAMSI) propelled those unremembered islands into the national news. Sound-bytes are never adequate for cross-cultural dialogue, so in this edition the Bishop of Malaita takes the opportunity to spell out his perspective on RAMSI.

Many issues currently on the worldwide political agenda support the fact that when people's legitimate power is thwarted they will find alternative ways to exercise that power. This phenomenon is alive and fecund in our own institutions—including the Church—where it breeds readily in hierarchical structures. Cara Beed has spoken on cultures of secrecy and abuse at national conferences on bullying, and published a book on the subject. In this edition she reviews a controversial new book, *Fractured Families—the Story of a Melbourne Church Cult*, a risky project by a Christian journalist, which was published this summer.

Common Theology is lodged in the federal Parliamentary Library, as are all Australian publications, and so we find ourselves on national mailing lists. In February we received an email spruiking a national day of thanksgiving. It would be salutary for church-goers to consider whether it is appropriate for the Government to call the Church to prayer, before taking part in this event.

Maggie Helass

7 bits of Good News

In January Bishop Terry Brown of Malaita made headlines in Australia with some mildly critical remarks about the Australian-led Regional Assistance Mission (RAMSI) to the Solomon Islands. Diplomatic feathers were ruffled and the Anglican Church made haste to distance itself from his comments. He now fills *Common Theology* readers in on the background to the hullabaloo.



In preparing to write this article, I have been thinking of what Australians (and others) need to know now about the Solomon Islands. I write from the perspective of two long stays in the Solomons—six years as a theological lecturer at Bishop Patteson Theological College, West Guadalcanal (1975–81) and then, after 15 years back in Canada but many visits back to the Solomons, the last nine years (since 1996) as Bishop of the Diocese of Malaita, one of the eight dioceses of the Church of Melanesia, a part of the Anglican Communion.

My relation with the Solomons has encompassed the end of the colonial era; the optimism of independence; the reality of economic dependence on logging and fishing beyond sustainable levels; widespread corruption resulting largely from Asian entry into these industries; “ethnic tension”; a near civil war; the Malaita Eagle Forced coup; the Townsville Peace Agreement; the International Peace-Monitoring Team; Harold Keke and followers’ reign of terror on the Weather Coast of Guadalcanal and, now, the Australian-led Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands (RAMSI).

As Christians, we search for signs of God’s grace in the present and look to the future with hope. So I begin with the good news. I believe there are at least seven pieces of good news.

- Village and town community and family life is still alive and healthy. With strong traditional cultures, strong church identities and most land still

held through traditional land tenure, the Solomons still largely retain a healthy and active community life. They can still be seen as an example of “affluent subsistence”. Cash is very short but the land and sea are bountiful and people work very hard. Some villages have hardly been touched by the recent ethnic conflict, except that the inflation resulting from the collapse of the Solomon Islands dollar has made paying for anything with cash difficult. Of course, there are social problems because of very few educational and employment opportunities and a very high birth rate.

The Solomons have not been well served by the international media, as often the picture that has been portrayed has been of complete social, economic and political collapse and widespread

Not unlike the Alexandria of Athanasius and Arius, matters of doctrine and worship are discussed in the marketplace.

violence to the point of anarchy. This is simply not the case. The media concentrates on the political rhetoric in Honiara and forgets that there is another eighty percent of the population living relatively peacefully in rural areas.

- The country is still a parliamentary democracy. Despite all the flaws of the system, from corrupt elections to Members of Parliament who seldom or never visit their constituencies, to many self-serving decisions by them, the country is still a parliamentary democracy. Sitings of Parliament are broadcast on the national radio and reported in detail in the media. The opposition does not mince its words. Even the planners of the May 2000 coup could not envision a Prime Minister not elected by Parliament. The Solomons’ strong Westminster parliamentary tradition, despite all its

flaws, is something to be built on, though there is a great need for electoral reform.

- The country has a very strong and vigorous free media. Even during the coup period, the Solomon Islands Broadcasting Corporation (SIBC) and *The Solomon Star* newspaper very bravely continued to report the news as they saw it, resulting in attacks on their personnel and equipment and armed demands for cash “compensation” for stories deemed defamatory by militants or government ministers. This strong tradition of the freedom of the media has continued and local criticism of RAMSI, despite all of RAMSI’s good work, has not been restrained. Ironically, while RAMSI has been fostering transparency in Solomon Islands government activities in its anti-corruption investigations, it has been quite opaque about its own internal failures. These usually only come out in stories by aggrieved Solomon Islanders in the local media. SIBC and *The Solomon Star* will broadcast or print almost anything they are given, so there is true media democracy in the Solomons Islands, despite continued attacks on it by certain government ministers embarrassed by the media’s disclosures.

- The churches are alive and well, often growing, trying to face challenges. It is a bit of a shock to realize that there are more people attending services at St Barnabas Cathedral in Honiara on a Sunday morning than there are in entire Canadian (and possibly Australian) dioceses. Solomon Islanders are religious people and church life is woven into communities, especially in rural areas. In my own diocese (some 35,000 Anglicans), in the last nine years we have grown from 32 to 39 parishes, that is, from 360 to 410 congregations. I have a waiting list of about 30 candidates for ordination. Religious communities, women’s groups, fellowship groups, church lay and clergy training centers, church secondary schools, etc, all flourish.

Of course, there are problems—Christianity that is not deep or holistic, various versions of the ‘gospel of prosperity’, lack of all sorts of resources, and many new churches and sects. These range from various quasi-Baptist groups demanding the re-baptism of all adult members of ‘mainline’ churches, to well known heterodox groups such as the Jehovah’s Witnesses, Mormons and Moonies, to homegrown religious movements that creatively—and sometimes destructively—combine traditional religion, Christianity and other influences. Groups such as our own marijuana-smoking “Malaita Law”

“Sabbath-keeping Anglicans” who set fire to the cathedral last year to stop its Sunday worship. Not unlike the Alexandria of Athanasius and Arius, matters of doctrine and worship are discussed in the marketplace.

- Generally, “law and order” has returned to the country. Credit for this must be given to the RAMSI intervention of July 2003, which continues. RAMSI’s notable accomplishments include the arrest of Harold Keke and his followers on the Weather Coast of Guadalcanal on numerous charges of murder, including that of Fr Augustine Geve, Roman Catholic priest and Member of Parliament, and seven Melanesian Brothers; the arrest of many ex-militants, ex-police, politicians and businessmen on both sides of the conflict on charges ranging from murder, kidnapping and rape to threatening with menace, assault and corruption; the re-establishment of the Finance Ministry as an essential part of the government, rather than a slush fund for ex-militants; and the demobilization of some 2,000 Special Constables, mostly ex-militants put on the government payroll to keep them quiet. There have been over 3,000 arrests since RAMSI arrived.

However, lest it be thought that Australia’s foreign policy has been blameless in this area, it should

be said that the intervention came very *very* late. If earlier pleas to Australia for (a much smaller scale) intervention from the government and churches had been heeded, there would not have been a coup, there would not have been armed conflict between the Isatabu Freedom Movement and the Malaita Eagle Force, there would not have been the mass exodus of overseas volunteers and other expatriates from the country and, positively, many Solomon Islands lives would have been spared and millions of Australian dollars saved. The Australian government held on to its isolationist policy vis-à-vis the Pacific for too long.

- Australian foreign aid policy towards the Solomons is slowly improving. The most creative AusAID programme to come out of the Solomons conflict was the Community Peace and Restoration Fund (CPRF). Rather than pumping millions into government ministries or megaprojects, it offered support to local community development projects, assessed and monitored locally—rural clinics, community high schools, women’s centers, infrastructure projects such as roads and bridges, local water supplies, peace and reconciliation conferences, etc. While I thought it was unnecessarily constrained by some AusAID restrictions of what could or could not be funded (for example, no vehicles), it offered hope and support to communities who had been ignored and forgotten. CPRF is evolving into a new AusAID program—Community Services Program, delivered under different auspices and concentrating on income generation, an important need. I only hope the new program utilizes the experience of CPRF rather than starting from scratch.

The Australian government also seems finally to realize that the churches are the real non-governmental organizations in the Solomons, in that they are well organized, deliver services and *are* the grassroots. Rather than pumping money into Honiara-based NGOs (non-government organizations) with little grassroots connection or establishing new NGOs, AusAID is moving toward working more directly with the Solomon Islands churches. Last year a new AusAID program was developed involving several SI churches and their Australian church development partners; these programs are getting off the ground. Of course, the churches have to be careful that they do not get co-opted by governments and NGOs seeking to use their networks to “deliver services”.

- Australia has a good High Commissioner in the Solomons. Patrick Cole grew up as a “missionary kid” in Singapore. His father taught Old Testament at Trinity College, Singapore, and later become General Secretary of Church Missionary Society (CMS) Australia. Patrick is an active member of St Barnabas Cathedral, Honiara, is theologically literate and committed and well positioned to challenge Solomon Island leaders (and, indeed, all SI citizens) to be true to their Christian vocations. Given the dominant role of Australia in RAMSI and RAMSI’s occasional insensitivity to its context, it is important to have a strong High Commissioner of integrity who can represent well Australia’s overall interests in the Solomons, provide an independent check on RAMSI (while, of course, supporting it) and relate to Solomon Islanders through the institutions closest to them, their churches.

Recently, I published two articles in *The Solomon Star* on the Solomon Islands political and security situation. They were entitled “RAMSI, the Police and the Future” and “RAMSI, the ‘Big Fish’ and Solomon Islands Sovereignty”. (I think both eventually appeared on the Internet.) I wrote regular *Solomon Star* commentaries on the political situation during the “ethnic tension” period but had not published anything on RAMSI since an

A common Malaita complaint has been that RAMSI has ignored the “big fish” in its quest for political stability in the Solomons

article in *The Australian Financial Review* just before their arrival in July 2003. I decided to wait before making any judgments.

The main concern of the first article was the decline in the quality of police services in Malaita after the burst of activity when RAMSI first arrived, pointing out that James Tatau, the main suspect in the recent killing in Honiara of Australian RAMSI police officer Adam Dunning, was a well-known criminal in Auki, against whom many serious complaints had been made and that he should already have been in prison. When RAMSI first arrived

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in Auki, they took down all this information, then nothing happened. I also noted some emerging complaints about RAMSI such as lack of continuity because of very short appointments, the increasing aloofness of Australian RAMSI police, the large gap in income and lifestyle between RAMSI staff and locals, the high percentage of RAMSI expenditure that ends up back in Australia, and an apparent lack of long-term coordination and planning.

The second article criticized the move of some in the government to “call off RAMSI” as it gets closer and closer to certain senior governor ministers (including the Prime Minister), and urged RAMSI not to target just well-known ex-militants. A common Malaita complaint has been that RAMSI has ignored the “big fish” in its quest for political stability in the Solomons, a charge that both RAMSI and the Prime Minister deny. The article also pointed out the danger to Solomon Islands sovereignty of appointing an Australian RAMSI Police Commissioner and encouraged the reappointment of the current expatriate Police Commissioner, William Morrell, who has worked hard at building up the Royal Solomon Islands Police.

