AAMS JUNE 09 EDITORIAL and short biography- Rev Wendy Snook.

Rev Wendy Snook is a wife, mother, daughter, Uniting Church in Australia Minister of the Word in Cranbourne, Victoria, ex- Presbytery Mission Development Worker, ex-RAAF and mining company chaplain, ex- geologist, patchwork quilter, singer and guitarist.

Christian Mission in the Public Square.

Pentecost approaches, a most apt time to reflect on our mission as contemporary Australian Christians. It has been my privilege to be the guest editor for this edition of the Australian Association of Mission Studies journal. It has been a fast learning curve, and I acknowledge with great gratitude the help and wisdom of the Editorial Board, particularly the Editor, Bruce Newnham, Ross Langmead and Heather Weedon, without whose help this task could not have been done.

This fifth issue of the **Australian Journal of Mission Studies** (AJMS) brings together papers which were presented at the Australian Association of Mission Studies & Public and Contextual Theology Conference, entitled ‘Christian Mission in the Public Square’, kindly hosted by the Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture. This was a most apt choice of place for the conference in light of the conference theme, situated as it is on the corner of the Parliamentary Triangle in Canberra, the Federal Capital of Australia. The Parliamentary Triangle is the home of the three arms of the Australian Federal Government- the Parliament, the Executive, and the Judiciary, and it is no accident that the Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture has been prophetically placed nearby. Its mandate to engage and promote debate between and within Christianity, Australian culture and its institutions, all expressions of ‘The Public Square’, brought a special depth and significance to the conference theme, and we thank them very much for being willing to host the conference for the AAMS.

I would like to introduce you to the themes and people who shared their stories, thoughts, visions and challenges to the conference, and to whom I give my profound thanks for their willingness to share them with a wider audience through this journal. This edition we have chosen to focus on articles, stories, book reviews and issues that are more pertinent to Australia. In the next edition we will reflect on the missiological discussions deriving from overseas experiences and contexts. Sometimes the dividing line was thin, as we needed to move some articles proposed for June to the next edition in December. You may notice in this edition for the first time the presence of abstracts for each of the articles. As part of our move towards international recognition of the AAMS Journal, in future we will include 150-200 word abstracts and a short author’s biography with each peer-reviewed article. (However future authors please note that reflection pieces and book reviews do not need an abstract.) Consequently, I will draw out some linking threads, and highlight some of the gems contained herein.

It seems right to begin with a missiological article pertaining to Australia’s First peoples, **Missiology and Australian Aboriginal Missions: A Personal Journey.** Bill Edwards takes us on a personal 50 year journey which has been challenging, inspiring and fruitful. In the 1950’s missiology in Australia was very much a Do-It-Yourself (DIY) experience. Edwards found as Supervisor of the Presbyterian Ernabella Station, in the Pitjantjatjara/Yankunytjatjara region, that he was ‘walking to a different drum beat’ to Australian society at the time. And yet, he says, ‘This carryover of knowledge, understandings and skills developed in the missionary task..(led)..to the role of lecturer in Aboriginal Studies and interpreter in lands rights negotiations, Royal Commissions and in courts, prisons and hospitals.’ His journey is truly most relevant to the theme of the conference, The Christian Mission in the Public Square.

Then our relationship to land and our eco-mission theology is explored by Clive Ayre from Queensland. Australia has been populated by Aboriginal Australians for more than 50,000 years. Geologically Australia contains some of the oldest rocks and poorest and deepest soils on earth. Yet as he says, Christian theology and mission has often tended to be anthropocentric, and to take the natural world for granted. Here more easily than many other places, our treatment of the land can quickly lead to eco-crisis or to eco-sustainability. Ecotheology provides a primary building block for an eco-mission theology, Ayre argues, and that we need a composite approach to stewardship, and be prepared to engage in the political process. Given that the environment is one of the key issues for younger people today, what Ayre had to say is most relevant for all 21st century Australian Christians.

Concern for the world and its environment, whether natural, political or social, is mentioned by Darren Cronshaw as part of the marks of incarnational, non-dualistic and Jewish-inspired "messianic spirituality" present amongst emerging churches. Messianic spirituality relates to the practical implication of Jewish monotheism that God is the one God over all of life; that Jesus is Lord over all aspects and dimensions of life, and so we as Christians must be concerned with the whole of life. He analyses the public theology and mission of three emerging church style Melbourne churches, Eastern Hills, Urban Life and Solace, as case studies. Understanding mission as God's mission in which they participate, where mission involves the whole people of God, Cronshaw says that they are particularly open to these perspectives as part of Christian mission in the public square.

Brent Lyons-Lee's reflection expands upon material in his book from a more personal perspective, based on his experiences with Urban Seed, an inner city mission organisation based in Melbourne, also with an emerging church perspective.

To give a divergent view, Stephen Burns explores firstly, liturgy as public service, and secondly, the missionary dynamic of the deep structures of ecumenically-shaped liturgy. Arguing that often too much emphasis has been placed on emerging church practices, Burns says that our liturgy and even our buildings are meant for participation, witness and public service, and that rather than abandon our historic expressions of faith in worship, we need to reclaim and reshape them for the current time. If we explore the tradition, Burns says, we will find the resources to unfold worship in public and missionary ways. This is a challenge for liturgists, public theologians and missiologists alike, and I look forward to the debate amongst more traditional and emerging church liturgists.

As a former chaplain myself, I found Garth Eichhorn's article most thought-provoking. He suggests that at the heart of New Testament mission was a commitment to engage with "the powers." (Col 2:15). Defining the powers, he says, is essential for developing a theology and practice for ministry in post Christendom cities. From personal experience Eichhorn explores how street chaplaincy is an example of Christian ministry in relation to the powers. I was left wanting more. On one hand, I agree that chaplaincy gives one an entrée into a world that otherwise remains closed to recognized Christian witness. On the other hand, how prophetic can one be as a chaplain, and how does one tackle the powers, when one works within a powerful institution such as the RAAF? I look forward to more conversations about Australian chaplaincy in its many forms and mission.

My own article returns to Bill Edwards' theme of cross-cultural ministry and mission within Australia, this time amongst the newest arrivals to Australia. Australian patterns of immigration have changed dramatically since 1975. A rapidly increasing migrant and second generation population and increased diversity of immigration cultures, concentrated in Sydney and Melbourne, create significant challenges for the Australian community and church. We often see a blossoming of Diaspora mono-ethnic culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) congregations, rather than a strong diversification of ethnicities within already existing Christian denominations and congregations. I argue that one reason could be that often Australian Christians do not understand the immigrant's non-verbal language, or use gestures inappropriately and without verbal congruency in public settings. This can block good communication, impede the unified work of the Body of Christ, and hinder the spread of the Kingdom of God. I would argue that we have not yet sufficiently learnt the lesson of Pentecost in bodily ways, nor yet learnt to dance in communion with the perichoretic dance of the Trinity.

Vince David shares his reflections on the International Association of Mission Studies conference at Lake Balaton, Hungary in 2008. As a person from a Third world background, his perspectives can help our local thinking to become global, just as is Australia itself.

This edition concludes with some book reviews. Larry Nemer reviews the book "Refuge on the Roper: The Origins of Roper River Mission, Ngukurr," by Murray Seiffert which explores the origins of the Roper River Aboriginal Mission work. Darren Cronshaw reviews the book "Public Theology in Cultural Engagement" edited by Stephen R. Holmes; a book on public theology, and the book "Faith Seeking Action: Mission, Social Movements and the Church in Motion" by Gregory P Leffel, on social movements, and their implications for faith seeking action in the world, and on innovation in mission. Ross Langmead reviews *A different perspective*, edited by Stuart M Brooking which explores Asian and African leaders' views on mission. When one considers how the centre of gravity of global Christianity is now in the developing world, and that some immigrants to Australia see themselves as missionaries to Australians, then this contribution is significant.

Finally, we are sad to report the death of Seton Arndell in February 2009. He was a faithful husband and father, a teacher, missionary, friend and contributor to Australian missiology. We wish to acknowledge his life's work, particularly through his involvement with the South Pacific Association of Mission Studies, (SPAMS). We express our condolences to his loving wife Barbara and the family. His long time good friend, Cyril Hally, assisted by Seton's family, has written a reflection about Seton's life and its achievements. Vale, Seton, we miss you.

Missiology and Australian Aboriginal Missions: A Personal Journey:

Bill Edwards

WH (Bill) Edwards is a retired Minister of the Uniting Church in Australia. He served as Superintendent of Ernabella Mission in the Pitjantjatjara region in the north-west of South Australia (1958-72), Superintendent of Mowanjum Mission in the north-west of Western Australia (1972-73) and Minister of the Pitjantjatjara Parish (1976-80). He lectured in Indigenous Studies at the South Australian College of Advanced Education and the University of South Australia (1981-1996). In retirement he is an Adjunct Senior Lecturer in the David Unaipon College of Indigenous Education and Research at the University of South Australia and completed a thesis entitled Moravian Aboriginal Missions in Australia for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in History at Flinders University. He is the author of *An Introduction to Aboriginal Societies,* Tuggerah, NSW: Social Science Press, 2nd ed. 2004, and editor of *Traditional Aboriginal Society,* South Yarra: Macmillan, 2nd ed. 1998.

This paper records the half-century journey with missiology of one who served as a missionary with Aboriginal people for two decades and then lectured in Indigenous Studies. The author reflects on the limited contact with Aboriginal people and knowledge of their culture and history in earlier years and the lack of preparation for this specialised task during university and theological studies. Missiology in the Australian Aboriginal mission field was largely a DIY experience. Under the headings Communication, Gospel and Culture and Adapting to Change, the influence of authors such as Roland Allen, Eugene Nida, John Taylor, Paul Hiebert and Vincent Donovan is explored. The author relates how he used their insights as he reflected on his own experiences in several missiological papers.

Introduction

On the 3rd May 1958, I stepped from the Ghan train at Finke near the South Australian/Northern Territory border, having been appointed assistant to the Superintendent of Ernabella Mission. Met by the Superintendent and a Pitjantjatjara man, Andy Tjilari, we camped that night before leaving on the 310 kilometres journey westward in the mission truck to Ernabella. As we sat on our swags eating a meal, dogs from the Aboriginal fringe camp came looking for food. My shouts of 'shoo' were ineffective. I had to learn the Pitjantjatjara term 'pai!' which the dogs understood. Obviously I was entering into another cultural world where I had much to learn to adequately communicate not only with the dogs, but more importantly with the Pitjantjatjara people. In this paper I reflect on my half-century journey with missiology. Looking back through journals and books to see the passages I had marked as relevant to my journey, the paper is structured around my earlier writings to identify those who helped me work through issues confronting me as a missionary working with Aboriginal people.

Preparation

What preparation had I received for Christian service in a different cultural setting? In fact, very little! Raised in a storekeeping family in a small Wimmera township in Victoria, there was virtually no cross-cultural experience. I read little about Aboriginal people. Local monuments bore inscriptions that "Major Mitchell passed by here." This implied that Mitchell's exploration was the beginning of history in the region, reflecting what Stanner identified as "the great Australian silence" in Australian history.[1] On leaving school I worked as a bank clerk, and in 1950 commenced training in Melbourne for the Presbyterian ministry.

At university I studied Ancient, British and Modern history but no Australian history. The only Anthropology taught at Melbourne was a short course offered by Donald Thomson to history honours

students. When I enquired about attending these classes in 1957, it was not offered as Thomson was undertaking a field trip to central Australia. My theological course contained no missiology, defined as "the science of missions."[2] This reflected the British influence on theological education in Australia. Despite the significant British contribution to the missionary movement, the study of missiology attracted less attention in the United Kingdom than in Germany and The Netherlands. Timothy Yates regrets that the rise of schools of missiology in other countries is "still, sadly, not reflected in Britain by any widespread attention to this important branch of Christian theology." [3]

My training was mainly through participation in the Melbourne University Evangelical Union. Missions received prominence in the Inter-Varsity Fellowship and its conferences. Through the Evangelical Union I was introduced to the writings of Roland Allen, an Anglican clergyman who served in China briefly from 1895. Disenchanted with prevailing missionary methods Allen advocated a return to the methods of St. Paul. These did not involve the establishment of mission stations or dependence on foreign money but rather the spontaneous expansion of the church by which Allen meant:

> The expansion which follows the unexhorted and unorganized activity of individual members of the Church explaining to others the Gospel which they have found for themselves; I mean the expansion which follows the irresistible attraction of the Christian Church for men who see its ordered life, and are drawn to it by desire to discover the secret of a life which they instinctively desire to share; I mean also the expansion of the Church by the addition of new Churches.[4]

A visit to Adelaide as staff worker with the Inter-Varsity Fellowship in 1954, coincided with Queen Elizabeth's royal tour. A group of Pitjantjatjara people, including Andy Tjilari, travelled to Adelaide as the Ernabella Choir to see the Queen. I heard them sing in the Teachers College and spent time with them. Although I later worked on the kind of mission station that Allen abhorred, his writings influenced the way I worked with Andy Tjilari and others who were to play a central role in the expansion of the Pitjantjatjara Church.

Ernabella Mission

Ernabella was established by the Presbyterian Church in 1937, through the advocacy of an Adelaide surgeon, Charles Duguid.[5] Having heard of abuses of Aboriginal people, Duguid toured the Pitjantjatjara/Yankunytjatjara region. Some Pitjantjatjaras had moved east because of drought and to obtain food and other commodities through working on pastoral stations. Duguid observed the lack of medical services for people who were suffering from introduced and other diseases such as yaws, chest infections and sexually transmitted diseases. He envisaged Ernabella as a buffer station stopping the eastward drift and providing medical services, education and employment. The Ernabella block was leased as a sheep property since 1933. The Church obtained the lease and maintained the sheep to enable training in shepherding, shearing, fencing and well-sinking. A school opened in 1940 and a clinic staffed by a nursing sister in 1945. Duguid identified the principles on which Ernabella was founded.

> There was to be no compulsion nor imposition of our way of life on the Aborigines, nor deliberate interference with tribal custom … only people trained in some particular skill should be on the mission staff, and … they must learn the tribal language.[6]

Foundations were laid through translation of gospels and hymns, teaching of bible stories, catechising, and the example of Christian living in daily work. A solid cement block church building was dedicated in November 1952. In the afternoon, 20 young people were baptised. From then on, Pitjantjatjara church members played active roles in services, reflecting the emphasis in their traditional ceremonies on being participants rather than spectators.

As the Superintendent resigned for family health reasons, I was appointed Acting Superintendent in September 1958, and later Superintendent. I was responsible in the material sphere for supervising accounts, store, garden, maintenance and kitchen and oversight of staff engaged in education and medical services, the sheep and craft industries and vehicle maintenance. In the spiritual domain, I was the ordained minister of the church. With no preparation for undertaking these roles in a cross-cultural setting, where was I to turn for guidance and understanding of the nature of mission in such

situations? I was isolated from other Presbyterian missions. At that time, missiology in Australia was very much a DIY experience.

The beginning of my journey

Three things helped me through this experience. Firstly, Ernabella's policies encouraged me to learn the Pitjantjatjara language and about Pitjantjatjara culture. Secondly, I continued tertiary studies by correspondence to complete a Bachelor of Education. In such situations one could lose touch with the world of ideas because of immersion in daily duties. This study enabled me to explore ideas and commence writing in the area of missiology. My first published paper was based on an assignment undertaken during this course.[7] Thirdly, I subscribed to two overseas journals which provided me with stimulating ideas from Africa, Asia and other mission fields. They were ***Practical Anthropology*** which in 1973 was incorporated into a new journal ***Missiology*** and ***The International Review of Missions***, with a subscription to the ***Evangelical Missions Quarterly*** added in 1967. The latter acquainted me with the writings of Charles Taber, Arthur Glasser, Allan Tippett, and others.

Articles about Australian Aborigines were rare in these journals. Two 1943 issues of ***The International Review of Missions*** contained sections headed "The Aborigines of Australia." The first had a short article by JH Sexton.[8] The following issue contained short articles by pioneer missionaries: the Presbyterian, Robert Love, the Methodist, Theodore Webb and the Anglican, Ernest Gribble.[9]

Other articles relating to Aborigines in these journals were written by anthropologists and linguists.[10] The attention given in the past to some notable conflicts between missionaries and anthropologists has overshadowed the positive relationships that often existed between the two and the role played by clergy in the development of anthropology and linguistics in Australia.[11] John Harris records that the Church Missionary Society committee included "an anthropologist, Professor A P Elkin, and a linguist, Dr. Arthur Capell, both of Sydney University and both ordained Church of England clergy."[12] Elkin suggested that "the missionary has a unique opportunity to try to fill the spiritual void or ease the bewilderment caused by contact with us."[13] Capell advised missionaries to learn Aboriginal languages, to recognize the sacramental nature of traditional rituals and seek adaptation "whereby Christian faith could be presented in aboriginal (sic) dress."[14]

An article by Wilf Douglas on vernacular languages took Capell's injunctions seriously. Douglas acknowledged that: "Anthropologists and other trained persons have helped us gain a more enlightened outlook on aborigines (sic)."[15] Douglas commenced his work with the United Aborigines Mission (UAM) in an environment where Aboriginal cultures and languages were denigrated. However, Douglas developed an interest in languages and attended a Summer Institute of Linguistics Summer School. In 1958, he was an enthusiastic lecturer when I undertook the SIL course. Douglas later experimented with the use of traditional symbols to convey the Christian story, taking seriously Harold Lindsell's advice relating to syncretism: "Evangelicals must be willing to listen to what others have to say, and must really *listen."*[16]

Although isolated from other Presbyterian missions, I contacted other missionaries in Central Australia. Pastor FW Albrecht who had served for many years at Hermannsburg Mission lived in Alice Springs when I began work at Ernabella. I occasionally sought his counsel. He graciously expressed regret that the Lutherans had not followed some of the Ernabella policies. Albrecht followed the Lutheran Board policy that missionaries should not attend traditional ceremonies. His son and successor, Pastor Paul Albrecht outlines a paradigm shift and his own journey through this change: "It is my conviction that ultimately only Aboriginal Christians themselves in the light of God's Word can decide what to keep of their culture and what as Christians they must discard."[17] FW Albrecht trained and placed Arrernte evangelists on cattle stations to minister to Aboriginal stockmen and their families.[18] This outreach from Hermannsburg eventually extended to 15 centres with approximately 1,100 Aborigines.[19]

Published lectures by TGH Strehlow, son of an early Lutheran missionary at Hermannsburg and linguist at the University of Adelaide were helpful in my early writings. Strehlow emphasised the importance of language and of recognising Aboriginal customs and social norms.[20]

Reflecting at the end of my first three-year term at Ernabella, I contemplated some new initiatives. I invited other missionaries to attend an inter-missions conference at Ernabella. In October 1961, four Lutherans and two Baptists joined me for three days of discussion and sharing. The conference spurred my interest in seeking a deeper understanding of the culture of the Pitjantjatjara people and

more effective ways of sharing the Christian message with them. I welcomed the publication of a volume: **The Christian Approach to the Animist**. However, I was to read: "The Australian aborigines (sic) have often been thought of as typically primitive, or animistic, or totemistic. However this may be, they are few in number, only about 50,000 and not likely to concern many of us."[21] As I was to write later: "So much for those of us who are concerned with them."[22] Another conference was held at Hermannsburg in September 1963, with Wilf Douglas sharing his experiences with language.

Communication

Having witnessed a traditional ceremony soon after arriving at Ernabella in 1958, I was invited to observe others, including increase rituals at the remote sites of the native fig Dreaming in 1963 and the emu Dreaming in 1965. Pitjantjatjara Christians participated in these ceremonies and saw no incongruity in my being present. For my part, I recognized the need to understand more of the Aboriginal methods of communication and of their basic concepts about existence to assist me in communicating the Christian message. As Sundkler wrote from African experience: "A theologian, who with the Apostle, is prepared to become to the Jews as a Jew … and therefore, unto Africans as an African, must needs start with fundamental facts of the African interpretation of existence and the universe."[23] I drew on my observation of the processes of communication observed at those ceremonies as well as on my reading of Eugene Nida, Hendrik Kraemer, JH Bavinck, Jacob Loewen, John Taylor and others in presenting a paper, **Communicating the Gospel to Australian Aborigines**, at an inter-mission conference in Alice Springs in 1965. In addition to the Lutheran and Baptist pastors, a Catholic priest from Santa Teresa Mission and a minister with the United Church of Northern Australia participated. Commenting on Sundkler's observation, I wrote: "We will commence this process as a child does, having to learn everything including language, customs, taboos, etc. Our learning will save unnecessary offence, as well as prepare for significant communication."[24]

I drew on Kraemer's distinction between "communication of" and "communication between", and on Nida's identification of three essential factors in communication: the source, the message and the receptor.[25] Nida's diagrams, using squares, circles and triangles to signify different cultural contexts, were used to share what I was learning. Nida introduced me to the need to seek a functional rather than a formal equivalence for words and concepts.[26] Thus my understanding of communication was informed by Nida's insights and my observation of the following factors in traditional Pitjantjatjara communication: that teaching is progressive, it involves periods of intensive instruction, emphasis is on the concrete rather than the abstract, and education is primarily through imitation and participation. As John Taylor suggested, from his experience in Africa: "The Western adage 'I think, therefore I am' is replaced by 'I participate, therefore I am.'"[27] This resonated with my observations of the Pitjantjatjara. Drawing on these observations and missiology texts, I suggested the use of the following in communicating the Gospel: the language of the people, vivid story telling, the familiar as a starting point, visual images, music, drama and ritual.[28] Weber's comment was appropriate: "we must learn, and use, the illiterate's methods of communication. We must proclaim picturesquely and dramatically."[29]

I noted that of the 51 parables in the Gospels, five had relevance to Aboriginal life, although unrelated to everyday happenings, thirty refer to aspects of life introduced through culture contact, including shepherding and gardening of the mission's program, and sixteen had little or no relevance. I played on the term de-mythologising to suggest the need for re-mythologising. I sought to find analogies from familiar features such as hunting, tracking, dingoes, ant-lions and eagles in accord with Nida's advice: "In addition to the selection of culturally relevant elements in the Scriptures, one must find cultural parallels which will make possible apprehension of the Biblical truth within the context of contemporary life."[30]

The Pitjantjatjara preachers were able to take these suggested ideas to a deeper level than I imagined.[31] Although the Greek and Roman influences on the New Testament presented problems, the Old Testament world offered parallels to Pitjantjatjara people. The Israelites had been a people 'on walkabout', crossing deserts, obtaining water from rock holes and relating to sacred places. Once when I was wearing sandals, a woman observed: "Nyawa! Tjina wiru", "Look at his beautiful feet." My feet protected by shoes, contrasted with Pitjantjatjara feet scarred by walking over rocks, hot sand and sticks, just as the sandal-clad feet of messengers from a palace contrasted with the feet of Israelite exiles. I had a new understanding of the words: "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him

who bring good news."[32] When visiting a remote site I observed tracks of a dingo and a euro (a type of small kangaroo). Andy Tjilari used his skills to follow them. He showed me where the dingo had followed the euro, attacked it where there were scuffle marks in the sand and then dragged the euro towards a nearby rocky hill to feed its pups. I had seen some tracks. Andy saw a story. Passages that refer to "those who have eyes but cannot see", took on a new meaning.[33]

Adapting to change

Ten people attended the fourth Central Australian Inter-Missions Conference held at Ernabella in June 1967. I presented a paper with the strange title, **Reflections on an Expo Aborigine: or Why are we no-hopers?** Earlier that year, I attended an Expo Aborigine in Melbourne. Dr. Colin Tatz was quoted in *The Age* as saying: "A large proportion of those who work for Aboriginal welfare were 'deadbeats' and 'no-hopers'."'[34] Addressing an Expo seminar, I commented that I was representing the 'no-hopers'. Tatz protested that he had been misquoted.[35] However, I found it interesting that terms often applied to indigenous people were used to stereotype those working with them. I explored the possibility that there was some commonality of experience between missionaries and Aborigines. Both groups were minorities, faced language, cultural and communication problems, experienced some degree of institutional living, were subject to stereotypes and were often frustrated and uncertain about the future. Articles from missiology journals provided supportive examples. I suggested encouraging better language learning, the minimising of institutionalism, and providing opportunities for people to develop skills in those areas in which they had ability.

