



COMMUNITY

Quarterly news magazine of St Paul's, Manuka, and St David's, Red Hill, in the Anglican Diocese of Canberra and Goulburn

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SYNOD 2016

Building spiritual homes

Bishop's Synod Charge

In his address to Synod, the Bishop of Canberra and Goulburn, Bishop Stuart Robinson, spoke of the life and mission of the Anglican Church as being a spiritual home. It was, he said, "a home where people grow deep and strong, a place where the love of Jesus transforms people and communities".

He outlined the foundations on which the Diocese of Canberra and Goulburn had been built. Its blueprint was the diocese's "3D vision" (repay debt, promote development, deploy resources) to "facilitate the transformation for which we all long".

He said that Jesus, a carpenter, knew the importance of building houses and the significance of creating a home. He told the crowds that if you build a house with nothing but sand for its foundation, the place won't last. But build it on the rock, then, it will withstand all the storms that come and crash against it. Such a house will be not only solid, it will become a home.

He said:

"The one who hears and does not act is like a person who built a house on the ground without a foundation. When the river burst against it, immediately it fell, and great was the ruin of that house". (Luke 6 (NRSV))

Jesus, he said, is telling the people what discipleship looks like: the pursuit of a solid home where

everyone can weather the storms of life, whatever part we play in God's great work, lay or clergy, young or old.

"When Jesus' words are worked into our lives, both personally and corporately, the church is not only capable of withstanding the storms that come but a family where people find joy, friendship and renewal that comes from God".

On future development, Bishop Stuart said that properties used by parishes, schools, retirement villages and our agencies across the ACT and south-eastern NSW were the direct result of the generosity and sacrifices made by the body of Christ in this place, over time.

Following the decision to develop the Jamieson Apartments on the site of the former diocesan offices, other parishes had engaged in developments designed to enhance their capacity for ministry.

The insights gleaned from the Jamieson project had helped shape the brief and trajectory of a new Property Development Commission which will provide the oversight for planning and development to address our future obligations and to seed new ministry. "My aim, our hope, our charter, is to see more people active in the 'harvest'".

"We are blessed by a large, creative and gracious household of 23 deacons, engaging in a range of chaplaincy-styled ministries that extend well beyond the sanctuary doors. Their diaconal – servant –



ministry was the kind of foundation on which our congregational life relies. Priestly and lay they build 'home' around people, right where they live. These spiritual homes are oases founded on Christ and anchored in his amazing grace".

Our diocese, he said, takes its part in deploying chaplains in public schools, listening to the troubled hearts of children; in Anglican schools, helping students discover their capacity to take their part in transforming the world through the love of Jesus; in hospitals and healthcare to bring peace to those who are most troubled by sickness and infirmity; in prisons and among first responders, bringing hope and restoration to those most confronted by brokenness and life's disappointments.

It was not only the elderly who need a spiritual home. Children and young people were often expected "to simply fit in". The youth ministry was creating spiritual homes for a new generation to discover the amazing grace that underpins our lives together.

The mission of the church, he said, does not rest solely with the ordained; the church's capacity only grows when each and every Anglican takes Jesus' words to heart and acts upon them.

The fruit of the vine

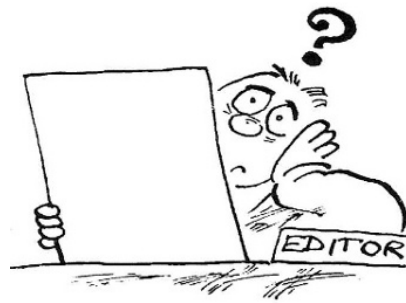
In his new book *The Boy Behind the Curtain* Tim Winton, a significant voice in contemporary Australian literature, reveals how Christianity came to influence his outlook on life and his writing. He explains this intersection in a personal memoir appropriately titled *Twice on Sundays*.

The mix of different voices involved in the exchange between literature and the Bible can further enlighten our own religious understanding from different perspectives: the language of prayer, the language of literature, the language of song, the language of poetry, the language of drama, the language of the law, the language of journalism, and the language of the Children's Nativity play. A particular focus of this issue of *Community* is on that mix of fresh insights, the branches of the vine which nurtures our faith and reaches out to others.

Evocatively recapturing through word and memory his early childhood experiences, Winton recalls that churchgoing was his introduction to "conscious living". It taught him "what a civil life might be." Nowhere else, he writes, was he exposed to the kind of self examination and reflective discipline that the faith of his childhood required. Even if the Australian society of his childhood was militantly irreligious the church was his first and most formative culture.

It was in church, he said, that he discovered how faith depended on story, "for without narrative there is only theological assertion". For him story is the bearer of imaginative energy. It was church that taught him the power of language. "I began to see how potent words really are". He had become "increasingly enthralled" by Biblical imagery and story. They were his imaginative bread and butter for his writing. "I didn't catch the bug at school; I picked it up in church".