The first article was picked up by a Pacific news service, sensationalized and appeared in the Australian and New Zealand media under the

Probably not coincidentally, I had a string of visitors in Auki the next week to discuss the concerns of the article.

inaccurate theme of ‘Solomon Islands church leader says RAMSI is doomed’, missing the main point of the article and omitting a very important “unless” that followed. Church partners in Australia contacted the Archbishop in Honiara to ask if this story now meant that the Church of Melanesia no longer supported RAMSI. The media publicity resulted in Radio Australia and Radio New Zealand interviews where, despite my constant statements in support of RAMSI, the leading questions, headlines and summaries were often about my opposition to RAMSI. Quite unnecessarily, even *The Solomon Star* reprinted the sensational-

ized version of the article. The Acting RAMSI Coordinator in Honiara issued an official denial of my criticisms for the media. The denial was very general—everything is all right with RAMSI—and did not address any of the specific issues I raised.

Probably not coincidentally, I had a string of visitors in Auki the next week to discuss the concerns of the article. They included the Solomon Islands Police Commissioner (he was coming anyway), a Deputy New Zealand Police Commissioner from Wellington and his assistant, the Australian High Commission person responsible for AusAID programs, the RAMSI Coordinator for developing “machinery of government” and the Australian Shadow Minister for the South Pacific and his Australian High Commission host. All of these visits were cordial and virtually all acknowledged the reality of the difficulties I had raised. It would appear that RAMSI must put forward a positive face to the media no matter what but is willing to admit privately to weaknesses. I was actually encouraged by the visits.

The second article brought an outburst in Parliament from the Prime Minister and a threat to take me to court. In addition to *The Solomon Star* article, he inaccurately claimed that I had denounced him in a sermon that said RAMSI had 27 charges against him. The latter is common Honiara street gossip where even the children discuss when is the Prime Minister going to jail. The Archbishop calmed down the Prime Minister who is an active Anglican, despite his flirtations with the Moonies. He has since publicly admitted that the story about the sermon was not true. There will be no court case.

The Prime Minister’s outburst against me in Parliament was top news on SIBC that night and picked up by Australian and New Zealand media, with the media now trying to portray me as an enemy of both RAMSI and the Prime Minister. However, the matter has passed.

During mid-February there has been a much stronger RAMSI presence in Malaita. Some special investigators have come across and there are small military contingents in both Auki and Malu’u, possibly elsewhere. On a visit to North Malaita this week, I met the new RAMSI officer-in-charge there and had a good visit with him. Like many in RAMSI, including the Coordinator, James Batley, he comes to the Solomons from service in East Timor. He is even an Anglican, attending services in Malu’u

(this is very unusual for RAMSI staff who are usually very secular). A magistrate has been flown into Malu’u to hear criminal cases which have built up over the years; it was the first visit in about three years. And on the national scale, RAMSI is instituting a cultural sensitivity training program for all incoming staff—military, police and civilian.

I would say to Australians, support the RAMSI initiative. To pull out at this point would be a return to chaos on all levels. However, while RAMSI should be supported, there are many areas needing improvement—for example, making RAMSI more regional and less Australian (“put the ‘R’ back into RAMSI”, as one local commentator has written), addressing the country’s serious educational crisis

Pacific Christianity still has much to offer Australia in terms of depth of interpersonal and community life, simple living with integrity, beauty of worship

whereby a large portion of the country’s teenage population does not attend secondary school because their parents cannot afford the compulsory school fees; addressing quickly and effectively the nation’s collapsed infrastructure (why focus on developing local income-generating projects when the “roads” needed to take the products to market have long overgrown with bush and washed away with constant rain?); establishing effective policing and judicial services in rural areas; providing genuine programs of local human resource development (local scholarships!) and capacity building rather than relying on rhetoric or osmosis; and (not least) shifting the development focus in the Solomons Islands away from Honiara to the provinces and villages.

On the latter point, a very recent summit of Guadalcanal leaders has again reasserted that Honiara is “an inalienable part of Guadalcanal” and therefore still owned by its customary landowners despite any (legal) government purchase and registration of land. The potential for major ethnic conflict between Guadalcanal and the rest of the country, especially Malaita, remains (most of the population of Honiara is from Malaita). Questions about whether Honiara can continue to remain the country’s capital and commercial centre are sure to

come up again. Alternatives need to be developed. RAMSI’s policies and practices must not fall into the Honiara centralization trap of generations of Solomon Islands governments.

But perhaps more importantly, Australian Christians need to begin to take a more positive interest in the South Pacific, especially the Solomons, Papua New Guinea and Vanuatu. Rather than being frightened off by the media’s emphasis on the violent extremes (in some cases, long after they have ceased to exist), which local people are also horrified by, Australian Christians ought to make efforts to build friendship with South Pacific Christians.

Pacific Christianity still has much to offer to Australia in terms of depth of interpersonal and community life, simple living with integrity, beauty of worship (song and dance), depth of spirituality, practical love and joy and laughter.

Australian Christians need to become alternatives to the Australian RAMSI soldiers in full battle gear speeding in high gear through the streets of Honiara.

The Australian church needs to move away from its isolation from the Pacific and/or its fascination with mission situations far away. Rather, be a good neighbour to your friends next door. The Pacific churches want church friends in Australia, not just RAMSI.

There is one other political area that needs to be looked at carefully—the possibility of Australia opening its doors for Solomon Islanders to come work (say, for short periods) in Australia. Tonga, Samoa, Fiji, Niue and the Cook Islands have a measure of prosperity, stability and confidence partly because of the relative ease of movement (even settlement) between them and New Zealand. With regard to Melanesia, Australia still seems to be pursuing its old “white Australia” policy.

No one wants to repeat the abuses of the 19th century indentured labour trade that brought Solomon Islands workers (sometimes kidnapped) to Queensland sugar cane plantations. (But even there, in the end, working in Queensland came to be something to be strived for.) On the other hand, the Solomon Islands have a surplus of labour and willing and friendly workers. As I say, the matter needs to be looked at seriously as, especially compared to New Zealand, Canada, etc, present Australian policy seems to have a residual racist cast.

However, even if one believes Solomon Islanders should be encouraged to stay at home (I fluctuate on the issue, seeing how much friends would like to see another part of the world, yet fearing some of the consequences), then Australian foreign aid policy and spending should be aimed at providing employment for Solomon Islanders, rather than high salaries to Australians working in the Solomons. Ironically, it is only the well-heeled Solomon Islands politicians (who have often got their gain from corrupt dealings) and the rich

Solomon Islands Chinese business community (often despised by the Solomon Islanders they exploit) who are allowed into Australia to visit, work or settle—because they have the money. What is the message here?

The Right. Revd Terry Brown is Anglican Bishop of Malaita based at Auki, Malaita Province, Solomon Islands, in the Church of Melanesia.
domauki@solomon.com.sb

On modern Lenten temptations

Especially for Lent

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Fresh Australian Large Crumbed Fish Portions

Save 3.51 6⁹⁸ kg
Imported New French Fish

NEW SEASON **Save 2.07** 13⁹⁸ kg
Hot Cooked Lobsters

Save 2.00 9⁹⁸ kg
Pacific Oysters

Save 5.00 24⁹⁸ kg
Imported Crumbed Crustacean Portions Tail On

Great For Salads 5⁹⁸ kg
Imported Crumbed Fish

Nile Perch Fillets with Aioli
Serves: 4

Ingredients:

- 4 x 100g Nile Perch fillets
- 2 eggs, beaten
- 1 cup fresh breadcrumbs
- 2 lemons, juiced
- 1 small red onion, sliced and quartered
- 1/2 cup fresh flat-leaf parsley

Method:

1. Dip the Nile Perch fillets in the flour and dip off any excess. Beat the eggs in the beaten egg and bread in the crumbs.
2. Heat a little olive oil in a large fry pan with the butter and gently shallow fry the fish until golden on both sides. Remove from the pan and drain on absorbent paper.
3. To serve, place a wedge of cooking shiraz, Nile perch and top with Aioli.
4. Serve with a piece of lemon.

The Fresh Food People
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Seafood lines may not be available in all stores.

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“And could we have Pachelbel’s Canon for our wedding march, Father?” “I’m afraid you can’t have the organ.” “Why not?” “Because it’s Lent.” The couple take an unbelieving glance at the organ, firmly in its place. There’s something fishy about this advertisement too. Abstain from meat at your main meal of the day and you are succeeding in your Lenten fast, however gorgeous are the Nile perch fillets with Aioli. Or, perhaps, though it doesn’t say, this is an advert for being ‘specially good—a sort of half-fast at your Lenten Sunday feast. Hopefully the ad idea has been borrowed, rather than lent.

Eric Cooper

A crisis of suspicion

The Revd Dr Timothy Radcliffe, former Master-General of the Dominican Order, and Oxford-based scholar delivered a public lecture in Brisbane late last year called ‘The Crisis of Truth-Telling in our Society’. This edited text of his lecture is timely and worth a close reading by anyone interested in maintaining the faith in public life today.



Onora O’Neill from Cambridge, in the 2002 Reith lectures, talked of a crisis of suspicion. People suspect they are not being told the truth by politicians, doctors, business executives, the clergy and especially the media. We are drowning in information, but we do not know whom or what to believe. This is not to say necessarily that people are less truthful than before. They may be, I don’t

The fact that we cannot find the evidence proves how untrustworthy and fiendishly cunning your enemy is.

For most of the history of the West, telling the truth has been seen as something important in itself, as honourable, part of our human dignity. Aristotle wrote that ‘falsehood is itself mean and culpable, and truth noble and full of praise.’ And that is a tradition that carries all the way through to Immanuel Kant, who wrote, “By a lie a person throws away and, as it were, annihilates his dignity as a person.”¹

Raimund Gaita, an Australian who not only teaches here at Australian Catholic University but also at King’s in London, wrote a wonderful book which is an account of his father, *Romulus my Father*. His father was a blacksmith who emigrated from Romania to Australia. And at the heart of Romulus’ character, his personhood, was his belief in the absolute exigency of telling the truth. Gaita says of his father and his friend Hora, “They valued [truthfulness] because, to adapt the words of a fine English philosopher, they were men for whom *not to falsify* had become a spiritual demeanour.”² There is nothing calculating about that attitude. There is nothing utilitarian. It is not saying if you don’t tell the truth then you will get into a mess. It was a simple requirement of human honour. Such a cherishing of truth telling for its own sake has largely been lost by our society.

know, I haven’t seen the evidence. But it is to say there is an instinctive suspicion.

