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# AUSTRALIAN JOURNAL OF LITURGY 12/3 (2011)

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AUSTRALIAN ACADEMY OF LITURGY

# AUSTRALIAN JOURNAL OF LITURGY

*Volume 12 Number 3 2011*

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AJL is the journal of the Australian Academy of Liturgy and exists to further the study of liturgy at a scholarly level, and to comment on and provide information concerning liturgical matters with special reference to Australia. AJL is published twice a year.

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The cover picture is of the Kialla West Methodist (now Uniting) Church on the Goulburn Valley Highway south of Shepparton, Victoria. Founded 125 years ago in a flourishing farming community, it now has a monthly service for eight to ten persons, mostly elderly. It is one example of the liturgical needs of a small congregation.

## EDITORIAL

The Journal following a conference as fruitful as the one we enjoyed in Melbourne this summer has a plethora of good things to publish! I note the *Studia Liturgica* (40/1-2, 2010) is out in a bumper edition of 250 pages with papers from the Congress in Sydney last year, but I am going to divide our treasure store into two. For other good things, wait for October – and my apologies to any authors eager to see themselves in print. Even so, I thought it right to welcome a writer from the Churches of Christ tradition in an interesting study based around two chalices; that tradition is unusual among Protestant churches in celebrating the Lord’s Supper every Lord’s Day. I also thought it important to mark the celebrations in Rome for the canonisation of St Mary MacKillop last year, even if the central rites are remarkably spare. But the rest belongs to the Academy and its biennial conference.

The fact that we have a mixture of academic papers properly so-described and a range of reports and reflections which do not need to meet the same criteria of peer review – and which contributions I want to encourage – I have decided to mark formally peer-reviewed articles with an asterisk (\*), so that our hard-won status for academic purposes is maintained. This does not mean that authors and readers have not benefitted from advice from our editorial panel.

I want personally to thank David Pitman as President and Elizabeth Harrington as Secretary, and some generous Brisbane volunteers, for their considerable help in publishing and distributing the Journal over several years. The Executive has moved to the West, and the production of AJL to Melbourne. I am very grateful to Monica Barlow (and her sisters) and Julie Moran for the photographs we have used this time. It is a pleasure to welcome on board Paul Taylor as our business manager and our new publishers, Catholic Communications Melbourne.

Robert Gribben

**Contents**

\*Remember Me: a liturgical, theological and social history surrounding two nineteenth-century chalices from Churches of Christ in Australia  
 Kerrie Handasyde..... 116

THE AUSTRALIAN ACADEMY OF LITURGY: ANNUAL CONFERENCE

*A Word from the President:*  
 Angela McCarthy..... 127

*Keynote addresses*

\*Ecclesiological Reflections on Small Congregations  
 Gerard Kelly..... 129

Rural worship, by Ross Neville  
 A report by Ray Hartley..... 140

*Members' papers*

\*Worship, formation and small seminary communities  
 Stephen Burns..... 142

Reflections on the Canonisation of Saint Mary MacKillop in Rome  
 Carmel Pilcher rsj..... 149

The Pilgrimage in Rome  
 Monica Barlow rsj..... 154

*Conference reports*

Three Liturgies, Four Venues and Five Experiences  
 Stephen Millington..... 160

*News from the Chapters*..... 164

*Book reviews*

Gail, Ramshaw, *Christian Worship: 100 000 Sundays of Symbols and Rituals*  
 (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2009).  
 Anita Munro..... 166

Janet Wootton, *This is our Song: Women's Hymn-Writing*  
 (Peterborough: Epworth Press, 2010).  
 Ursula O'Rourke..... 167

Kimberly Bracken Long, *The Worshiping Body: The Art of Leading Worship*  
 (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2009).  
 Stephen Burns..... 168

*Other liturgical news:*

Press release: New Association of Pastoral Musicians  
 Paul Mason..... 170

Our Contributors..... 171

\*The asterisk indicates a peer-reviewed article (see Editorial).

**Remember Me: a liturgical, theological and social history surrounding two nineteenth-century chalices from Churches of Christ in Australia.**

**Kerry Handasyde**

In the late nineteenth century Hawthorn Church of Christ had a pair of matching chalices for use in their weekly Lord's Supper. They do not appear to be the work of an artist silversmith, but were most likely mass-produced in electro-plated nickel silver and factory-engraved to be purchased by any church on a budget. Unremarkable in aesthetic and manufacture, these artefacts may be read for theological, social and institutional history as they intersect with the liturgy of the worshipping community. Central to the congregations' weekly sacrament, they cannot be overlooked in the development of the church's identity as a denomination, inscribing as they do, the congregation's name on the side. When brought into conversation with the sacramental theology of a religious movement which was intentionally unbound by tradition and welcoming of newcomers from other churches, the engraving on the reverse, 'Remember Me', must be read not merely as a paraphrase of Christ's command to "do this in remembrance of me" but as a statement of a theological position standing against the winds of change. Amidst theological debate, the words spoken as the chalices were held aloft and then distributed among the faithful are lost to time because Churches of Christ were a lay movement without a formalised liturgy – but there are hymn books full of theological statement which, in turn, reveal significant discontinuities with the denomination's 'orthodoxy'. The chalices once held 'wine' – non-alcoholic only – and so the moral content of the cups and the implications for sacramental understandings are explored. Despite a theology which is suspicious of ritual and liturgy and has traditionally clung to Restoration and reason, in Churches of Christ the liturgy of the Lord's Supper has been a conduit for theological and social change as this study of the material objects associated with that ritual will demonstrate.

Within the Hawthorn Church of Christ the chalices would have been placed on the communion table along with a ewer and a white cloth. The communion table would have been, in denominational tradition, in the centre of the raised platform at the front of the chapel. The Lord's Supper was celebrated at the mid-point of *every* worship service. As material objects their presence would have been central in time and place, and touched by every adult believer. Just in terms of shine and decorativeness, the chalices would have stood out amid the bare aesthetic of the Church of Christ. As a matching pair, they are indicative of some financial resources and the eldership's expectation of numerical growth. Indeed, they are not the modest communion cups of a 'small inward-looking'<sup>1</sup> sect but of a church growing in confidence and aware of its position in the colony's religious landscape. Measuring eighteen centimetres high and eight centimetres in diameter, the chalices are covered in engraving, the most striking of which being the words on the sides of each of the cups.

<sup>1</sup> Graeme Chapman, *One Lord, One Faith, One Baptism* (Melbourne: Vital, 1979), 10.



*Pair of chalices from the Australian Churches of Christ Historical Society Archive. The left one is turned to show the engraving 'Remember Me'. The right shows 'Church of Christ Hawthorn'. (Source: Photo by the author.)*

### ***The cups' church identity***

On one side of the cups they are engraved, 'Church of Christ Hawthorn'. Such self-conscious denominational branding seems a world away from the modest tent gatherings for the 'breaking of bread' which characterised the religious movement a few decades earlier when it arrived with the Victorian gold rush. The engraving of 'Church of Christ Hawthorn', beyond mere insurance against theft, suggests a congregation certain of its identity and place within the movement. Unlike many Churches of Christ in Australia in the 1800s, the congregation at Hawthorn did not originate outside the movement. It was not originally a Baptist church as the congregation at Newstead in the state of Victoria had been before the arrival of travelling evangelist Stephen Cheek who persuaded the entire congregation to switch denominations, nor a German Baptist Church as the congregation at Zillmere in Queensland had been before the same evangelist visited.<sup>2</sup> Nor was it a church such as Wedderburn which had come across the denominational journal, *British Millennial Harbinger*, and, being so persuaded by its Restorationist argument, established themselves as a Church of Christ. Nor was it a former independent Christian Church as was Kersbrook in South Australia.<sup>3</sup> All these

<sup>2</sup> A. B. Maston, ed., *Jubilee Pictorial History of Churches of Christ in Australasia* (Melbourne: Austral Printing and Publishing Company, 1903), 270 and 122.