He adds: "I had always been a natural believer in more than one



sense. Although I treasured scripture I did not need to be convinced by it."

The church, he said, gave him the instinctive apprehension of a divine element at play in the world.

We come to see communication in all its forms as a defining dimension in our religious life and experience. Stories shape who we are. They contribute to our shared identity as a faith community.

Having established a presence over the last eight years, this being the 38th issue of *Community*, it is appropriate at this time of Advent to reflect on our experience together.

A sense of journey with its own apprehension of the "mystery" of the divine has guided the editor towards an editorial vision of how theology and journalism can intersect to report the spiritual experiences of parishioners and contribute to the life of the church.

Statistical evidence reveals that *Community* might have reached a high point in circulation with the Summer issue (No. 30) 2014: a print run of 150 copies and 244 downloads from St Paul's web site, hopefully not a computer error.

The value of a church magazine ultimately lies in the responsiveness of its readership. The role of the audience in any communication is fundamental. Participation in dialogue has been seen to result in personal enrichment.

The Editor has appreciated the Parish's support in pursuing the objectives of *Community* as a communications tool and a reflective ministry. The goal of *Community* is to widen the conversation: "to nourish new branches and grow more fruit on the vine to make the harvest more plentiful".

The Coming of Christ

Revelation and performance

The Spring issue of *Community* reflected on how the communications chain in the performance of word and music contributes to our understanding of the divine. Sharing the “mystical space” between composer and audience engages each in individual acts of creation, to deepen through other contexts what is revealed to us in the Scriptures.

This was poignantly demonstrated in England in the 1920’s and 1930’s in response to a movement, led by the then Dean of Canterbury Cathedral, the Rev’d George Bell, and later Bishop of Chichester, to rediscover the possibilities of religious drama, the beginnings of which reach back across the span of time to Greek tragedies and the medieval spiritual plays.

At Whitsuntide in 1928, Canterbury Cathedral saw “sell out” performances of a specially composed Nativity Play *The Coming of Christ* written by the poet laureate, John Masefield, with a musical score composed by the English musician, Gustav Holst, best known for his orchestral suite *The Planet*. The story of how this came about and the theme of the performance are relevant at this time.

Dr. Bell had commissioned the performance as his first attempt to re-incorporate the arts in theology and to revive the medieval practice of enacting Mystery Plays in churches. Masefield had previously written a number of dramatic pieces based on Christian themes, including his *Good Friday*, first published in 1917.

With such a partnership between two of England’s foremost artists in the fields of poetry and music, the national profile of the event was very high with the nave of the cathedral as the setting both “unadorned and impressive, adding colour to worship”.

The Coming of Christ is now seen as one of Holst’s rarest works.

His incidental music, which he directed, comprised seven choral pieces. For the performance Holst had pupils from St Paul’s Girls’ School and participants from his own Morley College.

Although *The Coming of Christ* was received to critical acclaim, it languished until its revival at the English Music Festival in 2010. A performance the following year by the City of London Choir, which used an abridged version of the original script, was recorded, with an actor, Robert Hardy, playing all the spoken parts. It is now on classical music lists as momentarily inspiring as it was witnessed in its original performance.

A reviewer of the play reported that 3,000 people had attended the first two performances on the first day and a further 3,000 more had taken tickets for the next day’s performances’

“Most onlookers,” the reviewer wrote, “were humble townsmen and townswomen of Canterbury, many of whose kinfolk collaborated with the authors either in sewing costumes, making properties or helping in the choruses.

At the time of *The Coming of Christ* it was forbidden to represent Christ on the stage. Ultimately a compromise was reached, with the portrayal of *Anima Christi*, “soul of Christ”.

As it was explained by the reviewer writing of the performance for the *New York Times* on 29 May, 1928 (reprinted in *Saga Magazine*, 20 December 2011):

“The mystery play—that medieval theatrical convention whereby the Church once tried to explain to the unlettered laity the teachings of the Bible and the ritual—was revived today in the nave of Canterbury Cathedral.

“The play, while given without intervals and consuming only one

hour and twenty minutes, naturally falls into four episodes. There were only fourteen characters, including one which the British play censors forbid on the London stage.

“The play opens after the trumpeters’ fanfare, with four angels, The Power, The Sword, The Mercy, The Light, trying to dissuade the *Anima Christi* from entering man’s form and enduring the suffering they see with prophetic eyes. *Anima Christi* is resolute. He converses with the spirits of Paul and Peter, coming followers through whom he is confident he can overcome the world. ‘Pass onward into life, O resolute soul!’ bids one angel then, and a heavenly host appears to sing him on his way”.

Of the performance Dean Bell said. “I look upon mystery plays as a chance to recapture the arts for the service of the church, a chance to offer the gifts of poetry, music, beauty, colour and design, singing and acting, the arts and crafts to worship. Today as well as many centuries ago, mystery plays may present great religious truths to man’s imagination and senses as well as his mind”.