It is often assumed that the answer is as much transparency as possible. If only everything were revealed, then we would know if our suspicions were grounded or not. And so, every email, every memo, telephone call and conversation in the corridors of power should be recorded for inspection. And increasingly the government checks up on us all. But O’Neill argues that the demand for universal transparency won’t give us the truth. It will never kill suspicion. She says it is likely to encourage the evasions, hypocrisies and half-truths that we usually refer to as “political correctness”. But which might more forthrightly be called either “self-censorship” or “deception”.³

Suspicion can never be completely allayed. There might always be a last bit of evidence we haven’t tracked down. Some missing bit of evidence. Like the endless searching for weapons of mass destruction in Iraq. The fact that we cannot find the evi-

¹ Quoted by Bok *op.cit.* p. 32

² *Romulus my father* Melbourne 1998 p.148

³ *A question of Trust: The BBC Reith Lectures 2002* Cambridge 2002 p.73

dence proves how untrustworthy and fiendishly cunning your enemy is.

A culture of complete transparency also might actively discourage people from being truthful. Because you would never know when your words might not be taken down and used in evidence against you. And how can we ever discover what we can think unless we have the freedom to float ideas, have crazy hypotheses, and make mistakes? Meister Eckhart, a fourteenth century German Dominican, wrote that no one may attain the truth without a hundred errors on the way. We need the freedom for words for which we will not be held eternally responsible. Seeking the truth requires, paradoxically, places of protected irresponsibility. Universities should be such places. So the ideal of total transparency as a solution to our suspicion is neither possible nor desirable.

We are the heirs of an older, and alternative understanding of truthfulness

This frustrated hunger for truth is also evident in the desire for endless self-revelation or the exposure of others. We live in what has been called ‘the bare all society.’ On TV chat shows like Oprah’s, people are heroes for a brief moment by telling all. And in the media, according to Zygmunt Bauman, ‘public interest’ means “the private problems of public figures.”⁴ Everybody’s little secrets must be disclosed. Yet this passion for unveiling, for self-disclosure, or for ripping the clothes off other people never satisfies our feeling that something nasty is going on which we ought to know about.

Faced with this crisis of truthfulness Christianity has something to offer. It is not that Christians are necessarily any more truthful than anyone else. I also feel there is a profound crisis of truthfulness inside our own churches. Speaking for my own church I know that bishops, priests, theologians often don’t tell the truth. Often we are afraid to say what we believe. So the Church cannot claim to be a beacon of honesty in a world of lies. So what does the Church have to offer?

I believe that our tradition offers us something remarkable and often unnoticed which is a different understanding of what it means to seek the

truth. We are the heirs of an older, and alternative understanding of truthfulness, and our society needs that if it is not to break down. We need what I might call a spirituality of truthfulness which is a way of being alive which helps one to see the world aright.

Our western society tends to see truthfulness almost exclusively in terms of the Enlightenment tradition. This is a wonderful and fertile tradition which has given us modern science, much freedom. It is good, but if it becomes the sole paradigm of seeking the truth, then it is not surprising that we are in such a mess. It would take a couple of lectures to give a fair presentation of the Enlightenment understanding of truth, so please forgive me for just offering just a few suggestive hints.

Alasdair MacIntyre wrote, “From the seventeenth century onwards it was a commonplace that whereas the scholastics had allowed themselves to be deceived about the character of the facts of the natural and social world by imposing an Aristotelian interpretation between themselves and experienced reality, we moderns,—that is we seventeenth and eighteenth century moderns—had stripped away interpretation and theory and confronted fact and experience just as they are. It was precisely in virtue of this that those moderns proclaimed themselves the Enlightenment, and understood the Medieval past by contrast as the Dark Ages. What Aristotle obscured, they see.”⁵ So we seek the truth in this tradition first of all by rejecting doctrine, especially the dogmas of Christianity. This is an attitude which is still widely held. You only have to look at the preamble to the proposed Constitution for the European Union which passes directly from the Greeks and Romans to the Enlightenment, giving the impression that most of Christian history is an aberration in the steady advance of humanity towards rationality.

The truthful eye of the Enlightenment is that of the detached scientific observer, who looks coldly, rationally, questioning the inherited assumptions and prejudices of the crowd. But it turned out not to be as simple as that. Because once you start to doubt, it is very hard to stop. How can you be sure that you are seeing things as they are? How can you bridge the gap between the mind and the world? How can you be sure that there was anything out

⁴ *Liquid Modernity* Cambridge 2000 p.70

⁵ *After Virtue* p.78

there at all? You can quickly recognise the finger of Descartes emerging.

In its search for truthfulness, the mind must doubt everything. One must be sceptical, suspicious, distrustful. It is characterized by the English philosopher Bernard Williams in this way, “There is an intense commitment to truthfulness, or, at any rate, a pervasive suspiciousness, a readiness against being fooled, an eagerness to see through appearances to the real structures and motives that lie behind them.”⁶ Systematic doubt! And this ultimately undermines any trust in language as a place in which truth may be encountered.

Voltaire remarked that we have language to conceal our thoughts. I do not suggest that this tradition is simply to be rejected. We are all the children of the Enlightenment and we are profoundly indebted to it. But if it becomes the primary paradigm of seeking the truth then we will create a society which is inevitably mistrustful, sceptical, suspicious, and whose social bonds begin to crumble.

As fish were made to swim in water, human beings were made to thrive in the truth. It is our home.

We Christians offer an alternative and necessary complementary understanding of what it means to be truthful.

Of course in our complex world, there cannot be a single measure or model of truthfulness. The academic has different obligations than the journalist or the novelist. Telling the truth is not so central to the vocation of a politician as it is to a philosopher. There is no simple unified code of truthfulness that can be universally applied. But if we form Christians satisfactorily in what I would call a spirituality of truthfulness, then Christian politicians, Christian doctors, journalists, academics, business executives and plumbers might come to see what truthfulness is required in their way of life.

A Christian spirituality of truthfulness must scandalize a child of the Enlightenment, because it starts from doctrine. For the Enlightenment, truthfulness began with being liberated from doctrine. Of course it was not noticed that very soon the Enlightenment itself had its own doctrines. As G K Chesterton once remarked, “There are only

two kinds of people, those who accept dogmas and know it, and those who accept dogmas and don’t know it”.

Let us begin at the beginning, with the doctrine of creation. For St Thomas Aquinas, the doctrine of creation does not tell us about what happened a long time ago, before the Big Bang. The doctrine of creation is our belief that everything *now* receives its existence from God and it is for this reason that we can understand it. It is God’s world, sustained in being by God, and we are at home in it as God’s creatures. It is not an alien and incomprehensible place. The central intuition of Aquinas was that, in the words of Cornelius Ernst, the world “effortlessly shows itself for what it is, flowers into the light.”⁷ Of course we make mistakes, we misunderstand, we can tell lies, we can wear masks. But the truth is prior to error and deceit. As fish were made to swim in water, human beings were made to thrive in the truth. It is our home.

This is very different from the vision of Descartes, who was of course a pious Christian, where the mind is the ‘ghost in the machine’, struggling to get in contact with reality. For the Enlightenment the big challenge was how we can be sure of anything. How can we get from our minds to the world? How can we know that reality is not entirely different? So we start with doubt and mistrust.

Thomas (Aquinas) also believed that if we are to see things as they are, if we are to live in the truth, our natural environment, first of all we must be contemplative. Contemplation is that quiet, still opening of the mind to what is before it, whether it is the Word of God, a person, or a plant. It is that calm presence to what is not oneself, resisting the egotistical temptation to take it over, to own it, to use it, to see it purely in terms of myself.

You must let your heart and mind be stretched open, enlarged by what you see. Thomas loved the phrase of Aristotle “the soul in some way is all things”.⁸ Understanding what is other than oneself expands one’s being. Contemplation is being humbly, nakedly present to the other. Simone Weil wrote that “Real genius is nothing else but the supernatural virtue of humility in the domain of thought.”⁹

This demands of us quietness of mind, and time. One source of our crisis of truth telling, is that

⁶ *Truth and Truthfulness: An essay in genealogy* Princeton 2002 p.1

⁷ *Multiple Echo* p.8.

⁸ e.g. *De Veritate* art. 1, quoting *De Anima*, III, 8 (431b 21)

⁹ Raimond Gaita *A Common Humanity: Thinking about love and truth and justice* London 2000 p.224

our lives are so hectic, so frenetic that we do not have the time to even see each other or anything properly. Our preoccupation for truth as accountability, transparency, means that we have to spend so much time filling in forms, making reports, compiling statistics, checking up on other people, being checked up on ourselves, that we have no time to open our eyes and see.

When Wittgenstein was asked how should one philosopher greet another, he replied, “Take your time”.

So a spirituality of truth first invites us to slow down, be quiet, and let our hearts and minds be stretched open. Simone Weil writes “we do not obtain the most precious gifts by going in search of them but by waiting for them... This way of looking is, in the first place, attentive. The soul empties itself of all its own contents in order to receive the human being it is looking at, just as he is, in all his truth”.¹⁰

Truthfulness is a moral activity. It is inseparable from breaking the hold of a certain form of egoism.

To lie was not just to fail to be accurate. More radically it is destructive of language, and so of the basis of human solidarity.

Truthfulness is not just the reporting of facts. Truth is the basis of human community. It is the medium in which human beings encounter each other and belong to each other. St Augustine talked of humanity as ‘the community of truth’. He was virulently opposed to a heresy called Priscillianism, which maintained that one was under no obligation to tell the truth to strangers. There is a lot of it about today! For Augustine telling the truth to strangers is part of building the human community, constructing the Kingdom. And this explains why until recently nearly all theologians were extremely intolerant of even white lies. To lie was not just to fail to be accurate. More radically it is destructive of language, and so of the basis of human solidarity.

For us, there doesn't appear to be much of a difference between a remark that is true but misleading, and a lie. That is because we do not have that profound sense of most of European history, of the sacredness of true words as the foundation of human community. Lies pollute our natural environment. We die spiritually, like fish in a polluted river.

People often say that the Church is hung up on sex. For most of the history of our tradition we have been far more preoccupied with lying.

In Dante's *Inferno*, the upper circles where people get a gentle warming are reserved for people who sinned because of the passions. They desired the good, but desired it wrongly. If you go down to the central circles of Hell where the temperature is turned up, that was reserved for those who desired the bad, especially the violent. But the absolute pits were kept for those who undermined the human community of truth—the liars, the fraudulent, the flatterers, the forgers, and worst of all the traitors.

It is true that sometimes the Church does get hung up on sex, and this suits the media, since it locks the gospel in a safe little box where it can be mocked. But for a traditional Christian, lying is a far more serious matter. Which you may or may not consider to be a consolation!

To see the truth, we need a humble, serene attentiveness. Then, according to Aquinas, we shall see the goodness of the world. When God finished creation God saw that it was very good. Fergus Kerr wrote, “The world, for Thomas, much against what was quite widely taught in his time, is simply the expression of divine bounty, freely shared, entirely unforced, “unnecessary”, simply an expression of love.”¹¹ For anything to exist at all is an expression of love.