In a new era of Aboriginal policy changes from assimilation through integration to self-management, mission agencies, such as the National Missionary Council, advocated the right for Aboriginal groups to choose for or against separate development, land rights, and the right to maintain culture, customs and languages.[36] Involvement with Aboriginal people in these social and political changes enlarged, to use Max Warren's phrase, "the scope of the mission."[37] Just as Warren found young African Christians challenging churches to see God as the God of politics and social life, missionaries working with Aborigines were called to engage in these spheres. From experience in South America, Samuel Escobar reminded Evangelicals that evangelism should lead to social responsibility.[38] Escobar emphasized that this involvement must be carried out in the spirit of service.[39]

In this period of post-colonialism and emerging Aboriginal political movements there were internal and external pressures for change. Missions were pressured to devolve some of their institutional roles and transfer responsibility to Aboriginal communities or government departments. For example, responsibility for the Ernabella mission school was handed over to the Department of Education from 1971. The Political Scientist, Charles Rowley, who had written about the limited success of Aboriginal missions, influenced my own thinking.[40] Rowley advocated incorporating missions and government settlements as communities under their own councils.[41] The Presbyterian Board of Missions aimed at "the incorporation of all the Aboriginal Communities by December 1973."[42] Ernabella and Fregon became incorporated communities from 1st January 1974. In 1972, I transferred to Mowanjum Mission near Derby in Western Australia to oversee the incorporation of the community. A paper I wrote was rare as a commentary on these changes written from the field. It concluded with a section on the role of the Church.

> I believe that the new era is an exciting time in which Churches and Christians have the opportunity to build on rapport which has been established with Aboriginal people in the past, to concentrate on the central task of mission without having to divert attention to the many tasks imposed upon us by Missions, and to explore and experiment with new roles of service in partnership with the Aboriginal Church.[43]

Returning to the Pitjantjatjara lands in 1973 as Area Chaplain based at Fregon, a cattle outstation of Ernabella, I was no longer superintendent. I was free to engage in a pastoral role covering Ernabella and Fregon, two government settlements, Amata and Indulkana, and an Aboriginal run cattle station, Mimili. As superintendent I was referred to as 'mayatja', derived from the English 'master'. Pitjantjatjara had no direct equivalents for boss or master. They adapted English terms and applied them to people who appeared to have positions of authority. Being no longer a superintendent enabled me to more easily fulfill the role of servant. There was now more time to attend to producing Pitjantjatjara Christian literature and training church Elders. At the beginning of 1974, two Elders attended a six week course at Aurukun Mission on Cape York. They were then given, with Elders from other Presbyterian missions, authority to administer sacraments.

Although missiology had been very much a DIY experience, I had some distant contact with others who were exploring the same issues. In Arnhem Land, the Methodist missionary Gowan Armstrong edited *The Arnhem Land Epistle,* an occasional bulletin which included short papers by missionaries including his colleagues Jack Goodluck and Bernard Clarke. Armstrong wrote on developing Aboriginal leadership.[44] Goodluck wrote on **Culture and Gospel** in consultation with Arnhem Land Church members.[45] Clarke wrote a report, **Free to Decide**, as the charter for transfer of Methodist missions to Aboriginal incorporated councils.

On a sabbatical year in 1974 I studied in Suva, Fiji, at the Pacific Theological College and the University of the South Pacific. My reading of Marshall Sahlins on the politics of Pacific island societies familiarised me with the terms 'ascribed status' as applied to chiefs in Polynesian societies and the 'achieved status' of 'Bigmen' in Melanesian societies.[46] This helped me understand the basically egalitarian nature of Aboriginal societies with their limited and diffused authority and influenced my later reflections on Aboriginal ministry in churches. During my absence from the Pitjantjatjara area, the Elders exercised effective ministries in the communities and it was thought that my return might suppress this initiative.[47] Although I felt that there was unfinished business, in 1975, I lectured in Aboriginal Studies at Torrens College of Advanced Education and studied Anthropology at the University of Adelaide, writing a dissertation on Leadership in Aboriginal Societies.

Gospel and Culture

We returned to the Pitjantjatjara/Yankunytjatjara region in March 1976 during the period of the homeland movement when some families were moving from the larger communities to establish outstations in their traditional areas. There were five major settlements with populations ranging from 100-400 and several small homelands. We lived at Amata at the centre of the 600 kilometre wide parish. As more government and non-missionary staff worked in the region one heard ill-informed criticisms of the past missionary work, with comments such as: "The missionaries destroyed the culture." I responded by writing a paper, **The Gospel and Aboriginal Culture.** Drawing on Cecil Northcott, Elton Trueblood, A C Bouquet, Kenneth Cragg, J H Bavinck, John Taylor and Eugene Nida, I argued that missions had done more than other agencies to enable the preservation of elements of Aboriginal culture. Furthermore, missions had played a significant role in effective cultural changes. The paper was written soon after an Easter Convention at Amata attended by over 1000 Aboriginal people. I concluded by commenting that, although Christianity is often identified as a White peoples' religion, "a visitor from space arriving at Amata during Easter would have concluded that Christianity was a Black peoples' religion and that they were finding it difficult to win White converts because of the seeming incompatibility of the White Australian culture with the Gospel."[48]

Reference was made in that article to change in burial practices. The mission had not stopped traditional practices, but after 35 years, these practices were somewhat inimical to the changing social, political and economic structures. In 1972, two church Elders initiated a change by holding a service in the church and commencing a cemetery. This model soon spread to other nearby communities. In conservative Aboriginal societies innovations were viewed suspiciously. However, an older person had a dream which validated the change. Later at Amata, an older man sought instruction for baptism following a dream in which Jesus appeared at the top of a ladder and called his name. Reading about the significance of dreams in African experience as interpreted by Taylor and Sundkler, helped me to appreciate their significance for Aboriginal Christians.[49]

My experience with language and cross-cultural communication was soon called upon at Amata. In July 1976, residents from several communities met there to form a Pitjantjatjara Council. I was invited to interpret and to take the minutes in English and Pitjantjatjara and continued in these roles for four years. The main focus of the Council was negotiating with the government of South Australia for land rights. When I later wrote an article on Land Rights for ***Missiology,*** Brueggemann's, **The Land,** assisted in identifying similarities in the biblical and indigenous concepts of land.[50]

In May 1980, I visited a World Council of Churches conference on mission in Melbourne and met Gerald Anderson and Arthur Glasser. At their invitation, on leaving Amata in August 1980, I travelled to the United States of America on Long Service Leave with my family. We were hosted by Glasser for two weeks at Fuller Seminary and by Anderson for three weeks at the Overseas Ministries Study Centre (OMSC) at Ventnor, NJ. At Fuller I attended classes conducted by Paul Hiebert, Charles Kraft and Peter Wagner. In Ventnor I attended week long courses conducted by Paul Hiebert, James Sherer and Father Thomas Stransky. A highlight at both centres was the sharing with people from

diverse backgrounds, including Catholic Sisters from Central America, nationals from Japan, Taiwan, Thailand and India, and missionaries who had worked in Zaire, Nepal, Borneo and other countries. Although this experience was too late to contribute to my mission work, insights gained from those classes and discussions informed my later writings.

Returning to Australia, from 1981, I again lectured in Aboriginal studies at the South Australian College of Advanced Education in Adelaide. In 1991, the SACAE was incorporated into the University of South Australia. Father Martin Wilson had begun editing ***Nelen Yubu***, an Australian missiological journal first published in 1978. Drawing upon my studies of Aboriginal politics and my experience of mentoring Pitjantjatjara church leaders, I contributed an article on **Ministry in Aboriginal Churches** in which I warned against the imposition of Western orders of ministry without due consideration of Aboriginal cultural and historical factors. I acknowledged the influence of Pastor Paul Albrecht who wrote about problems encountered when effective Arrernte evangelists were ordained, and of the Catholic priest, Vincent Donovan. Writing from his experience with the Masai in Africa, Donovan argued that just as other cultures had influenced their models of priesthood as individualistic and hierarchical, cultures "like an African one for instance, with its communitarian, nonhierarchic structure, should have an equal right to respond with its valid form of priesthood."[51]

During these years, my writings on missions tended to relate to history and short biographies of missionaries and Aboriginal Christians, although some papers retained a missiological focus. A chapter published in 2005 was written in response to an American anthropologist, Aram Yengoyan, who asserted that the Pitjantjatjara had not converted to Christianity because they lacked "a prior text" to enable such conversion.[52] His argument was based on the conservative nature of Pitjantjatjara culture and the limitations on individuals making decisions because of the emphasis on group allegiances. Having baptised hundreds of Pitjantjatjara/Yankunytjatjara people and worked closely with church Elders I gave illustrations of ways in which they had expressed a genuine Christian faith through storytelling, preaching, prayer and singing.[53]

Song was central to Aboriginal social life. As Myers commented: "To the Pintupi, singing provides a salient image of sociability."[54] One of the fulfilling experiences at Ernabella was involvement with the Ernabella Choir. On tours to Adelaide, Melbourne, Sydney and Fiji, they performed traditional dances and sang hymns in western four-part harmonies. Reference was made earlier to Capell's call to present the Christian message in Aboriginal dress. This was most notably done in the early 1980s when Warlpiri Christians performed Christian corroborees.[55] While there was some experimentation with this in the Pitjantjatjara lands the close association between form and message in Aboriginal music made this problematic.[56] The ethnomusicologist, Catherine Ellis, referred to this as the interlocking of the melody and the text through the rhythmic segments of traditional Pitjantjatjara music.[57] Pitjantjatjara Christians appear content to express their Christian faith through translations of western hymns and to accept the association of their traditional music with their Dreaming heritage.

The missiological and historical writings referred to above culminated in my retirement project, the writing of a thesis on the Moravian Aboriginal Missions in Australia. I drew on the above-mentioned writers of missiological texts, as well as the influential works of David Bosch and Kenelm Burridge. Burridge, an anthropologist and Catholic layman, exposed the stereotypes which have so often blurred the presentations of mission histories.[58] Visits on study leave to the Overseas Ministries Study Centre in New Haven in 1994 and to the Centre for the Study of Christianity in the Non-Western World at the University of Edinburgh in 1991 and 1994 enabled fruitful discussions with Paul Hiebert, Andrew Walls and others. Contact with Pitjantjatjara people was maintained during my years of lecturing and retirement as the skills I had developed to assist in communicating the Christian message were called upon to interpret in health, legal and other sectors. This carryover of knowledge, understandings and skills developed in the missionary task to the role of lecturer in Aboriginal Studies and interpreter in lands rights negotiations, Royal Commissions and in courts, prisons and hospitals is relevant to the theme of this conference, The Christian Mission in the Public Square. At times, those who have been critical of missions for their alleged destruction of Aboriginal cultures and languages have had to reconsider their judgments when the person lecturing on Aboriginal culture, teaching an Aboriginal language and interpreting for an Aboriginal defendant is a former missionary.

Conclusion

This 50 year journey has been challenging, inspiring and fruitful. It has enabled me to gain from the insights of others who have had similar experience in a variety of cultural settings. I have been able to share a little of my own limited experience. I have been privileged as Aboriginal people have taken me bush and shared some of their traditional stories and understandings of life. The writers referred to above have helped me interpret the things I have learned from the Pitjantjatjara people. As I have walked book in hand, or hand in hand with A P Elkin and Jacky Tjupuru, Eugene Nida and Gordon Ingkatji, Paul Hiebert and Andy Tjilari, John Taylor and Tony Tjamiwa and Jan Sensbach and Nganyinytja Ilyatjari my personal life and understanding of the Christian faith have been enriched.

THE CHURCH IN THE ECO-CRISIS

by Rev Dr Clive W Ayre.

The paper considers a theology of Christian eco-mission in the context of an increasingly obvious environmental crisis. Christian theology and mission has often tended to be anthropocentric, and to take the natural world for granted. The development of ecotheology in recent decades has necessitated fresh responses not only to the crisis, but also to theology itself. Ecotheology provides a primary building block for an eco-mission theology; the paper argues that a composite approach to stewardship provides the most useful link between theology and mission. A second building block is a reconsideration of mission so that ecological issues are included; this entails the development of a sound eco-mission theology. The paper outlines some essential elements. Once the theological underpinning has been established, the practical implications of such an approach are considered. Although eco-mission is still not widely practised, a comparison of examples from the UK and Australia will indicate some positive developments. This includes the possibility of public engagement, or "mission *with*" and not just "mission *to*" the wider community. The paper argues that theologically-based and practically oriented responses to the eco-crisis provide the potential for effective "Christian mission in the public square".

My aim in this paper is to consider the role of the Christian Church in the context of what is an increasingly obvious global environmental crisis, and concerning which a great deal has been said in recent years. It is not my intention to elaborate on that crisis, except to note that its scope encompasses not only ecological issues, but also has some significant implications for social justice and for human and other life generally. Part of the problem has been that Christian theology and mission has tended to be anthropocentric, and along with the population at large, to have taken the natural world very much for granted.

Having said that, my essential argument is that the Church has an important role to play in addressing the crisis, and that such a role is based not on a pragmatic response to the situation, but rather that it rises out of the theology of the Church. With community concern about the environment steadily rising, and whether or not the community expects anything of the Christian community, it hardly needs to be said that the Church must do its theology on this issue in a very public place.

The fact that there is a perceived environmental crisis that is exercising scientists, governments, and many other people and groups, including the Christian Church, means that there are few issues more important for public, practical mission theology than this. The interface between faith and science is a case in point, and the potential for a constructive partnership is significant. I believe there is truth in Moltmann's perception that science and theology are entering a new phase of partnership. As he expressed it, "The sciences have shown us how to understand creation as nature. Now theology must show science how nature is to be understood as creation."[59]

Ecotheology

Theology, and in particular the emerging discipline of ecotheology, is therefore the foundational building block for Christian eco-mission in the 21st century. There are many interwoven themes that cannot be explored here, although some basic questions can at least be raised. For example, what is the place of humankind within creation? What does it mean for humans to be created in the image of God? At an even more basic level, who is God?

Eco-mission is of course able to rise out of a range of theological positions, even anthropocentric ones, although I would argue that an excessively human focus can be more prone to lead to exploitation than to care. Biocentrism in its various forms on the other hand holds the value and unity of all life, which in itself is good. The problem arises for me when the fundamental unity of life is allowed to become an equality that virtually eliminates difference. At the same time, it may be argued that there is strong theological support for an understanding of creation that is essentially biocentric,

but which is also God-centred, or theocentric. My own preferred term of reference is therefore theistic biocentrism.

Thus, between the extremes of deep ecology on one hand and anthropocentrism on the other, it may be possible to identify humans as part of creation, and not above it, yet with a unique part to play in the economy of God. One of the issues for ecotheology has been the confusion of dominion with domination. But when a dominion theology is understood in terms of its serving nature, or as a reflection of the spirit of Christ, care replaces exploitation as the inevitable response.

Connecting theology and mission

A theology of Creation calls for a response, usually described as "stewardship", although there is some debate about the appropriateness of the term. In spite of any reservations about stewardship as the vehicle for creation care, my proposal is for a composite model based on the term "stewardship", but one that incorporates a number of essential factors:

1. It will reflect a dominion theology based on the *imago Dei* and the servant spirit of Christ.
2. It will express ecological stewardship in terms of partnership; that is, with humankind seen as part of creation rather than above it and recognising fully the value of other life for its own sake, yet recognising also a special relationship with God and ecological responsibility under God.
3. It will express "the biblical language of 'cultivating and caring for'" creation[60].
4. It will clearly be based on the inclusive covenant of God as expressed to Noah (Gen 9).
5. An understanding of God as both transcendent and immanent will issue in a sacramental element, but without resorting to the extreme of pantheism.
6. It will recognise the validity of ecological care as an extension of holistic pastoral care.

An eco-mission theology

A theology of eco-mission builds on the foundation of ecotheology. But the problem at the outset is finding an adequate and agreed definition of mission. David Bosch has said that mission is ultimately undefinable, and that the most we can hope for is "some *approximations*" of what it is all about.[61] Norman Habel [62] however has suggested that there have been three phases in the history of Christian mission, and this will be a useful structural tool in the discussion that follows.

Habel's first mission of the Church represents an approach that is largely confined to evangelism in the sense of what could be called "saving disembodied souls."

The "second mission" extends the personal "spiritual" focus "to include … the whole human being as part of a community."[63] Alan Walker expressed this well when he called for "a new, saner, larger evangelism" that will "draw together the personal and the social elements of the gospel, seeking at the same time the conversion of men and women and the building of a society fit for people to live in." [64]

The third mission of the Church begins with the call to announce the reign of God, and therefore moves beyond the earlier approaches to a wider vision of mission that encompasses the earth itself, in terms of saving, redeeming, and healing.

In 2005 Bevans and Schroeder made the point that "there has not been much reflection on how the preservation of the integrity of creation is linked to the church's mission", and added that "there is no question, however, that it is."[65] That position may be changing; in any event, in considering an approach to Christian mission in the 21st century, Bosch was prepared to be quite specific: "A missiology of Western culture must include an ecological dimension. The time is long past that we can afford to exclude the environment from our missionary agenda."[66] Eco-mission therefore emerges as one of the essential aspects of a holistic mission response in these days.

As a practical expression of such an approach, one of the more significant mission statements of recent times, in my view, has been the Anglican document known as ***MISSIO 2000***.[67] This document asserts that while the Church is marked by the sins of humankind, it similarly reflects its solidarity with the suffering of the world, and at that point it is possible to see the emergence of an eco-mission

theology. The Anglican Church's "Five Marks of Mission" have rightly won wide acceptance among Anglicans and others around the world.

The first three points suggest a traditional approach to mission, and there is no problem with that. Similarly, the fourth point, "to seek to transform the unjust structures of society", is important but not new. It is the fifth point, "to strive to safeguard the integrity of creation, and sustain and renew the life of the earth"[68], that makes quite explicit something that was previously implicit, and clearly identifies the basis of a valid eco-mission.

But while the Church does not need to establish structures that will replicate what secular organizations are already doing effectively, there is still a need to enable both Christian action and the projection of a specifically Christian voice within that wider forum. Even if a secular humanist may not be convinced of that need, there are still several reasons why that should be so. I contend that it is important for the Church itself, for the integrity of the gospel it proclaims, and for the environmental contribution it is able to make alongside other people of goodwill, even if some are not people of faith. Christians themselves need to be educated, and to that end some structural organization may be required to facilitate participation.

The development of a cohesive theology of eco-mission is therefore important, and when applied in practical terms in the life of a Church, it will include a number of elements operating at different levels. For example, the existence of environmental policy statements at both an ecumenical level and at a National-State denominational level potentially provides a fundamental direction and a sense of cohesion in this matter. Second, ownership of an ecological mission policy at a congregation or Parish level is also of critical importance.

Third, there are several crucial areas of contextuality which offer both challenge and opportunity. For example, environmental awareness and concern is rising in the community, focussed in issues such as climate change, global warming, or even the price of fuel. In that context, an ecologically-aware Christian community could make a significant mission impact. But there is another quite different sense in which context is important. The ultimate context in which Christian eco-mission is set is of course global. It is increasingly apparent that the global biosphere knows nothing about national or even continental boundaries. However, there is also a more immediate context in which eco-mission is exercised and to which it must relate. A locally identified agenda within an overall global framework will provide the best possibility of relevance and effectiveness.

Fourth, the church will need to consider programs of environmental and eco-theological education, conceived and applied at a number of levels. Fifth, an eco-theological awareness will need to extend to the worship life and spirituality of the church. To some extent that has already started to happen. And finally, eco-theological implications for Christian mission must resonate with a personal and corporate lifestyle that is consistent with those principles.

A theology of ecological mission will therefore have its roots in ecotheology, in the biblical mandate for mission rather than in pragmatism. In a primary sense this will be expressed globally, in general principles that will hold firm regardless of any particular circumstances. But a theology of eco-mission will ultimately need to be worked through and expressed in a myriad of different and particular situations by local congregations.

Practical responses

In practical terms then, where is the Church in the eco-crisis? There will obviously be elements of a valid eco-mission that will be peculiar to the inner life and working of denominations and congregations. But in a very profound sense, the Church in the eco-crisis is in a very public place. It must exercise its mission in the public square, under the gaze of the public at large. Even more, it must begin to perceive an approach of "mission with" rather than simply "mission to" the community at large. I want to illustrate that through a number of examples of what I regard as "eco-mission in the public square" drawn from both the United Kingdom and Australia.