<sup>3</sup> Lori McDonald, 'Formation of the Kersbrook Church of Christ,' *Australian Churches of Christ Historical Society's Historical Digest* Vol. 144 (August 2004): 1-4.

churches, and many like them, had lingering attachments to other religious causes. But the church at Hawthorn could have no doubt about its identity and purpose. It was composed of “a few brethren and sisters living in Hawthorn, Kew, and surrounding districts, feeling the inconvenience of going into Melbourne on the Lord’s Day for worship, [who] met and resolved to assemble together in Hawthorn”.<sup>4</sup> They were denominationally aligned before their establishment as the Hawthorn Church of Christ.

However, while the group of worshippers dated their origins from 1873, meeting weekly for Lord’s Supper, they officially constituted themselves as a church ten years later and didn’t have the use of a chapel until 1886 (which is most likely when they invested in matching chalices). This lack of institution does not indicate a corresponding lack of identity or clarity of purpose, for they knew very well for what they stood. It is instead characteristic of a lay movement centred around the restoration of simple church practices observed in the New Testament.



Officers of Hawthorn Church.

Top Row—R. H. BARDWELL, W. E. SMITH, JNO. COLLINGS, J. MCCOUGHTRY, R. C. EDWARDS, JOS. COLLINGS (*Deacons*).  
 Bottom Row—J. EDWARDS, W. FINGER (*Elders*), MRS. J. MCCOUGHTRY, MRS. NORFOLK, MRS. STAGGARD (*Deaconesses*),  
 W. H. BARDWELL (*Elder*), D. FIELDING (*Deacon*).

*By 1903, when this photograph was taken, the church had an average attendance of 110 at worship on Sunday mornings and 210 for the evening ‘Gospel Service’ at which an evangelist was employed to preach. Elders had spiritual oversight while deacons and deaconesses took care of all other matters of church governance.*

(Source: A. B. Maston, ed., *Jubilee Pictorial History of Churches of Christ in Australasia* (Melbourne: Austral Printing and Publishing Company, 1903), 281.)

<sup>4</sup> Maston, 281.

### ***Restoration and the Lord's Supper***

Restoring New Testament ways was the life work of Alexander Campbell (b. 1788, N. Ireland - d. 1866, U.S.A.), one of the founders of Churches of Christ (along with his father, former Presbyterian minister, Thomas Campbell (1763-1854)). He believed unity was essential for the integrity of the then highly fractured church and for its mission to the world. Campbell held that discarding human religious innovations in favour of restored New Testament principles was the only way of achieving the necessary common ground. Placing a common-sense reading of the New Testament as authoritative beyond tradition and charisma, he argued that the bible was the text with which all Christians began, regardless of what path institutions had taken since. His writings, published in both Britain and North America in the early 1800s and distributed in colonial Australia, were the unifying link which saw Churches of Christ establish and form into a movement, albeit with disparate strands. Though not immune to disagreement from his independent-minded fellow churchmen, his was an articulate and powerful central voice with which to argue or agree. A brief examination of his writings on the practice of the Lord's Supper, which is so central to the denomination, provides some insight into Churches of Christ's Restorationist liturgy.

As a Restorationist, Campbell turned to Scripture for his model in re-imagining Lord's Supper practice and, in line with his preference for 'Bible words' rather than those of the church or 'theology', he argued (against his own occasional practice) that the ordinance not be called Lord's Supper at all. The term was imprecise, he claimed. He referred to 1 Corinthians 11:20 which distinguishes between supper and the breaking of bread and drinking of wine. More scriptural to call the ordinance 'Breaking the Loaf', argued Campbell:

As the calling of Bible things by Bible names is an important item in the present reformation, we may here take the occasion to remark, that both 'the Sacrament' and 'the Eucharist' are of human origin. It is also called the communion or '*the communion of the saints*;' but this might indicate that it is exclusively the communion of saints; and, therefore, it is more consistent to denominate it literally 'the breaking of the loaf.'<sup>5</sup>

The distinction which Campbell made illustrates his general approach to Restorationism: plain-speaking, reasonable, inclusive in spirit. Indeed, spirit is central to the proper practice of the rite:

But much depends upon the *manner* of celebrating the supper. The simplicity of the Christian institution runs through every part of it. The well bred Christian is like the well bred gentleman – his manners are graceful, easy, artless, and simple ... in all the ceremonies of the table.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Alexander Campbell, *The Christian System, in Reference to the Union of Christians and a Restoration of Primitive Christianity as Pleaded in the Current Reformation*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (Pittsburgh, Pa: Forrester and Campbell, 1839), 319-320.

<sup>6</sup> Campbell, 340.

For Restorationists, simplicity, solemnity and the spirit in which the ordinance was observed was more important than ‘man-made’ liturgical texts: indeed initially there were none. Campbell went on to conclude his writing on ‘Breaking the Loaf’ by giving a detailed description, but not a prescription, for a worship service. In brief, after songs and bible readings, the lay brother presiding stood at the table and reminded the faithful of the practice of the Apostles in breaking bread. He broke the single loaf and it was distributed. Then, giving thanks for the cup he passed it around, followed by a collection and prayers for the poor. More songs and extemporised prayers were interspersed with bible readings and the mutual exhortations of the faithful, followed by a benediction. All this was undertaken with ‘no formality, no pageantry’.<sup>7</sup> Although, in the twentieth century, hygienic individual cups replaced the single chalice and the sermons of ordained ministers replaced mutual exhortation (and, in some cases, simultaneously added a degree more spectacle), the pattern of worship remains and the Lord’s Supper retains its centrality in Churches of Christ today.

After terminology and spirit, there were other more contentious issues to be considered around Eucharistic practice: frequency, access and theology. Campbell answered all three issues in a single sentence:

All Christians are members of the house or family of God, are called and constituted a holy and a royal priesthood, and may, therefore bless God for the Lord’s Table, its loaf, and cup - approach it without fear and partake of it with joy as often as they please, in remembrance of the death of their Lord and Saviour.<sup>8</sup>

Frequency, access and theology have their own histories in Churches of Christ. Only frequency has remained constant, the Lord’s Supper still being celebrated at each service (though individuals most often partake at only one service each week). Access varied over the years, beginning in Australia with restriction to only those baptised believers in good standing (in the estimation of the lay eldership) but developing under the spirit of unity and twentieth-century ecumenism to include *all Christians*.<sup>9</sup> Theology, like access, broadened and diversified as we shall see in the following discussion.

### ***The cups’ use in maintaining theological purity***

On the other side of each of Hawthorn’s cups it says ‘Remember Me’ in capital letters. The words are simple and bold. They serve as a reminder to the theologically adventurous or the newly converted (whose numbers had begun to grow in the last two decades of the nineteenth century) of the church’s much argued scriptural position on Lord’s Supper. The presence of ‘Remember Me’ on the cup from which the members drank signified a church sure of its sacramental position, and willing to defend it. Partaking from these vessels was, beyond faithful observance of the ordinance, an act of doctrinal

<sup>7</sup> Campbell, 342.