The truthful eye of the Enlightenment is that of the detached observer, who dispassionately regards what is before his eyes. It is the scientific eye that looks down the microscope. It is a very useful way of looking at the world and we would be immensely the poorer if it had not been developed in the seventeenth century. But if we try to look at each other just through microscopes, like animals to be dissected, then we will not see each other's goodness, which is the deepest truth of our being.

St Augustine wrote at the end of the *Confessions*, “All these works of yours we see. We see that together they are very good, because it is you who see them in us and it was you who gave us the Spirit by which we see them and love you in them”.¹²

This confection of the ultimate goodness of human beings, of creation, which praises God, is founded on doctrine. But that doesn't mean to say

¹⁰ *Waiting for God* London 1959 p.169

¹¹ Fergus Kerr OP *After Aquinas Versions of Thomism* Oxford 2002 p.39

¹² xiii.34

that we can only show that goodness to those who share our doctrines.

Gaita argues that often we come to see people as lovable because we see people loving them. Children come to love their brothers and sisters because they see them in the light of their parents' love. Just as gaolers, prison wardens, see beloved ones come into prison and see the prisoners differently. This is not a matter of being kind, it is not a matter of seeing the world through rose-tinted glasses. It is seeing the truth of things.

The opponent of God's truth in the Bible is Satan, the father of lies. And his lies do not consist, as modern politicians might say, of being economical with the truth, or making an error of judgment.

We need a different model of political debate, where the goal is not to trash your opponent but to arrive at a shared understanding of the common good.

It is not even that he tells fibs. His untruthfulness is in sowing distrust between God and Adam and Eve. He makes them suspicious. His name, ‘Satan’, means ‘The Accuser’, and the Bible concludes with the saints singing that “the accuser of our brothers and sisters has been thrown down”. For Christians the great lie is to see other people unmercifully, to shut our eyes to their goodness and to weigh them down with the burden of their sins.

Truthfulness is a moral task—the deconstruction of deceptive egoism.

So the conflict between truth and falsity in the Bible is not just about accuracy, about describing what is the case, though that matters profoundly. More deeply it is a conflict between God's word, which gives life, and the Word of the accuser, which undermines, and denigrates and belittles.

The media are typical fruit of the eighteenth century, unmasking hypocrisy, denouncing failure, and it is largely through their eyes that we see the world. Thanks be to God that we have the media who are free.¹³ Thanks be to God for Watergate. The media exposed the practice of sexual abuse in the Catholic Church and the failure of the authori-

ties to deal with it. It was profoundly painful and humiliating. But thanks be to God that the media did show up our failings, otherwise we might never have been forced to confront our failure and our sins. Thanks be to God for the media's revelation of the appalling abuse of Iraqis in the Abu Ghraib prison. Without the media's revelations, it might never have been stopped. But denunciation and accusation—necessary as they are sometimes—cannot be the main way in which human beings view each other, otherwise we shall be sucked into untruthfulness, because it is good people who do bad things.

In a mistrustful and suspicious society which is in danger of disintegration, we need a different sort of press, free to develop beyond the limitations of its Enlightenment beginnings, just as we need a different model of political debate, where the goal is not to trash your opponent but to arrive at a shared understanding of the common good. I think the Medieval model of the disputation may offer us some useful clues.

We have to think how we can offer oases in which journalists, and politicians and business executives and shop keepers can be sustained in other ways of seeing the world and so discover what it might mean to be truthful in their particular professions.

The doctrine of creation teaches us to see the world as created, which is to say as gift. Our eyes are opened to the pure gratuitousness of being. Nothing need exist. It is sustained at every moment by God.

In 1944 Karl Polanyi wrote a book called *The Great Transformation: the political and economic origins of our times*. It plotted the evolution of another way of seeing the world—the birth of ‘the commodity fiction’.¹⁴ It is fiction that everything can be bought and sold—land, labour, water, all of God's creation. The market economy provides the filter through which we look at the world. The ownership of property becomes the foundation of human dignity. The rights of property are absolute and everything becomes property.

Sixty years after the publication of Polanyi's book, we can see that commodification of creation is proceeding apace. He plotted the transformation of land into a commodity. He could never have dreamed

¹³ *Common Theology* is an independent publication.

¹⁴ Boston 1957 p.73

that by the end of the century, multinational companies would seek ownership of even the fertility of the earth in the name of ‘intellectual property rights’. A few companies are buying up control of seed plasma. According to Jeremy Rifkin, they “then slightly modify the seeds or strip out individual genetic traits, or recombine new genes into the seeds and secure patent protection over their ‘inventions’. The goal is to control, in the form of intellectual property, the entire seed stock of the planet”.¹⁵ We are rightly indignant at the President of Zimbabwe for appropriating the land of the white farmers. It is a sin against justice. Far more disturbing is the appropriation of the fertility of the planet. It is a sin against the truth of creation.

In a society which is a market place, in which we are first of all consumers, how can we sustain another way of seeing the world—a clarity of sight? One way is by saying our prayers. For Thomas Aquinas, praying is principally about saying ‘please’ and ‘thank you’. We ask God for what we desire and we thank God if we receive it. This may sound rather infantile. Aren’t we grown up enough to look after ourselves? For Thomas Aquinas, prayer is simply the recognition of things as they are—gift. To ask God for what I desire and to thank God when I receive it is simply to live in the real world. It is to open our eyes to the gratuity of being. The word ‘thank’ derives from ‘think’.¹⁶ Thanking is thinking truly. So the daily round of services in our churches is a constant reminder that the world is not as consumerism says. We are not ultimately producers and consumers, we are the recipients of gifts. I have often been struck in Muslim countries by the call of the muezzin to prayer, reminding one insistently, publicly, that God is the Creator of all good things.

If we are made to find our fulfilment in God, it means now we cannot fully know who we are. We are made to flourish in the one who is beyond imagination and beyond all words. We only get a glimpse of what it is to be a human being. As St John says, “Beloved, we are God’s children now; it does not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is” (1 John 3.2).

So if I am to describe what it is to be human being I must be scrabbling at the boundaries of words, at the limits of what can be said—where language breaks down. Truthfulness drives us to

poetry, and of course Thomas Aquinas was one of the finest poets of the Middle Ages.

Our society is afflicted with a crisis of truthfulness. We do not trust that politicians, business executives, doctors, the media, even the clergy, are telling us the truth. No amount of verification, checking up will restore our trust. No amount of the exposing of lies seems to do the trick. How can we recover trust in each other? How can we learn to cherish truth, for its own sake?

Bernard Williams wrote well of what he called “the two basic virtues of truth, Accuracy and Sincerity”.¹⁷ My thesis is that these are necessary but not sufficient. We need what I have called a spirituality of truth. We need to take the time and the leisure to see.

We cannot see anybody if we are caught up in a frenetic and hectic life. According to Aquinas, no society is civilized which does not maintain communities of contemplative people. Without quietness there is no friendship or love. At the beginning of his *Spiritual Friendship* Aelred of Rivaulx wrote, “Here we are, you and I, and I hope a third, Christ, is in our midst. There is no one now to disturb us. There is no one to break in upon our friendly chat, no one’s prattle or noise of any kind will creep into this pleasant solitude. Come now, beloved, open your heart, and pour into these friendly ears whatsoever you will, and let us accept gratefully the boon of this place, time and leisure”.

Truthfulness requires also a sense of the power of words to hurt or heal. We cannot just fling them around irresponsibly. It means learning to live in a world of gifts, of speaking the truth to strangers.

I have not tried to say what it might mean for a politician or a journalist or a taxi driver, an accountant or even a priest to be truthful in this Christian sense. In a complex world there can be no single and simple model. What the Church needs to build are spaces and places in which people can come to have their sight refreshed and their eyes cleaned. The climate of mistrust and suspicion, the constant bombardment of the media with its culture of accusation, the ethos of consumerism, all press upon us, and deform our perceptions. We need oases of leisure and silence and gratitude where we can, literally, come to our senses.

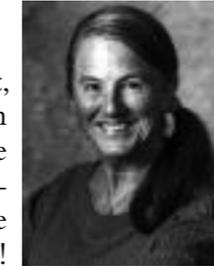
¹⁵ *The Age of Access* London 2000 p.66

¹⁶ John Ayto *Bloomsbury Dictionary of Word Origins* London 1990 p.526

¹⁷ op.cit 44

Rehearsals for heaven

By Kay McLennan



When I was a student, living in a Scottish Presbyterian college in Melbourne, we looked forward all Sunday, if not the entire week, to our Sunday night *treat!* This treat was heralded by gorgeous smells wafting from the one meal a week we cooked for ourselves (whilst the domestic staff enjoyed its Sabbath rest)—cheese on toast.

After this delectable was consumed, we were allowed to go *out*—to any church we cared to visit.

So in our twos and threes we explored the Gaelic-speaking congregation up on the corner, the Welsh Calvinist Methodist church, the Evangelical Anglican beyond the university, Sacred Heart just up the street, and the cathedral. For the music loving amongst us, the cathedral was our favourite.

The director of music in those days was a generously large man, and his choir had a generous, large sound. The men and boys were of course professional to their toe-tips, so the music was superb.

My best friend graduated and went to Korea where she would one day become Professor of Music at Ewha University. After her first five years she returned to Australia on furlough, and I couldn’t wait to telephone her. It was a Sunday afternoon, and I said, “Remember how we loved going to Evensong at the cathedral when we were students? Let’s go to the cathedral tonight.”

“Oh Kay, I’d love to but I can’t” was Dee’s disappointing reply. “I’ve just joined the choir of the Canterbury Fellowship.”

I had heard of the choir of the Canterbury Fellowship of course. What devotee of Evensong on the ABC hadn’t? But an Anglican friend had told me that one had to be an Anglican to qualify for audition, so I’d dismissed the dream. I quizzed Dee but she’d heard nothing of the stipulation and suggested I forgo the cathedral to watch *her* new choir in action, and to meet the choirmaster afterwards.

It was a lovely night. To see this top-ranking ensemble making their glorious sounds was won-

eye witness

derful. I was introduced to the awe-full director of music when the Service ended and Dee asked him if he’d consider taking me on with her as a package. He wasn’t keen. He already had enough new young singers. But if I liked I could come to rehearsals on Thursdays and if I showed promised he *might* robe me in May.

On the first night I was seated next to an ample and ferocious lady who turned on (not to) me and said, “I’m Mary Dunsmuir and our first rule is ‘thou shalt not lean upon thy neighbour’”.

I gulped, but I had no intention of ‘leaning on my neighbour’. I was to discover a few years down the track when Peter, our director of music, placed a newcomer next to me, that he always asked an

In those days, a choir which auditioned hopefuls was regarded as elitist.

experienced chorister to eavesdrop on the new voice, to determine whether an audition would be profitable. In any event, after only two or three weeks, Mary went to Peter and said he ought to robe me. I had no idea of this, and was happily washing supper dishes with my friend Dee when Peter, walked into the kitchen. “I’ll wash,” he said. “You two dry, and we’ll have a sing. Do you know Mendelssohn’s ‘Lift Thine Eyes?’”