When Bell became Bishop of Chichester in 1929, he remained committed to his pioneer work to re-establish drama as an ally of the church and to give artists the opportunity to use their creative gifts. Subsequent performances included T S Eliot’s *Murder in the Cathedral*, Dorothy L Sayers’ *The Zeal of the House*, and *The Devil to Pay*, and Charles Williams’ *Thomas Cranmer of Canterbury*.

“We have lighted a torch,” Bell wrote, “which nothing can extinguish and have given a witness to the fellowship of religion and poetry and art, which will go on telling in ways far beyond our own imagination. In a moving and enchanting form, the poet and the artist together re-entered the Church.”

There was a supplementary hope: that this re-association might serve a missionary purpose, to re-engage the minds of those with whom the Church had lost contact; to rebuild that “basic faith to British culture.”

DIALOGUE

The passages to India of Claudia Hyles

Putting the pieces of the jigsaw together

Claudia Hyles, a regular reader at the 8AM service at St Paul's, and an active campaigner for social justice, has enjoyed a lifetime of journeys experiencing different cultures, never deterred, she says, by someone saying 'Don't go, there's nothing to see.'

She says: "I have lived and worked in Hindu, Muslim, Buddhist and Communist countries and all were fascinating. Nothing has ever shaken my Christian beliefs but wherever I have found faith of any kind, I have found wonderful people and great kindness".

From her first visit to India in 1968 Claudia has developed a special passion for the sub continent. She has now brought together all the pieces of her "giant Indian jigsaw" in her book *So you can see in the dark and other Indian essays* which was recently launched in Canberra.

Claudia paints a vivid picture of India's culture, complexity and vitality, from paradise gardens to solitary days in country buses, to bathing in the Ganges with 30 million others." She transmits her passion with a deeply acquired knowledge and understanding of Indian life.

Her many passages to India have included leading tour groups, purchasing for art gallery shops, attending festivals, and working for six months for the Jaipur Virasat Foundation. As a writer of some stature, she has written many articles and several books on food, art and life and regularly reviews books, particular those revealing more of India.

Claudia recalls that E M Forster had a great deal to do with directing her to India. In 1968 she was working in Sydney and studying English at night at the new Macquarie University. Thea Ashley, the writer, was her tutor for *Novel* and *A Passage to India* was a set text. She recalls that one night she found student travel brochures: "England looked good but turning to India I thought that's it, I'll go. And I did."



She applied for a two week home-stay with an Indian family and was allocated to a Kashmiri Brahmin family in Mysore in the southern state of Karnataka.

"Mysore, the Malgudi of R K Narayan's charming stories, was a pretty, tree-filled, slow-paced, spacious town full of fairy-tale palaces and temples".

"What an eye-opener it was for a girl in a mini skirt who had never heard of culture shock. I was so ignorant of India on that first visit. Somewhere in the 47 years and 33 visits since, I thought I was starting to understand it. Some aspects I think I will never understand but I willingly surrender to the spell".

"Mysore," she recalls, "was a kind and gentle introduction to India. Then I was on my own, making my way over two days by bus, train, bus, to Munnar in the High Range of Kerala to Scottish tea planters, in time for the High Range Club's New Year's Eve Party. This really was "Passage to India" stuff with amateur theatricals, dancing, drinking and great bonhomie, a huge contrast to the modest traditional household in Mysore.

"It was in Lucknow I realised that I had fallen deeply in love with the place. The layers of history seemed to fit into a wonderful complex entirety – from the refinements of the elevated Muslim culture of the former kingdom of

Oudh to the colonial tragedy of the siege of the British Residency during the Great Rebellion of 1857.

"We visited decaying 19th century mansions in the nearby countryside and the extraordinary La Martiniere College, mosques, tombs and imambaras. We ate great food; purchased embroidered shirts and a book on the Mutiny which I read as we journeyed on by train to Varanasi. Looking out the window I saw a palanquin being carried across the fields and the seduction was complete".

"In 2006-2007 I lived in India for eight months working as a volunteer for a cultural heritage organisation which runs the important Jaipur Literature Festival. As well as investigations into textiles, art and history I have been employed several times to shop for the National Gallery of Australia's South and South-East Asian exhibitions.

"For an extraordinary year I lived in Peshawar in the NWFP of Pakistan. There I came face to face with the plight of refugees for the first time. Three million Afghan refugees were living in camps in Pakistan at the time after ten years of war against the Russians in Afghanistan. I worked as a volunteer in the office of the British Afghan Refugee Relief Organisation.