<sup>8</sup> Campbell, 317.

<sup>9</sup> Campbell did not think ‘private consideration’ made a Christian, but believer baptism. He did however set the example of partaking alongside all who came, and this graciousness grew throughout the movement in time to include, literally, ‘all Christians’.

agreement and a pledge of allegiance to the cause of Eucharistic ‘remembrance only’ theology. The material object here intersects and engages with the theological debate of its era.

The clarifying power of words has been central to the practice of Lord’s Supper. While Protestant churches since the Reformation have emphasised the spoken, written and printed word above the “visual ritual”<sup>10</sup> of the Mass, Churches of Christ brought the clarifying power of words into the mystery of the sacrament and cleansed it of ‘superstition’. With the elements rendered mere ‘emblems’ or reminders, the power of the Lord’s Supper lay in the weekly recitation of the words of institution. Campbell was adamant that the practice was an act of remembrance only. In this, he is in line with Zwingli who argued against the real (bodily) presence of Christ in the bread and the wine (although Campbell was perhaps more directly influenced by exposure to the Scottish School of Common Sense and its philosophy of rationalist ‘common sense realism’). The strict memorialism of early Churches of Christ sacramental theology effectively stripped the ritual bare, leaving only scripture verse, memory and food.

However, Churches of Christ theology around Eucharist, despite its literal, rational and Restorationist intentions, was in practice sometimes nebulous. While Campbell’s preference for remembrance only was pervasive and was the majority understanding in the nineteenth-century, it was not exclusively practiced. Especially as lay people presided at the Lord’s Table, a variety of theologies were (and are still) heard in the churches. There were also other writers and thinkers in the denomination in the United States who argued at length with Campbell about the nature of the Lord’s Supper. Robert Milligan (1814-1875) and his contemporary Robert Richardson (who had been an Anglican) maintained there was a mystical dimension in communion. Influenced by the Anglicanism of the time, they tended strongly toward the notion of Lord’s Supper as ‘spiritual nourishment’.<sup>11</sup>

In Britain in the twentieth-century there was a decided shift toward Eucharistic presence (along with a change in vocabulary: ‘sacrament’ rather than ‘ordinance’) led by William Robinson (1888-1963). He argued that the Lord’s Supper was not merely commemorative or an aid to memory but a time of spiritual engagement with God. He insisted, in the Restorationist model, that there was no magic involved, stating that Christ was not literally present in the material of the bread and the wine. However, he claimed that Christ became mystically real in the *act* of partaking.<sup>12</sup> His ideas, he believed, were not a departure from Restoration ideals but a natural development of existing thoughts within the movement (though the study of hymns to follow suggests that his ideas were lyrically pre-empted).

<sup>10</sup> R. Kevin Seasoltz, *A Sense of the Sacred: Theological Foundations of Christian Architecture and Art*, (New York: Continuum, 2005), 204.

<sup>11</sup> Paul M. Blowers and Byron C. Lambert, “The Lord’s Supper”, in Douglas A. Foster, Paul M. Blowers, Anthony L. Dunnivant and D. Newell Williams, eds., *The Encyclopedia of the Stone-Campbell Movement* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2004), 493.

<sup>12</sup> Blowers and Lambert, 494.

Australian theology developed under the influence of nineteenth century American and British leaders, finding its own path in the twentieth century. In 1980 Australian Churches of Christ theologian E. Lyall Williams (1906-1994) wrote:

While we speak of the bread and wine as symbols we regard them as more than symbols. In theological parlance the Supper, like baptism, is a means of grace. That is, God's blessing is mediated to us through our worship in the partaking of the bread and the wine. Through the Supper we are built into Christ.<sup>13</sup>

Of course, like Campbell more than a century before, his articulate and educated opinion was not defining for the average member. As Blowers and Lambert state,

One of the difficulties of describing observances of The Lord's Supper ... is that [the denomination's] growth into millions of congregants, combined with a persistent individualism and spirit of independence, have generated a variety of communal practices among them.<sup>14</sup>

It has often been said that there are almost as many opinions as communicants. While memorialism has endured as a sacramental theology, the denomination's determined lack of ecclesial and doctrinal controls, its preference for primitivism over systematic theology and its deliberately naïve approach to worship have allowed room for many other ideas to be absorbed into the liturgy.

***The cups' musical accompaniment: theology in song and among the people***

Hawthorn Church of Christ's position on Lord's Supper was confidently engraved on the cups. But what was the accompanying liturgy chosen and sung by the congregation over the years? Records do not exist to show us what hymns were sung each week as the faithful gathered but, considering the congregation's denominational orthodoxy, it is likely they were chosen from Churches of Christ sources. Those sources covered a wide range of sacramental positions, not all of them consonant with the bare memorialism of Alexander Campbell – and the 'Remember Me' cups.

Even while Churches of Christ in Australia eschewed the supposed pretensions of liturgy and theology in favour of plain biblical speaking, the hymnal had enormous effect as people drank in theology through song. Indeed, such was the value of the *Hymn Book* among congregations, some churches presented it to new members when they were baptised by immersion as believers - in place of the more traditional gift of a New Testament.<sup>15</sup> Hymnals thus exist as evidence of non-prescribed liturgy demonstrating religious understanding even as the official denominational position was articulated differently. The lyrics reveal theology as it was heard in the pews. The music aided theological 'absorption' (as it was hummed during the week while people went about their working lives), and expressed the tradition's largely working-class musical aesthetic.

<sup>13</sup> Edwin Lyall Williams, *Churches of Christ: An Interpretation* (Melbourne: Vital, 1980), 72.

<sup>14</sup> Blowers and Lambert, 491.

A range of hymnals were produced for Churches of Christ in Australia, derived from British and American Churches of Christ sources as well as other denominations. The books have in common a larger than usual proportion of Lord's Supper hymns, reflecting the centrality of the ritual.<sup>16</sup> They also repeat a great number of hymns between editions pointing to a slow rate of change and generational sharing in the sentiments expressed. In 1887 *Psalms and Hymns* was published in Melbourne, Victoria, the hymns largely sourced from the American branch of the denomination's *Christian Hymn Book* (1864) and the British Churches of Christ hymnal. Alongside Churches of Christ's own compositions, they include hymns by Watts, Wesley, Newton, Bonar and Doddridge. But no music was provided. In its place was direction to a range of tunes in other hymnals, with instruction to repeat, alter or omit lines to make the words fit - pity the organist.<sup>17</sup> In 1931 another hymnal was produced, and again in 1957 and 1974.

Not until 1976, just three years before Hawthorn Church of Christ closed for lack of members as people moved out of Melbourne's inner suburbs, were tunes fixed firmly to hymns with publication of a 'music edition' of the hymn book. Hawthorn thus existed in a period in which music was always interchangeable and subject to the preferences of individuals – their theological and *musical* preferences. With laymen planning and leading worship services, their musical tastes inevitably influenced which words were sung. The practice of substituting tunes in three successive hymnbooks speaks of the tradition's disregard for the formalities of liturgy and, though it seems a contradiction, congregations' and lay leaders' willingness to engage creatively with that liturgy.

### *Liturgy of contested lyrics*

Words were tacitly considered more contentious than music, and more powerful too as the lack of controls around tunes attests. It comes as no surprise then that, despite a generally low level of education among members and some undistinguished musical preferences, lyrics were examined and contested.