As it happened Dee and I had sung in this trio at public Presbyterian money-raising events years before, so off we went. Then Peter said, “Now we’ll do some rounds... ‘Frere Jacques’ first,” and off we went again. Never had dishwashing been more fun. And the following Sunday I was robed. The dishwashing session had been my audition! Utterly painless!

In those days, a choir (if not a cathedral ensemble) which auditioned hopefuls as an automatic prelude

to membership was regarded as elitist. The view was held that anyone who was 'sincere' should be allowed to sing in a choir. One hears that view still.

Holy Scripture says otherwise. Time and again the Bible notes that musicians were selected for ministry because they were skillful, trained and willing (1 Chron 25.7). Keneniah was chosen to conduct the choir because he was skillful at it (1 Chron 15.22). When the temple was purified under King Hezekiah, it involved the re-establishment of the ministry of music as set forth under David (2 Chron 29.25-28). And when it was again re-established under Nehemiah and Ezra (Neh 12.45-47) it was again done according to the commands of David, and what the Lord God commanded.

The science of bioacoustics has found that Creation itself is full of complex and glorious music.

Most auditioning choirs re-audition their singers every year. For there comes a time in every singer's life whom God has not called to Himself very early, when the fine voice begins to fail. Kind directors most typically say, "I think you should regard this as your last annual audition."

With a dread of every hearing those words, I took the Royal School of Church Music's way out, "The thoughtful chorister will retire before they all wish he would!"—that's how I became a cantor.

But what to do about people who want to worship God by singing a bit more than just the congregation's part, but who, if let loose on anthems and motets would drive half that congregation to drink, if not out of the assembly? In more recent years, at the second church in which I was cantor, there was what the priest called a 'singing group'. "They will never be a choir," said he firmly.

I went to the group's rehearsals. It was certainly one of the most undisciplined singing mobs I'd ever struck, and the outcome reflected the process. But it was very useful as a lead for the rest of the congregation when something new was being taught. And it performed a legitimate ministry.

Not only did Our Lord sing constantly during his lifetime (he probably sang when reading the

Scriptures in the synagogue, and he certainly sang at the institution of the Eucharist), but He sings today ...in the midst of those who come together in His Name (Heb 2.10-12).

He is with the congregation when it sings, and he is with the choir not only in its performance but during rehearsals. Realizing this fact makes mighty sense of the focused and effective practice!

One of the first music forms I had to master as a rookie in the Canterbury Fellowship was the chanted psalm—that exquisite tradition called Anglican chant. It is a form the Royal School of Church Music has come to realize is not for everyone, and there are other lovely ways of clothing those wonderful words—Gelineau chants and some of the other suggestions in the ecumenical hymn book *Together in Song*.

Sing psalms and other scriptural settings we must. Paul makes this clear (Col. 3.16; Eph 5.18). Thus we rehearse for what we'll be doing in heaven (Rev 15.3). Preaching and evangelism will cease in heaven (1 Cor 13.8) but music will go on.

But why all this? Why all those commands such as, "Come before His presence with singing" (Psalm 100.2), and the lavish demands of Psalm 150? (And whence the Free Kirker idea that no more than a tuning fork was pleasing to the Almighty?)

Because God Himself sings. Job 38.4, 6-7) tells us that there was music making during Creation. The science of bioacoustics has found that Creation itself is full of complex and glorious music, and the prophet Zephaniah reveals that God will sing for joy over the restoration of his people (Zeph 3.14-17).

Music heralded the major events of the Incarnation—the *Magnificat* of Mary, the *Benedictus* of Zechariah, the Gloria of the angels, and the *Nunc Dimittis* of Simeon. And one day (Rev 5.13) not just humankind but all of Creation will sing praise to God.

God has gifted us, and the rest of Creation, with music. And the God with perfect pitch and taste wants it gifted back. To clothe our devotions with music is therefore a compulsion. To offer anything which is shoddily composed, prepared or presented is a blasphemy.

Kay McLennan, veteran broadcaster of the music program *For the God Who Sings*, retired from the Australian Broadcasting Corporation in December.

Price tag for a child's education

\$75 a year can provide for the education of a child in India, Sri Lanka, Thailand or the Philippines.

St Veronica's Welfare Committee was founded 50 years ago in Brisbane to give poor children in the Pacific Region hope and a way out of poverty through an education.

All St Veronica's workers are volunteers, so all donors' money is sent to sponsored children in the care of orphanages, parishes and convents. Administration costs are covered by proceeds from the St Veronica's Thrift Shop which raised more than \$63,000 last year.

Special projects sponsored by St Veronica's in Vietnam, PNG, Thailand and the Philippines focus on self-sufficiency—

A goat for a family to provide milk, manure and a kid for sale.

A power tiller so that children in an orphanage can grow/sell their own food.

Funding for women's small businesses to liberate them from moneylenders.

Education for blind women to earn income.

St Veronica's Welfare Committee was established in 1956 by Colin and Eileen Bennett, through their contact with a Grail Lady working with refugees in Hong Kong. The Bennetts ran movie evenings, BBQs and soccer matches to raise funds for her work. By 1960 the first children were being sponsored in India.

Colin Bennett was a well-known figure in political circles in Brisbane, first as a City Councillor and later as a Member of the State Parliament. He died in 2002. Eileen Bennett still takes an active interest in their life's work developing St Veronica's.

The committee sends money to almost a hundred centres, under the auspices of the bishops of local dioceses. Currently nearly 600 donors are sponsoring 1160 children.

From the beginning St Veronica's stressed that its aim was to foster a personal connection between child and sponsor through letters, even a visit. Some sponsors have continued financing their child through tertiary education—often nursing for the girls. Normally a sponsorship is completed at Year 12.



Kebin Pius Nedumpallikunnel will be five years old on April 19th. He has begun school at St Ann's Carmelite Convent in Thirumarady, in tsunami-affected Ernakulam District, India. Kebin has a talent for painting with water colours. *Common Theology* is sponsoring Kebin for his uniform, school fees and books, and will publish news of him from time to time.

If you would like to sponsor a child please contact—
St Veronica's Welfare Committee,
PO Box 5098, West End Qld 4101
Thrift Shop, 89 Hardgrave Road, West End, Brisbane 4101
Tel (07) 3844 7423 Email:stveronica4101@gil.com.au

Easter 2005 programs from ABC Religion

ABC Radio

Good Friday, March 25

6.00-8.30 am – Radio National

Good Friday Breakfast, with David Busch

Music and interviews appropriate to the day.

Includes at 7.05 am:

Encounter: Befriending a Vengeful God

James Alison, one of the world's emerging Catholic thinkers, offers a theology of the sacrificial death of Jesus that challenges traditional notions of the atonement.

At 8.05 am: David speaks with Australian Catholic Worker disarmament activist Ciaran O'Reilly.

12.05-1.00 pm – Radio National

The John Cleary Interviews: Stephen Prothero

Professor Stephen Prothero, author of *American Jesus: How the Son of God Became a National Icon*

5.05-6.00 pm – Radio National

Encounter Special: Intelligent Spirits

Professor Louis Dupre of Yale University in the USA, and Fr David Ranson of the Catholic Institute in Sydney, explore aspects of Christian spirituality and theology, including the nature of suffering and evil, personal experience, and the authority of Scripture.

10.05pm-2.00am – Local Radio across Australia

John Cleary

Talkback, interviews, music and the Inquisition in a special Good Friday edition of this popular program normally heard on Sunday nights.

Easter Sunday, March 27

7.10-8.00 am – Radio National

Encounter: God, Church and All That Jazz

David Busch explores the intersection of jazz and worship as expressed in churches and jazz festivals across Australia. (Repeated Wed. Mar. 30, 7.10pm)

3.45-4.00 pm – Radio National

The Ark: Resurrection

The resurrection of Jesus' crucified body is a contentious belief these days. But how did it figure in ancient understandings? (Repeated Wed. Mar. 30, 8.35pm)

6.10-7.00 pm – Radio National

The Spirit of Things: Dark Night of the Soul

Rachael Kohn talks with Thomas More, author of *Dark Nights of the Soul*, about how experiences of spiritual abandonment and desolation may provide the very potential for developing an outlook that can see people through life's blackest hours. (Repeated Mon. Mar. 28, 9.05pm)

10.10pm-2.00 am – Local Radio across Australia

Sunday Nights with John Cleary

Talkback, interviews, music, the Inquisition and the One O'Clock Chat Room

10.30pm-12.30am – ABC Classic FM

For the God Who Sings

The ancient and simple ceremony of lighting a fire in the dark of winter and from it distributing candle-light is a potent Easter symbol magically accompanied by music.

Easter Monday, March 28

12.05-1.00 pm – Radio National

The John Cleary Interviews: Farid Esack

South African Muslim academic, author and activist

5.05-6.00pm – Radio National

Special: Lloyd Geering – God And Me

Well-known Presbyterian progressive theologian from New Zealand, speaking at Pitt St Uniting Church in October 2004

6.05-7.00pm – Radio National

Special: In The Land of Comparative Peace

On the anniversary of the Easter Monday 1916 Irish uprising, Irish poet Medbh McGuckian reads her own works and discusses religion and reconciliation.

ABC TV - Compass

Palm Sunday night, March 20

Pilate: The Man Who Killed Christ

Who was Pontius Pilate? Strip away Christian mythology and a vivid portrait of a flesh-&-blood Roman administrator emerges. He was a Roman soldier who had the unenviable task of maintaining order within the Empire's most troublesome occupied province: Judea (in modern Israel).

Good Friday, March 25, 7.30 pm

Compass Special: The Big Issue

The poignant story of Big Issue, a non-profit newspaper that provides a real means to improve the self-reliance and self esteem for people on the margins of society.

Easter Sunday night, March 27

Where Easter Began

Portrays the events reported in the New Testament's stories of the Easter Passion and Crucifixion of Jesus; and features Christian academics and dramatic reconstructions.

All enquiries: religious.radio@your.abc.net.au

<http://www.abc.net.au/religion>

A long farewell—Gallipoli 90 years on

On April 25th Australia, New Zealand and Turkey will remember the Gallipoli landings 90 years ago.



Lieutenant Alan Henderson, 7th Batt^l 1st AIF



Captain Rupert Henderson, 7th Batt^l 1st AIF

The Journey to Gallipoli—First World War letters and Records of Rupert and Alan Henderson, edited by Margaret Henderson, Helasslnk, 2004, 133pp, \$35.

These two young officers of the 7th Battalion both died at Gallipoli. Their niece, Margaret Henderson, transcribed the diaries from originals which had survived for almost 90 years in a suitcase amongst family property. Her uncles were 22 and 20 respectively when they sailed from Australia. Alan was killed on the day of the landing. His elder brother Rupert became Commanding Officer of the company as all his senior officers were killed, and died himself at Cape Helles on May 8th 1915.