"In 2013 I went to the Kumbh Mela in Allahabad, a truly amazing Hindu festival. It was and is beyond my powers of comprehension that on the main bathing day I was part of a crowd of 30 million people. It was the biggest gathering of humanity in the world ... ever. A friend had invited me to stay in her ashram's camp. It was an extraordinary experience and yes, we did take Holy Dip. Later we came upon a large group of men who had come all the way from Nepal to be at the confluence of the two holy rivers at this incredibly propitious time. They invited us into their circle to sit near their priests. It was wonderful to see this ceremony of worship and devotion".

These images and many more are "the pieces of the jigsaw of India" which Claudia has joined together in her book.

RECOLLECTIONS

Every window a story

You live but once

MICHAEL ROACH

I am always eager to obtain a copy of *Community*, so you can understand that I was disappointed not to obtain a print copy of the Spring Issue. Fortunately, I was able to download Page 6 and read Tim Bailey's tale of his father and the difficult period of life for the Bailey Family.

I had heard of Tim's story as it in part referred to the RAAF 3 Squadron, and its history. I worked for Gibbs Sepik Airways in Papua New Guinea, which was owned by Bobby Gibbs; more formally Wing Commander R.H. Gibbs DSO DFC and Bar. Bobby Gibbs was the C.O. of 3 Squadron and he no doubt knew Tim Bailey's father.

After the war Gibbs established his own airline in Papua New Guinea, using war surplus aircraft to develop links across the inaccessible highlands. After selling the business in 1958 he went into the coffee and tourist industries. By the time he returned to Australia in 1975 he had established in the region vast coffee plantations and the biggest hotel chain in the Western Highlands. He was later awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) for his services in New Guinea.

Much has been written of Bobby's war service and his dedicated work for the development of P.N.G., but the Gibbs family also had connections to Canberra and our sister Church St. John's.

Their family history is an interesting story and the origins can be traced back to 1834. Bobby's great grandfather Colonel John G.N. Gibbs was the Collector of Customs, N.S.W., being the second person to be appointed to that position. Colonel Gibbs was born in London in 1787 and in the background to this man reference is made to the Grand Old Duke of York.

John Gibbs was a member of the Legislative Council of N.S.W. and was retired from his Customs position as a result of a smuggling operation organised by one of his sons. However Gibbs retired with a pension of 500 Pounds a year.

In 1843 John Gibbs moved from Point Piper to "Wotonga" on five acres of land at Kirribilli. He sold that home in 1851 and moved to Vaucluse, and later moved to Canberra to live with his son Gussy at "Yarralumla", which is now the home of our Governor General. "Wotonga" is now named Admiralty House, which is the Sydney home of the Governor General. John Gibbs remained in Canberra for 14 years and when he passed away in 1859 he was buried at Yarralumla and subsequently interred at St. John's, Canberra.

Gussy dedicated two nave windows to the memory of his parents. Next time you visit St. John's please make a point of looking at the windows. I think that we can agree that the Gibbs Family contributed much to Australia and our history would be lacking but for such pioneers. Bobby Gibbs passed away in 2007. His life and exploits have been recorded in great detail in his autobiography *You Live But Once*. I have many fond memories of the man who gave me the opportunity to work in the aviation industry. He was a true leader and I appreciated his everlasting friendship.

IDLE MOMENTS

A book by any weighty measure

In his address at the launch of his book *Children, Parents and the Courts: Legal Intervention in Family Life*, a weighty enough subject, John Seymour humorously spoke of why he was determined to write a slim book.

In 1809 Robert Southey the poet, essayist and historian, was asked to write a review of Clarke and M'Arthur's *Life of Nelson*. Incidentally he was to be paid 20 guineas a sheet and he planned to fill 3 sheets – a large sum. Southey had a low opinion of Clarke, who had written a very critical review of one of his books and

Southey exulted: "he is now delivered over to be tormented." He also commented that Clarke had "proved himself a blockhead".

When he received the book in 1810 he wrote in a letter: "Here is the great *Life of Nelson* sent to me to review. ... By way of deserving [my fee] I have just invented a new mode of criticism, which is to send the book ... [out] to be weighed, and then calculate its faults by the pound. It is the longest book I ever saw being actually five inches thick ... and at least one half consisting of matter which had been better [left out]."

As a collector of naval books my interest was sparked. I weighed my copy of Clarke and M'Arthur: 3 volumes, 2.1 kilograms or 4.5 pounds and 1249 large pages. Southey himself went on to write a biography of Nelson: vital statistics, 500 grams, one pound and 528 very small pages. Clarke and M'Arthur is today read by earnest masochists while Southey is still a pleasant read and has been regularly reprinted.

ON THE USE OF LANGUAGE

Seeing the light

Simplifying legal prose

JOHN SEYMOUR

At the launching of his book *Children Parents and the Courts: Legal Intervention in Family Life* at the Australian National Library John Seymour, a regular worshipper at St Paul's 8 AM service, chose to speak not about the content of the book but "the magnitude of the task" in simplifying "turgid" legal prose. He engaged the audience in a refreshing presentation on the fine art of composition from a perceptive legal mind. Dr Seymour has had a long standing professional interest in children and the law, retiring from the Australian National University College of Law in 1998 as a Reader.