Theological variation in song, as it applies to Lord's Supper, is evident from early times. Prolific British hymn writer, Gilbert Y. Tickle died in 1888, just as he co-produced a hymnal for use in British Churches of Christ. Tickle (1818-1888) was a powerful individual in a church which, without institutional hierarchy, could be swayed by personality. He had been the head of the movement in Britain, taking up the year-long position as President of the Conference of Churches of Christ in Britain numerous times in the years between 1859 and 1880. Just two verses from Tickle's "Another week with all its cares hath flown" illustrate a variety of theological positions:

<sup>15</sup> Judith Raftery, 'Singing en route to Beulah Land,' *Australian Churches of Christ Historical Society's Historical Digest* 156 (May 2008): 2-5.

<sup>16</sup> For example, Australian Churches of Christ's 1957 hymnal dedicated one in fifteen hymns to communion. In their 1974 hymnal it was one in fourteen. The 1933 (1946 reprint) *English Hymnal* for use in the Anglican Church had only one in eighteen hymns, and the popular *Sacred Songs and Solos* 1200 edition by Ira Sankey had only one in one hundred and thirty-three.

<sup>17</sup> Frank J. Funston, 'Notes on our Hymnals', *The Digest of the Australian Churches of Christ Historical Society* Vol. 19 (May 1967): 4. Funston notes that some churches did not own organs or were doctrinally opposed to instrumental music in the nineteenth century under the influence of the American a *capella* movement within Churches of Christ.

Jesus, our great High Priest, our Sacrifice! / Our Passover! rich Gift of love divine! / With Thee we would into the Holiest rise, / Communing with Thee in the bread and the wine.

O what a feast ineffable is this! / Thy table spread with more than angel's food! / Angels, the highest, never taste the bliss - / The dear communion of Thy flesh and blood.<sup>18</sup>

Tickle's lyrics consistently speak of spiritual nourishment, atonement, the bread and wine as a pledge for divine promises and Lord's Supper as communion with God.<sup>19</sup> The introduction of a developed form of this last idea into British Churches of Christ is usually attributed to William Robinson; though he was born the year the hymnal was published and perhaps raised singing it. Such hymns as Tickle's were sung by generations of Australians.

Although there is a range of theological viewpoints found in the church's hymns, resulting in some apparent inconsistency,<sup>20</sup> there is evidence of thoughtful negotiation. In the 1957 *Churches of Christ Hymn Book* there are lyrics by writers of various religious backgrounds and a range of theological understanding. William Robinson's preference for spiritual nourishment via the bread and the wine features in a third of the Lord's Supper hymns. However, Campbell's interpretation of strict commemoration dominates: twenty-six of the fifty-two hymns sing of remembrance. It is carefully balanced: that exactly half the hymns in 1957 mention the theme of commemoration is unlikely to be a coincidence. When the 1974 edition was published a third of hymns were removed or replaced yet the proportion of commemoration lyrics remained the same. The need to balance the hymn selection so precisely speaks of ongoing tension over interpretation.

Despite evidence of careful negotiation over sacramental theology in the Australian Churches of Christ's hymn books, musical practice has often pre-empted or made diffuse the denomination's doctrinal articulation. This has gone largely unnoticed by the denomination's historians who, reflecting their tradition's suspicion of liturgy, bypassed the hymnal and looked only to preachers for evidence of theological development. But the liturgy, negotiated among the laity and spoken and sung by the people each week, is surely at least as reliable a guide to the denomination's theology in practice as the heated argument of individual preachers' polemic, preferred by the denomination's historians (all of whom have been preachers themselves). In the light of the people's liturgy, the cups' engraving must be read not as a sure statement of denominational orthodoxy and particularity but as a contested position originating with the denomination's foundation but under threat of erosion ever since.

<sup>18</sup> Gilbert Y. Tickle, 'Another week with all its cares hath flown' in (Australian) *Churches of Christ Hymn Book*, ed. Robert Lyall, et al. (Melbourne: Austral Printing and Publishing Company, 1957), hymn no. 231.

<sup>19</sup> For examples see hymn numbers 231, 258, 283, and 286 in *Churches of Christ Hymn Book*, 1957.

<sup>20</sup> Judith Raftery describes this inconsistency as, 'a telling expression of the intentionally undeveloped nature of the movement's theology and doctrine and its consequent ability to absorb a variety of influences'. J. Raftery, 'Jesus in Twentieth Century Evangelical Hymnody' (unpublished thesis, Flinders University, 2007).

### *The cups' moral content*

Along with the words, 'Church of Christ Hawthorn' and 'Remember Me', Hawthorn's communion chalices are engraved extensively with vine leaves, symbolic of the cups' traditional contents. Yet the cups at Hawthorn would never have contained real wine. Just as Churches of Christ's theology of Eucharist held (at least in part) to 'remembrance', so the vine leaves engraved on the cups remained a mere 'remembrance' of wine. Anti-liquor campaigning grew up alongside Churches of Christ, rising in the early 1800s to political prominence in the last few decades of that century. In many Churches of Christ, the work of Temperance fitted neatly alongside the work of saving souls and eventually led to involvement in much greater social service. It did however raise an apparent contradiction between the movement's insistence on biblical literalism around Lord's Supper and their moral insistence on the non-use of wine. A solution was found at first in unfermented grape juice. Restorationism's literalism in using wine disappeared under the moral weight of wowsersism amid much convoluted biblical interpretation and corrupted hermeneutic all of which attempted to give scriptural sanction to the non-scriptural use of non-alcoholic 'wine'.<sup>21</sup> Meanwhile, the acceptable range of substitute substances grew. In the late nineteenth-century Churches of Christ's denominational printing press actually ran a small side-business distributing unfermented grape juice (along with rubberised 'Baptismal Trousers', thus representing the two sacraments observed by the church). By the late twentieth-century blackcurrant cordial was sometimes used: it tasted pleasant, was the right sort of colour and had a long shelf life. Many congregations have made do with less convincing non-alcoholic substitutes.<sup>22</sup>

To eliminate any confusion, however improbable given Australian Churches of Christ's public stance against alcohol, the word 'wine' was rarely used in the liturgy. Separating the vocabulary of Temperance and sacrament neatly avoided confusing the sacramental representation of Christ's blood with morally corrupt alcohol. When speaking of Lord's Supper, 'wine' was frequently replaced metonymically with 'the cup',<sup>23</sup> though the sacramental bread was never called 'the plate'. Following New Testament tradition, the vessel stood in linguistic place of its contents, which were once innocent (indeed the innocence of the blood sacrifice is integral to the narrative of atonement) but had become, in the light of Temperance, potentially contentious. Necessarily some of the narrative power of the now questionably innocent wine/blood was sacrificed to the cause of anti-alcohol campaigning. An undeveloped liturgy could be adaptable – even while Restorationist interpretation resisted and moral concerns remained firm.

<sup>21</sup> Daniel Sack, *Whitebread Protestants: Food and Religion in American Culture* (New York: Palgrave, 2001), 16-19.

<sup>22</sup> The substitution of the material substance of the elements seemed to raise few theological problems for Churches of Christ. Indeed Alexander Campbell did not write on the matter. However Temperance did not herald the beginning of substitutions: see Paul Gibson, 'Eucharistic Food – May We Substitute?' *Worship*, Vol. 76:5 (Sept 2002). As well as discussing the history of substitution and its theological considerations, Gibson takes time in his article to criticise the Australian practice of using blackcurrant Ribena.

<sup>23</sup> For example, *Australian Christian Pioneer* (June 1, 1879): 253. 'The cup' is also used in numerous Churches of Christ publications produced to guide laymen in presiding over the Lord's Table in the early and mid-twentieth century.