The surviving brother, Kenneth Henderson, Margaret's father, was a founder of ABC Religious Radio. He served as a chaplain in the Somme.

Mundane details of life on board ship, of training in Egypt, and the final departure for

Gallipoli are clothed with the tragedy of hindsight in this account. The stories of the voyage, with their horses, the training near Cairo, the boredom waiting for action, acquire the pathos of a bell tolling the days towards April 25th 1915.

Their letters show a touching care to allay their parents' worries, but artlessly reveal something of the growing realisation of the reality of war, as the Gallipoli landing approaches. This collection of letters and diaries are a touching witness to what Archbishop John Grindrod KBE has described as a fine Christian family, and an intimate inside view of daily life for those who went to war in 1914.

"Pompey" Elliot, a friend of their father, writes to the parents describing the young officers' deaths, recreating the spirit of Gallipoli with a wrenching immediacy.

The Journey to Gallipoli, \$35 including packing and postage, is available via *Common Theology*, PO Box 117, Sandgate, Qld 4017.

readers' views

The South Australian Housing Trust and the Whyalla City Council set up a typical double unit Trust home to demonstrate how effective energy and water saving can improve life-style in this semi-arid climate zone.

I was asked to take on the care and development of the gardens and the orchard attached to the house, to demonstrate how construction, irrigation, organic management, choice of trees and shrubs, can serve to provide food, pleasure, and quality living in quite small areas. First I needed to find the team to share in the project.

I've been at it for three years now. Without a ready-made group of fellow worshippers to call on, the reasons for doing anything about the garden had to be clear.

These are the articles of faith for the task—

“I believe in ecological sustainability, in the rejection of poisons and chemical substitutes for organic processes, and in the enrichment of the environment by husbanding its natural processes, and the hope of truer, more fruitful living.”

This credo is justified by the practical results of our own efforts.

We lack the compulsive power of a living Saviour, justifying our commitment by our faith in him. So the pressure exerted on me by those working on the project is two-fold—

- to push me into the role of saviour.
- for each person to do what they were interested in, irrespective of the garden's needs.

Both of these pressures can inhibit coherent care and drive enthusiasts away.

Volunteers come because they are enthusiastic, not about the project, but about what the project means and offers. It touches and resounds in their credo. There is, in them, an urgency to get things moving, and they come with the intention to make it happen.

First they look for the leader. Letting myself be made 'supremo' (whether as saviour or as chief executive) inevitably represses their sense of urgency, because the real decision-making and the accountability drift back to me. Enthusiasm is undermined.

When the loyalty to a real Saviour (Jesus) has motivated the volunteer, then the institution retains support even though the project may be written off.

When beliefs are justified by what is achieved, and the project is experienced as bad news, then volunteers find there is no place for them. They leave.

I thank my Lord and Saviour for the parish experiences which forced me to recognise the gospel principle of being subject to each other.

In those circumstances, just as the parish priest receives his licence and instructions, so each person needs a proper letter of appointment, a job description, naming who is responsible to them, and for what, as well as to whom they are responsible and for what.

At that point the commission given at Confirmation and the prayer of thanks in Baptism can begin to have practical reality along with their devotional expression.

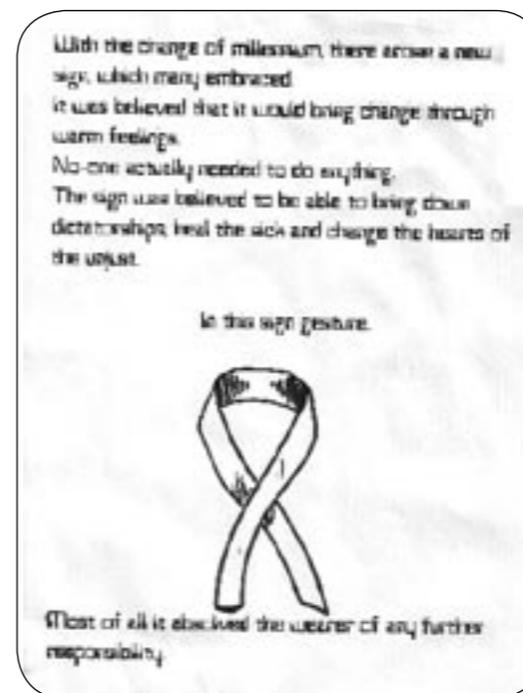
Parish life is working with a living loving Lord to hold all the human conflicts together, where each, gifted independently by the Holy Spirit, is required to fulfil their own vocation as accountable to Christ—so receiving the obedience of the Church to authority, ministry, and spiritual gifts.

Every step I take in working out what actually happens to set laity free to minister, having authority within the church's management structure, makes it plainer that the real issue depends on the way the regular liturgy and orders of service acknowledge, celebrate and emphasise this reality. It is in the set-up, but the way it comes over makes it nominal and formal, a passing bowing of the head to the doctrines we proclaim.

The Revd Gordon Hewitson
Whyalla, South Australia

I am currently sitting in the Chaplains' office in Butterworth, Malaysia waiting to go to Banda Aceh with the relief effort there. I'll be working with one of the teams Air (RAAF) is sending in. I decided to sit and write a comment on my cartoon in the last issue.

No doubt the 'Ribbon Cartoon' published in the last issue of *Common Theology* will have ruffled a few



feathers. I thank the Editor for her willingness to publish the cartoon.

I would like to comment in several parts—

I got your attention? Well, so far so good. It's nice to know that someone reads my little offerings.

It stopped you in your tracks? Even better! Such a cartoon should. Hopefully it made you wonder what it was all about.

Was I criticising the wearing of 'special interest' ribbons? No, I've worn them myself. In fact I regularly purchase one particular ribbon. As Christians, I believe that we need to respond to the various needs around us. In some cases we may even be led to give time and money generously to a particular cause. Also the wearing of a ribbon may be to highlight a particular injustice and show allegiance to a particular group who are disadvantaged.

Many Christians in Europe wore the patches the Nazis used to identify Jews. In doing so they showed both Jew and Nazi that being a Jew was not a thing of shame.

It can be a powerful expression of protection, of allegiance and not a bad money-spinner for the cause.

It is where the ribbon is used to gain political advantage—being seen to be sympathetic to a special interest group or just highlighting the fact that “I gave some money to a cause”—that I dislike.

It is where the token expression of support is enough to exonerate the wearer from further action that reeks of hypocrisy.

The wearing of a cross on a chain was an expression of faith, but then it became a fashion accessory and lost its impact.

When the wearing of a ribbon shows the concern of the wearer, that's one thing. But when it's worn to make the wearer look good, that's another.

If we are going to make a gesture it should be meaningful gesture. It should be a costly gesture.

The Revd Robert Paget
Chaplain, RAAF, Bullsbrook WA
(see Paget's Parable page 30)

I noted with pleasure that you used a picture of the crucifix at The Brookfield Centre chapel on the front cover of the last edition of *Common Theology*. There are records of its origin at the Brookfield Centre for Spirituality but you may not have had access to that information. I wanted to make sure that you knew that it was created for Bishop Ian Shevill as a parting gift when he left Newcastle, by Krysten Walker.

The Crucifix is a replica of one that Ian commissioned for Christ Church Cathedral Newcastle. When Ian died the boys and I decided to give it to David Binns for the Brookfield Centre chapel. I always delight in seeing it there. Krysten is an artist who lives with her family in the Hunter Valley.

I always enjoy the magazine.

Ann Shevill
Brookfield, Brisbane

Errata

Some footnotes went missing in the last edition, prompting a reproachful call to the Editor that *anawim* was not in the Macquarie dictionary so it could not be fair dinkum Australian.

Vol 1 no. 9, Spring 2004

Page 6 footnote: EM Forster, *Alexandria—A History and a Guide*, Michael Haag Ltd, London 1982

Page 11 footnote: *anawim* a name in Old Testament times for the fringe-dwellers, the poor, the outcast, through whom the spirit of prophecy was often renewed in Israel.

book reviews

Fractured Families: The Story of a Melbourne Church Cult by Morag Zwartz, Parenesis Publishing, PO Box 792, Boronia 3155, 2004, pp.191. ISBN 0958795517. Rrp \$18.95

Review by Cara Beed

Morag Zwartz' book *Fractured Families: The Story of a Melbourne Church Cult* is a sharp, challenging confrontation with the realities of church membership gone wrong.

The book details the presence of 'The Fellowship' as a church within churches.

Morag explains how fellowship members invite, examine, reject, diminish or capture church members to itself. She deplores the occurrence, and points out that church leaders, even with the knowledge of these behaviours, have been impotent to root out the unorthodox ideas of Fellowship leaders and members.

Reading the stories aroused for me memories of long years in the Anglican Church when my family and I knew many of the people mentioned in *Fractured Families*.

We unsuspectingly met them as members of Anglican congregations in Camberwell and Kew. Decades in the Anglican Church hold memories of worship, music, study, discussion and honest, open fellowship. Nonetheless, our family relates strongly to the anecdotal stories and painful personal experiences shared in this book.

Looking back, especially on the 1970s at St Hilary's in Kew, we remember friendly interchanges, shared family outings, beach trips and coffee together. Particular people named in the book dropped away, exhibiting patterns of exclusiveness and control within an ever-narrowing circle.

Morag shares sad stories from family members who are isolated from their filial members since they left The Fellowship's cultish, authoritarian group within some Anglican and Presbyterian churches in Melbourne's eastern suburbs.

In this review there are no quotes from the book itself. I leave the reader to experience these brave and poignant stories. I found the pain—so ably captured and described by Morag—leapt off the

page, arousing memories and clarifying my own past experiences.

Documenting those affected by The Fellowship, Morag Zwartz offers new insight into unfathomable exclusivity and control in some congregations. Such pain contrasts with the fresh, welcoming inclusiveness offered within general church membership.

Fractured Families details behaviours by leaders and followers within some Christian organisations—control, power abuse, curtailment of freedom, isolation, insulation, rejection and personal abuse. Sound ideas and beliefs have been neglected—an indictment on the churches. The author and her contributors call for church leaders to be accountable for what happens in church communities.

The most vital aspect of this book is its establishment of the legitimacy for the abused to voice complaints and be heard. At last, brave folk have been offered a forum to speak out against church bullies and abusers.

At the book launch, Morag spoke with passion—"I applaud you, ex-Fellowship members, survivors, for demonstrating the courage of your convictions, for your perseverance in the face of private anguish, and for taking blow after blow as those whom you looked to for support or relief so often let you down. This is your moment.

"And I salute you, victims of The Fellowship over many years, for your silent suffering and your tenacity. I stand with you in your pain and I acknowledge the wrongs done to you by men and women deluded into believing in their own superior spiritual status."