First, one of the questions I addressed in my research is whether the Church should engage the political process as part of its eco-mission. What I found is that those who were involved in some form of eco-mission were almost unanimous in their affirmation that it should. One outworking of that,

in the context of climate change, would be Operation Noah in Britain, which, as one of its founders stated, set out to operate “more on a leading edge.”[69]

Second, one of the peak groups operating in Britain is the John Ray Initiative, which has its roots in the Evangelical stream of Christianity. It was founded in 1997 by a group of eminent like-minded scientists, including Sir John Houghton, a former head of the IPCC and a committed Baptist, and had the basic aim of bringing together scientific and Christian understandings of the environment, in terms of the promotion of sustainable development and environmental stewardship. According to JRI’s basic brochure, “They saw two needs: to wake up people to the facts, and to show that technology is only part of the solution. The problem, at heart, is religious, a matter of how we choose to live.” Thus, “JRI was founded to promote sound theology and practical theology as the basis for urgent action.” It is clear, however, that while some of JRI’s courses touch a wider range of people, its prime area of influence is at an elite level, extending to the highest levels of industry, and indirectly even to government.

Third, the Climate Institute in Australia is an interesting case. It does not set out to be a specifically Christian organisation, but it certainly includes a strong Christian dimension, as in its leaflet, “The Christian Call to Action on Climate Change”. More than that, it also reaches out to other Faiths as well, which is certainly positive in an area that impacts on all life.

Fourth, WaterLines rose out of the Uniting Church Earth Ministry in North Sydney, and set out to be a 3-year research and reflection project based on the catchment of the Lane Cove River. The aim was to “research the environmental significance of water in this region in such a way as to inform the way we do theology with reference to the land and our sense of place.” This connection between the landscape and its inhabitants is also a reminder “that we are sustained by the natural environment and are in turn required to care for the earth.”[70] The promoters of WaterLines assert that “The project has national significance as the first of its type in Australia to make connections across geography, religion, communities, and academic discourses.”[71]

Finally, while in many ways eco-mission in Australia is still in its infancy, my research has shown that Churches and congregations around the country are becoming active environmentally. As I suggested earlier, some projects will have a private face, such as in worship, study, and spirituality, and policy decisions. But others will very much be in the public square; for example, the Grafton Diocese of the Anglican Church has published a booklet called “Building a Better Relationship with our World: a Green Guide for People in Parishes.” In addition, they initiated the Riverbank Rainforest Restoration Project on the Clarence River, and that had implications for the indigenous population, in addition to being in publicly-accessible space. A Baptist congregation in Nambour is working on a community garden project in conjunction with the Regional Council. Ten years ago the Northmead Uniting Church began a creek regeneration project, which also involved cooperation with the local Council. This was consciously regarded as an expression of Christian mission, and the work of the Church was publicly acknowledged. St James’ Anglican Church in Toowoomba has photovoltaic cells on the Church roof, and that has been the subject of some prominent exposure in the media.

Conclusion

In this paper I have argued that the emerging theology and practice of eco-mission opens up a most important aspect of the overall mission of the Church, especially in the public square. The fact of an increasingly obvious environmental problem sharpens the focus of that mission, and offers scope for cooperation across some of the normal divisions; but the driving force of eco-mission, I contend, is distinctly theological. Where then is the Church in the eco-crisis? As I see it, by divine calling the Church is in the midst of it, with the potential to make a positive difference. The good news is that eco-mission appears to be starting up all over the country. The challenge is perhaps best expressed by Conradie, who suggested that what is needed is “a fundamental change of heart, a *metanoia*”[72], and in the call, as those made in the image of God, to care for creation.

THE SHAPING OF PUBLIC THEOLOGY IN EMERGING CHURCHES

By Darren Cronshaw

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Abstract

"Emerging churches" claim they express new forms of mission and innovation appropriate for a post-Christendom context. A major text is Michael Frost and Alan Hirsch's **The Shaping of Things to Come**, which advocates pioneering such churches throughout the Western world and giving priority to incarnational mission, non-dualistic spirituality and pioneering leadership. This paper examines the basis for public theology in Frost and Hirsch, and using Frost and Hirsch as a point of reference, analyses the public theology of three Melbourne churches as case studies: Eastern Hills, Urban Life and Solace. These emerging churches are reflecting freshly on their approach to mission. They understand mission not as a church department but as God's mission in which they participate. They are reflecting on the mission of the whole people of God. They are exploring the role of all of God's people in mission, not just professionals, and that mission is carried out through the week and not just Sundays. Adopting the language of everyday spirituality and a theology of vocation that helps people express mission in all of life is not unique to emerging churches, but they are particularly open to these perspectives as part of Christian mission in the public square.

Introduction

Most eighteenth-century small-towns had their public square or what was known as the *commons*. It typically included all the major social, business and government buildings. Law court, town hall, chamber of commerce, entertainment venues and church were all in this public space in which public life was enacted. We now use the term not about physical place but a space for mutual acknowledgement and ongoing debate. Public theology, as I am beginning to understand it as a newcomer to the conversation, is the thinking in the public square that we do about society. Contrary to forces of secularisation that would restrict Christian beliefs to the private realm, public theology asserts that there is a valid and valuable Christian voice to bring to public debate and decision-making about society, of which Christians are a part.[73]

It is interesting to me that the conversations of the conference "Christian Mission in the Public Square" were in Canberra's not public square but public triangle of government and other buildings. I enjoyed the hospitality of the Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture and appreciated the interaction of pastors, church consultants, public servants, historians, missiologists and public theologians. My background is as a pastor and missiologist, though in those roles I am very interested in public theology and exploring how the resources of faith and church apply to our broader society. Thus I welcomed the opportunity to reflect and discuss how public theology is expressed through a number of "emerging churches" which I have been learning from.

Emerging churches are a global, cross-denominational movement that claim they are expressing new forms of mission and innovation appropriate for a postmodern, post-Christendom context. I have been visiting, interviewing and analysing case studies of how some Melbourne emerging churches express mission and innovation for their local contexts. The resulting thesis explored what forms mission takes in the lives of individuals and through the life of the congregations, how they form and express community, and how they introduce innovations and plan change.[74] Fundamentally I was asking: Does the reality of emerging churches match the rhetoric? What can other churches learn from emerging churches, and what are emerging churches yet to learn?

In this article, I focus on the extent, nature and quality of their engagement with public theology; that is, what do they say and do in the public square. Thus the article explores "the shaping of public theology in emerging churches", through the lenses of three emerging church case studies and one influential emerging church text.

The Shaping of Things to Come

An influential book for the emerging church movement, especially in Australia, is Michael Frost and Alan Hirsch's **The Shaping of Things to Come**.[75] Frost and Hirsch argue for the need for multiplying new missional structures, offer a theological paradigm for emerging churches and share stories from around the world of imaginative new expressions of church.

Frost and Hirsch's focus is not revitalising established churches, though they acknowledge a place for that. Their vision is to see new culturally diverse missional communities planted with three organic characteristics:

- "incarnational ecclesiology" that infiltrates community networks
- "messianic spirituality" that engages culture and everyday rhythms of life
- "apostolic leadership" that pioneers new and innovative mission, prophetically questions the status quo and evangelistically goes beyond the church's walls.

Each of these have a degree of relevance for public theology.

"Incarnational ecclesiology" is Frost and Hirsch's primary framework for missionary practice.[76] They maintain that as the fruit of God's Incarnation, the people of God should be *incarnational* by entering into a culture, identifying with the people and experiencing life as an insider. Their vision is of a "go to them" rather than "come to us", missional rather than extractional, and incarnational rather than attractional approach. Leaving aside the debate over how helpful that dichotomy is, incarnational ecclesiology is helping emerging churches to think about: (1) how they can engage people in their community networks; (2) how they can utilise what Ray Oldenburg describes as "third places": pubs, cafes, clubs and interest groups that people use as informal public gathering places, and so "invade secular space";[77] and (3) how they engage not just church maintenance or even pragmatic "church growth" issues but broader public issues.

Another distinctive of emerging/ missional churches which Frost and Hirsch advocate is non-dualistic and Jewish-inspired "messianic spirituality". Messianic spirituality relates to the practical implication of Jewish monotheism that God is the one God over all of life; that Jesus is Lord over all aspects and dimensions of life.[78] Their agenda is to critique dualistic approaches to life which limit faith to the "sacred" sphere of private belief and which warn against too much "secular" entanglement. They argue God can be found and that we can work with God not just in the worship sanctuary but in everyday life and the public arena, and Monday to Saturday as well as Sunday.[79]

Thirdly, Frost and Hirsch, advocate for "apostolic leadership" which pioneers new initiatives beyond the walls of the present church, and prophetic-type leaders who challenge the status quo and those who evangelistically proclaim what is good news, as well as pastors and teachers.[80] They accept, and celebrate, that the church is on the margins of society, and can no longer presume a privileged role in the centre of the public square. They say that as the people of God, and living as we do in a significant time of transition and change, the church exists in a place of *liminality*, using Victor Turner's phrase.[81] The leadership task, drawing on Newbigin and the Gospel our Culture Network, is not to reassert the church as chaplain to society or provider of religious goods and services, but to imaginatively point to a fresh vision of God's purposes in the world and explore how to encounter culture with the gospel.[82]

These are not unique or original contributions, but they are popularly adopted in emerging church circles and they are consistent with and potentially reinforce a public theology. The rest of the article explores examples of how public theology is expressed in three local and particular emerging churches and considers whether they live up to the missional/ non-dualistic/ apostolic rhetoric of the literature. I hope these congregations will show some keys and principles for congregational public theology.

Eastern Hills – Creating lives which reflect the kingdom of God

Eastern Hills Community Church is a new church planted in Croydon by a group of young adults. They share passions for social justice and engaging the world, enjoying community and hospitality together, and celebrating anything creative from worship to cooking. Leadership is intentionally shared, although Toli and Emma Morgan have emerged as the main pastors.[83]

Church services meet in community centres and they have sought to engage the broader community at a variety of levels – cultural awareness, high school groups, a creative group for people with mental illness, a soup kitchen team, assistance for Sudanese asylum seekers, and basically supporting anything people want to get involved in. Their original planning was inspired by reading N T Wright and rethinking how to express church, which they see as encapsulated in their mission statement, "Creating lives which reflect the kingdom of God".

A distinctive of Eastern Hills is engagement with their broader world. As a student at Bible College of Victoria, Toli vividly remembers a 1996 chapel sermon by Steve Bradbury, National Director of TEAR Australia (Transformation Empowerment Advocacy Relief).[84] To introduce himself, Bradbury thanked the team that led worship and then commented: "I have just come back from visiting quite a few different slums in Asia where we have different community development projects going and what we do here in worship has to somehow be connected. It must be connected to what is going on there is those slums in Asia."[85]

Bradbury was urging students to do worship and theology which connected with global needs. Toli says they have been responding to that challenge: "It sort of summarises quite nicely the theological questions that we were wrestling with at that time … there was a bunch of friends who [were] really sort of wrestling with those sort of theological questions … how does the Gospel touch culture? How do we do Church in such a way that it is connected with the world in which we live, with the community in which we live? … How do we actually make this connection between our Worship on a Sunday and what happens in our world?"[86] These questions about engaging world needs have inspired the formation and direction of Eastern Hills.

Eastern Hills have a creative, interactive approach to worship, and seek to engage the broader world through worship. One morning I attended we sang "Lord have your way" and were invited to voice concerns for our world. It was a creative but simple framework for a pastoral prayer time. People mentioned Uganda and people coming out of slavery, indigenous communities, Iran, Iraq, East Timor, Jakarta, "my classroom", Croydon Secondary School, mercy and wisdom for world leaders, people in prison especially a particular friend and people in local Supported Residential Services (SRS) housing.

After praying for these concerns – mostly people on the margins and for troubled regions around the world – the worship leader also prays in a kind of "by the way God" prayer for our families and those not with us today. It was a refreshing contrast to pastoral prayer times where a congregation focuses on itself and friends and family, and the worship leader's "by the way" prayer is for the broader world. For communion on another Sunday, we were invited to "bring our whole world to the table" and write out on newspapers our frustrations including those things which distress us.[87] Using newspapers in worship helps people keep the connection between faith and public life.

At a local level, Eastern Hills' mission or public engagement is expressed in a diverse number of ways. The church understands itself as the people of God sent into the world to bring life: "we believe the Holy Spirit sends us to our homes, local community and wider world and empowers us to bring about love, truth, hope, healing, beauty and justice".[88] As a sent people engaging with global needs, the church promotes fair trade coffee and tea sales, and has prepared a "Sunday best cookbook", sales of which go to Australian Wildlife Conservancy.[89]

Eastern Hills' first social gathering was a rally to protest the deepening of Melbourne bay.[90] The church has "adopted" Croydon Secondary College and runs lunchtime programs there with Youth Dimension. It started a Monday night soup kitchen, casserole bank and emergency fund to help people in need. The church has organised and helps sponsor a Thursday night indoor soccer team, which included a few Sudanese teenagers, and a volleyball team for Sudanese and soup kitchen friends.[91] One of the main expressions of compassion and advocacy as a community is for members of the Sudanese community. Their engagement with the world has included a commitment to help make it more in line with the kingdom of God.

Urban Life – Living for the wellbeing of our community

Urban Life has recently been transformed from Christian Life Centre, a flagship of the Christian Revival Crusade. It relocated from the "country club" acreage on Ringwood's outskirts into an old nightclub in the centre of Ringwood. The church's new home, "The Urban", is a café, community centre and children's play area that also has church here on Sundays.

They want to be a church their community would miss if they disappeared, and so have fostered community ministries, a soup kitchen, high school ministry, craft group, book club, Prime Timers social group, role-playing games and an exercise group. (In their NCLS measures, they show high scores on practical and diverse service – higher than average, though lower than might be expected and lower than average measures of faith-sharing and newcomers).[92]

Doug Faircloth handed over leadership to Anthea Smits and together they have revisioned what they do as a church around the twin priorities of community and mission. For them, community is "doing life deeply together", exemplified by "Get Together" small groups around a shared meal. Mission is "being found about our Father's business", which they have broadened beyond Pentecostal gifts and overseas giving. Their focus is captured in their mission statement: "Living for the wellbeing of our community".

There are glimpses of missional activity in CLC's history. Like many evangelical-charismatic-Pentecostal (EPC) churches, rhetoric was high for mission and evangelism, but the reality was that church programs which aimed at attracting and keeping people in church consumed a lot of energy.[93] Furthermore, Anthea grew disillusioned with Pentecostal manifestations which had no missional outworking. CLC had been a centre for charismatic renewal since the 1970s and through to the infamous "Toronto Blessing" in the mid 1990s. But it bemused Anthea that "amazing miracles" did not often lead to passion for witness, community engagement and mission as she expected they naturally should.[94]

Anthea teaches that mission is "being found about our heavenly Father's business".[95] That means "finding God's heart for a situation and being that, in partnership with God". The best picture of mission, therefore, is God's own self (Acts 2:42) rather than an activity or department of the church. Mission describes God's character.[96] So Anthea, like many in the emerging missional church movement, has had her imagination captured by *missio Dei* "the mission of God" or "the missionary God" as articulated by David Bosch.[97]

Anthea is clear to explain their holistic approach to mission involves proclamation and justice and mercy. Urban Life people often talk about their desire to see people come to faith through verbal witness. But they also have a clear commitment to service and demonstrating the gospel in action. Anthea says, "Christianity is often about populating heaven, where it needs to be about transforming earth".[98]

Urban Life is engaging their local community in a set of new ways. A daily mission opportunity for Urban Life is their café, kids' play area and community centre in the midst of Ringwood's shopping centre. The space they provide is a witness to a relevant church which is prepared to serve, and sometimes leads to opportunities to talk about faith.[99] The church also gets involved in Clean Up Australia Day, a Pay It Forward (PIF) program with the local council and a schools ministry at a local high school with mentoring, weekly breakfast and school camps. Each year they support the World Vision Forty Hour Famine, but in 2006 instead of fasting from food they spent their time cleaning the local methadone clinic. So as well as a variety of ongoing global projects in Cuba, Vietnam and Cambodia, they are increasingly involved in local community service.[100]

Urban Life leaders are also engaged in advocacy for justice. Doug has good contacts with local political leaders and strong networks with broader church leaders – around Melbourne and internationally. His advocacy for social justice often becomes part of the prayers and giving of the church.[101] Interestingly, Doug works part-time for Urban Life and part-time for a consulting business, a move which has impressed some who see how he integrates a life of mission with "normal" work.

Solace – to enable a people to thrive as followers of Jesus, celebrating and re-making their everyday world

Solace was started by Olivia MacLean as a group that wanted to create space for theological questioning and interactive worship for all ages and stages of faith, as I discussed in greater detail in a previous article.[102] They are based now at St Paul's, Fairfield, and take a local interest in their neighbourhood. Yet their main focus is not gathering people together but helping people live out their faith as they are scattered in the world.

Solace focuses on celebrating everyday spirituality and the vocation and mission of all members of their network. They help people reflect on their passions and dreams and celebrate stories of people being better neighbours, friends, advocates, businesspeople, teachers, nurses and environmental carers. The most basic principle of Solace is "to enable a people to thrive as followers of Jesus, celebrating and re-making their everyday world".[103]

Solace's book **Remaking** is a collection of stories, artwork and exercises structured around the seven "Ways of Jesus-centred spirituality".[104] The first of the seven Ways focus on this sacramental tradition of celebrating God in the ordinary events of everyday life and work: "*The Way of the Everyday* is about acknowledging that God is both above all things and in all things – that there exists no separate categories of spiritual and unspiritual, and that God can be found, and has an integral interest, in all that happens in the world."[105]

This denial of sacred-spiritual divisions is consistent with Frost and Hirsch's non-dualistic messianic spirituality, though Solace prefers more accessible language of everyday spirituality.[106] The other six Ways also explore everyday themes – for example, following the Spirit of God already at work in bringing about God's good intention in the world.[107]

Solace recognises and celebrates the "Way of the everyday" in people who seek to remake their world in their work and relational lives. A research scientist devotes herself to malaria research, conscious it does not attract huge funding but is one of the largest killers of poor people. A young couple invests in housing and give preference to marginalised people looking for rental properties.[108] A couple have a weeknight set apart for writing to politicians. Abigail organises the involvement of Solace in Friends of Glass Creek, Greening Australia tree planting and Clean Up Australia.[109] Naming and celebrating how these people are remaking their world reminds the community of their identity and how they are living out their purpose of remaking the world.[110] And it inspires others to consider how to express their faith and vocation in their everyday context.

Solace is active in environmental care as an aspect of holistic mission. Some EMC literature shows awareness of global mismanagement and the responsibility for Christians to be at the forefront of environmental sustainability.[111] **Remaking** includes descriptions of global environmental challenges and suggestions for local action and stewardship which can make a difference to a person's environmental footprint.[112]

Through participating in Clean Up Australia days, Solace are proud that they are a community which can see worship in a broader sense than singing and listening in a church service. For Solace, it was a distinctive annual event which set them apart from their mother church, which was concerned with keeping "normal" worship services going every Sunday. Solace saw cleaning up parks together and with the broader community as an appropriate act of worship in itself.

"Everyday spirituality" is not just about a personal individualised faith. It is about God's relevance to all of life. It is an approach to spirituality that offers integration of people's work, recreation and interests with their vocation. **Remaking** resists narrow individualising of spirituality to a consumer faith which is perceived to be only good as long as it helps enhance personal happiness. It points towards a broader faith which builds hope in the midst of the bigger issues of our day: "To believe in a God who will protect you from car accidents and find you car parks sounds more like relying on fate rather than developing a spirituality which supplies meaning and hope".[113]

Everyday spirituality is an aspect of mission not because it promises God will accompany people as their assistant through life, but because it invites people to enter and experience the Kingdom of God wherever they are involved. People at Solace understand that part of mission is bringing Kingdom values into everyday spheres. Solace is thus developing a mature and explicitly missional approach to

everyday spirituality and public theology.

Solace staff seek to model everyday spirituality through their own friendships, balanced approach to life and pride in their work. All staff are intentionally part-time so that they can understand and demonstrate the challenges of balancing church and other work.[114] They see a big part of their role to help Solace members find and live out their vocations, in their everyday life and workplace, and not primarily through recruiting them to run church programs. One of Solace's pastors, Stuart Davey, sees his ministry as a pilgrim-guide, like a spiritual director who travels alongside to help people find their passions. One of his dreams is to encourage a number of hospital workers from Solace to get together for prayer and encouragement to help make the hospital the best it can be.[115]

Solace staff see it as their role to help people do the right things more than believe the right things. Some of their favourite questions include: "Where is God taking you?", "What are you enjoying?", "What are you passionate about?", "What is it about this community you are living in that you connect with?" and "What are you challenged about or celebrating with people around you?".[116] Solace wants to help people dream about how to remake their everyday world – this is perhaps the most significant part of the shaping of public theology in Solace.

Theologically, the mission of God and the incarnation is an inspiration for Solace as they live out "being sent" like Jesus: "Just as Jesus lived among a people of a particular time and culture so do we seek to live amongst people of our time and culture. Furthermore Jesus engaged in every aspect of life and taught that the work and reign of God encompasses the entire world, all things are or can be sacred and made new."[117]

Stuart said they are influenced in this incarnational approach by James Thwaites who teaches that the church as the body of Christ is the work of God in the entire world and not just the institutional church.[118] Their focus is explicitly the "scattered church", and not just when the people of God are "gathered" for worship. They applaud the work of God "beyond the congregation".

Recognising what God is doing in the world and joining in with that is important for Solace. The influence of this perspective can be seen in Stuart's work with SPACE. They begin their time by asking what good is already happening in their community: for example, things to cheer, celebrations to join and conversations which lead somewhere. Their meetings are discernment exercises to examine what good God is doing in their community so they can join in.[119] This is a congregationally-based expression of public theology that seeks to discern the movement of *missio Dei*.

"Emerging churches" claim they express new forms of mission and innovation appropriate for a post-Christendom context. The Frost and Hirsch inspired approaches to incarnational mission, non-dualistic spirituality and pioneering leadership resonate with and reinforce public theology.

Eastern Hills, Urban Life and Solace are reflecting afresh on their approach to mission as God's mission in which they seek to participate. They are inspired by the incarnation of Christ to go beyond their church walls and engage with their broader communities and the issues of concern in society. They are not only interested in doing things as a church group, but welcome opportunities for partnering with others who are acting in ways that are consistent with the Kingdom of God. This is illustrated, for example, in the engagement of Solace and Urban Life in Clean Up Australia.