***Remember Me***

Hawthorn's pair of chalices was used in one time and place yet their story intertwines with the liturgical, social and theological history of Churches of Christ in Australia, depending so much, as that story does, on the weekly practice of Lord's Supper. With the congregation's name on the side, the cups articulate the certain identity of a confident and growing church, for which Lord's Supper was central and defining. As mass-produced artefacts, engraved and adapted for Churches of Christ, they are symbolic of the tension between the move toward the Protestant mainstream and the maintenance of denominational distinctiveness. Likewise, their non-alcoholic contents represent the disjuncture between Restorationist reading and the shared Protestant concern of Temperance which also led the way out of sectarianism and into social co-operation. The cups step unexpectedly into theological debate with their bold 'Remember Me' assertion even, as comparison with the music of the time reveals, the position's certainty began to fade in the glow of new ideas and old hymns. The Lord's Supper, though initially stripped of mysticism and complexity, has incorporated multiple interpretations which rest uneasily with the persistent primitivist simplicity of 'Remember Me'. Through all this, the deliberately undeveloped liturgy has quietly permitted, ahead of sanctioned theology, a permeability around the denomination's sacramental understanding. In this context, 'Remember Me' needs to be read not only as denominational doctrine but as a tempering of the theologically porous liturgy, written into the ritual's material objects. The story of two unremarkable nineteenth century chalices intersects with Churches of Christ's development as a denomination and its central liturgy which, while retaining much of its nineteenth century simplicity, has been a creative conduit for change all around.

## THE 2011 ACADEMY CONFERENCE, MELBOURNE

From the President, Dr Angela McCarthy



The Academy Conference in January 2011 at Trinity College Melbourne could only be deemed an excellent one! It was a large gathering and we were delighted that our Brisbane Chapter, despite floods and other weather events, were mostly able to be present.

The theme of ‘Worship in Small Congregations’ was ably explored from many directions showing the diversity of approaches in Australia to what is a widespread concern. The first keynote address was from Rev Dr Gerard Kelly from the Catholic Institute in Sydney and he carefully explored the issues through a theological and ecclesiological framework. The depth of his explorations infused the gathering with a perspective that immediately lifted the conference into top gear.

On Tuesday night we were further gifted with an exploration of the priesthood of the people of God by Rev Dr David Orr OSB who has been a long time member of the AAL as well as being on the executive for a number of years. His development of the issues involved with the priesthood of all through Baptism provided worthwhile discussion material.

Pastor Ross Neville, a Rural Consultant for Evangelism and Mission with the NSW Uniting Church Board of Mission, gave a very enlightening and challenging talk on rural worship in NSW in the UCA. From an extraordinarily wide background of differing careers and a wide experience within Christian churches, he provided a very warm understanding of the resources offered to small communities through DVD recordings and other valuable materials that enable wide-flung communities to celebrate their faith.

The liturgies for the conference were very capably provided through the Melbourne Chapter, particularly through the giftedness of Nathan Nettleton. Using different chapels within the Colleges over the days of the conference was a rich experience. It was interesting to also explore the use of using technology to bring two worshipping communities together. While such technologies might be too expensive for small communities at present, it is still important to keep developing such ideas.

The conference dinner, held on site, was excellent with fine food, fine wine, fine conversation and the music of *Lady Grey*! A wonderful night!

The AGM resulted in the Western Australia Chapter taking on the executive role. I have taken on the position of President, while my husband John has become the secretary and John Dunn the treasurer. As we go to print with this journal we are still finding our roles but we hope to follow the Queensland Chapter's expertise and fulfil the roles well.

The next conference will be held in Tasmania and will occur around the time of the 50th anniversary of the opening of the Second Vatican Council and the 30th anniversary of the first AAL conference. The ecumenical journey over the past 50 years has been very rich and productive so it will be worthwhile exploring the developments. We look forward to a fruitful time in Tasmania. And in the meantime, we look forward to much rewarding discussion within our Chapter groups.

## Ecclesiological Reflections on Small Congregations

Gerard Kelly



In the midst of the rapidly changing environment in which we live today, people also face change in the way they perceive the church and experience it, be it through worship, fellowship, social engagement or ministry and leadership. A shorthand way to describe this is to say that for the majority of churches the experience is one of growing smaller. Because this phenomenon is now so widespread and has been evolving for some decades the time is ripe to reflect theologically on what it may mean. However, the focus of this paper is not on the size of parishes or congregations, but on the change that is occurring within them. If the congregation was originally very large and is now halved in size, even though it may still be larger than many other congregations ever were, its prevailing experience is one of diminishment.

The paper will be in three parts. I shall begin with a brief description of the phenomenon of small congregations. The major section of the paper will set out a larger theological and ecclesiological context. Finally, I will propose my own list of significant theological elements of this new situation and reflect on them.

### *The Phenomenon of Small Congregations*

The first and most obvious characteristic of small congregations is that they are a sign of decline and thus a constant reminder to their members of the diminishing presence of the church. The church no longer has the privileged voice it once had in our society, and its capacity to make a social and political impact is much diminished. There was a telling indicator of this at the Triennial Forum of the National Council of Churches in Australia in July 2010. An invitation to address the Forum had been sent to the Governor General, the Prime Minister, and the Leader of the Opposition, all of whom declined. The one politician who did accept the invitation to address the church delegates withdrew at the eleventh hour. Both the President and the General Secretary of the NCCA, in their respective addresses, noted this lack of interest by our national political leaders in what should be regarded as the peak Christian body in the country.<sup>1</sup> Conversation in the corridors was quick to pick up the fact that political leaders seemed very willing to take up invitations to attend gatherings of Pentecostal Christians. This would seem to suggest that size and influence matter, and traditional churches were losing both.

A further characteristic of today's parishes and congregations is that many of them are now comprised of ageing members, who could well be described as the faithful remnant. Slowly the congregation is diminishing around them. Often it will be lacking

<sup>1</sup> The President's address is available at <http://www.ncca.org.au/forums/7th-national-forum/563-presidential-address>; the General Secretary's address is available at <http://www.ncca.org.au/forums/7th-national-forum/567-general-secretarys-address>.

members from other generations, especially younger generations. This has important ecclesiological implications, as it means that the opportunities for renewal and new ideas can be missed. To an observer from the outside the congregation may seem to have become rather staid, even in fact when it has not.

Smaller congregations may also find that their resources for good worship are limited, as they no longer have a sufficient number of people with a variety of skills that facilitate good worship. They face a growing challenge to provide ministry – be it ministry that will emerge from the congregation or the leadership ministry that might normally come from outside. Many smaller congregations find themselves without a regular official leader of worship.

The situation can vary in different parts of the country. Often rural congregations feel under more pressure than do urban ones. Resources of all kinds are usually more readily available in urban centres than in rural areas. It is probably not surprising that more creative adaptations have been made in rural areas, including closer cooperation between different denominations in the same or neighbouring towns. The members of these small congregations are usually from the ecumenical generation who have seen the great ecumenical advance and know that possibilities exist to take this further.

Another characteristic of our time is the growing gap between church affiliation and Christian faith. The Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches, in its study on the nature and mission of the church, pointed explicitly to the situation of communities where people “belong without believing”, and the related phenomenon of individuals who opt out of church membership and “believe without belonging”.<sup>2</sup> A part of this phenomenon is the growing number of intentional communities where people gather for worship without being bound by traditional forms of church affiliation.