While this book gives comfort to those who have suffered, gives them a voice and calls the church to accountability, it also offers essential study material for theological courses and church members.

The Christian community needs to understand churches have problems. The church community needs to examine the structures and processes within which abuse and pain occur. Hierarchical structures and processes are patently unChristian.

Morag Zwartz' contributors have shared their personal pain, named their abusers, and faced the public with their brokenness, produced and tolerated, if not encouraged, within churches.

Unacceptable behaviour described in the book is not confined to The Fellowship. In the wider church, selectivity, exclusion, elitism, isolation, judgmentalism, ostracism, pretension, gossip, bullying, abuse, secrecy and manifest superiority can be expressed by a narrow and selective few, particularly leaders.

Churches should be free of particular structures—authoritarian and hierarchical—conducive to abuse. These structures do not resonate with the Word of Christ. This book is a timely reminder that Christian followers have vital work to do in their own community of faith. Christians need to have their house in order, need to be in charity within the Body of Christ. Dissent, discussion and loving resolution of difficulties can overcome secrecy, abuse, bullying and pain.

Morag found churches wanting in accountability and remedial action. Clergy interviewed for this book attempted to explain, even justify, their decades of failure to reduce the influence of The Fellowship. It was left to an independent journalist to give those in pain a public voice. In *Fractured Families*, the issues are explored and published.

Morag challenges the status quo within churches by pinpointing the existence of cultish behaviours. Where abuse has continued unchecked by hierarchies, seemingly, there is a lack of servanthood and humility. At the launch of the book, Morag asked, "Is the Presbyterian Church paralysed by trepidation and anxiety over taking hard decisions and

standing firmly by its own stated position with regard to the cult in its midst?"

In her call for accountability at the launch, Morag stayed firm, "... lest we fall into the naivety of some in the church, let me proclaim loud and clear, that charm and subtle changes are not enough. Love-bombing of visitors and newcomers, and currying favour with the church at large will not compensate those wronged and crippled by misguided Fellowship zeal..."

"...the church must not be charmed into believing that the Fellowship has faded away. Nothing less than a full, public acknowledgment of its errors and a renunciation of same, and a genuine repentance and apology to those hundreds of Fellowship victims...nothing less than this will constitute grounds for forgiveness and a readiness to move on as a united church..."

Cara Beed is a sociologist and writer who has researched and written about problems in the churches with 'Bullying in Pastoral Care' published in *Bullying: Causes, Costs and Cures* (1998), and her book *Cultures of Secrecy and Abuse: A Paradox for Churches*, (1998). Her suggestions for changing churches are discussed in her paper for *Zadok* (S116 Summer 2001): 'Power, Secrecy and Abuse: Changing the Churches'.

www.cnbeed.customer.netspace.net.au

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Cultures of Secrecy and Abuse:

A Paradox for Churches

Cara Beed

book reviews

Against Establishment: An Anglican Polemic, by Theo Hobson, Darton Longman and Todd, 2003. ISBN 0232525080. Rrp \$24.95

Review by Hugh McGinlay

The news of the marriage of Charles and Camilla raises again the relationship of the monarchy and the Church of England, with the curious phenomenon of the Prince of Wales being denied a wedding in the very church of which he will one day be the head. It all seems very Anglican.

And probably no surprise to readers of this recent book that explores the history, nature and realities of Establishment and its consequences for the life and happiness of the Church of England.

Hobson is against establishment (“To argue against establishment is like trying to kill a ghost – a rather embarrassing undertaking”).

He longs for the detachment of the Church of England from its monarchical apron strings. He is unimpressed by the arguments of those who long for the days when the church was culturally authoritative and socially relevant. He is aware of the decline in membership of all the churches but is convinced that, in the case of the Church of England, the decline is not helped by its ties to the monarchy and its claims to special treatment as the national church, official guardian and defender of all things English.

The book is a fascinating and interesting (and quite biased) account of the history of the Church of England from Reformation times when various forces tried to shape the church in ways that reflected theological emphases as well as political realities.

He considers the contending forces that sought to dominate, from Henry VIII to Cromwell, reminding us that the Restoration brought back not only the monarchy but also the bishops as part of the package of newly asserted national unity.

And it all seemed to work, as long as England itself did not change. Sadly, however, a time came when church attendance began to decline, when dissent arose within the church, when reform was in the air, when people began to murmur about a

church that had become to all intents a department of the government.

If change in society had been a feature of the nineteenth century, it was the events of the First World War that provided the final nails in the coffins of the Establishment and the church that was by definition associated with it.

Today, the Church of England is in very serious decline. Racked by financial losses, theological and liturgical disputation, and faced with a loss of identity as well as membership, the issue of Establishment is raised again by those on both sides who seek to arrest the decline and are looking for new ways of being Church.

Hobson notes with some disdain the arguments of recent writers who favour the Establishment. These include (apart from various bishops) T S Eliot (who wanted to revive the idea of “England as a Christian nation”); C S Lewis (whose true Church reflected the ideal England of the 1930s – “a place of pipe smoking and potting sheds”) and more recent authors—Vidler, Runcie, Habgood, Percy, Scruton, Hitchens, Holloway, Avis, Bradley—all of whom, in one way or another, either cling to the notion of the church as the ‘happy marriage of religion and nationalistic sentiment’ or idealise the Church of England as that happy *via media* between the extremes of Catholicism and Protestantism that results in “shrouding its beliefs in elegant vagueness”.

Hobson will have none of this. The book is subtitled ‘a polemic’ and two sentences summarise his opinion—

“The Church of England, beneath all its modish evasion, remains rooted in the ideal of a national religious unity under the Crown—an ideal from the sixteenth century that died during the nineteenth century and stank during the twentieth. It is painfully clear that the Church, if it wants new life, must cut loose from the Constantinian corpse, even at the risk of its identity, its unity, its very existence.”

We don’t often hear this kind of language from Anglicans. It’s a far cry from the vague, muted, respectful criticism that we have come to expect from members of a church renowned for its desire to accommodate and include.

Which makes *Against Establishment* interesting, irritating, witty, controversial and always engaging.

Hugh McGinlay is a Catholic layman who promotes theology resources for Rainbow Book Agencies in Melbourne.

Raymond E Brown, *An Introduction to the Gospel of John*, edited by Francis J Moloney, Doubleday, New York, 2003, ISBN 0385507224 xxvi + 356 pp. Rrp \$54.95

Reviewed by Ray Barraclough

“Brown maintains his stature as a giant among those who have used historical criticism to read the Gospel of John”. Such is Francis Moloney’s assessment (p.321) whose fine editing of this book enables contemporary Johannine scholars to benefit from Brown’s reflections on John’s gospel over the last thirty years of his life. (Brown died aged 70 in 1998.)

Moloney provides a helpful introduction to the context of Brown’s revised study of *John* and an extensive bibliography (15–25) indicating “the considerable amount of contemporary (scholarly) interest in the Gospel of John and the newer directions that are emerging from this interest” (15).

In this volume Brown “rounds off decades of masterly concern with the world behind and in the Johannine text” (39). The chapter headings indicate how his approach is still strongly located within an historical-critical handling of John. Sample chapter headings include—

The Unity and Composition of the Fourth Gospel

Johannine Tradition: Relation to the Synoptics and Historicity

Proposed Influences on the religious thought of the Fourth Gospel

The Author, the Place, and the Date

The Language, Text, and Format of the gospel: Some Considerations on Style

As regards the composition of John, after re-assessing various proposals as regards the sources and composition of John, Brown opts for a conservative and baldly expressed conclusion that “one thinks of the final editor as someone loyal to the evangelist’s thought, (and) there will be very few

times when editing has completely changed the original meaning of a passage” (63).

Brown retains his interest in the historical processes shaping the gospel of the Johannine community (epitomised in his book *The Community of the Beloved Disciple*). He proposes three stages in the final production of John. What he sketches is various stages of reader/hearer response (64–69) being incorporated into the gospel narrative, with the observation “that what is received is received according to the mind-set of the recipient” (65).

As regards historicity, he tends to overstate his case. He contends that “there is a growing tendency to take seriously many of the historical, social, and geographical details... found only in the Fourth Gospel” (91) but his list of “the most striking”, citing chapters 4, 5, 7–8, 9 and 10, do not merit the term “many”, nor are they remarkably detailed.

Brown still uses the old categories that shaped presumptions underlying historical-critical studies. He looks at the “ability of the final form of the Gospel to give a scientifically accurate picture of the Jesus of history” (105) and considers John less useful in this regard than material drawn from the synoptic gospels (107).

As regards the intended recipients of John, both Brown and Moloney consider it was written for believers “to intensify people’s faith and make it more profound” (152).

Brown discusses the mainly negative references to “the Jews” in John (157–175), seeing the term largely coloured by the experience and interpretation of the Johannine Christians (171). He opposes eliminating the translation “the Jews” from John but he is aware of the downside. He notes that M J Cook “is uncomfortably correct in pointing out that John may give the impression that God is anti-Jewish” (168).

As regards dating, Brown locates it between 75 and 100–110. As regards authorship, he explores such questions as—

- Was the evangelist the ‘Beloved Disciple’?
- Was the gospel written by an eye-witness of Jesus’ ministry?
- Was the evangelist ‘part of a Johannine School’?

The most interesting chapter is entitled Critical Questions in Johannine Theology. In exploring Ecclesiology there are fine insights into the ways of reading John in regard to community/individual and church/personal faith (220–228). On Sacramentalism Brown sees “different degrees of sacramentality” on

book reviews

the part of the evangelist and the final redactor but that “in the very substance of the Gospel (there is) a broad sacramental interest” (233).

Other areas considered are Eschatology, Christology (with an interesting study of the title Son of Man), and Wisdom Motifs. This is the most theologically meaty part of the book but was not extensive in what it examined.

Overall, this was an interesting and stimulating book to read within the confines of ongoing historical critical study of John. For that heritage we are greatly indebted to the scholarly work of Raymond Brown.

Dr Ray Barraclough is currently Acting Academic Dean at St Francis Theological College, Brisbane



Communication and the Gospel by John Holdsworth
(part of the *Exploring Faith Theology for Life* series)

Darton Longman and Todd, ISBN 0-232-52488-2.
Rrp \$29.95

Reviewed by Katy Gerner

The author covers such topics as how the gospel was communicated in Israel 4 BC, the aim behind many biblical communications, and methods to use when interpreting them, and how the gospel can be communicated today through sermons, through contact with the public and through the media.

Holdsworth considers the writers of the New Testament to be wonderful communicators. Of Matthew he writes, “If Matthew had been alive today, he would undoubtedly have been a film director. He has that kind of eye. Often, he divides his material into visual scenes separated from each other by terse link words.”

Of Mark, he writes, “Mark is very fond of a style of recounting very similar to that of a stand-up comic.”

And he praises Paul and the author of 1 Peter by saying that they “can couch their message in a way that strikes local chords”, are aware “of the way a

particular culture expresses itself,” and know “how to press the right buttons”.