As a legal academic I had to write books, journal articles and reports, but nothing I have written in the past proved so difficult to write as *Children, Parents and the Courts*. This is because I had to free myself from the strait-jacket imposed by academic or so-called "scholarly" writing. I had to try to surmount a number of hurdles.

Hurdle 1

I was determined to write a slim book. Writing a slim book is, for a former academic, much more difficult than writing a long one. Brevity tends not to be a characteristic of legal academic writing.

The legal academic does not leave anything out; he or she has to show that every case, every journal article and every book has been read. I therefore found it very difficult to approach my task by concentrating not on what to put in, but on what to leave out.

Hence Hurdle 1: be brief, be concise. Ask: does the reader really need to know this?

Hurdle 2

The legal academic is passionately in love with footnotes. Footnotes are a shop-window of learning. "Look at me. Look how much I know."

Footnotes can be academic name-dropping. In complaining about a piece of legal scholarship, one critic remarked of it: "A little trickle of text ran through a ravine of footnotes".

I determined to avoid footnote references in the text, but it was not easy to sidestep academic practice

while at the same time avoiding plagiarism.

Hence Hurdle 2: producing a clean-looking and readable text without distractions.

Hurdle 3

Legal academics, like all academics, tend to write for insiders. They do not need to justify their writings. A legal academic can launch into a 40 page article on a recent High Court judgment without addressing the question why the case matters. Yet answering this question is important, particularly in trying to write for the general reader. The impatient general reader can legitimately ask "Why are you telling me all this?"

Hence Hurdle 3: discovering how to engage the reader's interest. What are the points that the book sets out to make? Why do they matter? Why should I, the reader, care?

Hurdle 4

Achieving a clear and simple style is particularly difficult for academics: writing for insiders, they do not need to strive to be lucid. One critic of so-called "scholarly" writing has referred to "the sort of awful clarity that academics would wish to avoid."

Such a style can conceal the simplicity (or the ponderousness) of the points they wish to make. Academic language can conceal meaning. Writers who use ordinary language must say what they mean. I have a suspicion that when some academics are told, "Your stuff is too difficult for me" they will take this as a compliment. It confirms

their view that they are part of an elite.

The shackles of the insiders' vocabulary and style – opaque and pretentious rather than fluent and engaging – are difficult to throw off.

Let me give you an example of academic legal writing

"Some of the powers of the Minister under the Child Welfare Act were clearly powers exercisable in his capacity as Minister. The power, for example, to establish institutions for children ... would fit this description and would not be subject to control by the Court. But this conclusion [and here part of a judgment is quoted]: 'does not lend any support to a proposition that the court cannot interfere with the actions of the Minister qua guardian.'" [69 words]

The passage can be translated: "There are some powers which the Minister may exercise under the Child Welfare Act without court control, for example, the power to establish institutions for children. But the Court can interfere when the Minister exercises guardianship powers." [37 words]

Note the use of the passive voice in the original; also a double negative and a word of Latin. The passive voice is a well-recognised enemy of plain-speaking: the author who writes "It can be argued that" should say what he or she means: it prompts the question: "If it can be argued, why don't you nail your colours to the mast and make the argument?"

What is it about academic writers that leads them to manufacture such turgid prose which with a little effort can be improved? More important, who wrote this lamentable passage? **I plead guilty.**

Now you will appreciate the magnitude of the task I faced in trying to write simply, clearly, briefly and in a way that engages the reader. I may not have achieved these aims, but I hope you will give me credit for soul-searching. I have – belatedly – seen the light.

JOURNALISM AND THEOLOGY

Reporting Religion

GEORGE MENHAM

At the last meeting for the year of the St Paul's Discovery group, Graham Downie shared his experience of how his reporting of religion as a journalist in Canberra became what is now seen as "a chronicle of church life".

*"And lo a voice from heaven,
saying,
This is my beloved Son, in whom I
am well pleased".*

When Graham Downie learnt of the opportunity for a job in Canberra as the main telephonist at the *Canberra Times*, blind from birth and anxious to be employed, he says he "prayed to God that it might be so." Demonstrating "considerable naivety and/or poor theology", he promised to repay God should he get the job.

When later he was offered the position of journalist that pact had particular meaning, when he was told that the position required the occupant to "also do God", a weekly column 'Around the Churches', known within the office as "the God page". "Recalling my prayer in 1968", he says, "I felt somehow obligated to try."

Thus both by default and accidentally he began 40 years reporting religion locally and nationally. His journalism included extended interviews with the country's spiritual leaders. He came to establish a reputation and national recognition for his high standard of reporting which earned respect for its quality. More importantly he was highly regarded and trusted by the religious leaders who opened their hearts and minds to him. Almost all those interviews, he admits, had an impact on his own thinking and beliefs.