Their incarnational intent is also demonstrated in their geographic moves and experiments in using "third places" or at least shared public buildings. Eastern Hills started in one community centre and moved to a larger one. Urban Life moved from their old "country club" buildings to their renovated café and community centre. Solace started at Carey Grammar Chapel and moved to St Paul's in Fairfield, as well as using Balwyn Baptist and North Fitzroy Arts Centre. Their interesting choices of location, however, are just a symbol and tool for their mission of incarnating the presence of Christ in their communities.

Furthermore, they are exploring the role of the whole people of God in mission, as a calling not just professionals but for all believers, and not just on Sundays but through the week in everyday life and work. This language of everyday spirituality and a theology of vocation helps empower congregational members to express mission in all of life. Most of the employed workers of these churches work part-time in the church and are occupied elsewhere for at least part of their week. These expressions and

outworking of public theology are not unique to emerging churches, but they are open to these perspectives as part of Christian mission in the public square.

City Mission and the New Monasticism: The Urban Seed story.
A reflection by Brent Lyons-Lee.

Brent Lyons Lee is a Baptist Minister and works with Urban Seed. This article is excerpted from *Emerging Downunder*, a book he co-authored with Ray Simpson. The book is available at www.atfpress.com

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An increasing number of Christians are turning to 'the new monasticism'. This article provides some insight for those exploring 'emerging' ways of church through the experience of Urban Seed in Melbourne. What makes new monasticism 'new' when there is nothing new under the sun? I think it is about a rediscovery of the ancient, earthy spirituality; however there is also a sense that a new wineskin is needed for new wine. Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote in a prophetic letter to his brother Karl in January 1935:

> The restoration of the Church must surely come from a new kind of monasticism, which will have only one thing in common with the old, a life lived without compromise according to the Sermon on the Mount in the following of Jesus. I believe the time has come to gather people together for this.[120]

Because of his execution in a prison cell shortly before the end of World War II we shall never know how he would have developed a new monasticism. Sadly, the German Church did not take hold of what he had conceived. In Scotland, however, George McLeod had been developing the Iona Community during those same war years. Bonhoeffer's *Life Together* became standard reading there.

In the Catholic tradition, or more broadly the western church, there is a notion of 'Mendicant Orders' and 'Monastic Orders'. Mendicant orders are commonly known as 'Apostolic Religious Orders'. These orders are more committed to action and not necessarily tied to a geographical area. This is in contrast to 'Monastic Orders' where monks are committed to a life of contemplation in a specific geographical location or monastery and were defined as enclosed communities. Both orders have elements of both the apostolic and the contemplative; however a real synthesis of each model is needed. This is evident in the Celtic tradition.

Urban Seed and New Monasticism

In 1987 Collins Street Baptist Church (CSBC) asked what it means to be church in the unique neighbourhood of the city centre. The initial ideas for the work of Urban Seed began with a professional and academic approach to mission and urban spirituality. By 1995 a residential community at Central House was established when three interns moved into the old Collins Street Baptist Church property officers' residence on Level 9. This development would come to play the major part in the development of the practice and ethos of Urban Seed. In the same year, Tim Costello was appointed as the new Director of Urban Seed, which was another critical factor in the evolving character of Urban Seed's work.

The first internship was constructed around the ideas of a 'monastic' rhythm of life of 12 hours in mission, 12 hours studying and 12 hours work doing property duties around the Church for a small salary each week. Inspired by the example of Peter Chapman's 17 year ministry through 'City Life' at the Presbyterian Church next door, these first interns spent much of their time walking the streets of Melbourne meeting people. After 3 months they invited friends they had made to join them in their house for lunch. This formed the basis of the spiritual discipline of the community's open lunch time which has run ever since and which is currently held in the 'Credo Cafe'.

Between 1995 and 2008 over sixty people have come to live at Central House, and each year the intake of residents built upon these early initiatives. Since 1995 much has developed within the residential community, and yet many of the early elements remain the same:

relational presence in the inner city,

the discipline of hospitality, sharing meals and living space in the church

home with those considered least,

discernment walks and public speaking,

public liturgy and protest,

exploring Christian community,

balancing work, study and mission,

common work in and around the building.

This history has been shaped by many extremely gifted people. The one thing that has been a standout charism for Urban Seed has been the willingness to engage. This has come through primarily a commitment to neighbourhood, which in the inner city are the extremes of wealth and poverty. On any given day at Credo Café, these extremes of society, with everything in between, will be represented in some way. We mostly attract marginalised people because lunch is free; however it is a high priority to keep it 'open' to all.

The commitment to engagement has meant trying to stay connected to inherited churches. It is easier for groups to write the inherited church off all together and form new 'emerging' churches. It has often been a bumpy ride, but Urban Seed and Collins Street Baptist Church (CSBC) have a relationship. Urban Seed has been a breath of new life in the nine-storey building that is *Central House*, attracting creative people to explore ways of holistic ministry.

Some of the tensions have existed because of process. Urban Seed has a flat structure and is somewhat anarchistic, where as CSBC has a traditional Baptist understanding of the diaconate. When one is running an organisation like Urban Seed it is not always easy to have decisions going through unpaid, although highly committed deacons who meet together semi-regularly. This was a factor for Urban Seed having to find its own identity separate from the church.

Living issues have also come up when sharing a building. In 2000 we had 12 residents living at *Central House* at the peak of Melbourne's heroin crisis. Our back laneway became the most frequented area in the CBD for injecting drug use. We were constantly responding to overdoses as a team and realised that we were actually keeping people alive, people who may have otherwise fatally overdosed in places where no one was present.

As well as keeping people alive, we could offer refuge and friendship in Credo Café. This helped greatly with overcoming people's feeling of marginalisation. For some in the church it was seen as a way of encouraging drug use, and basic arguments of harm minimisation and the best approach for injecting drug user's health and well being were often debated. For us, the 'non-professional' (which does not make it unprofessional) approach we adopt of offering friendship first and foremost was what was needed for a majority of these 'outcasts'.

Living at one's place of mission and worship gives rise to the images of the 'Celtic' style monasteries that we have explored in earlier chapters. We have always attracted great people to Urban Seed and the dilemma has been just what these people can do when their internship in the city has finished. A small number of Seeders, particularly after our incorporation, have been able to create jobs to stay in the city and stay connected. This has come through money from philanthropic and corporate engagement, which also sustains a business of schools seminar and walks.

We have found that corporations and philanthropists are really keen to fund our work. They understand and like our 'community development' model which we would call 'church.' The idea of 'thick' and 'thin' language has often been debated at Urban Seed. In order to engage the world, we have found it useful to find language that people understand. Often people are invited in by this non religious 'thin' language we use such as 'community development'. Credo Café to outsiders is a

unique chance to build relationships with marginalised people and also wealthy corporations in Melbourne's CBD. However our 'thick' theological language says that it is communion with people as diverse as 'tax collectors' and 'notorious sinners' exploring the journey of discipleship.

The Seeds Network

Our tension with 'thick' and 'thin' language ,and the need to broaden our base so that people have communities to go to, were some of the reasons for taking the Seeds program in a whole new direction. Seeds allows us to use 'thick' language, which we know is needed to sustain the activism of Urban Seed as evidenced on the Seeds website (www.seeds.org.au).

Our idea is to run Seeds as 'new monastic' missional communities, that can have Urban Seed as a funding base for Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR) status with work done in the alleviation of poverty. Urban Seed can remain as a 'public' front for Seeds communities beyond the city that allows us to engage in non-threatening ways. We have explored this with Norlane in Geelong and also in Bendigo and Footscray. We can continue to renew church buildings by have committed communities living in or close by and organising themselves around some simple principles. Rather than having a Rule, we have Quaker inspired queries and advices to explore together in our covenanted communities.

From our Urban Seed experience, three key elements emerged for Seeds Covenanted Communities: **Know** the Word, **Grow** Home; and **Go** Engage.

Know the Word

We seek to know and be known by God's message of truth, love and justice by gathering together to pray, discern and celebrate our participation in the living story of Jesus Christ. It includes our 'slow' approach to worship gatherings, bible study, and public missional conversations such as city walks and seminar series.

Grow Home

We seek to grow a new sense of home in local places by re-discovering and re-imagining the traditional vows of poverty, chastity and obedience. For us the vow of Poverty is not about being poor or idealising poverty; it is however about seeking to live simply.

The essence of the vow of Chastity is seen as honouring the sacred connections between God, creation and each other's bodies. As such it has been less about sex and more about food. Many of our discernment queries around chastity challenge us to explore the simple but profound connections that can be made by making the production and consumption of food central to our spiritual life. Eating 'slow' food around an open table helps create a sense of shared community and often re-frames the life-giving power of the Eucharist for us.

The vow of Obedience is difficult for powerful literate, post-colonial educated, Australians who have also been socialised by consumer capitalism. Much of the "Seeds" branding is about capturing the sense of the anti-power of being small and uncontrollably organic.

Go Engage

We seek to serve others through re-discovering and re-imagining the missionary instructions of Jesus to teach, heal and cast out evil (Mark 6). Such practices are understood quite differently in the various Christian traditions from which we come, but we find these more helpful than the secular social sciences or welfare categories in keeping us united in our activism and keeping it connected with our spirituality. Our queries and advices call us to critically return to the stories of Jesus when considering any new mission model, program or idea.

In the heart of the Melbourne we have expressed these three instructions through the ministries of education, hospitality and political advocacy respectively, but they look and feel quite different in different places and in the lives of our people. It is in the general mix of these missional aspects rather than the emphasis of one over another that we get a sense of the breadth of God's own mission.

Worship, mission and the public square:

a primer | *Stephen Burns*

ABSTRACT: *This article suggests that Christian assembly is a form of public service. Considering both old-line traditions and 'fresh expressions' of worship, it invites attention to the missionary dynamics of ecumenical patterns which centre on word and sacrament. It affirms the public and missionary significance of gathering, sending and other elements of the Sunday service, and appeals for care about the interface of pastoral offices and liturgical spaces with other public realms.*

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Preamble: locating my perspective

In this article, I begin to sketch out some basic suggestions about relating "worship", "mission" and the "public square".[1] This modest aim – beginning a sketch - reflects the fact that finding two of my three keywords in creative juxtaposition is rare enough,[2] and that attempts to triangulate all three seem almost non-existent.[3] I assume that precisely how the three ought best to be related is context-specific, hence wish to refrain from a headlong rush into prescription; rather, I am more concerned with what I take to be the beginnings of description[4] and the search for some starting questions that might shape an agenda for vision and practice. So I aspire to suggest something like a primer: just first words able to be taken up in specific situations by others in their turn.

I open up two main trajectories: firstly, liturgy as public service, and secondly, the missionary dynamic of the deep structures of ecumenically-shaped liturgy. For what it is worth, I perceive my own thinking to be broadly in a stream of what the liturgical theologian Gordon Lathrop calls "critical classicism": that is,

> marked by the willing reception of traditional patterns and archaic symbols, in the belief that these classics bear authority among us. . . [yet] at the same time. . . marked by the willing elaboration of a contemporary critique of received tradition.[5]

Lathrop's emphasis on both tradition and critique is helpful not least as an encouragement to my concern to encircle both old-line and emerging church practice.

In order to do this, throughout I use "worship" and "liturgy" more-or-less interchangeably,[6] and assume that my suggestions are relevant in diverse ecclesial contexts, because alongside the Catholics and Lutherans and Anglicans and Methodists and all the other old-timers in the old-lines, worshippers who may at first think of themselves as "non-liturgical" (for instance, Quakers,[7] the Brethren, and Pentecostals[8]) in fact do have liturgical forms, scripted or unscripted. The same is true of those who are variously labelled (by themselves or others) "mission-shaped"/ "liquid" church/ "post-evangelical"/ "emerging network"/ "fresh expression"/ "alternative worshippers".[9] Yet it does seem to me that too often in the literature, such as it exists, when links between liturgy and mission are made they tend to place too much emphasis on emerging church practices. One of the most high-profile culprits is the British Anglican endeavour **Mission-Shaped Church**.[10] The link between mission and emerging church practice is of course not wrong but it does, I think, fail to tap the roots of other promising practices of Christian assembly.

Public service

My first suggestion is that persons in whatever tradition, whatever their church-style,[11] might try to retrieve from the Christian inheritance some meanings of the word "liturgy". It is a marvellously ambiguous word that conflates the Greek *ergon* and *laos*, people and work, and is most commonly rendered as "work of the people". Hence it is oftentimes allied with the notion of participation, "full, conscious and active participation" being widely regarded as an "ecumenical treasure" and the principal key to the renewal of worship.[12] But liturgy might also (with good precedent, from the **Epistle of Diognetus**,[13] if not the Epistle to the Hebrews,[14] to recently deceased Benedictine Aidan Kavanagh[15]) be rendered as "work for the people", and as such some kind of public service.[16]

These are semantic associations here that really should not be missed. On the one hand, the notion of participation at the heart of contemporary liturgical theology is full of promising resonance for public theologians – ideals of participation are central in at least some ideals of public theology, in their visions of society, citizenship, and political processes.[17] On the other hand, the longstanding idea of liturgy as public service challenges public theologians to make and keep connections with practices at the heart of the church which themselves purport to be public and at the very least are durable. My point here is of course not to argue for a kind of liturgical fossilization, as if to support the idea that "worship-is-already-public-service-so- everything-can-stay-as-it-is"; it is rather to share my critical-classical conviction that if we explore the tradition we will find resources to animate reflection and action in our particular struggles to unfold worship in public and missionary ways.

Just as the notion of public theology has attracted a range of specific understandings, so liturgical theologians have developed ideas about worship as public service in a range of ways. Among the most robust of them is Aidan Kavanagh, who writes makes the daring claim that worship aspires to "church doing world": the liturgy, he says, "steadily regards the world as abnormal by its own choice" and "play[s] extremely hard ball with the world by remaining constantly clearheaded about what the world cannot do for itself, and about its perennial need for grace and judgment".[18] In a more positive vein, worship as Kavanagh envisages it may show something of how to "actively co-operat[e] with God in [our] own rehabilitation".[19] The lines Kavanagh draws between church and world will no doubt be suspect to some of us, and intolerable to others – but they should give us pause enough to note that they are a line akin to lines drawn between church and society in at least some kinds of public theology.[20] For my own part, I find it helpful to blur the lines with the kind of nuance suggested in Christian Scharen's insistence that we remain always conscious of "the world in the church in the world".[21] This is a natty phrase that points to considerable complexity in the interactions of church and world – and it can serve as the beginnings of a critique of any temptation on Christians' part to self-deception and superiority, as well as a constructive basis for missionary engagement: so it is notable that Scharen's wider argument is that a certain worldliness[22] opens Christian assembly outwards in mission (a point he makes with force about the presence in Christian worship of what might be thought of "secular" song). And we might add, making a point that Scharen does not: an awareness of "the world in the church in the world" can readily be allied to celebration of the sacramentality of the world God loves.[23] In any case, the key point to be remembered here is that the relationships between church and world, the cultures of Christian worship and other cultures, are overlapping, and most certainly include Christians' complicity and collusion with things that are wrong, apart from much potential for public goodness and personal beatitude.

Deep structures

My next suggestion is to encourage engagement with contemporary ecumenical consensus about the shape of eucharistic worship,[24] and in particular its deep structure. This deep structure begins with an intentional sense of gathering, and moves on to attend to the central things of word and sacrament,[25] and then on towards an intentional sense of sending out. This fourfold movement is now inscribed in the ritual books of countless traditions, so, as one example, the Church of England's **Common Worship** range begins with a description of "the journey through the liturgy" that reads:

> The journey through the liturgy has a clear structure with signposts for those less familiar with the way. It moves from the gathering of the community through the Liturgy of the Word to an opportunity of transformation, sacramental or non-sacramental, after which those present are sent out to put their faith into practice.[26]

Three initial points should be made about this deep structure. Firstly, this eucharistic shape is mirrored in much non-eucharistic worship, so that services of the word might also be shaped around the basic structure of gathering, word, table (so **Common Worship** speaks of an "opportunity of

transformation, sacramental or non-sacramental") and sending.[27] The "eucharistic shape" can clearly be seen in the British **Methodist Worship Book** in which the third section of word services characteristically includes an emphatic stress on "thanksgiving" as a mirror, as it were, to eucharistic thanksgiving in the orders for holy communion. Secondly, contemporary ecumenical consensus is based on constructs of ancient Christian practice, and is especially indebted to Justin Martyr's testimony about Sunday mornings in second-century Rome.[28] But it may well also claim to be broadly based on the authority of scripture, fragments of biblical witness being taken together, with the risen Jesus' self-disclosure through open scripture (Luke 24.27) and table-companionship (Luke 24.35) in the Emmaus encounter usually regarded as the integrating key to the rest of the clues.[29]

Thirdly, the most theologically loaded of the three, so I pose it as a question: if, as in the memory of Emmaus, word and table are in some sense means of gracious divine self-revelation - means of grace by which Christ makes himself known – then, surely, their significance is inestimable in terms of how worship is envisaged as both public and missionary? The implication of my question is contestable, of course, but the point to engage, whether by way of affirmation, rejection or whatever kind of nuance is that the tradition has long mediated the view that worship in word and sacrament is somehow a matter of God's giving of godself – word and sacrament "open[us] up to a richly personal divine presence, [ ] to be graced by that presence".[30] And of course relish in a sense of divine largesse and mercy in the central things of Christian worship is the ultimate reason that the deep structure of gathering-word-table-sending has met with affirmation, past and present, across any number of different church-styles, alt. worship included.

Sending

Much more might be said about aspects of the deep structure in relation to mission, so I limit myself here to just a few ideas. The most obvious is that the structure culminates with a sending out, a commissioning to a shared responsibility. It may involve liturgical features such as a "word of mission",[31] and an assertion that all of life is worship – such as is nicely captured in the UK Baptists' line:

> Our worship is ended.
>
> **Our service begins**,[32]

or some other kind of dismissal that is a summons to link liturgy and mission, "church" life and "public" life. So, for example, a beautiful and challenging old Huguenot dismissal has been incorporated in the recent revisions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America: "Go in peace. Remember the poor".[33]

It should be noted, however, that the sending section of the deep structure has been relatively poorly attended to in liturgical scholarship, and is the least well resourced with texts for prayer and ceremonial scenes in official ritual books. In light of the contemporary renaissance of mission in academic and ecclesial theology, this is strange and ought to change. But that being said, various imaginative attempts to strengthen the sending are now being sought and found,[34] and it may well be that emerging churches have been and are leading the way at reviving participation in the meaning of this part of the deep structure.

Apart from sending people, whose work liturgy is, the tradition (indebted to Justin's testimony) affirms at least two public, other-centred, practices as integral to the sending out. The first is the sending of communion to persons who are absent, and the second is the gathering of a collection for the poor – which the new North American Lutheran ending echoes nicely. Both are strong reminders that from the first Christian assembly has related to those who are not actually present. This is part of its public-ness.

The challenge of the ancient collection perhaps offers us a particular opportunity for fresh thought because we need to link it with the consistent finding that asking for money is the most off-putting aspect of church for many so-called "Generation X-ers" and "Generation Y-ers". In fact, the desire to do away with the practice of "passing the plate" in response to the finding was one of the key motivators for setting up what became the archetypal "mega-church" at Willow Creek, Illinois,[35] which has been so lauded by some. Whatever, it seems obvious that finding ways to deal openly and creatively with our money in worship, whatever its style, is one of the most biting intersections of ritual

and public action, and it should certainly be included in reflection on the church's mission, not least as we are seemingly evermore conscious of financial flows in a climate of globalization.[36]

Gathering

But making something of the sending is not the only challenge in enacting the deep structure of Christian worship. The very idea of gathering can be regarded as potentially counter-cultural, at least if we follow the widespread line of thinking that western societies are now characterized by "consumer values" shaped by "an individualistic mentality" which cuts against "collective obligation"[37] – here citing Duncan MacLaren.

The value of gathering is certainly under question in some liquid church ideas: for instance, Pete Ward's massively influential **Liquid Church** suggests that "congregations" are inevitably identified with missiologically-inappropriate and dated modes of "solid church" which have "internalized some of the core values of modernity",[38] are fixated on Sunday morning attendance, and in which worship tends to be what he deftly calls 'a one-size-fits-all-environment".[39] Conscious of the problems of this kind of "solid" institution in terms of evangelism to supposedly "fluid" post-modern individuals, Ward imagines what a church more expressive of liquid culture might look like, so as to begin to engage the situation that even when post-modern young people "might have met Jesus, [ ] they still don"t want to meet the congregation!"[40] So Ward imagines (he says "dreams of") "worship in a liquid church" as a "decentred" activity which "does not rely on a congregational dynamic".[41] He cites as inspirations the labyrinth – a "symbolic journey [ ] with a series of prayer stations",[42] which several people can walk individually at the same time; the medieval spectacle of the elevation of the eucharistic host - perhaps in coterminous consecrations by priests at altars scattered throughout the same building: "a series of private prayers"; and the Orthodox expressing their devotion in "a variety of activities" – kissing icons, lighting candles, eating blessed bread, filling bottles with holy oil, and so on, all of which go on alongside the singing, chanting and ceremony conducted by the priest at or around the altar. For Ward, these three things – labyrinth, coterminous medieval masses, and Orthodox devotion - suggest the kind of "varied and individual. . . corporate [ ], but also decentred"[43] approach to worship he thinks there needs to be more of in contemporary western churches. He writes of the various modes of devotion he explores as shaping his own "attempt to get away from the congregational style of corporate worship that is characteristic of solid church" and of the emphasis of the western tradition on assembly for the communal enterprise of liturgy, which, it is often claimed by others, is "by its nature. . . more than shared celebration meeting private needs".[44] The heart of the dilemma here is perhaps that unless some concessions along the lines of Ward's proposals, or of some other kind, are allowed, there may be little hope of gaining or regaining a viable hope of what it means to congregate in Christ's name in at least some contemporary cultural contexts.