Holdsworth believes we would understand their communications better if we occasionally used a literary critical method when we read them. He advises us to question the underlying themes, the effect of the dramatic structure, the way the characters are presented and the way the plot is developed.

With advances in technology today and the wonderful example of these New Testament writers, surely our communications about the gospel should be enormously successful. However, unfortunately, we have a device to halt its success—the dull sermon. Holdsworth believes the dull sermon comes about because the preacher fails to ask three vital questions—“The first is what am I aiming to achieve? The second is what outcomes do I expect from the lecture, and the third is how do I know if I’ve been successful?”

He feels dull sermons lack structure, but writes that he has faced much resistance to this sensible idea, as “some appear to believe that if the Spirit inspires you, the need for structure is removed.”

My favourite part of *Communication and the Gospel* was the section that dealt with the public relations skills needed when communicating the gospel. Holdsworth gives excellent advice on devising a mission statement, a church prospectus, a logo, an advertisement, and a radio or television program, organising an open day or welcoming a visitor to your church.

Holdsworth style of writing of writing is dry. He paints wonderful word pictures of glassy-eyed congregations trying to guess what underwear the minister is wearing, and he lampoons a typical church magazine. This type of magazine contains sentimental doggerel, a best-ignored sermon disguised as a letter from the minister, a ‘merry quips’ section, and a cookery corner “that would reduce any modern TV chef to tears”.

Communication and the Gospel is part of the series *Exploring Faith Theology for Life*. John Holdsworth is the Archdeacon of St Davids, Pembrokeshire, and is a broadcaster on BBC Radio Wales and Radio 4. He has also been principal of St Michael’s Theological College in Llandaff and Dean of the Faculty of Theology at Cardiff University.

book reviews

The Language of Silence: the Changing Face of Monastic Solitude by Peter-Damien Belisle, Darton Longman and Todd. ISBN 0232524688. Rrp \$29.95.

Reviewed by Kay McLennan

What a title! And the preface to the texts is just as exciting. “Nowadays, in the western world, there is a widespread hunger for spirituality in all its forms,” begins Philip Sheldrake of Sarum College Salisbury. “...(T)he spiritual quest has led many people to seek wisdom in unfamiliar places... Given the present climate, it is an opportune moment for a new series which will help more people to be aware of the great spiritual riches available within the Christian tradition.”

A guide for the hungry into worlds of mystery and great riches. *Wow!*

Historical antecedents—Moses and Elijah, with periods of prayer and retreat followed by bursts of huge activity. Fine. John the Baptist, our Lord Himself, and Our Blessed Lady, who ‘pondered all these things in her heart’. Yes. Let’s read on.

Antony of Egypt and other desert ascetics, the development of early monasticism, movements backwards and forwards from physical solitude to monasticism, together with the suspicious practitioners of one mode of silence had for the other. Basil, Evagrius, Eucherius, John Cassian, Theodoret of Cyr, Cyril, John Climacus, Isaac of Nineveh. Okay. Benedict of Nursia and the Rule, and his wont as a young solitary to throw his naked body into thorns and nettles as an antidote to temptations of the flesh. Uh huh!

Romuald of Ravenna (yawn). But wait! His writings are being quoted, “Be constant in your practice, and one day He Who gave you the desire for the prayer of the heart will give you that prayer itself. When your heart’s intention is fixed on God, it will keep lit the incense of your prayer, and the wind of distraction will not put it out. Do not worry about stray thoughts; they may come and go, but they will not take your attention away from God.” On page 89, we’ve come to the good oil. Here we go at last. Worth waiting for!

Peter Damian, Rudolf of Camaldoli, Peter Giustiniani, Anselm Giabbani, the Carthusians and

by contrast the Cistercians with an insight from Bernard, who “encouraged his monks to be united to all souls, to watch over all. He likened monks praying... to teeth that chew on behalf of the whole body.” That’s on page 108.

Thomas Merton, Julian of Norwich, the Russian *staretz*, through to the close-to-contemporary universalists, including the fascinating Charles de Foucauld who left his order to journey to the Holy Land, a position as servant to the Poor Clares there, and later prayer and work amongst Muslims in the Sahara. And Jules Monchanin, with his vocation to the Hindus of India. And Dorothy Day.

So the work has not been a guide into great mysteries and riches, but a pocket dictionary of hermits, monastics, and anchorites. Add water, and there’s a lifetime’s reading ahead—yes, there are meticulously huge footnotes, and two packed pages of suggested further reading.

Well, that’s alright. But change the title. Rewrite the foreword. Be honest!

Paget’s parable



The row in the baptistery

In December Brisbane's *The Courier Mail* featured a series of stories on a family row between the priest and congregation of a city parish, and Brisbane's Catholic Archbishop, the Most Revd John Bathersby. Experiments with liturgy had come into conflict with rulings on doctrine, specifically relating to words used in baptisms. The matter is now out of Australian hands and awaiting a ruling from Rome. Below is a response to the disagreement from Peter Kennedy, parish priest of St Mary's, South Brisbane.

In the pontificate of Pope Zachary (741–752), an archbishop by the name of Boniface wrote to the Pope about a problem that his brother bishops had raised with him. It concerned a priest who—having a limited knowledge of Latin—had unwittingly breached the accepted scriptural formula for baptism. He should have said, “*Ego te baptizo in nomine patri et filii et spiritus sancti*” (translated into English as, “I baptise you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit”).

Unfortunately the priest used the words “*patria et filia*,” which translated as, “I baptise you in the name of the fatherland, and in the name of the daughter, and of the Holy Spirit”.

The bishop wanted a ruling from the Pope as to whether the priest needed to re-baptise. The Pope replied that there should be no re-baptism unless it was certain there had been some error leading to heresy. “Ignorance of the Latin language does not invalidate his ministry of baptism,” he ruled.

In other words, as Dr Paul Collins said in *The Courier Mail* on December 4, “The sacrament of baptism goes on the intention which is as important, if not more important, than the use of the traditional formula.”

For centuries all those who made rulings on the Trinitarian formula—Father, Son and Holy Spirit—for the universal Church, were men. Women outnumber men in the Church, and they have to put up with this exclusive formula.

Our sin, it appears from the rebuke we have received from the Archbishop, was to explore alternative formula such as “Creator, Redeemer (Liberator) and Sustainer of Life”.

home truths

We find the baptismal formula in the closing paragraph of Matthew's gospel—“Make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, Son and of the Holy Spirit.” These words are attributed to the *risen* Jesus. Hence it probably refers to an emerging liturgical practice in the Matthean church.

Given the tensions in the Matthean community, putting this formula on the lips of the departing, risen Jesus would have given it an authority in what may have been, at the time, competing baptismal formulas.

For, in the Acts of the Apostles—that is, the Lucan communities, St Luke being the author of Acts—the imagery associated with baptism is similar, but the formula is different. “Repent and be baptised every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2.38).

This Lucan formula using the name of Jesus Christ is most likely to have been an earlier one than the Matthean formula. The question is, why is only the latter deemed doctrinally correct? Is it more effective? More holy?

Jesus never links baptism with one set, unchangeable formula—which is important in the current debate.

Only well into the second century does the tradition of the *right creed* and *right code* and *right cult* begin to develop in the churches of the pastoral letters, and they are not dominant in the New Testament.

Prior to the Reformation in England the Douay Ritual of 1610 used the formula, “I *christen* thee (Tom) in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit”. The Douay ritual was used by seminary priests going, at great peril to themselves, to keep the Catholic faith alive in Protestant England.

Note the word “christen” (incorporate with Christ) rather than “baptise”, the word for washing.

There is wide diversity in the New Testament in relation to baptism. Because the documents were

written during a period of extraordinary development in early and emerging Christianity, and because they came from different places, diversity both in practice and theology is evident. This is not only characteristic of early Christianity but throughout its history also. Baptism has changed very significantly from the early adult catechumenate over a period of three years, to infant baptism, links with confirmation, and separation from confirmation.

Change and adaptation could be said to characterise each period of the Church's history of baptism, and the present is no exception.

Communities seeking liberation from exclusivist language and tired metaphors contribute to diversity, which will ensure that the tradition is growing and therefore living.

Rich metaphors for God, for Trinity, expand our religious imagination and enliven our faith. Our use of the formula, “Creator, Redeemer, Sanctifier”, was an attempt to develop appropriate language where it matters—in the liturgy where the community will encounter it.

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Readers' comments on the last edition —

Many thanks for kindly including me in your excellent journal. I am grateful that my curmudgeonly offerings have a place in the greater scheme of things. I was fascinated with your article on alternative life-styles/religious outlooks. It was written with real sensitivity and the people you interviewed seemed to have left a strong, positive impression on you.

Don Palmer, Sydney

Theology—we hope it is the success that it deserves to be!
Sid and Hazel Colam, George, South Africa

I was very encouraged to read the article on Beyers (Naude), intrigued at the experiences of the people in the Tasmania backblocks, very moved and inspired by Jim Young's Eye Witness account on “giving up trying too hard”, found the review of Radical Brisbane thought-provoking and enjoyed very much Don Palmer's Home Truths on ‘Family skeletons in the bible closet’. Gosh, what a stimulating read I've had!

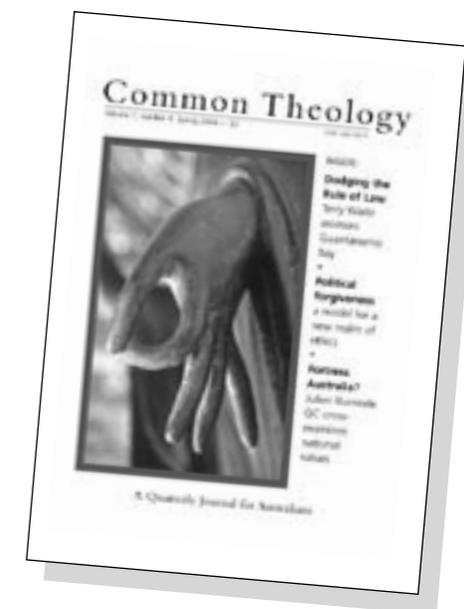
Pat Leighton, Barrow Gurney, England

I found valuable food for reflection in the beautiful contribution from Jim Young. I also appreciate the perspective given to the rise of the religious right by Don Palmer.

Rod Lelievre, Tasmania
This is a first-rate journal. I made myself a copy of the review article on the political forgiveness book.
The Revd Connie Jones, Norfolk, Va, USA

Congratulations on a thought-provoking magazine.

I Boniface, Monterey Keys, Qld



Congratulations on *Common*. Very interesting to read about Beyers Naude, and also the people living simple life in Tasmania. We found, trying to live without mechanical aids etc, in Botswana, that just keeping alive took so much time and energy there was not much left for ministry. But well worth doing.

The Revd Sr Phoebe Margaret CSMV, Birmingham, England

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