At the last Discovery group meeting for the year at St Paul's in November, Graham, as guest speaker, shared stories of his personal life and his conviction to succeed in what he did.

Born in Wellington, NSW, and growing up on a farm at Tarcutta he had always wanted to do something in his life. It was always assumed he was going to get a job. With a vague idea of becoming a minister, he undertook a short course in counselling, a skill that was to prove useful in his new job.

Unobtrusively referring to Braille notes in his hand, he traced his journey from farm boy, being sent to a school for the blind, working in a factory, public relations officer for the Guide Dog Association, finally to become a journalist highly regarded for his outstanding professionalism.



Graham has brought together the interviews he conducted during his 40 years as a journalist in his book *Servants and Leaders: Eminent Christians in their own words*. The book is both a narrative of personal and professional achievement and a backdrop to the history of the church in Australia, underscored by his being witness to significant and often defining events and reporting them. Graham puts the interviews in historical context with his own narrative of the events surrounding them. For both Graham and the reader they are flashbacks in time and people, an important oral history.

Graham recalls that when the Primate of the Anglican Church,

Archbishop Rayner, addressed the National Press Club he asked: "how many of our major newspapers employ specialist religious reporters who really understand the issues?" Graham observes that at that time he was one of only two or three religion reporters on major Australian newspapers and there were fewer today. "I certainly never claimed to understand all issues fully."

Servants and Leaders is, therefore, a significant, if not rare, contribution to national discussion on religion in Australian society, revealed in conversation by those at the centre of church life specifically called for the missional task, what in his preface to the book Professor Tom Frame calls "the first draft of history" of a significant institution.

Publication of the interviews has been an opportunity for Graham himself to reflect more deeply on the people he encountered and the institution itself, to enrich our understanding of the church and the issues it faces. Graham worked as religion reporter for the *Canberra Times* for most of his working life. Church leaders of all persuasions opened up to him on the issues and feelings that mattered to them most.

Of his book Graham said that on re-reading some of the old interviews and putting them in context, he realised there was a mini church history, a social study of how the church has been changing over the last 40 years, seen from different perspectives. Graham saw the interviews more as having a conversation, adding a new dimension of church life.

A former Editor of the *Canberra Times*, Jack Waterford, wrote that Graham was "the best note-taker in the game, an old-style reporter dedicated to accuracy"; and later, during a dispute with a church leader, "a reporter, in whom, above all reporters, I repose most confidence for accuracy, fairness and faithfulness."

Graham reported on many significant events in the church.

(Continued on page 8)

REPORTING RELIGION

(Continued from page 7)

Among these in the Anglican Church, focused on the Diocese of Canberra and Goulburn, was the ordination of women as priests.

He was particularly proud of breaking the news that the Anglican General Synod, meeting in Sydney in 1992, had agreed to admit women to the priesthood, paving the way for Bishop Owen Dowling to proceed with the ordination of 11 women as priests, effectively his final act as Bishop of the Diocese of Canberra and Goulburn.

Graham subsequently reported that on 19 September 2004 the Synod of Canberra and Goulburn overwhelmingly supported the consecration of female bishops.

The Swiss theologian, Hans Urs Von Balthasar spoke of the need for “the tree of tradition to put forth new branches, to plumb the depths of the divine”. He saw God’s creativity blending seamlessly into a vision for



The Venerable John Gibson and Graham

communicating the church in all its forms, more deeply to encounter the “good news” that the church brings.

While Graham Downie may not have seen his role in that light, in his book he successfully integrates journalism and theology through the instrument of interviews with leaders of the church who offer a frame of religious reference “in their own words” with personal insights. In the integrative process Graham re-investigates religious language.

Graham has been recognised with a number of awards, including 1990 Canberra Citizen of the Year for his community involvement, particularly with the scouting movement, and 2005 Member of the Order of Australia (AM) for service to the community, particularly youth through the Scouting movement, and to journalism.

As the proposer of the word of thanks for Graham said at the Discovery Group meeting: “We each receive our own call from God in different ways: for Graham, God was thrust on him. I have no doubt that having prayed to God for that job, He would now look down on you and say: “You have done me wisely.” Australian journalism and the church have been rewarded by that obligation to God to “do it.”

Children rehearse for the Christmas Eve Nativity play

A Nativity play which has become a special feature of St Paul’s during the festive season will again be presented on Christmas Eve as part of the Children’s Eucharist. Since mid November, the cast of 10 children between the ages of six and 11 have been rehearsing for the play “which will follow a traditional theme, but with a different twist and humour.” There will also be a children’s choir at the Eucharist.



Special visitors at St Paul’s

On a rainy day in early Spring two ducks came to the Memorial Pond at St Paul’s, quietly contemplative, graceful in the water, heralding seasonal change, the transition between winter and summer. How did they get there? Where do ducks go? Theirs is the comfort of quiet joy together, a moment of delight for others to witness, as Christina Erwin discovered.