So gathering and sending are two parts of the deep structure of Christian worship that present huge challenges for the church's mission, and both have implications for what can be made of the claim that worship is public service.[45]

Elements of rite

There is a great deal more again in the various elements that constitute the fourfold movement of the deep structure. For instance, both "traditional" set pieces like the *Kyrie eleison, Gloria in excelsis* and *Sanctus* - so-called "prayers we have in common" – not to say creeds, can be seen as engaged in a public work of asserting "divine political authority" - "you alone are the Lord", "Lord, have mercy", "heaven and earth are full of your glory" - in that they help to "put the 'lords' of the world in their place"[46] by asserting the Christian people's primarily allegiances. And if we can believe that, I can see no reason not to say much the same thing about many contemporary praise songs' celebration of divine sovereignty. Then we might note that the prayers of the people at the pivot of word and sacrament are a key opportunity to link liturgy and life. So, hopefully, is preaching. And so are invitations to lament, repent, renounce and affirm specific attitudes and practices in the likes of baptismal renewal, and the gesturing of selves in thanksgiving and oblation in eucharistic prayer. These are not the only possible examples, but texts from a couple of these cases make the point. From the Kenyan Anglican **Our Modern Services**, a contemporary lament that consciously echoes Habakkuk 3:

Though the mango tree does not blossom,

nor the fruit be on the vines,

the crop of the coconut fails,

and the fields yield no food,

the flock be cut off from the fold,

and there be no herd in the stall,

yet I will rejoice. . [47]

And from **Celebrate God's Presence**, the United Church of Canada's ritual book, the preface of a eucharistic prayer:

O Holy Wisdom of our God,

eternally offensive to our wisdom,

and compassionate towards our weakness,

we praise you and give you thanks,

because you emptied yourself of power

and entered our struggle,

taking upon you our unprotected flesh.

You opened wide your arms for us upon the cross,

becoming scandal for our sake,

that you might sanctify even the grave

to be a bed of hope to your people.

Therefore, with those who are made refugees in their own land,

abandoned or betrayed by friends,

whose bodies are violated or in pain;

with those who have died alone

without dignity, comfort or hope;

and with all the company of saints

who have carried you in their wounds,

we join to praise you. . .[48]

Against the backdrop of events in Australia in February 2008, it is notable that the prayer in the Canadian book was originally intended for use in a service of official apology to First Nations peoples.

The public dimensions of such prayers take on edge if we believe that over time the deep structures of worship, and the various elements within them, shape dispositions that are ultimately the gift of mission. That is to say that worship is not simply expressive, but formative, and might even be regarded as nurturing abundant life[49] - a point that Kavanagh makes in his own way when he

suggests that liturgy makes worshippers "normal" in the sense of resourced by God as God intends with the means of grace to become whole persons. Like my earlier question about divine self-giving in the central things, this conviction is also contestable, but it is one worth reflection because different possible feelings about it yield different kinds scope to possibilities of imagining worship and mission in the public square.

Ending with further openings

So this primer has begun to open out some starting thoughts towards aligning worship, mission and the public square. In my closing reflections now, I point to the fecundity of the alignment by suggesting just two more themes that I think are also of major importance.

If the deep structures of Sunday eucharistic worship might nurture full life, perhaps something similar might be said of the seven sacraments of Catholic tradition, or their variations in Protestant performance. They suggest shapes of the life that matters, pathways to whole personhood in Christian perspective. And whatever we make of that idea, the most minimal that might be said about them is that in very many contexts they remain a major site of missionary opportunity. As James White insists, in terms of evangelization, such rites of passage may be much more important than eucharist, because they are oftentimes populated by "the alumni and alumnae" of Sunday morning worship.[50]That is they remain a crucible of engagement with a particular way in which the world is in the church in the world, through those who have been variously labelled as "vicariously religious" and "differentially religious", and whom Alan Billings calls "cultural Christians" - whilst he adroitly points out that they are probably not "believers without belonging" because beliefs are at best marginal to their self-confessed affection and affiliation to at least aspects of the Christian tradition.[51] In any case, in terms of opportunities for engagement with such persons, the sacraments of the life-cycle are more significant than anything yet to surface in emerging church worship.[52]

Finally, I point to the importance of investing thought (and money) towards imaginative buildings and space for worship. Buildings, correctly or incorrectly often called churches, are in many places still major centres for celebration of sacraments of the human life-cycle - as well as gathering places for communities in dreadful times of tragedy and lament[53] - and as such involve a much wider "audience"[54] than any self-conscious church congregation. How these buildings might facilitate a sense of journey through the liturgy, engagement in the deep structures, is a question that seems to me to be of signal importance,[55] and it is part of their continuing capacity to be of public service.

End Notes

1. A version of this paper was presented at the Australian Association for Mission Studies/Charles Sturt University Public and Contextual Theology Strategic Research Centre conference on "Mission and the Public Square" at the Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture, Canberra, October 05 08.

2. DAVIES, Gordon, 1964, *Worship and Mission* (London: SCM Press, 1964) is still widely cited, which may reflect its 'classic' qualities, or simply a dearth of other work on its themes. For more recent efforts, see SCHATTUER, Thomas F, ed., *Inside Out: Worship in an Age of Mission* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000). For a contribution from Australia, see McGOWAN, Andrew, 'Worship and the "Mission Shaped" Church', *St. Mark's Review* 200: 2006, 36-42.

3. FOLEY, Edward, Capuchin, 'Worship as Public Theology', *International Journal of Practical Theology* 8: 2004 1-13 makes an important, rare, attempt to bolster the alliance of worship and public theology. Intriguingly, for some reason this essay was not included in the published collection of papers from the conference at which it was originally presented: GRAHAM, Elaine and ROWLANDS, Anna [eds], *Pathways to the Public Square: Practical Theology in an Age of Pluralism* (Munster: Lit Verlag, 2005). See also MOE-LOBEDA, Cynthia D, *Public Church: For the Life of the World* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress Press, 2004) for a slightly wider perspective that very helpfully engages with sacramental practices.

4. On the importance of privileging description over prescription in liturgical studies, see WHITE, James F, *Christian Worship in North America 1955-1995: A Retrospective* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1997), p314.

5. LATHROP, Gordon W, *Holy Things: A Liturgical Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), pp4-5.

6. Whilst there are nuances about what might distinguish them, I wish more than to weight the nuances to unsettle any sense we might have - they are common enough - that some patterns of worship are 'liturgical', whilst others are not. For this reason, the conflation of liturgy and worship is commonplace in contemporary liturgical theology.

7. See DANDELION, Pink, *The Liturgies of Quakerism* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004).

8. See, for example, ALBRECHT, Daniel, *Rites in the Spirit: A Ritual Approach to Pentecostal/Charismatic Spirituality* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999).

9. Here I cluster a range of terms associated with what are supposed to be 'new' and/or 'experimental' forms of worship, echoing some book titles of key proponents: WARD, Pete, *Liquid Church* (Carlisle, Paternoster Press, 2002); WARD, Pete, *Participation and Mediation: A Practical Theology for the Liquid Church* (London: SCM Press, 2008); TOMLINSON, Dave, *The Post-evangelical* (London: Triangle, 1995); TOMLINSON, Dave, *Re-enchanting Christianity: Faith in an Emerging Culture* (Norwich: Canterbury Press, 2008); KIMBALL, Dan, *Emerging Worship: Creating Worship Gatherings for New Generations*, (Colorado Springs: Zondervan, 2004); BAKER, Jonny, GAY, Doug and BROWN, Jenny, *Alternative Worship*, (London: SPCK, 2003), etc etc. This list is indicative only and far from exhaustive; obviously, namings differ, but concerns clearly overlap. Much material about these related circles is available on the internet, good ways in being the websites by Jonny Baker and Ryan Bolger, in the UK and US respectively, who have both published in print in this area (the latter being a teacher at Fuller Seminary) and by Paul Roberts (a former teacher of liturgy in an English theological college, whose current research focuses on emerging church worship and whose own contribution includes critical assessment of the rhetoric of 'postmodernity' in emerging churches. See http://jonnybaker.blogs.com/ and http://thebolgblog.typepad.com/ and http://alternativeworship.org/paulsblog/

10. *Mission-Shaped Church* (London, CHP, 2004), p117. For critical engagement with this aspect of the report, see BURNS, Stephen, 'Mission-shaped worship', *Anvil* 21: 2005, 185-201. For wider critique, see CROFT, Steven, [ed], *Mission-Shaped Questions: Defining Issues for Today's Church* (London: CHP, 2007), and especially HULL, John, *Mission-Shaped Church: A Theological Response* (London: SCM Press, 2006). On the influence of *Mission-Shaped Church* in Australia, see NICHOLS, Alan, [ed], *Building the Mission-Shaped Church in Australia*, (Sydney: General Synod Office, 2007).

11. I use the term 'church-styles' as an alternative to the older, gendered, 'churchmanship'.

12. See, for example, BURNS, Stephen, *Liturgy* (SCM Studyguide) (London: SCM Press, 2006), pp1-12 and BURNS, Stephen, *Worship in Context: Liturgical Theology, Children and the City* (Peterborough: Epworth Press, 2006), pp1-6.

13. See SEARLE, Mark, 'Private Religion, Individualistic Society and Common Worship', in KOESTER, Anne Y and SEARLE, Barbara [eds], *Vision: The Scholarly Contributions of Mark Searle to Liturgical Renewal*, (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2004), 185-203, p195.

14. Hebrews 8.6 employs *leitourgia* to speak of Jesus' work for others.

15. See below.

16. Recently re-stated in, for example, BURNS, Stephen, 'Heaven or Las Vegas? Engaging Liturgical Theology', in WARD, Pete, *Mass Culture: The Interface of Eucharist and Mission* (Oxford: Bible Reading Fellowship, 2008), 95-112, pp108-9 and LOADES, Ann, 'Table', in BURNS, Stephen [ed], *Journey* (Renewing the Eucharist 1), Norwich: Canterbury Press, 2008, 66-80, p80.

17. CARBINE, Rosemary P, 'Ekklesial Work: Toward a Feminist Public Theology', in *Harvard Theological Review*, 99: 2006, 433-455. Aspects of alliance between liturgical and feminist theologies are traced in BURNS, Stephen, 'Grace Dances: Liturgy and Embodiment', in WATSON, Natalie K and BURNS, Stephen [eds], *Exchanges of Grace: Essays in Honour of Ann Loades* (London: SCM Press, 2008), 225-235.

18. KAVANAGH, OSB, Aidan, *On Liturgical Theology (*Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1984), pp153, 168.

19. KAVANAGH, *On Liturgical Theology,* p176.

20. Notions of public theology are sometimes predicated on understandings on David Tracey's writing in TRACEY, David *The Analogical Imagination: Christian Theology and the Culture of Pluralism* (New York: Crossroad, 1981) which identifies three 'audiences' for theology: church, academy and society. The subtle interplay of these audiences is not always remembered.

21. SCHAREN, Christian, *Public Worship and Public Work: Character and Commitment in Local Congregational Life (*Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2004), pp203-227. Scharen appeals for a more ethnographic texture in the study of worship. His emphasis on 'the world in the church in the world' might also offer salient critique and contribution to characterizations of public theology.

22. WHITE, James F, *The Worldliness of Worship* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967) remains insightful.

23. For a wide view of the sacramental, see LOADES, Ann, 'Finding New Sense in the Sacramental', in ROWELL, Geoffrey and HALL, Christine [eds], *The Gestures of God: Explorations in Sacramentality* (London: Continuum, 2004), 161-172

24. See BEST, Thomas F and HELLER, Dagmar [eds], *Eucharistic Worship in Ecumenical Contexts: The Lima Liturgy – and Beyond* (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1995).

25. LATHROP, Gordon W, *Central Things: Worship in Word and Sacrament (*Minneapolis: Augsburg Press, 2006) is a robust and accessible argument for the demonstrable significance of word and table in Christian assembly.

26. *Common Worship: Services and Prayers for the Church of England* (London: CHP, 2000), px

(Roman numeral 10).

27. Methodist Church of Great Britain, *Methodist Worship Book (*Peterborough: Methodist Publishing House, 1999), pp26, 51, cf. 221-2.

28. *1 Apology*, 67, cited everywhere in liturgical studies. The document gives the earliest available fulsome description of worship in a Christian assembly, though it is not clear: [1] whether it describes regular or ideal practice; [2] whether it refers to one congregation, congregations across Rome, or what Justin took to be ‘universal’ practice.

29. I sketch the contours of a cumulative argument for taking scriptural fragments together in BURNS, ‘Heaven or Las Vegas?’

30. LOADES, Ann, ‘On Music’s Grace: Trying to Think Theologically about Music’, in LIPNER, Julius [ed], *Truth, Religious Dialogue and Dynamic Orthodoxy: Reflections on the Works of Brian Hebblethwaite* (London: SCM Press, 2005), 25-38, p26.

31. An attractive feature of the Uniting Church in Australia, *Uniting in Worship 2* (Sydney: Uniting Church Press, 2005), interestingly mirrored in more recent editions of the Church of England’s *Common Worship* range which have in a more obvious way retrieved the ‘dismissal gospel’ from the pre-conciliar Roman Catholic mass. See *Common Worship: Times and Seasons (*London: Church House Publishing, 2006).

32. Baptist Union of Great Britain, *Gathering for Worship: Patterns and Prayers for the Community of Disciples* (Norwich: Canterbury Press, 2005), p21 (bold case in original, indicating unison response).

33. Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, *Evangelical Lutheran Worship (*Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress Press, 2006), p115 (bold case in original, indicating unison response).

34. IRELAND, Mark, ‘Sending’, in BURNS, [ed], *Journey*, 2008, 81-99, makes a range of practical suggestions.

35. YARS, Ronald P, *The Future of Protestant Worship: Beyond the Worship Wars (*Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002), p17.

36. See, for example, MOE-LOBEDA, Cynthia D, *Healing a Broken World: Globalization and God*, (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2002) and READER, John, *Reconstructing Practical Theology: The Impact of Globalization* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008).

37. See MACLAREN, Duncan, *Mission Implausible: Restoring Credibility to the Church* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 2004), p132. My comments on the challenge of gathering draw on BURNS, ‘Mission-shaped Worship’.

38. WARD, *Liquid Church*, p17.

39. WARD, *Liquid Church*, p19.

40. WARD, *Liquid Church*, p14.

41. WARD, *Liquid Church*, p94.

42. Ward's 'dreams' of worship in a liquid church are found in *Liquid Church*, pp95-97.

43. Ward is not alone in encouraging reflection on Orthodox worship in search of its potential contribution to worship in western Christian contexts: two notable examples are HOLETON, David, 'Welcome Children, Welcome Me', *Anglican Theological Review* 51: 1999, 92-111, and SENN, Frank, *Christian Liturgy: Catholic and Evangelical* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1997) Ward's willingness to contemplate the dissolution of congregational dynamic is, however, what is distinctive about his proposals.

44. SEARLE, 'Private Religion', p195.

45. See GILES, Richard, 'Gathering' and IRELAND, Mark, 'Sending', both in BURNS, *Journey* (Anglican), BYARS, Ronald P., *What Language Shall I Borrow? The Bible in Christian Worship* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008) (Reformed) and QUIVIK, Melinda, 'Re-assembly: Participation as Faith Construction' and LANGE, Dirk G, 'Worship at the Edges: Redefining Evangelism', both in WENGERT, Timothy J [ed], *Centripetal Worship: The Evangelical Heart of Lutheran Worship* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Press, 2006), for further related ecumenical perspectives on gathering and sending dynamics in Christian assembly.

46. LOADES, 'On Music's Grace', p36.

47. Anglican Church of the Province of Kenya, *Our Modern Services* (Nairobi: Uzima Press, 2002), p5.

48. United Church of Canada, *Celebrate God's Presence: A Book of Services* (Etobicoke: United Church Publishing House, 2000), p254; adapted from MORLEY, Janet, *All Desires Known* (London: SPCK, 1988), p52.

49. See BURNS, Stephen, 'Liturgy and Justice', *International Journal for Public Theology* 3: 2009, 368-386, esp. pp375-379.

50. WHITE, *Christian Worship in North America*, p313.

51. BILLINGS, Alan, *Secular Lives, Sacred Hearts: The Role of the Church in a Time of No Religion*, (London: SPCK, 2004), p17.

52. The liturgical tradition is marked by intercultural engagement at every turn - as knowing anything about, for example, the origins of Christmas or Easter, or the hagiographies of many of a saint, makes evident. The same intercultural engagement is folded into the history of architecture for Christian assembly, where the world is in the church in the church in the world through the adoption of the public space of the basilica, and the assimilation and arguably transformation of certain of its stylistic features, from the first moves out from gatherings in private homes.

53. For a powerful, recent reassertion of this point, see CHERRY, Stephen, 'Representation', in

WELLS, Samuel and COAKLEY, Sarah [eds], *Praying for England: Priestly Presence in Contemporary Culture* (London: Continuum, 2008), 21-41.

54. David Tracey's word. See above note.

55. See GILES, Richard, *Re-pitching the Tent: Reordering the Church Building for Worship and Mission*, (Norwich: Canterbury Press, third edition 2004) and GILES, Richard, *Creating Uncommon Worship: Transforming the Liturgy of the Eucharist* (Norwich: Canterbury Press, 2004). See also various essays in BURNS, Stephen, [ed], *The Art of Tent-making: Essays in Honour of Richard Giles* (Norwich: Canterbury Press, forthcoming).

The Church and the Powers – A Missions Perspective.

Biographical note

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Abstract

Churches today are increasingly developing local mission projects. This is a good sign in post Christian societies and the results can be seen in a range of compassionate and educational programs to many in local neighbourhoods.

This paper challenges this model by suggesting the New Testament had a wholly different approach to mission. The paper explores this different approach and suggest that at the heart of New Testament mission was a commitment to engage with "the powers"(Col 2:15). Defining the powers is essential as is a careful example of the way the New Testament missionaries engaged with them. The mission stories of the book of Acts can indeed be taken as templates for mission today.

The paper builds on the earlier work of people like Berkhof, Yoder and Wink developing a theology and practice for ministry and the powers in post Christendom cities. It shows how chaplaincy as mission is an example of Christian ministry in relation to the powers. With most societies increasingly suffering from anti-social behavior and alcoholism the Church needs to understand the city and its mission by looking again at the New Testament pattern.

By Garth Eichhorn.

This paper addresses a key issue for missional churches. It explores the reality of the reaction to the gospel when it is presented in public space. The paper identifies this reaction with reference to the apostle's term of 'the Powers' as the socially reactive group to the gospel, and then examines the outcomes including the likely outcomes upon the missionary. The paper is about practical theology. It draws upon the writings of recent theologians, makes reference to a New Testament example and to the contemporary mission of chaplains. Good mission should flow from good theology. Mission in a post-Christendom world demands a robust theology which addresses the society in which we find ourselves as Christians and missionaries. There is every justification for pursuing a practical theology of the Powers. The records of New Testament missionary practice show a substantive theology of the disarming of the Powers as part of the salvation message.

Why Explore the Powers?

With the demise of Christendom, churches are becoming more focused on mission strategies that seek to reach and draw Australians to the gospel. Fifty years ago the churches would run children and youth programs within church facilities, confident these same young people would come to faith in Christ and become the future leaders of those churches. Most didn't! A number of influences have affected Australians and drawn them away (or driven them away) from an interest in the gospel. Some of these influences include postmodernism (with its incredulity towards meta-narratives such as the gospel), materialism, internal church issues (such as clergy and church leaders' misbehavior) heightened by media attention, and the growing influence of other major world religions in Australia, particularly through recent immigrants' proselytisation.

Many churches are barely surviving and are fearful that their current members will be their last. Stronger churches are venturing outside church space in an effort to win the wider population to the gospel. This paper explores the value and importance of this step and what those in mission may find in the wider, secular, postmodern community. Despite the variety of reactions to the gospel, this paper suggests strongly that the key to the missionary task lies in publicly engaging with the Powers.

The Interface of the Powers and the Mission of Jesus

Two questions come immediately to mind with respect to the "Powers". Firstly, how should we define them? Then secondly, having done so, what is their importance? Evidence will be sought from the New Testament that shows the Powers in relation to God, and their relevance in the missionary task today. Next, implications will be drawn from the present Australian social context for Christian missionary practice with respect to the Powers.

Defining the Powers

The excellent work done by theologians such as Hendrik Berkhof, John Howard Yoder and David Bosch will not be reviewed. They have clearly shown that the Church must go further than an emphasis on individual salvation (focusing on justification, reconciliation, and the well-being of Christians). The Church must see the Christian's role in society as the continuation of the work of Christ.

Despite other conflicting definitions, Yoder provides a simple and effective definition of the Powers as a "*network of persons and agencies able to make decisions or exert pressure.*"[121] Wink[122] earths it a little more into a contemporary setting:

> "*All of us deal with the Powers That Be. They staff our hospitals, run City Hall, sit around table in corporate boardrooms, collect our taxes, and head our families. But the Powers That Be are more than just the people who run things. They are the systems themselves, the institutions and structures that weave society into an intricate fabric of power and relationships. These Powers surround us on every side. They are necessary. They are useful. We could do nothing without them. Who wants to do without timely mail delivery or well-maintained roads? But the Powers are also the source of unmitigated evils.*"

Wink's description goes beyond the simplicity of Yoder and forces us to identify the social and theological ambivalences within the structure itself. It is these ambivalences which needs attention, especially as they relate to mission. These will be discussed in greater detail later in the paper. One notable absence in these definitions is specific reference to the personal spirituality popularly called "demonic possession" or "spirit possession" (of humans).

Drawing together these thoughts, a definition might then look something like this: **"The Powers are evident in the spirit of persons and agencies which act for good and bad in society".** If we were to shape the definition into a simple diagram it might look something like this. **Figure 1.**

For example, the "Social" node would include some 3,000 Foundations promoting the city of New York. These are a few of the major 'nodes' of power typical of a pluralistic society in a modern city. There are also a profusion of minor 'nodes' as well (not shown), such as The Arts, Festivals etc.

Theology of the Powers

Berkhof[123] uses the three verbs of Col 2:15 to identify what Christ did to the Powers in the cross and in his resurrection. "He made a public example of them", by which Paul implies that Christ was the first to identify the powers and confront them. "He triumphed over them" showing that by His resurrection Christ displayed that He is stronger than the "Powers", and "He disarmed the rulers and authorities" by unmasking their role.

From his birth the Powers were set against Christ, from Herod's massacre of the children of Bethlehem to the opposition of religious leaders throughout his ministry years, culminating in His death on a cross. Yet it was in the cross that Christ identified and defeated the Powers. In his death and resurrection, he triumphed over them. The apostle Paul, the preeminent missionary, from his vast experience in mission developed a helpful theology of the Powers. Throughout the book of Acts, Luke showed this tension between the gospel and the Powers. Each missionary episode in Acts identified the Powers and the work of the gospel to disarm them so that the world could see the importance of God's plan to deal with evil and bring salvation through Jesus Christ.

Of what importance are the Powers to the missionary task?