The context of smaller congregations will not be fully understood if we fail to note that the diminishment of traditional church parishes and congregations seems to coincide with the rise of Pentecostal and evangelical communities. Often the members of these communities have walked away from the traditional ecclesial paradigm, particularly in worship. It is estimated that worldwide the Pentecostal movement represents 25% of the world’s Christians. Some have referred to their expansion as a ‘new Reformation’ or a third wave in the history of Christianity.<sup>3</sup> By their presence they ask questions of the older churches.

### ***The larger theological and ecclesiological context***

While one approach to this phenomenon of small parishes and congregations is to ask what has gone wrong and how can we recover what seems to be lost, this is not the approach I wish to take. The premise of this paper is that the change I have described points to something more profound than diminishing numbers.

<sup>2</sup> *The Nature and Mission of the Church: A Stage on the Way to a Common Statement*, Faith and Order paper no.198 (Geneva: WCC, 2005), n.51.

<sup>3</sup> See Thomas P. Rausch, “Catholics and Pentecostals: Troubled History, New Initiatives”, *Theological Studies* 71 (2010): 926-950, but especially, 926-227.

In the early 1970s Karl Rahner wrote a book called *The Shape of the Church to Come*.<sup>4</sup> While it was a reflection on the state of the Roman Catholic Church in Germany at the time, it had wide appeal as an ecclesiological commentary on the church in the west. Rahner used the phrase “the church of the little flock” to describe this new situation, and argued that the church was now located in a post-Christendom world. In another, later article he set up a three-fold division in Christian history: the short period of Judeo-Christianity; the period that dawned with Constantine when the church was embedded in Hellenism and European culture and civilisation; and the current period “in which the church’s living space is from the very outset the whole world”.<sup>5</sup> It is in this final phase that we find ourselves, and it represents the end of Christendom.

In Rahner’s schema the global south has assumed a place of importance. It is surely not insignificant that at the time he was writing there was a conscious effort in the global south for people to gather in small communities or Basic Christian Communities.<sup>6</sup> These were not signs of a diminishing church, but of its vibrancy. People assembled in small groups for worship, study and community organisation. By and large they were vulnerable and lived under threat of imprisonment by regimes that were determined to crush those working for social justice. These were poor people, who were hearing the word of God as a word of liberation and a word of hope. They set their sights on the kingdom of God not just as a future promise for the next life, but more significantly as an event that was already dawning among them. Worship in these small communities was a celebration of hope in the midst of struggle. The Paschal Mystery was not something notional but a stark reality in their midst; it was at the heart of worship. The members of these Basic Christian Communities were able to unite their own struggles and sufferings with the liturgical action of the death and resurrection of Jesus for the sake of the Kingdom. Not only were their struggles brought before God, but the experience with others in the community also offered support and encouragement. These communities were an interesting mix of sophistication and popular religion. Often their members were uneducated, and their worship was marked by all the piety and practices associated with Latino popular religion. Yet these people were imbibing some highly sophisticated theological ideas that were transforming their lives.

So while this experience was quite different to the European experience described by Rahner, at a deeper level it pointed to the same thing, namely a post-Christendom Church. I want to suggest that the present situation of the church can be described in similar terms. Any response to this situation will require a clear understanding of what is happening. In order to try to understand this I will draw on three authors and use them to shine a light on the milieu in which the church in the west finds itself.

<sup>4</sup> Karl Rahner, *The Shape of the Church to Come*, trans. Edward Quinn (London: SPCK, 1972).

<sup>5</sup> Karl Rahner, “Basic Theological Interpretation of the Second Vatican Council”, *Theological Investigations* 20, trans. Edward Quinn (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1981), 77-98, at 83.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Gerard Kelly, *Basic Christian Communities: A Study in the Church’s Self-Understanding*, Master of Theology dissertation, Catholic Institute of Sydney, 1985.

**Alister McGrath**

The first author is the prolific Anglican theologian, Alister McGrath. His turn-of-the-millennium book, *The Future of Christianity*,<sup>7</sup> was a rather bleak assessment of the present situation of churches in the west. In his opinion they are no longer “mainline”, if mainline is defined numerically. There are two prongs to his thesis. One is that numerically Christianity is all but dead in the west while it is flourishing in non-western countries. He offers three snapshots to illustrate his point: Korea, which has seen a huge growth in Christian adherents, especially in Korean Protestantism; Africa, which has jettisoned its colonial past and broken “the stereotype of western-led churches following western-style worship”;<sup>8</sup> and Latin America where forms of evangelicalism and Pentecostalism have developed which are more attuned to local realities than were the liberation theologians.<sup>9</sup> The second prong of his thesis is that where Christianity is thriving in the west it is doing so in the form of evangelicalism and Pentecostalism.

In short, he envisages the ultimate demise of traditional Protestantism as it has existed in the west, and its survival only in the sort of evangelical and Pentecostal forms evident in non-western countries. He is less harsh regarding the future of the Roman Catholic Church, because “Roman Catholicism has moved decisively from being a western European to a global faith in the last two centuries”.<sup>10</sup> Nevertheless, his analysis is no more comforting for Roman Catholics in the west than it is for traditional Protestants.

He regards the present pattern of decline and decay as “largely self-inflicted”.<sup>11</sup> He clearly has in his sights liberal theology. By way of example, he paints a picture of the World Council of Churches “as having been hijacked by a liberal clique”, and laments the absence of conservatives in the WCC. “Conservatives, marginalised in 1948 but dominant in global Christianity by 1998, generally regarded the organisation as unfit to represent historic Christianity, and ceased to pay attention to it.”<sup>12</sup> His point is fairly clear: there has been a theological wind-change between 1948 and 1998. Overall, I find this analysis rather weak from an ecclesiological point of view. He rejects the vision of visible unity that has developed through dialogue over the past century, although he fails to understand it adequately and to note how the concept continues to develop. In the end he has a rather simple argument to justify his position: ordinary people “just wanted to understand and get on better with others at both the individual and institutional level”.<sup>13</sup> This view has no serious ecclesiological foundation and seems to miss the link between unity and the Gospel of God.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Alister McGrath, *The Future of Christianity*, Blackwell Manifestos (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002).

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 35.

<sup>9</sup> McGrath writes, *ibid.*: “Liberation theology appeared well-intentioned towards popular Latin American culture, but was perceived to be bookish, intellectualist and out of touch with the ordinary people. You’d need a degree of some kind to understand, for example, what Leonardo Boff was saying.”

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 105. I am not sure whether McGrath would still express things this way after five years of a new pope with a very strong commitment to the European roots of Christianity.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 101.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 85.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 86.

<sup>14</sup> The centrality of unity to the Christian gospel is a theme that I have explored elsewhere. See Gerard Kelly, “Baptism in the Roman Catholic Church”, in Gordon L. Heath & James D. Dvorak, eds, *Baptism: Historical, Theological and Pastoral Perspectives* (Eugene OR: Pickwick Publications, 2011), 26-52, but especially 44-48.

I present this as one theological and ecclesiological interpretation of the current situation facing churches in the west, even though I do not share all that it contains. I suspect that it would not be an isolated interpretation. A more rigorous analysis of what has transpired in the western world is needed. For that I turn to the Canadian philosopher, Charles Taylor.

**Charles Taylor**

Taylor’s monumental book, *A Secular Age*,<sup>15</sup> while not at all a work of theology or ecclesiology, nevertheless provides us with valuable insight and perspective for our own ecclesiological task. This is a cultural history that offers a dispassionate account of the long history that sees us where we are today.