A NEW CHALLENGE

A bicycle adventure in Vietnam

Undertaking a bicycle ride extending over 13 days through countryside Vietnam from Hanoi to Ho Chi Minh City represents for Rebecca Harris yet another challenge, and certainly, as its promoters suggest, “an adventure of a lifetime.”

Rebecca has undertaken to participate in “The Ride for Rights Northern Vietnam Challenge” as part of a United Nations program to raise money for women’s rights.

For the last few months Rebecca has dedicated herself to training for the bicycle ride and undertaking a range of fund raising activities to meet her target of \$10,000. Rebecca has been pleased with the way the Parish has responded. She has already raised \$3000 towards her target.

In addition to experiencing the Vietnamese countryside, the team will visit project sites where UN Women field staff are working with local communities to prevent violence against women and improve services to women survivors of violence.

Although a recent newcomer to St Paul’s, Rebecca has established a presence within the Parish, with regular stalls after Sunday services. Like her husband, Kelvin Harris, who has been assigned to St Paul’s as part of his training for chaplaincy in the Navy, Rebecca has been a serving member of the Australian Defence Force for 17 years. A Marine Technician by trade she has the rank of Petty Officer. As an ANZAC FFH, frigate class warship, sailor she says she has had an incredibly fortunate career through deploying overseas and posting opportunities throughout Australia. She is currently studying part time with the University of Canberra towards a Bachelor in Public Relations and Communications degree.

“My inspiration for supporting charities,” she says, “began when I had my son Trystien, now aged 17. I started to support through monthly donations *Medicines Frontiers Doctors Without Borders*. I believed that if I had the opportunity to provide my son with the best of opportunities in health and medical care, I wished to do my part for others. I chose a charity that could provide the required medical needs and support/health services to those who are not as fortunate to live in a country such as Australia”.

“I have always wanted to partake in a much larger role,” she says, “to go a step further with a hands-on approach and working



within local communities”.

She came across UN Women through a Defence related event to discuss and raise awareness concerning the prevention of violence against women and bringing about equality.

“I had then received an email from UN Women asking if I would like to partake on a ride across Vietnam as part of a team. This gave me the opportunity to help at the local level through education on the prevention of violence and raising awareness through support networks for women who are in a less fortunate situation than ourselves.

“I jumped at the opportunity



and thought I am just going to put myself out there. I could not think of a more rewarding experience than being able to help in so many different ways for UN Women”.

Rebecca admits to being “incredibly excited” to undertake this new adventure. “I do appreciate how fortunate I am to be raised in a country such as Australia”. She is also fortunate by having her own support networks, through friends and

family helping her in her quest to raise awareness about the devastating effects violence has on many families across the world.

Rebecca says: “In reaching a target of \$10,000 through fundraising may sound like an astronomical amount; however, every donation is going towards making the world a safer place to live for Women, Men and Children”.

To help raise funds Rebecca has been selling chocolates

at work, receiving donations and being a part of the Lions Car Boot Market Stalls on Sundays at Westfield Woden.

“However” she says, “my most successful campaign has been through making Terrariums to sell at work and at St Paul’s Manuka. So if you are interested please come down to St Paul’s Manuka on Sunday mornings and please introduce yourself and purchase a plant that can help make change”.

“I am looking forward to the challenges ahead and am honoured as a female to represent for Australia”.

Nourishing the soul through poetry
A Christmas Hymn

ROBERT WILLSON

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

This beautiful little hymn is number 317 in the book *Together in Song*. It is 243 in the *Australian Hymn Book*. The usual tune is "Hermitage", written for these words.

The author is one of the famous Pre-Raphaelite Fellowship. Christina Rossetti was born in London in 1830, one of the children of a family that were royalist exiles from Naples and settled in England.

Christina was educated at home by her mother and soon showed promise as a poet. She was a delicate and devout girl with a deep Christian faith which shines out in her verse. She spent most of her life in the family circle.

She was a very beautiful girl and sometimes was painted by members of the Pre-Raphaelites, such as Sir John Everett Millais. At first her poetry was little recognised. Twice she might have married but she gradually rejected all earthly allurements, and devoted herself to her writing. Her later life was a struggle with ill health and she died in 1894.

Reading the Bible as a poet

Christina was a constant reader of the Bible, "reading it as a poet reads, with a heart open to its symbolism." She was not interested in the controversies of the time. "As a mystic her evidence was an inward authority."

She loved also such spiritual classics as *The Imitation of Christ* and St Augustine's *Confessions*, as well as the homely masterpiece *Pilgrim's Progress*.

As a young girl she began attending Christ Church Albany Street, a very advanced London Anglo-Catholic parish. In Sydney Christina would be at home in Christ Church, St Laurence or St James'

Church, King Street. She would love the music and the liturgy of St Paul's, Manuka, but she would probably prefer the 1662 Prayer Book.