Current Church Projects and the Powers

Churches in general show a somewhat hesitant and cautious relationship with the Powers and this is evident in a number of ways, such as in the preference to use their buildings and their homes for mission (e.g. Alpha etc); and in so doing, limit their contact with the Powers and any repercussions that might result. Or in the way churches (or denominational social agencies) work within the social structures of the Powers to provide good outcomes for people (in hospitals, schools and in aged care) thus putting themselves under a contract to work with the Powers rather than maintaining a more objective relationship. Also by working within political systems as Christian politicians or in Christian lobby groups with the result that ambivalence is created between the Church and its social doctrines and the wider public social conscience.
All of the above relationships have some missional value and are tried and valuable Christian ministries. But do these modern Christian/secular relationships do justice to the New Testament theology of the Gospel and the Powers? To pursue an answer, it is important to look firstly at a New Testament example.

A New Testament Example of the Mission of Christ and the Powers

Of first importance is a reaffirming of a theology of the Powers and the Gospel as it is given to us in the New Testament. Subsequently consideration must be given to contemporary applications.

The Philippian mission (Acts 16:16-40) provides one such example. In the story of the mission to Philippi there are four obvious expressions of the Powers as they interact with the missionaries of the Gospel. Firstly, the slave girl who is influenced by Powers greater than herself and who acts as their mouthpiece. Luke tells us that Paul was deeply troubled by her words and found them misleading. Witherington[124] clarifies the problem of her utterances when he says that the girl's term "Most High God" 'would not suggest monotheism to a pagan, but rather would suggest the deity one saw as being at the top of the pantheon of all gods.' It was this deceit concerning the one true God that vexed Paul. Leaving aside the problem of whether the girl was a charlatan or not, the evidence remains she was seeking to deceive the public about the gospel.

Secondly, the Slave owners, whom we are told were making a "*great deal of money*" (v16) from the girl's fortune-telling. It isn't clear if they saw the girl as the sole source of their income, but they were upset enough to call in the civil authorities when the source was stopped. This would surely infer that her efforts gave them substantial income and the loss was keenly felt. Thirdly, the magistrates provide the third group of players in this story. They gave little thought of justice by supporting their constituents against the foreign missionaries. Fourthly, the Jailor was a typical public servant, whom one would expect to have been a toughened jail superintendent quite capable of handling hardened criminals. The combination however, of bruised but singing and joyful prisoners plus an earthquake shakes him to the core of his soul. His inner fears are unmasked and he finds help and salvation with his family in the gospel.

Luke's story has a sequel with suggestions about the way the gospel dealt with the Powers. If the template of Col 2:15 is used it might look like this; "He made an example of them", meaning 'they (the magistrates v37, 38) came and apologized' to the apostles for their political mistake in not enquiring as to their Roman citizenship. "He triumphed over them" by showing the power of the gospel to release a girl from the tyranny of the Powers and by the conversion of the jailor and his family. " He disarmed the rulers and authorities" by breaking through the fears of the jailor and delivering him and his family to salvation!

A range of responses by the Powers

This diversity of responses is important and is often reflected today in missional ministry. Notice the liberation from the Powers for the slave girl (v18), the anger emerging amongst the slave owners (v19-21) with their loss of income, the aggressive political expediency of the civil authorities v22, 23) as they backed the traders (slave owners) against the visitors to the city only to come back upon them as they realize their own misuse of Rome's law, and the joyful salvation for the jailor and his family (v34).

What These Responses Mean For Missional Ministry Today

There are a number of ways of reflecting on this missionary episode in Philippi and its relation to the Powers. We choose three particularly. These are a Theological Reflection, suggested outcomes for missionary practice and reflections for urban mission practice in the public space today.

Some Theological Reflections

It is sobering to reflect on both the **diversity and depth of the reactions** at Philippi. Those contributing to the reaction included the psychologically disturbed girl, traders in commerce, the judicial principals of the city and a public servant! That is quite a broad response. It was also deep. Freeing the psychologically disturbed is no small task even today and is quite expensive if professional services are engaged! Traders in this case were so angry they petitioned City Hall, bringing about a major public spat. The civil authorities are shown up for their political expediency which lacked a due respect for the accused. The jailor and his family are so touched that he is saved from his own fears and gives hospitality to his two prisoners. A remarkable result for the gospel and from it one can more easily see how Paul could develop his theology of the Powers (i.e. Colossians 2:15) from the sheer experience of a missionary episode such as this.

There is also the effect on the Powers themselves that must be considered. Wink[125] makes a powerful statement to those who would rage (however rightfully) about the suffering that so often arises from evil powers; *"This is the goal: not only to become free from the Powers,* ***but to free the Powers****. Jesus came not only to reconcile people to God, but to reconcile the Powers themselves to God (Col 1:20)."* This is an important point. The gospel at work in the marketplace proclaims the gracious invitation of a saving God to bring salvation to the broken lives of those who are in the thrall of the Powers. Some will reject the invitation and see it in opposition to their own power, thus unleashing another shaft of suffering upon the missionary. Others will welcome the invitation bringing healing and hope into their broken and fearful lives.

If this episode of Paul's is typical of New Testament missionary practice, then the Church needs in this post Christendom age to **own this theology afresh**. Berkhof, amongst many encourages Christians to do so, "*All resistance and every attack against the gods of this age will be unfruitful, unless the church herself is resistance and attack, unless she demonstrates in her life and fellowship how men can live freed from the Powers*."[126] This needs pressing even further in the face of the diminishing effect of the Church in Western society today. Paul's word in Eph 3:10 hands a "baton to the Church" as the only community which can declare God's wisdom to the Rulers and Authorities. No one else is capable of doing so. Only those freed from the tyranny of the Powers have the capacity. The Church cannot hide from this task and "*is under orders to make known to the Powers, as no other proclaimer can do, the fulfillment of the mysterious purposes of God (Eph 3:10) by means of that Man in whom their rebellion has been broken and the pretensions they have raised have been demolished.*"[127]

Suggested outcomes for missionary practice

There are ever increasing opportunities for Christian mission in a post Christendom era. Of particular importance in western culture is the rise of anti-social behavior. Liberal humanist values may seem appropriate for the general public but offer little personal ability to deal with human weaknesses. To quote a tired senior policeman in Perth recently as he reflected on his work, "*The system doesn't work*"! There are too many alcohol related incidents, a judiciary with too few tools to deliver justice and politicians whose only resource is to tighten society into even more behavioural laws.
The system certainly doesn't work and societies everywhere are looking for help. Christians have many opportunities to enter the dysfunctional areas of society offering the hope and healing of the gospel. One such opportunity being taken with school leavers, the health, the military, schools and Aged care sectors is chaplaincy. Unlike other social programs where Christians are contracted into service relationships with the community and thus reducing their overt Christian contribution; chaplains provide a more objective ministry. Their crisis/pastoral care service gives a valuable expression of the gospel in the public space. Chaplaincy of course is but one option of many. Churches alert to their communities will see other opportunities and if wise, will train, encourage and send out their members to meet these opportunities.

Reflections for Urban Mission Practice

From the one example given in this paper of the apostle's mission practice a number of reflections are apparent. If we are to take seriously the missionary task for our time in Australian cities, then the Church must pursue "apostolic" ministry as a priority. By "apostolic" we mean working outside of church facilities and working as missionaries amongst the Powers of Australian society. This is a very "Pauline" tradition and one that best serves the post modern society in which we find ourselves.

Closely linked to this priority of apostolic missionary practice in Aussie cities will be the relation of the missionaries to the Powers. Paul's ministry resulted in the gospel reaching a wide range of the Powers. This suggests a valuable clue to the missionary task today. Australian cities are relatively well organized politically and generally promote a democratic role of their citizens. Figure one gives a simple view of the many sectors that dominate to a greater of lesser degree in any city. What is significant for the missionary is how the larger issues of society such as law and order are of considerable interest across all these sectors. This results in the emerging of very specific groups which seek to integrate and manage such an issue. No one group can solve law and order issues. Police in the past have been given the role of maintaining law and order. They can no longer do so. It is increasingly obvious that more and more sectors are being drawn in to help.

Churches need to spend time in their communities to find such issues as the law and order issues. Generally in Australian cities, the starting point is with the community officers in local government. These people have a good view of the local problems and those groups that are cross sectional in developing healing strategies. Christians have the "social capital" so valuable to a society. Their ability to embrace a multicultural society is unique in society today. Ann Morisy, in her useful books on community ministry talks about social capital as "*essentially about trust and the ability and willingness to cross boundaries between strangers*"[128] Christians do this well and are so welcome into these cross sectional groups. It will not take long for obvious Christian ministries to emerge once the issues are understood by the churches. Churches need to realize that in every Aussie city will be found committees which serve cross sectional issues such as those mentioned (health or Law & Order). Churches will do well to find them. Experience shows that these committees generally warmly welcome Christians into their midst knowing they have the social capital to help. It is these cross sectional committees which show the key issues that Christians can address with appropriate mission.

The issue of the ambivalences of responses to the gospel must also be addressed within churches. The disarming of the Powers by Christ in Philippi is fascinating and instructive. The variety of responses was not without its suffering for the missionaries. This is such a big issue for Christians, who are human after all and prefer that churches don't get into ministries that might produce suffering for them. It seems to be a middle class values issue mostly. Christians will support and fervently pray for the overseas missionary who is in danger. The degree of danger often provoking a greater response from those at home in the churches! It is very much at the feet of the preachers and pastors to take up this issue with their churches. Bosch rightly talks about the link between mission and suffering as a normal Christian following the Christ of Calvary. "*In a variety of ways Luke portrays Jesus' journey from Galilee to Jerusalem (Luke 9:51-19:40) as a journey to his passion and death…What was true of the Master is also true of his disciples."*[129] Pastors need to preach mission and be an example of the missionary in their community. This will help church members build bridges into their communities with courage.

In Conclusion

Some chaplains, kitted up with their "bomber jackets" clearly marked in big reflective letters "Street Chaplain" were walking across a "T" junction late into the night on a Perth street. As they passed by they noticed a group of men fighting. Drawn to the problem the chaplains were seen by the men fighting and it ceased. The crowd opened up and let the chaplains into the scene. Warm and helpful mediation took place and the crowd dispersed amicably.

Across town one of the female chaplains was approached by a scantily clad girl softly crying. The ensuing conversation provided the chaplain the opportunity to be a mum to a lost girl and point her to freedom from the Powers of the night.

This paper suggests that the missionary stories of the New Testament are valuable templates for missionary practice in a post Christendom Australia. The broad range of Powers at work in our cities

can only be identified by Christians. A post modern society is best addressed by a Church committed to an apostolic ministry to these Powers.

"Australian Immigration, Cross-Cultural Body Language and their implications for Australian Theology and Mission: An Exploration."

By Rev Wendy Snook. May 2009.

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ABSTRACT

Australian patterns of immigration have changed dramatically since 1975. A rapidly increasing migrant and second generation population and increased diversity of immigration cultures, concentrated in Sydney and Melbourne, create significant challenges for the Australian community and church. The doctrine of the Incarnation of Jesus describes God as embodied in Jesus. In turn, this suggests that bodies and bodily communication matter to God today. If one accepts that up to 87% of human communication is through our body language, and that our body language, like gender, is culturally defined, then there are significant implications for theology and mission in multi-cultural Australia. It is suggested that cross-cultural body language miscommunications and lack of congruency with our verbal communications may explain the sometimes difficult connections between Anglo-based Australian churches and recent immigrants, and why there is a proliferation of small mono-ethnic cultural congregations. We have not yet sufficiently learnt the lesson of Pentecost in bodily ways, nor yet learnt to dance in communion with the perichoretic dance of the Trinity.

The Australian Immigration context.

How do we greet our neighbour? Do we shake hands, bow or kiss? Was there eye contact between us? How far apart are we, and why? These things happen between humans every day without us being aware of them. But what happens when they don't mean what we think they mean? How do these differences affect our mission and theology in 21st century Australia? These were some of the questions that led to this paper. Body language is better seen than described in words, so there are some illustrations. However should any illustrated gesture be thought offensive within the reader's culture, please accept my apologies.

Australia today is a culturally diverse nation with more than one in five people born overseas, almost 400 different languages spoken at home and more than 250 different ancestries.[130] Since the 1970's Australia has been a "multicultural" country. In 1980 Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser made a speech to the newly formed Institute of Multicultural Affairs, proclaiming: "Multiculturalism is about diversity, not division… interaction not isolation." Fraser claimed that multicultural acceptance was "set within a framework of shared fundamental values."[131] What was different was not, in fact, the presence of migrants in Australia, but the ethnicities of the migrants now welcomed by the Australian government.

Aboriginal peoples have lived in Australia for about fifty thousand years through dramatic variation in climate and sea level changes that dramatically affected coastlines. The societies which these people created were certainly not uniform or static in any way. There was, for example, much interaction in and across Torres Strait. Then from 1606 onwards, with the discovery of most of the Australian coast by the Dutch, and not forgetting the Spaniard Torres who only missed out on being the first 'discoverer' by a few months as he sailed through Torres Strait, the continent was open to contacts from many different peoples. During the seventeenth century, various groups of Dutch castaways disappeared in Western Australia; from the middle of the eighteenth century, along the north coast and on offshore islands, Muslim fishermen mainly from Makassar in present day Indonesia collected maritime products; in the course of the eighteen century also the Dutch, the Swedes, and the French, or rather some interests from these nations, expressed interest in settlements in this part of the world.

But none of this led to settlement. Even when a colony was established by the British in New South Wales in 1788, the convicts of the First Fleet, and later were by no means uniformly English. [132]

Colonial Britain exported its criminals, its political undesirables and its poor to Australia, with people coming from England, Scotland, Wales, Cornwall and Ireland. There were also immigrants, both legal and illegal, from New Zealand, the United States of America, and China during the gold rushes of 1850-60s in NSW and Victoria and 1880s in WA. However, both Victoria and New South Wales had restrictions on Chinese immigration in the mid to late 1800s.[133] Technically the "White Australia" policy, which stands for the historical policies that intentionally restricted non-white immigration to Australia, lasted from the enactment of the Commonwealth Immigration Restriction Act (1901) at Federation until 1975, when the Australian government passed the Racial Discrimination Act, making the use of racial criteria for any official purpose illegal.[134]
After World War 1 Australia was overwhelming British and Irish in population. Even post World War 2, immigrants from Britain and Europe were accepted into Australia preferentially over immigrants from other races. As one writer commented: "Australians, no matter what class, religion or party, were united in their racist and ethnocentric views of the world. Quite apart from the Aborigines- who were given short shrift- Australians, by and large, believed that non whites –be they black, yellow or brown- were culturally and intellectually inferior to whites."[135]

Consequently the abolition of the White Australia policy and the introduction of the Racial Discrimination Act were significant milestones in Australia's ethnic history. Immigrants were accepted from the Pacific and Asia, particularly from Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia. The proportion of migrants born in China, India and South Africa increased considerably between 1996 and 2006.[136] More recently, migrants from other African nations and the Middle East have joined the mix. Today, Australia has more than 21 million people, of whom 22% (4.4 million) were born overseas. A further 26% of people born in Australia had at least one parent who was born overseas, and 37% of the migrant population were from English-speaking, ethnically Anglo countries, (the United Kingdom, New Zealand, the Republic of Ireland, Canada, the United States of America and South Africa).

The majority of immigrants (63%) were born in culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) countries.[137] At 30 June 2002, those born in the United Kingdom were the largest group of overseas-born, followed by New Zealand, Italy, Viet Nam and China. They were mostly aged between 15 and 35 years, with the median around 25 years.[138] In 2008 China (3rd) and India (6th), were major contributors to Australia's net migration (13.0% and 9.8% respectively).[139] However, nearly two centuries of fear of Asian mass immigration, known as "the Yellow Peril" has not completely disappeared.[140] This was evident during the Howard era in the mandatory detention policy for boat people, and in 2008, with the choice of the Rudd government to slow African immigration because of Australian community unrest. Despite this, Australia's net overseas migration is at an all time high.[141]

Migrants are not uniformly distributed across Australia. By 2004, New South Wales received the largest share of net overseas migration (40%), which exceeded the share of population of Australia living there (34%). Queensland had the second largest share of net overseas migration (24%), followed by Victoria (18%), Western Australia (14%) and South Australia (3%). The Australian Capital Territory, the Northern Territory and Tasmania (less than 1% each) had the smallest shares. The contribution of net overseas migration to total population growth ranged from 85% in New South Wales to 15% in Tasmania. The majority of this migration is into the capital cities of Sydney and Melbourne, rather than smaller cities and regional areas.[142]

Often there are correlations made between nationality, ethnicity and religious affiliation. It is true that religions like Buddhism, Hinduism and Islam have grown in Australia due to overseas migration. **Figures 1 and 2.**[143] However, detailed studies made by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) show there are disparities between the percentages of various religions in the home country and the percentages of those religions amongst those who migrate to Australia. In Lebanon, 60% of residents cite Islam as their religion. The majority of Lebanese-born people in Australia report Christianity (53%), while 40% cited their religion as Islam. So there cannot be an automatic correlation drawn between a migrant's nationality or ethnicity and their religious affiliation. Other measures of ethnicity and cultural diversity such as Ancestry, Country of birth of parents, Language spoken at home, and Religion also need to be considered with care.[144]

In 2008 the Australian Bureau of Statistics reported:

> High levels of social participation and social connectedness are believed to contribute to the overall wellbeing of individuals and their communities. Opportunities for social participation and interaction may be found through participation in paid and unpaid work, friendships and participation in culture and leisure activities.... (Migrants) ...potentially face difficulties such as language barriers, cultural differences and discrimination, which could affect their ability to participate in some social activities..... People who were born in Australia or main English speaking countries generally had higher levels of social participation than did migrants from other countries.[145]

Summarising, Australia has experienced major demographic shifts due to immigration. This not only impacts Australian church life, it also indicates potential directions of God's mission in Australia. If "God so loved the world" (John 3:16), then so should Australian Christians when the world comes to Australia. But how do we do it? Examples could be by building mutual friendships, offering support in times of crisis, and building networks in the community, we can meet a clear need of the migrant community in Australia, particularly those from a non-English speaking background. Through these relationships we can share the gospel by being a loving witness to God's presence in Jesus Christ. Yet that means we need to communicate with one another, in all our diversity.

1. <u>Body language.</u>

Gestures and body language have been called "the silent language." It is studied under the discipline of Psychology, with sub-disciplines such as "kinesics", (the study of body motion), and "proxemics" (the study of the distances or space between people). It has been estimated that human beings can produce up to 700,000 different physical signs. The face alone can produce 250,000 expressions, and at least 5,000 distinct hand gestures have been attributed verbal equivalents. Another researcher has catalogued 1,000 postures and their accompanying gestures. Flora Davis argues that gestures are short-cuts, stronger than punctuation, underscoring type face or italics.[146]

Anthropologist Edward T Hall claims 60% of all our communication is non-verbal. Rev Dr Jana Childers claimed it was up to 87%.[147] Quoting Albert Moravian's work, she said that 55% of language meaning came from one's body and face, 38% from the tone of the words used, and only 7% from the words themselves. While we may prioritise the words in our listening, such percentages encourage us to keep our words and our body language congruent. Daniel Goleman said that 90% of our emotions are expressed non-verbally.[148] Whatever the exact percentage, clearly the majority of our communication is expressed through our bodies.

Some anthropologists divide our actions and gestures into three broad categories: instinctive, coded, and acquired. Instinctive gestures are those we do almost automatically, and are almost universally prevalent. For example, "the eyebrow flash", that is, we raise our eyebrows and wrinkle our foreheads when we greet someone. Often people cross their arms across their bodies when they feel defensive, although people also do this when they are cold! In Western society, head-oriented people use finger tip gestures frequently; gut-oriented people more often use their torso, and heart-oriented people use their palms and cheeks frequently when communicating.[149] Coded, ritual or technical gestures are those which are created by pre-established agreement. For example, there are set hand signals used by umpires, TV directors, sports coaches, defence force personnel on duty, and stockbrokers in the commodity markets. Sign languages for the deaf such as Auslan and American Sign Language are other examples. Much of what we do in our rituals of liturgy and dance could be classed as coded gestures.

Acquired gestures are those gestures which are socially generated and acquired, and are the subject of this paper. Many gestures have no known origins, (such as the OK hand sign), and no apparent reason (such as waving to say hello or good-bye.) Some only have loose connections with their meanings, and frequently are sexual in character. The only thing unifying these gestures is that they are widely used and understood amongst a certain group of people and perhaps only in a particular time and place.[150]

Much has been written about the differences between genders in our non-verbal communication in Western society. Gender is a social construct.[151] However, identical gestures from people of the same gender often mean different things among different societies. Each culture seems to adopt its own set of rules. For example, a stationary thumb upright means "Great!" in Australia, but in Nigeria it is an insult. A "V for Victory" sign with two fingers upright and with the palm outwards is acceptable in Australia. However as President George Bush found out when he visited Sydney in 1993, when the

sign is made with the palm inwards, it was front page news. In Australia, the "Reverse V" signifies "Up yours!"[152]

If there is no mutual understanding of body language rules amongst cultures, then the potential for friction is immense. While acknowledging that there are always sub-group and individual differences to the use of one's body and gestures in communication, there is sufficient group agreement inside cultures to justify the belief that there is value in becoming more sensitive, more aware, and more observant when it comes to effective, silent communication. Axtell said:

> What is the value of avoiding just one misunderstanding? As a wise counsellor once told me: "That's like trying to determine the value of a single light bulb. Unlit, the bulb has little value. Lit, the bulb can illuminate one room. And, one illuminated room occupied by one creative person can change the world."[153]

2. Theological Assumptions

The experience of embodiment is crucial for our anthropological and theological understanding of body language and is essential for our Christology. The doctrine of the Incarnation of Jesus describes God as embodied in Jesus, which implies that God used a human body to communicate with us. In turn, this suggests that bodies and bodily communication matter to God today. If one accepts that up to 87% of human communication is made through our body language, and that our body language, like gender, is culturally defined, then there are significant implications for theology and mission in multi-cultural Australia.