He frames his project in these terms: “How did we move from a condition where, in Christendom, people lived naïvely within a theistic construal, to one in which we all shunt between two stances, in which everyone’s construal shows up as such; and in which, moreover, unbelief has become for many the major default option?”<sup>16</sup> Taylor is interested in the conditions that once supported belief and the change that has taken place over several centuries leading to the erosion of those conditions and the development of other conditions. The secular condition of the modern west means that there has been a shift in human experience from a situation where in society belief in God was unchallenged and unproblematic to one where it becomes just one option among many. Moreover, this particular option is becoming less and less easy to embrace.

He is not talking about the more recent rise of the new atheists, but rather about something far more profound. It boils down to this: how can people sustain a belief in God when all that conveys that belief – conceptually and symbolically – is called into question by the intellectual underpinnings that make them modern people? To take a rather simple example, but one that has great impact, how can believers hold at the same time a belief in the creator God as revealed in the Bible and worshipped in church when modern science speaks intelligently and convincingly of evolution? The point is not that this cannot be done – in fact there has been significant theological research in this area.<sup>17</sup> Rather, it is the dilemma that everyone in our churches faces: consciously or not they live with a sort of schizophrenia.

This is what Taylor is pointing to when he refers to a naïve construal of reality. It worked well when we lived in what he calls an “enchanted world”. He observes that almost no one today is capable of living in this naïve construal of reality. “We all learn to navigate between two standpoints: an ‘engaged’ one in which we live as best we can the reality our standpoint opens up to us; and a ‘disengaged’ one in which we are able to see ourselves as occupying one standpoint amongst a range of possible ones, with which we have in various ways to coexist”.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>15</sup> Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007).

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.

<sup>17</sup> See, for example, Denis Edwards, *How God Acts: Creation, Redemption and Special Divine Action* (Minneapolis/Hindmarsh SA: Fortress/ATF Press, 2010; idem, *The God of Evolution* (New York: Paulist, 1999).

<sup>18</sup> Taylor, *A Secular Age*, 12.

This has ecclesiological implications because it raises questions about the language the church uses, be it the written and spoken word or symbolic language and gesture. It raises the question of how the church should speak about God today, after several centuries of the modern development in the understanding of God in the west. Taylor traces this particularly through the rise of Deism, which acted as a bridge away from theism and enabled us to be open to non-naïve explanations of reality. To return to the example of evolution: at the time of the publication of Darwin's *The Origin of Species* the shock that went through the churches had less to do with the interpretation of Genesis than with the question of the providence of God. This is a question about Deism and Theism, and about the presence or absence of the Transcendent.<sup>19</sup>

There is a further aspect to Taylor's analysis and this concerns the human person and their source of fulfilment. The difference between the believer and the unbeliever is that for the believer fulfilment comes from an external source and is accessed inwardly through for example, worship or prayer, whereas for the unbeliever the power to reach fulfilment is wholly within. In one variant of this, that power is rational agency. While many modern people often feel they are at the mercy of the highly rationalised society in which we live today, there is still a sense that ultimately human agency is in control. An obvious example is economic rationalism, but it is also evident for example, in the hope people place in the political process or modern technology to make everything right. Despite these various ways that people look for fulfilment, Taylor notes that the unbeliever is not yet fully satisfied. In a telling comment on the human condition he writes: "In other words, there is something he aspires to beyond where he's at. He perhaps hasn't yet fully conquered the nostalgia for something transcendent".

Taylor offers a challenging analysis, which takes us beyond the simple conclusion that the church got it all wrong or that internal factors have brought about the situation of diminishing congregations. He not only makes it clear that we are at a unique point in western world history, but he also helps us understand what is going on. He summarises it this way:

I would like to claim that the coming of modern secularity in my sense has been coterminous with the rise of a society in which for the first time in history a purely self-sufficient humanism came to be a widely available option. I mean by this a humanism accepting no final goals beyond human flourishing, nor any allegiance to anything else beyond this flourishing. Of no previous society was this true.<sup>20</sup>

He explains this further:

The main feature of this new context is that it puts an end to the naïve acknowledgement of the transcendent, or of goals or claims which go beyond human flourishing. But this is quite unlike religious turnovers of the past, where one naïve horizon ends up replacing another, or the two fuse syncretistically – as with, say, the conversion of Asia Minor from Christianity to Islam in the

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 7.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 18.

wake of the Turkish conquest. Naïveté is now unavailable to anyone, believer or unbeliever alike.<sup>21</sup>

These insights provide a most helpful framework for understanding the ecclesiological implications of our present situation as churches.

### *Jean Tillard*

The third author who can shine a light on what is happening in the western church is the Roman Catholic theologian, Jean Tillard, who in his day was one of the leading Catholic theologians engaged in ecumenical dialogue. In the late 1990s he gave a lecture that was subsequently published with the title, “Are we the Last Christians?”<sup>22</sup> His analysis was focused on Europe and North America, but like McGrath, he occasionally made comparisons with other parts of the world.

His response to the question, “are we the last Christians”, is an instinctive “no”. He acknowledges that things are different now from what they were in the years immediately after the Second Vatican Council. While he is writing and speaking out of the context of the Roman Catholic Church, I would venture that most churches in some form or other rode on the wave of renewal in Christian living and church life generated by the Council. Tillard addresses the disappointment felt by many people whose faith came to maturity in those years after the Council, and who now see something quite different around them. These are often the people who comprise dwindling congregations; they are the people who gave their heart and soul to implementing the renewal desired by the Council. Often their engagement came at a heavy cost, as the following words indicate: “Many among us still carry the wounds of those years, which were not at all peaceful: contempt, rejections, lies, sometimes even vile manoeuvres unhesitatingly turned to by ecclesiastical bodies, without ever thinking to apologise when the truth came out.”<sup>23</sup> But immediately after these words he adds, “But we knew that fidelity to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ would want it”.<sup>24</sup> This, in fact, sets the tone for his response to the present situation. The instinct that pushes him to respond “no” to the question as to whether we are the last Christians is the instinct for the faith, the *sensus fidei*; it is the instinct that knows the fidelity of God.

Tillard is realistic about the current situation in the west and is not pining for a return to some earlier glory day. “One thing is certain,” he says, “we are inexorably the last witnesses of a certain way of being Christian”.<sup>25</sup> His is a broader perspective than the past few hundred years. He recalls that in earlier centuries flourishing local churches more or less disappeared or at least became greatly diminished. The obvious example is the church in north Africa – the church of Cyprian and Augustine – in which is found the origins of much that came to characterise western Christianity.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 21.

<sup>22</sup> J.M.R. Tillard, *Sommes-nous les derniers chrétiens?* (Montreal: Fides, 1997).

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 9. All translations are my own.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 16.