Christina was only three years old when the Rev'd John Keble, also a notable hymn writer and poet, preached his famous Assize Sermon in Oxford in 1833. This sermon was occasioned by what was seen as an attack on the Church by the Government of the day. It was decided to dissolve 10 dioceses of the (Anglican) Church of Ireland. This horrified those who saw the Church, not as a department of State, but as the Body of Christ in the world.

With his friends John Henry Newman and Edward Pusey, and others, Keble began a movement to restore the Church to a deeper spirituality based on prayer, Scripture, the doctrine of Apostolic Succession and the central place of the Holy Communion in worship.

The Church of England was transformed by this movement. It was sometimes called the "Tractarian" movement because it taught through publishing tracts on Christian doctrine. In Australia Bishop Broughton was greatly influenced by it.

Newman's Sermons

Newman went over to Rome but his published sermons continued to inspire all Christians, including Christina. Lately I have been reading them with great profit. My great aunt was a devout Presbyterian but she always had a special veneration for Cardinal Newman. She remembered reading about his death in 1890. It was widely reported in the Australian newspapers.

Presbyterians, as well as Anglicans, were greatly influenced by the Oxford Movement. The Scottish Hymnbook contains a vast number of hymns by Anglo-Catholics such as Christina Rossetti and John Mason Neale and John Keble, as well as John



Henry Newman. I learned many of these as a child and researched them. Hymns such as "Sun of my soul, thou Saviour dear" by Keble, and "Lead kindly Light" by Newman, made a great impression on me.

Both Christina Rossetti and John Keble were gifted poets. Keble gathered many of his poems together and published a volume entitled *The Christian Year* in 1827. It was immensely popular in the 19th century. He chose words from *Isaiah* 30: 15 as his motto for the book. "In quietness and confidence shall be your strength".

In 1975 on a camping holiday around Britain we visited Hursley in Hampshire to see Keble's Church and his grave. He died in 1866.

I have often wondered if Christina was present at his funeral but I think not. She was too shy and withdrawn for such an occasion, and women rarely attended such services.

It was said of Christina Rossetti: "Anglo-Catholicism gave her the saints, and the colour and beauty, it gave her the Holy Seasons which she loved and celebrated in many poems and prayers. It gave her a sacramental outlook on life which was very near to her own genius, for she loved to discover God in his works, to penetrate into eternity through small beasts and flowers".

I like to write such a hymn on a card and carry it about, glancing at it at odd moments until it is firmly fixed in the mind. Christina Rossetti will nourish your soul.

St Paul's fete 2016



Rod King receives the side of lamb which he won in the raffle

SERVICES

St Paul's

Sunday Services

7.00 am Holy Eucharist (Book of Common Prayer)

8.00 am Holy Eucharist (A Prayer Book for Australia)

10.00 am Holy Eucharist - Sung (A Prayer Book for Australia)

Choral Evensong

6.00pm Service of Choral Evensong on the third Sunday of the month, February to November

Prayers for Healing—

on the second Wednesday of the month immediately following the 10am Eucharist

Weekday Services

10 am Wednesday- Holy Eucharist

St David's

Sunday Service

8.30am - Holy Eucharist

Weekday Service

10 am Thursday- Holy Eucharist

ST PAUL'S PARISH COUNCIL

Members of St Paul's Parish Council are: The Venerable Dr Brian Douglas (presiding member), the Rev'd Canon John Campbell, Dr Ingrid Moses (Rector's Warden), Robert Deane, Peter McDermott (People's Wardens), Catherine Bohm, Christopher Deane, Peter Cumines, Sandy White, Mary Pollard (Parish Councillors), Duncan Anderson, Lorraine Litster (St. David's Wardens), Tony Ralli (Rector's appointment). Helen Raymond. (minute taker)

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OUR EDITORIAL PURPOSE

Communication is at the heart of our identity as a church.

As a news magazine *Community* is a tool of mission, a showcase of the Parish in all its activities. By sharing our experiences through reflective dialogue we renew that sense of journey to discover the mystery of the divine, connect with God, each other and the wider community, and nurture Biblical literacy and understanding.

The stories in *Community* reflect the unique position of St Paul's and St David's in the life of the Diocese and the nation. Its editorial content inspired by other contexts seeks to widen our Christian understanding, recognising the capacity of religion to nourish individual lives. It aims to enlighten in ways relevant to its readers and to be a window for others beyond the church to observe our participation as a vibrant Christian community.

As the former Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Rowan Williams, said: "We believe in a God who speaks and calls, seeking to communicate more fully and effectively".

Community encourages the engagement of readers and contributors to reflect the richness and diversity of the Parish and to honour and proclaim an expression of faith in our life together.

Community

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Warden and Associate Priest The Rev'd Canon John Campbell

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