This paper explores "cross-cultural" rather than "multicultural" body language because the meaning of "multiculturalism" has changed enormously since its formal introduction to Australia. Originally it was understood by the mainstream population as a need for acceptance that many members of the Australian community originally came from different cultures. However, it came to mean the rights of migrants within mainstream Australia to express their cultural identity. It is now often used to refer to the fact that very many people in Australia have, and recognize, multiple cultural or ethnic backgrounds. However, there is tension even amongst Christians as to whether the intention of multiculturalism is to create a "cultural melting-pot" which is an assimilation model, or whether we are aiming to create a society of equal but different cultures.[154]

The problem is that the assimilation model of multiculturalism can be unjust, for example, by restricting minority groups' access to centres of power, but allowing diversity where it does not affect power structures, and in so doing, trivialising culture itself. By reducing multiculturalism to lifestyles such as food, dance and social occasions, it denies the public expression of those same cultures, such as how things are done in the law, in politics, and in the workplace. It can also support stereotypes about other ethnicities, and overlook the dominance of one group over all the others.[155] Holding implicit values of assimilation as one's definition of multiculturalism increases the private-public dichotomy of power structures in Australia. Thus one's definition of multiculturalism affects one's public theology. As Christians, we can only speak prophetically to our centres of power if we value our cultural diversity in all its forms.

When reflecting upon cross-cultural body language, one's own cultural and theological position are very relevant. One can only understand from within one's own cultural background, although cross-cultural experiences and the phenomenological method (where one temporarily places one's own culture and faith experience in abeyance in order to understand the experience of another from within) for religious and cultural exploration can assist.[156]

Theologically, I have been influenced by feminist theology. If one considers the nine hermeneutical methods described by Carol Noren, then method five, "preparing the way" is very relevant to the missional task. [157] By this Noren means the implicit assumption that the worshipping community's task is not simply to worship God, but to move towards God's new social order, to work for it, to announce it, and to train for it. Doing God's will means cooperating with the divine will as it is presently discerned, rather than conforming to past patterns. Noren sees this as an offshoot of early twentieth century liberalism. But it could be seen as choosing to participate in the *missio dei*, the Mission of God, as described by David Bosch.[158]

Christine Smith identified various hermeneutical tools as products of the influence of white western feminist theology upon the preaching of women generally. Smith named the use of women's experience, the importance of relationships, solidarity with other women and other oppressed and marginalised groups, the call to bring in God's Kingdom, and self-ratified authority as the most significant.[159] Having solidarity and relationships with oppressed and marginalised groups is not only what Jesus did; it is also the challenge for the Australian church as we experience high levels of immigration into Australia, and come to terms with our Anglo history of oppression of indigenous peoples.

3. Body language and cultural misunderstandings- Examples

When working cross-culturally, one cannot assume one understands another's gesture correctly. Yet in cross-cultural workshops in Australia led by myself with lay and ordained, male and female participants, this repeatedly happened. Often there was much hilarity and embarrassment when the misunderstandings were revealed. For example, Pease offers these common cross-cultural examples.[160] **Figure 3.**

Meanings according to different ethnicities include the following:

Gesture A. In Europe and North America it means OK. In the Mediterranean region, Russia, Brazil, and Turkey it is an orifice signal, a sexual insult, or indicates a gay man. In Tunisia, France, Belgium it means zero, or worthless, and in Japan and Korea it means money or coins. (That is, you could be asking for a bribe.)

Gesture G. In Western countries it means the number 5, in most places, it means "Stop!", and in Greece and Turkey it means "Go to hell!"

Gesture H. In Japan it means woman, in Bali it means bad, in South America it means thin, in the Mediterranean, it means a small penis, and in France it means "You can't fool me!"

Gesture L. In Europe, it means "one", in Australia, (with an upward jerk) it means "Sit on this!" and in numerous places it can mean a wish to hitchhike, or Good, OK. In Greece, (when thrust forward) it means "Up yours!" and in Japan, it means man or five.[161]

There are many examples of multiple meanings for the same gestures, or different gestures meaning the same thing. For example, in Indonesia, the "Come!" gesture has the palm turned downwards, not upwards as in Australia. "Sorry" is indicated in West Java with the "Punten" gesture, which has no equivalent gesture in Australia. The expectations about polite use of one's body and body space differ between cultures. For example, hand holding between adult people of the same sex to indicate friendship and respect is acceptable in public, but male-female hand holding is an intimate gesture, usually only done in private.[162] One never shakes hands with the left hand, as in Islamic countries the left hand is regarded as unclean, and only to be used for personal ablutions and toilet functions. Pointing one's toe at someone else while seated is rude, as is showing them the sole of your foot. Heads may never be touched.[163]

Even emotions are expressed in different ways bodily in different cultures. For example, it is impolite to show anger as a frown in Indonesia. Instead one tightens one's muscles on either side of one's eyes, drawing the skin tight, and at the same time maintains a tight small smile. Perhaps that facial difference explains the English myth of "Oriental inscrutability." After learning the Indonesian way to facially express anger and then using it as "second nature," I had to consciously relearn to express anger as a frown when back in Australia. When I used the Indonesian gesture in a similar context when I returned to Australia, it frightened my family, and it can still make Australians uneasy.

Eye contact or the lack thereof is a major stumbling block for cross-cultural communication. In Anglo society, to look someone in the eye when talking with them indicates interest, honesty and openness. However in many Aboriginal and other cultures, as a sign of respect, eye contact is not made when one person is of higher status than the other. is an equivalent of the English curtsy or bow gestures.[164] Recently on the Australian TV Channel 7 reality show "Border Security", Australian Customs staff were asked why they considered a certain person coming through Customs as suspicious, and searched him for drugs. The answer given was that the suspect avoided eye contact with the Customs staff. Yet it could have been a sign of respect for their authority. The lack of

training on cross-cultural communication can cause great misunderstanding.

The same happens in Australian churches regularly. Take the nodding gesture, for example. Does it mean "Yes, I will", or "Yes, I understand but I am still thinking about whether I will do it", or "I don't agree but I want to maintain the relationship"?[165] All of these are true for different cultures. So when someone nods after being asked to go on a church roster, and it is assumed that they meant "Yes I will", there can be friction later when Anglo expectations are not met. On the other hand, an Indian may indicate "Yes I will' with a sideways nod of the head, or Pacific Islanders may raise their eyebrows. In Bulgaria and Albania, the Anglo "Yes" head nod and "No" head shake gestures are completely reversed in meaning.[166]

Similarly, there are different greeting practices and also inter-personal distance differences between cultures. For example, as an Anglo woman who has been trained not to touch others without permission, it is quite confronting to be told by the local Cook Islanders that a proper greeting involves two kisses, one on each cheek, and not to do so makes them feel that they have not properly respected me in my role as a minister. A comfortable inter-personal distance is very important for a sense of connection between two people. Both Australian Anglo city people and people from high-density populated overseas countries are comfortable with closer distances between their bodies than Anglo country Australians. But unless it is an intimate friendship, overseas-born people usually prefer much closer inter-personal distances than Australian city dwellers. If immigrants try to maintain their preferred closer inter-personal distances in social settings with city and particularly with country Anglo Australians, it can be felt by the Anglos as encroaching upon their personal space and rejected, resulting in them moving further apart. Consequently the immigrant may feel rejected as the inter-personal distance increases between the parties. This is possibly part of the reason why recent immigrants prefer to live in the cities than in rural Australia.

Researchers have also discovered that in order to communicate more effectively, people often mimic the gestures, or mirror the posture of the person to whom they are talking. In Australian marketing training, salespeople are taught to mirror the body positions and gestures of their customers in order to make them feel more comfortable, and thus more likely to buy something. Frequently Western women unconsciously mirror their husbands, or the males they are interested in making their husbands, as part of the bonding process. Reflecting another's way of embodiment back to them is yet another way in which we communicate. But what happens if the gestures we mimic or reflect do not mean what we intend to say? We need to be careful to clarify matters verbally.

4. <u>How relevant are 21st century Australian Anglo majority assumptions about body language meanings to the interpretation and transmission of the 1st century gospel?</u>

If this lack of understanding of gestures across cultures is true today, then how much more so must that be true of cross-cultural body language understanding across millennia, in a different milieu? When one reads Scripture, one frequently reads of peoples' gestures and actions in the gospel narratives. We read frequently of Jesus touching others, and of his being touched. We even read of people begging to touch his clothes, and Scripture says those who touched him were healed (Mark 6: 56). Then there is the famous story of Jesus healing the deaf man by putting his fingers into the man's ears, and then spitting and touching the man's tongue, before praying "Ephphatha!" meaning, (we are told), "Be opened", and the man was healed (Mark 7:33-35). In Mark 8: 22-26 Jesus spits into a blind man's eyes and puts his hands on him. But where? At the second event, we are told Jesus placed his hands on the man's *eyes* again. So we know there were two eye touches. Yet in Mark 10:51-52, Jesus heals another blind man without any touching at all. Was this man from a different region with different customs about touching and spitting? Another interesting comment was during Jesus' debate with a disbelieving crowd in Luke 11:20. He said: "But if I drive out demons by the finger of God, then the kingdom of God has come to you." Jesus here uses the language of embodiment to describe God's liberating and saving action though him. But would we describe God's actions through us in that embodied way in our cultures today?

How may we "decode" the many gestures described in Scripture, if we are not told their meanings? And what they meant to whom? For example, in John 8:6 ff. when Jesus repeatedly drew on the ground with his finger when asked a tricky question by teachers of the Law and the Pharisees, how

would that gesture have been understood in his time and place, as distinct to what it would mean if we did the same thing today here in Australia? By that gesture, did he intend a reference to the finger of God at work through him to liberate and save, as he did in the Lukan passage? Or was it a rude gesture, indicating his anger at their disrespect? Or was it a breaking of eye contact for reasons of their supposedly 'superior' status? We do not know for sure, although some options seem more likely than others. So if we cannot fully understand the meaning of his gestures, how do we interpret and transmit the gospel to others in our day? It seems doubtful that we can mirror Jesus' embodied gestures today and expect the same results. We are faced with a translation issue for our bodies, as much as for our words.

5. Does the Scriptural witness give us some guidance for cross—cultural body language communication?

What we do know is that Jesus was a close observer of other human beings' behaviours. Take, for instance, the story of the offering of the widow's mite, told in Mark 12: 41-43 and Luke 21: 1-4. It says that Jesus watched the people as they put their offerings in the temple treasury, and then offered a comment about the widow's offering. Now today Ido not think that she would be well received if I sat and watched my parishioners put their offerings into the offerings plate. But the point here is that Jesus took the opportunity to observe his milieu and to reflect upon what he was seeing. It was only after he took the time to observe, reflect and learn that he understood and passed comment, connecting events with kingdom values.

Likewise, when Paul first arrived in Athens (in Acts 17:16ff), he took the time to travel round the city, to notice the abundance of idols, (including the idol to the unknown God), and to reflect upon what he had seen. It says that he was greatly distressed to see the frequency of the idols, and so he decided to do something about it. First, he preached to the Jews in the synagogue in Athens, using a familiar language in its familiar cultural setting. Then he used his knowledge of the new city and its Greek peoples' ways, including its idols, its philosophy, its literature and its local sayings, to present the gospel in ways that the local people would understand. This is a pattern from which we can learn. In order to communicate with others well, we need to observe, to ask questions and to reflect upon what we have learned, and to use it in order to communicate the good news with people different to ourselves. In this paper, it is argued that the same principles of verbal translation apply to learning the body languages of the other cultures with which we come in contact, even if there are many cultures around us in our Australian cities. It is also suggested that cross-cultural body language misunderstandings may explain some of the lack of strong connections between Anglo based Australian churches and the immigrants, and why there is a proliferation of small mono-ethnic cultural congregations. We have not yet learnt the lesson of Pentecost in bodily ways.

6. How can we best present the gospel in word and deed in 21st century multicultural Australia in the light of these cross-culturalbody language differences?

St Francis of Assisi is quoted as saying: "Preach the gospel every day; if necessary, use words."[167] Usually that saying is interpreted as promoting an activist service spirituality, preaching through one's kind deeds, rather than by words. But what if the meaning of the phrase was not simply about deliberate actions of service, but about one's body language and gestures? How does one best preach the gospel in body language? I would argue that one needs to study and use the body language of the other. Indeed, we may need to mirror that body language, when we are sure of the meaning of the gesture. Not only should we translate our words into the verbal language of the other; if possible, we must also make our body language (echoing or mirroring the other culture's body language) congruent with our verbal communication. Much has been written in Western literature about the necessity for congruity between body language and verbal language. It has been shown that people notice any incongruence between someone's verbal and non-verbal communication, even if they cannot verbalise what they have noticed. Sometimes they simply express a disquiet or an unease, but then they exercise a hermeneutic of suspicion, and do not trust what has been said verbally. [168]

If another person of another culture, whether Christian or not, has not understood what we have said, or has exercised a hermeneutic of suspicion about our intentions and the integrity of what we are saying, then we have failed to communicate well. When we fail to communicate well with our fellow

believers, then we reduce the efficacy of the unity and the power of the Body of Christ. When we fail to effectively communicate the gospel to an unbeliever, then we have not assisted the growth of the kingdom of God. Neither of these outcomes would be part of the Mission of God, the *Missio Dei*.

Above all, we need to incorporate this sensitivity to body language and congruency with our verbal language into our daily life and into our very way of being. Otherwise it could be seen as being manipulative and coercive. The US former White House staffer Chuck Colson once said: "So many Christians interpret Christ's words to witness rather than to be a witness. And they see it as an activity instead of what it really is; the state of our being- what you do emerges from who you are."[169]

7. Where is the gospel present, and where is it absent or being challenged by the expressions and assumptions made in our body languages?

It is interesting to reflect upon the image of the Triune God in Community as a revelation of the gospel being present in human body language. A favourite image is that of "perichoresis", the Trinitarian dance of the Persons of God, described by Jurgen Moltmann in his book, *The Trinity and the Kingdom of God*. In that book, Moltmann does not describe the dance of God in Community in detail, but one wonders, is it an instinctive dance? Maybe. Is it a ritualised or coded dance, with set movements in an ordered pattern? That is quite possible for a God who created order out of chaos according to Genesis 1. But it is inspiring to think that our God in Three persons enjoys dancing with loving, spontaneous, creative, adaptive and acquired body movements which celebrate the glory, hope and joy of the gospel, and which speak of a world of love, light, freedom, wholeness and restoration. Perhaps these Trinitarian body language movements can be movements in which God's people can participate. Even more, perhaps as people made in the image of God, restored and reconciled in shalom, we can even mirror our God's "body language dance of love" as we share the gospel with our diverse world.

On the other hand, when we make our own body language normative for all people of all cultures and for all time, denying the reality and truth of other cultures' body languages, or make no attempt to make our body language congruent with our verbal communication, then we stifle the dance of the Trinity in ourselves and in our world. We lessen ourselves as participants in the movement of God, limit the unity and power of the Body of Christ, and reduce the growth of the Kingdom of God.

In Leonard Sweet's book, *Post-Modern Pilgrims*, he writes of the post-modern Christian agenda of EPIC, where E is Experiential, P is Participatory, I is Image Driven and C is Community/ Connectedness.[170] He says for the church to be effective in the 21st century, it needs to be EPIC in its missional practice. Experiential, Participatory and Community/Connectedness are all elements of human communication through cross-cultural body language, whether used alone or when congruently combined with verbal communication. It is suggested that in missional and emergent churches, where an incarnational theology and a non-dualistic spirituality is preferred, one should take seriously the place of the congruent use of body language of the Other's culture when communicating the gospel, in order to serve the *missio dei.*[171]

There is much more to be explored about immigration and cross-cultural body language. For example, it has been argued by Deymaz (against the US Church Growth Movement) that the rise of multiculturalism brings to an end the belief that forming Homogenous Units are the best method for church growth.[172]

8. Conclusion.

Australian levels of immigration are at an all-time high. The rapid increase in the diversity of cultures present can create challenges in communication for the community and the church. With each cultural group using its own set of acquired gestures for its body language, for 21st century Australian Christian mission to be effective, it is imperative for Christians to be aware of cross-cultural body language even more than verbal language. In order to effectively communicate with non- Christians and with fellow Christians, to increase the unity and power of the Body of Christ, and to extend the Kingdom of God, Christians need to learn the other's body language and use it in a congruent fashion

with their words. Then we can be more fully participants in the body language of the Other, the "perichoretic" dance of our God in Three persons.

Reflections on the International Association of Mission Studies Conference,

Lake Balaton (Hungary), August 2008

Pastor Vince David lectures in New Testament and mission history at Pacific Adventist University, Boroko, Papua New Guinea. He attended the IAMS conference assisted by AAMS as a scholar from the Pacific region.

Firstly, I would like to thank the members of the Australian Association of Mission Studies (AAMS) for their financial assistance that enabled me to attend the International Association for Mission Studies (IAMS) Conference in Balatonfüred, Hungary, from 16 to 23 August 2008. I would also like to thank my colleague at Pacific Adventist University in PNG, Pastor Graeme Humble, who recommended my name to AAMS. I'm also deeply grateful to Dr Ross Langmead, who was tireless in organising my trip and showing hospitality to me in Hungary.

It would have been pretty obvious that I was the only delegate from the Island nations of the Pacific. There are many from this region who are interested in mission studies but without financial assistance such as AAMS provided, none of us would make it to an international conference.

I would like to give some personal reflections on the conference, not so much its specifics but more my overall impressions. I will begin by giving a succinct portrayal of my Christian pilgrimage and a brief background to my attending the Balaton Conference. This will be followed by my personal reflection and analysis of the conference. I will conclude with some biblical observations growing out of my reflection.

My pilgrimage

I grew up in 1960s and 70s in the Solomon Islands. My father was a nominal member of the Seventh-Day Adventist (SDA) Church, but like all children in my village I grew up in a thoroughly Methodist environment.

My Methodist village was and still is a very religious community. Corporate worship for the entire community occurred twice a day—morning and evening—as well as Sunday services. I can vividly recall attending Sunday School every Sunday afternoon. I was also a member of the Boys Brigade.

As I reflect on my early pilgrimage I have no regret for having been brought up in these two religious traditions—Methodism and Adventism. I have a much richer heritage as a result. In fact I owe a lot to my Methodist background. I recall listening as a boy to the dynamic preaching of my uncle, the late Reverend George Maelagi, a retired Methodist missionary to Bougainville. I would sit spellbound as he expounded the great themes of salvation. In the end my desire to be a preacher and a minister was largely due to this early influence.

Today I am a minister with the Seventh-day Adventist Church. But I continue to enjoy and nurture my relationship with my Methodist village, and am honoured to be invited to speak to the village whenever I go home. I truly am proud and enriched to have been brought up in these two religious traditions.

Education and ministry in the church

I did most of my primary education in my Methodist village. It was at an Adventist High School that I became familiar with the Adventist Church and its belief system. During this time I formally became a member through baptism.

In 1984 I came to Pacific Adventist College (now Pacific Adventist University) in Papua New Guinea, and did a two year diploma course in theology. At the end of 1985 I graduated and returned to the Solomon Islands and began working as an intern minister on my home island. After serving five years I returned to college to complete my first degree. I graduated with a BA in theology at the end of 1992, after which I served for two years as Director of a District. In the year 1995 I began teaching the Bible at our Senior High School in the capital city of Honiara.

Since then I have been in the teaching ministry. I taught Bible at Aore Adventist Academy in the beautiful country of Vanuatu for three years and later moved on to Fulton College in Fiji and lectured in the Department of Theology for a number of years. Since 2006 I have been lecturing in the School of Theology at Pacific Adventist University, Papua New Guinea. My teaching ministry has taken my family to several neighbouring countries in the Pacific including Vanuatu, Fiji, and now Papua New Guinea. It has been a wonderful cross-cultural experience indeed. In the meantime I have completed my MA at Pacific Adventist University.

My service in the Seventh-Day Adventist church for the last twenty-three years has been divided between pastoral ministry and the teaching ministry. Reflecting back I can see the importance of my parish experience in teaching young people to be ministers in local churches, and thus I greatly value those earlier years.

Background to attending the Balaton Conference

At the end of the year 2000, after having served for three years in Vanuatu, I received a call to return to the Solomon Islands to be the founding director of a new theological school established by the regional Union of the SDA Church. We arrived back home hoping that 2001 would see us directing the new theological school but due to lack of infrastructure the whole process was delayed. So I took on pastoral responsibilities for the next two years and at the end of 2002 I received a call to move on to Fulton College in Fiji.

This call initially surprised us. I felt unprepared for this. But God knew best. He leads and guides our lives every step of the way, always preparing us for something greater and for a much higher calling. While I thought I wasn't ready God knew I was. Who would have known and thought that my high school teaching experience would be a preparation for something even more challenging? As a result my family and I spent the next three years at Fulton College where I had a most enriching and enjoyable experience teaching students from diverse cultural backgrounds from the Island nations of the Pacific.

While we were at Fulton I was constantly conscious of the fact that education is not limited to pursuing a course of study in a college, university or seminary. There are other means of continuing education, one of which is attending professional seminars and conferences. However, during my three years at that college I did not have that privilege.

In 2006 I transferred to Pacific Adventist University in Papua New Guinea. During my first two years my Dean encouraged each faculty member to attend conferences as a means of professional growth and development. I realised that for a conference to be useful it needed to be in the area of my teaching and research.

I have always had a great interest in Pacific history, particularly the history of mission. I teach a subject on this topic, critically looking at various approaches taken by the early mission societies in their attempt to take the gospel to our people and learning lessons for contemporary mission endeavours.

This has led to a parallel interest in anthropology for mission and ministry, an interest I developed during my masters study.

I was very much aware of my limitations in this field. I have resolved, however, to explore this area for the rest of my life. Whether I remain in the academic field or contribute as a reflective practitioner, I will always develop my views on mission through anthropological lenses.

All this prepared me to grasp with enthusiasm the opportunity that came in 2008 to attend the Balaton conference. Once again I would like to thank all those who contributed in one way or another to make it possible for me to attend the conference.

Reflection and analysis

Enhancing my view of mission

The Balaton Conference, first of all, helped to broaden my perspective on mission.

To a large extent we are all a product of our heritage. We are accustomed to "thinking" and "doing mission" the way we have inherited them from our predecessors. This can be detrimental to ministry particularly here in the Island nations of the Pacific, where we have inherited a lot from our pioneer missionaries. We urgently need indigenous "emerging mission practitioners" who are not merely products of the past but who are critically observant mission workers who engage in mission from within their culture.

Seventh-day Adventists see mission rather distinctively. We see ourselves as a continuation of God's Remnant people, charged in these last days with the special mission of proclaiming the return of Jesus according to the message of the three angels of Revelation 14.

Having said this, our claim to remnant status is not exclusive and does not guarantee salvation for our members. For we believe salvation to be an individual issue between a believer and God. Our consciousness of being part of God's continuing Remnant church offers the privilege and the responsibility of sharing the "everlasting gospel" to the world before Jesus returns as described in Revelation 12 to 14.

Neither do we claim to be the only ones preaching and sharing the gospel to the world. Christians from all religious persuasions are involved in the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ in the world.

The Balaton conference has ignited the desire in me to revisit and evaluate my church's practice of mission from a broader, ecumenical perspective—not repudiating it but strengthening it through balancing it.

Directly serving the needy

The Balaton conference has also inspired me to take a more active role in community services to the poor, the needy, the disenfranchised and the marginalised in society.

Through the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) my church does cater as an organisation for humanitarian needs. But more such initiatives need to be taken at the local parish level and by individual members of my church.

I grew up thinking that our only work here on earth is the preaching of the gospel because Jesus is coming. It has been ninety-five years since the arrival of the first Adventist Missionaries in the Solomon Islands in 1914, and Jesus has still not come. My faith in His coming has not diminished, but I am very much aware of the fact that we've gone through changing times, times far different from the days of our pioneers.

Adventists have generally refrained from social involvement, giving the telling of the gospel priority over the doing of the gospel. But both are needed. I can sense some changes in the right direction, where we are beginning to show much more concern for the all-round wellbeing of the people around us. My church is more and more learning to translate our belief and faith into practice.

Many of these social questions are urgent. The epidemic of HIV/AIDS in Papua New Guinea is an example. The government is doing what it can to fight against the epidemic by way of awareness and education. What is the Christian response to this epidemic? I have been deeply impressed by the practical Christianity shown by Anglicare in Port Moresby in its program for AIDS victims. What could Adventists do?

The challenge I see is to balance my proclamation of the gospel with translating that gospel into real life. It means going the extra mile to get my hands dirty in the streets and valleys alongside those in need, whether physically, emotionally or spiritually. My church needs to become much more visible and proactive in community concerns. This is not another mission, but part of the mission of

the church here and now, making the grace of the kingdom of God a present reality while waiting for the arrival of that eschatological kingdom.

The underlying challenge is that when I as an Adventist accept Jesus as my Lord and Saviour, I take on myself the name of Christ. I become a “Christian”. This should govern my behaviour and attitude in the way I live and relate with people in general regardless of colour, gender, race and religion.

Being contextual in mission and ministry

One thing I was very conscious of both in the plenary sessions and workshops during the conference was that all the presenters spoke from their own cultural contexts. This greatly encouraged me to be contextual in ministry. Contextualisation is still a great challenge in the Pacific, and even more so in my religious tradition.

I always treasure my visit to my Methodist village at year end. For a number of years now my Methodist village has celebrated the Christmas and New Year festive season for a period covering two weeks. What I enjoy most is to worship with them and sing hymns in my own language. The Methodist church has translated hymns into our mother tongue. Some of the hymns I sing in English in the Adventist church I sing at home in my local language. It is much more meaningful.

I wonder how older Pacific Island Adventists without much exposure to education understand English hymns. While the Methodist church has done a good job in translating hymns, the Adventist church trails behind in the Solomon Islands.

Prompted and motivated by their love and salvation for those in the South Seas, the London Missionary Society sent its first group of missionaries in 1796 to Tahiti. Their ship, the *Duff*, arrived in Tahiti on Sunday 5 March 1797. Immediately a worship service was convened for the group of Tahitians who boarded the *Duff.* It is a tragedy and perhaps one of pioneer missionary James Cover’s great mistakes that he preached his first sermon in the English language. None of the Tahitians understood him. Could it be that we in the Islands of the Pacific are still making the same mistake that Cover did?

Conclusion

The Balaton conference in Hungary will remain with me for the rest of my life and ministry. It prodded me to be more relevant in mission and ministry. Not only did it help me evaluate my church’s practice of mission but it was also a privilege to meet, learn from and network with mission scholars and practitioners from around the world.

My learnings at the conference remind me of Jesus’ teaching in Matthew 24 and 25. Chapter 24 contains guidance in regard to the return of Jesus and the end of the world. But what follows in the next chapter is guidance on how a Christian should live, work and serve in view of His coming.

The three stories in chapter 25—the parable of the ten virgins, the parable of the talents and the scenario of the sheep and the goats—become meaningful when interpreted in the light of chapter 24. The first focuses on the importance of preparation while waiting, the second on using our talents while waiting, and the third on who the righteous are and will be during the time of judgment when Jesus comes.

The Balaton conference reminded me of the connection between being ready for Christ and serving Him through service to humanity, the central point of the story of the sheep and the goats. In the final analysis, the righteous who are going to make up God’s eternal kingdom are defined here as those who respond to need, not so much because they are members of a particular denomination but more because they are first and foremost Christians who have experienced the love of Jesus in their lives.

A reflection on the life of Seton Arndell.

By Cyril Hally.

It is with gratitude that I report briefly on the life of Seton Arndell who died on 13th February. During the entire existence of the South Pacific Association of Mission Studies (SPAMS) and its Journal, Seton was its Secretary.

In 1973 St Columbans College, the Columban Seminary, admitted others to participate in its missiology program. In 1980, Don Wodarz, who had a doctorate in missiology (a class mate of Larry Nemer), started a discussion group for lecturers in missiology from different denominational formation centres. Some of the early members were Seton, Jim Kime, Bernard Thorogood and Eric Sharpe of Sydney University. In 1989 this group set up SPAMS with Seton as secretary .

Seton was born 5th October 1936 at Richmond NSW of Barbara (nee Wyndham) and Donald Macquarie Arndell. His parents farmed at Cattai on grazing land in the Hawkesbury district. He was very proud of his heritage, being the great- great- great- great grandson of Dr. Thomas Arndell, assistant surgeon on the First Fleet and the great, great, grandson of George Wyndham, an early colonist who set up the Wyndham estate in the Hunter Valley.

Seton attended Cattai Primary School, St John's Grammar School (Vaucluse), Richmond High School, Sydney University and Baptist Theological College (Eastwood). His academic qualifications were BA (Syd), B.Th (MCD), Dip. RE (MCD) and MA Theol. (ACT).

In 1962 Seton married Barbara McPhee. They felt called to serve God in Papua New Guinea. They applied for and were accepted by the Australian Baptist Missionary Society (ABMS). At the end of the formation period Seton was ordained in 1966.

The couple, with two small children, left in 1967 for Papua New Guinea, destined for the Western Highlands in the Baiyer Valley among the Enga people. After studying the Kyaka language at Lumusa they went to live at Pinyapaisa, a two hour trek from Lumusa. Seton taught in the local school for three years (1967 – 1969).

Following furlough Seton taught for a term at Christian Leaders Training College (CLTC), Banz, PNG before becoming Principal of the Baptist Bible College at Kwinka (1970 – 1975), until requiring surgery in Australia as a result of a motor bike accident. A third daughter had been born.

On his recovery in Australia Seton spent four years in a pastorate at Greenacre Baptist Church. Having myself been involved in the formation of missionaries, I appreciate that Seton was able to spend periods of pasturing in his own culture both before and after his overseas missionary experience. So he was well prepared for his next role as NSW State Secretary with ABMS (1980-1997). As well as regular visits to missions overseas, his role involved the sending out of missionaries, welcoming those returning and accompanying those on furlough.

He retired in 1999 to the farm at Cattai.

In addition to this constant pastoral involvement Seton was an exemplary citizen. He was a Rotarian and Rotary President. He was also a family person in the widest sense of that term. Seton reprinted his father's book *Pioneers of Portland Head*. He was a member of the Hawkesbury Historical Society. He formed the Arndell Family Association, the members of which met regularly. At the local church level he wrote the history of the Gosford Baptist Church for its 75th anniversary in 2007. Following cardiac surgery he and Barbara moved to Avoca Beach on the Central Coast in 2003. There he was working on a history of the Baptist mission in PNG but had to retire in 2008.

While he was secretary of SPAMS he was also a member of the ABMS Board and Central Committee (1980 – 1997), a member of the Australian Council of Churches Commission on Mission (1980 – 1997), a member of the Evangelical Alliance Mission Commission (1976 – 1997 and Chairman during the 1980's), a member of the Baptist Historical Society of NSW, Missionary in Residence at the Global InterAction Global Discipleship Training course (GIAGDT) course, Townsville (2005) and a

visiting lecturer at Morling College (1976 – 2002). Despite ill health he participated in the first conference of the Australian Association for Mission Studies (AAMS) in Canberra October 2008.

Hence as Secretary of SPAMS he brought an exceptional background of mission experience, missiology, mission leadership and management and a variety of contacts. While he did not write many articles for the Journal, he volunteered often for book reviews and was active in obtaining indigenous input from PNG. His strengths were in history, primal religions and ecumenism. I found him most generous and supportive to work with. We became close friends. He was the recipient of the constant support of his wife Barbara, as I have been in writing this article.

Farewell to the complete missionary.

Gregory P Leffel, ***Faith Seeking Action: Mission, Social Movements and the Church in Motion*.** Revitalization: Explorations in World Christian Movements Intercultural Studies, No.1 (Lanham: Scarecrow Press, 2007)

Reviewed by Darren Cronshaw

It is not just Christians who bear the image of God and a passion for making the world more just and equitable. The passion and energy in some social movements for mercy and justice is admirable. As Christians seek to discern where God is moving in the world and how to join God's mission and focus the church in mission, it is appropriate to learn from contemporary social movements and how they are forming and flourishing, or not. This a task Gregory Leffel sets himself. Leffel is co-founder of Communality, a missional community in Lexington, Kentucky, and president of One Horizon Foundation. Leffel did his PhD at Asbury Theological Seminary, on which *Faith Seeking Action* is based. Leffel's research helps answer how Christians discern ways to apply their influence and make contributions to movements that help make their communities more in line with the Kingdom of God?

Leffel's contribution to missiology and to movement theory is to link the two fields in this unique work. Leffel explores the mission of the church drawing on recent work on *Missio Dei*, contextualization and mission to the Western world. Leffel brings this into dialogue with analysis of social movements and revitalization theory. The result is a conceptual framework that integrates faith and action. He introduces 'missio-ecclesiology' as a new way of addressing the church's engagement with society, as a movement embodying the good news of God's work in the world. Social movement theory explains how movements unite people to create or resist change. New social movements have been emerging since the activism of the 1960s, convinced that people can transform social life for the common good. This is a motivation communities of Christians and social activists share in common, and so it is appropriate to learn from one another and collaborate.

Leffel offers three case studies of movements to exemplify and develop his theory. The first movement is the international antiglobalization movement that has been mobilising since the mid-1990s against the globalization of corporate power and resulting widening poverty and decline in labor standards, marked especially by its activism against the World Trade Organization. The second movement is the American Sanctuary movements of churches courageously providing refuge for Central American refugees in the 1980s. The third movement is the more local and grassroots Xenos Christian Fellowship house church movement. It is characterised by its countercultural rejection of conservative institutional Christianity and particular approaches to collective living and leadership development.

The experience of these movements are fascinating in themselves, but Leffel uses them to go beyond theoretical understandings of movements and develop an 'action framework' to guide social activists in what to *do* to form a movement – in rhetoric and calling people to action, in strategy and organising action, and in culture and developing community and solidarity for action. Social movements pressure those holding power to change how they exercise it and provoke a crisis of decision among elites and the public. They do this through mass insurrection, resistance, or grassroots organising. Leffel describes these different approaches for what is involved in understanding, forming and fuelling movements.

Faith Seeking Action is a book which leaves me wanting two further things. Firstly, I am curious to read more on how social movements sometimes fail and disintegrate. Leffel is not starry-eyed about the movements he studies, but I would be interested if he could also describe movements in decline and how that can be avoided where appropriate. Secondly, I am curious about how Leffel's frameworks could be applied to social movements in Australia. His stories are American though relevant in their application to Australia. What I would like to see, furthermore, is someone to apply Leffel's frameworks to the analysis of historical and contemporary social movements in Australia. This is not a weakness in Leffels' work, set as it is in North America, but a point of departure for further research. Further research in Australia would be a further test of his frameworks and a useful application to 'missio-ecclesiology' in this land.

Leffel boldly suggests churches can learn from social movements such as environmental, anti-globalization and identity movements, and that churches can even collaborate and contribute to the quest for justice in many of these movements. The research and practical frameworks of *Faith Seeking Action* are a valuable contribution and a gift to mission studies.

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Stephen R. Holmes, ed.

Public Theology in Cultural Engagement

(Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2008)

Reviewed by Darren Cronshaw

Stephen Holmes edited this volume of papers arising from symposia hosted by the Bible Society. The Bible Society assumes that the Bible is a public text and are campaigning to restore its place in public discourse. They recognise that Christianity has a valid voice in conversation with philosophy and science, anthropology and sociology, politics and cultural studies, and that theology must have confidence in its own voice and contribution: 'theological analysis of cultural realities is possible, worthwhile and interesting' (p.x). It is imperative to engage other disciplines, but also to boldly and unembarrassingly contribute a distinctively theological contribution to pressing public issues.

The first set of five papers are theological explorations towards a general theology of culture.

In the first paper, Stephen Holmes explores how theology engages with culture. He suggests that the church's engagement with cultural analysis in the 21st century is as important as the early church's engagement with philosophy, or as critical as the post-enlightenment church's largely unmet need to engage the sciences. Holmes paints a vision of co-creating with God, thinking God's thoughts with him, assuming that God's creative work is neither finished nor limited to the church.

The next three papers are rather dense theological topics – good for biblical scholars, or public theologians wanting to deepen their biblical bases. Colin Greene explores recent study of the life and identity of Jesus and Trinitarian theology and implications for redemption and culture. Robert Jenson discusses election and the culture (and cultural diversity) of church. Stephen Holmes describes the place of the Law and Pentecost's place in infiltrating every culture with the gospel.

The fifth, and in my opinion best, article of the first section is Colin Gunton's discussion of Reformation accounts of the Church's response to culture. Gunton defines culture in a way which is implicit in *imago Dei*: 'culture … is that set of activities in which those made in the image of God share in the divine perfecting of that which was made in the beginning' (p80). He reminds Christians of their identity as sub-agents and sub-creators with God. He urges us to seek to perfect the world, but not independently of God. Contrary to Christendom dualistic assumptions, he celebrates how the material world will be perfected as material. Culture is not always good, but is not necessarily bad.

After working towards a theology of culture in the first section, the second and more practical section explores particular cultural realities. Luke Bretherton, in particular, models a thoughtful and wide-ranging approach to public theology. In Bretherton's first contribution, he theologically analyses patterns of drug use. He asserts that drug-taking, whether ampliative or therapeutic, is a sympton of our technological society and is used as a means to manipulate our bodies. Even prescription drugs have become, in some instances, a major threat to health, as when people pop a pill for a headache to mask symptoms which suggest the person really needs a rest. Drugs are the ultimate consumer product that instantly produce an experience without training, time or travel. It is helpful to understand what health, spiritual or life-escaping motives people have for drug-taking.

Bretherton also contributes a chapter on nationalism and cosmopolitanism in theological perspective, a key issue for the world today which theology must address. He develops an understanding of nation as a Scriptural category and God-ordained system (rather than an aberration of the fall). Abraham was called to reform Creation by forming Israel as a paradigm of a nation under God, setting an example and modelling nationhood. The sinful tendency of people and nations is to develop an empire approach to nationhood: "a totalising regime opposed to God and characterised by injustice" (183). The trillion dollar alternative question is how to value nation as a system that can order our love for our neighbours, near and far.

Colin Greene investigates the end of religion in Western society. He acknowledges how religion is relegated to the private sphere and that religious pluralism is not just something we experience but an ideology our society cherishes. Greene suggests this shift towards marginalisation of religion derives not from post-Enlightenment science or epistemology, nor secularisation, but from the ideological critique of religion, stemming from Marx, Freud and Nietzsche, that has questioned its validity in the modern world.

Finally, Brian Horne explores the legacy of Romanticism and how art and religion are different spheres but address the same issues in their reaching for transcendence.

In public theology it is imperative to have a biblical-theological basis as well as willingness to grapple with topical societal issues. It is also imperative to move beyond analysis of the issues to engagement and transformation. As Holmes says, this is an appropriate missiological outcome. *Public Theology in Cultural Engagement* demonstrates the courage to make judgments and to call for public life to be different.

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Review of *A different perspective*, edited by Stuart M Brooking

Ross Langmead

Stuart M Brooking, ed. *A different perspective: Asian and African leaders' views on mission* (Sydney: OCA Books, 2006). 187 pp.

In my mission classes we discuss how the centre of gravity of global Christianity is now in the developing world. Yet I am acutely aware that most of the written sources I use are Western, partly because appropriate non-Western books and articles are harder to find.

This collection of essays will help. Of the six chapters (apart from a concluding chapter) five are written by Asian or African leaders. The topics discussed are (1) what it is like to be a minority Christian, (2) spreading the gospel through lives of love in a situation of persecution, (3) dealing with corruption amongst Christians, (4) the complexity of relating to the politics and religion of India due to historical factors, (5) the pervasiveness of HIV/AIDS as a context for ministry in Africa, and (6) the good and bad a foreign missionary brings.

The editor, Stuart Brooking, is Executive Director of Overseas Council Australia, which supports evangelical theological colleges in the developing world. He provides introductions to each chapter and a concluding reflection on how global partnerships might look in two hundred years.

The outstanding essay for me, in terms of clarity and impact, was the first, 'Fate or call?', by Ashkenaz Asif Khan of Pakistan. He defines many different kinds of minorities and powerfully sketches how hard it is to be hemmed in on every side, both as a person and as a believer wanting to practise faith and share it with others.

The essay that speaks most directly to Western readers is David Williams' chapter on the pros and cons of sending foreign missionaries. At the time of writing, Williams was Principal of Carlile College in Nairobi, Kenya (but has since been replaced by a Kenyan). Among many gems of wisdom he advises foreign missionaries to contribute to leadership development rather than to evangelism and church planting. He challenges us to do a degree in the country we want to serve in, rather than doing all our study outside the context. He is particularly tough on the practice of training Two-Thirds World leaders in Western colleges, arguing that fewer than half return home, and that it is 'a systematic pillaging of a church which is desperate for leaders and least able to afford losing them' (p. 165).

Like most edited collections, there are one or two essays which seem less-focussed than the others, but this is a very useful addition to the literature providing a developing-world perspective on mission.

This book is modest in size and written in accessible language. It comes with study questions for each of the chapters, making it suitable for a study group. Its primary audiences are probably mission students in Africa or Asia and Western missionaries in that context.

Although there is little that would mark the book as distinctively Australian, it is pleasing that an Australian mission agency has published a missiological text. Its objective, to get Western Christians thinking about how a different context leads to a different perspective on mission, is an important one and is well met.

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Refuge on the Roper: The Origins of Roper River Mission, Ngukurr, by Murray Seiffert. Brunswick East, VIC: Acorn Press Ltd., 2008. $20.00

In the opening line of the Introduction the author states: “This book is about the beginnings of the Roper River Mission, established in 1908.” But the book actually is about so much more. It is not the traditional approach to a history of a mission station, mentioning names and dates (although all the important names and dates are given!) and leaving it at that. It also provides a rich background to the origins of the mission, an insight into the lived experience of those at the mission, aborigines and non-aborigines alike, and a frequent commentary on the facts that needed to be mentioned.

This particular reviewer appreciated several things about this book. First of all, the author does not just mention that the Church Missionary Association (CMA) in Victoria began this mission. He also gives a helpful background into the history and the coming of the Church Missionary Society (CMS) to Australia and its relationship to the CMA. He provides the motives why an organization in Victoria would undertake a mission in the far north and why it would continue to support it.

Secondly the author shows a deep sympathy with and understanding of the aborigines who came to the mission from other parts of Australia to work with the CMA in Ngukurr. He describes well the challenges they faced not only of learning a new language but also of adapting to a new culture. There are stories not only of Christianization but also of personal joys and tragedies. These are facts that are not often incorporated in mission history.

Thirdly, the author also makes the reader aware of the challenges that any aborigines who came to live on the mission faced. They would often come and go. This information he gathered through interviews with the people, some of whom are still alive and could remember the coming of the missionaries and some of whom are children of the people who first came to the mission and who heard their stories. They did not always understand what the missionaries were trying to do. They held on to their own culture even as they tried to adapt to the “mission ways”. These are described with both insight and empathy. They are also put into the context of the larger question of mission strategy of both “civilizing and Christianizing” people.

Fourthly, the author gives the painful context of this mission – the attitudes that many people had toward the aborigines at this time. Many people thought that as a race the aborigines were dying out, and that this process should be hastened. He reports the brutal facts of the killings that took place. For this reason the mission indeed became a refuge. There was so much indiscriminate killing of “blacks” that often they were safe only on the mission. He also describes the changes that the cattle industry brought to the lands of the aborigines – disastrous changes for the life of the aborigines. Yet, there were always some Church people who were willing to speak out for the aborigines and work for and with them.

Finally he ends the book with a word of hope – that a new mission is taking place and is being carried out by the aborigines themselves. There are touching human stories in this final chapter.

The book has maps, appendices, photographic material, a rich bibliography, and an index. It is only 179 pages long, but it is very rich in content. It will be appreciated and enjoyed both by professional historians and by anyone interested in the early Christian missions among the aborigines. I highly recommend it.

Larry Nemer – 28/10/08

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[136] ABS **Australian Social Trends 2007**, Migration: Permanent additions to Australia's population: Social participation of Migrants pp 24-9.
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[137] The preliminary estimated resident population (ERP) of Australia at 31 March 2008 was 21,283,000 persons. This was an increase of 336,800 persons (1.6%) since 31 March 2007 and 102,000 persons since 31 December 2007. Preliminary net overseas migration for the year ended 31 March 2008 was 199,100 persons. Australia's population grew by 1.6% during the 12 months ended 31 March 2008. Natural increase and net overseas migration contributed 41% and 59% respectively to this total population growth. All states and territories experienced positive population growth over the 12 months ended 31 March 2008. Western Australia recorded the largest percentage gain (2.6%) and Tasmania the smallest (0.9%). The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) 3101.0 **- Australian Demographic Statistics, Mar 2008,** http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/3101.0?OpenDocument Accessed 30 September 2008.

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[143]Apart from Judaism, the majority of people who reported non-Christian religions were born overseas: including 82% (121,300) of those recording Hinduism, 69% (288,100) recording Buddhism and 58% (198,400) recording Islam.

ABS 3416.0 - **Perspectives on Migrants**, 2007 BIRTHPLACE AND RELIGION

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