As a specialist in ecclesiology he draws out a basic implication for contemporary Christian living in the west. The church will need to be focused on what he calls the “evangelical difference”. By that he means that the church will be a “small remnant” of convinced believers practising their faith. No longer can we expect people simply to be assimilated into the Christian community by some sort of social osmosis. Rather than being a dominant force in the society the church will assemble in small numbers to celebrate what is essential and to give witness to it. He writes of these assemblies:

We can deduce that local churches, in their assemblies, will be centred more on the Word of God and the sacrament, which are the two sources of the Christian difference, than on a social discourse. Worship will truly be the place of renewal, synaxis before God, in order to discover together who is truly the one whose name we speak: neither formal ritualism devoid of all soul, nor an enthusiast ‘happening’ devoid of all content and reflection.<sup>26</sup>

The Christian difference of which he speaks is recognisable through faith and hope – faith in the God whose promise was fulfilled in Christ, and hope that God will not allow the light of Christ to be extinguished. He recalls the words of the disciples in John’s gospel, “Lord, to whom shall we go?” Faith and hope are built on the memory of God’s mighty actions – not just in Jesus but also throughout human history. In a way reminiscent of many patristic authors, the church Tillard believes in begins with Abel the just one. It is this conviction about God that allows him to write:

As catholic, I believe that this light [of Christ] began to shine *iam ab Abel justo*, in other words, that it has never ceased to accompany the human adventure. As theologian, I look for the reasons for this “no” that is spoken by instinct. I found them in grasping at a glance what I know of the human situation and what faith tells me of the God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ.<sup>27</sup>

Tillard sums up his reflections by proposing that the church will endure because there will always be Christians who can tell others about Christ, and there will always be human hearts searching for meaning. Significant elements in the new situation

The foregoing discussion gives us a broader context for considering the phenomenon of small parishes and congregations and understanding the new ecclesial situation they represent. We are not necessarily faced with new ecclesiological categories, but we are required to consider the traditional categories with a new imagination. What was previously taken for granted may now have to be questioned, what was previously ignored or received little attention may now require more focused consideration. In what will be a necessarily brief discussion, I wish to consider just a few of these ecclesiological categories in the light of the new situation.

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 17.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 24.

The first category concerns the basic question of what is essential to being the church. The present time, marked as it is by change, raises this question not so much with a view to determining the minimum resources needed to be able to function effectively as a church, but rather in order to provoke a consideration of what is essential and must be preserved and what is non-essential and can be modified or put aside. This was at least implicit, but sometimes explicit, in the comments of the three thinkers I have just considered. It is a matter of churches going back to their origins to rediscover what brought them into being in the first place.<sup>28</sup> This, of course, becomes a question of identity.

In this present situation it is not enough for the ecclesiological imagination to race too quickly to traditional denominational identity. This is a time to re-discover a common identity. The 2005 Faith and Order text, *The Nature and Mission of the Church*, proposes a fundamental statement about the nature of the church: “The Church is thus the creature of God’s Word and of the Holy Spirit. It belongs to God, is God’s gift and cannot exist by and for itself. Of its very nature it is missionary, called and sent to serve, as an instrument of the Word and the Spirit, as a witness to the Kingdom of God”.<sup>29</sup>

The quote speaks to me of “reception”. If the church is God’s gift – a gift to be received – then the present moment is to be received as a gift of God’s Word and Spirit. Receiving this gift means taking a fundamental ecclesiological stance that before all else the church is at the service of God and is focused on God. This is the primary ecclesial identity and the church’s mission springs from it. It means that the church is the place where Christian faith in God is nurtured. The present situation calls for a purified Christian faith – and small congregations will be the locus for this purification.

In the light of this fundamental statement about the church we can then look at what is essential in the particular denominational expressions of the Christian church. Ecclesiologists distinguish a Protestant ecclesiology from a Catholic one – noting that these are not watertight categories. The Protestant outlook will be focused on the doctrine of justification, while the Catholic outlook will be more sacramental. Our present situation calls for a re-imagining of these perspectives in the light of the new context. Hence, for example, from the Protestant side, it would seem important to identify a number of contemporary factors that shape the way the doctrine of justification is understood as the doctrine on which the church stands or falls. The recent agreement between the Roman Catholic Church and the Lutheran World Federation on justification implicitly raised the question of how the traditional sixteenth century doctrine might be expressed in fresh terms in the modern world. The challenge the churches face is how to find the right language and thought forms that will communicate the fundamental Christian gospel to the people of this age while at the same time safeguarding to the core of the doctrine. The mission of the church today involves speaking more clearly of the justice of God that offers the world hope at a time when people are coming to recognise that political or economic instruments cannot fulfil human aspirations.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. McGrath, *The Future of Christianity*, 101.

<sup>29</sup> *The Nature and Mission of the Church*, n.9.

The second ecclesiological category is that the church is a community of memory. This is an aspect of its life as a creature of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit preserves the Church in the memory of the mighty works of God in Jesus. Memory ensures that the church remains the church that God wants it to be. The assembly for worship is the basic location of memory: there the word is proclaimed and the memorial of the Paschal Mystery is celebrated. No matter how small the community, it will be sustained only if it keeps alive the memory of God's mighty actions in Jesus.

To remain authentic, memory needs to be continually purified, since over time there are accretions that, while useful at a particular moment, in a different setting can distract the church from what is essential. The ever-present danger in a time of diminishment is that communities will cling to memories that are not necessarily the core Christian memories. So, the present situation will call for a purification of memory, which may involve an active forgetting. The American theologian, Constance Fitzgerald, speaks of letting go of memory especially when it locks people into the past and prevents them from facing the future. Memories of how things used to be can hinder them from facing squarely their new context. If they do not like what they see ahead of them there is a temptation to run back to the past. As Fitzgerald puts it: "it is the limited self constituted by the past that needs to yield to the transforming power of God's call into the future".<sup>30</sup> This will mean accepting the limitations of the situation and inhabiting a church defined more by provisionality and frailty than by strength and certainty. Memory will be essential in this church. Rather than being a way to cling to the past, it is the key to the future. It points beyond itself to a future promised by God – a future known as the kingdom of God.

The third ecclesiological characteristic is the symbolic dimension of the church. This takes us to a more catholic ecclesiology, where the church is understood as the bearer of the mystery of God's saving action. This mystery is so profound that it can only be communicated by a variety of signs or symbols, of which the church is the basic one. The symbolic draws us into the mystery as participants. In the current situation attention to this aspect of the church may serve an important need, since the symbolic acts as a strong antidote to the highly rationalistic framework that engulfs much modern life and that in some cases is shaping the way people speak about God and the gospel. Attention to mystery, particularly in worship, has the capacity to draw people into an experience of the transcendent. If we take seriously the insight of both Taylor and Tillard, modern human beings are still in search of the transcendent.

The final ecclesiological category is that the church is a place of communion and connection. The danger for small congregations is that they become isolated, with little engagement outside the congregation. If this happens they become almost exclusively focused on themselves and their needs; they end up losing their true ecclesial quality.

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<sup>30</sup> Constance Fitzgerald, "From Impasse to Prophetic Hope: Crisis of Memory", in Catholic Theological Society of America, *Proceedings of the Sixty-fourth Annual Convention 64* (2009), 34.

It is fundamental to the nature of the church that it is communal. Among most churches there is agreement that the biblical word *koinonia* has been helpful in shining a light on the rich layers of connection that the church encapsulates. Community is probably too weak a translation for *koinonia*; communion or participation is a better translation. *Koinonia* is about connection with God and with each other. In the grand scheme of things it involves connection with the whole created order. Small congregations remind us more starkly of the need to be connected. The organisational structures that exist in the church are ultimately about keeping its members connected. The challenge for small congregations is to find the most appropriate way to keep connected.

One aspect of this is the need for accountability. This is an idea that has emerged rather forcefully in recent ecumenical discussion and was raised with all the churches at the 2006 WCC Assembly. The ecclesiology text, *Called to be the One Church*, stated: “The relationship between churches is dynamically interactive. Each church is called to mutual giving and receiving gifts and to *mutual accountability*. Each church must become aware of all that is provisional in its life and have the courage to acknowledge this to other churches.”<sup>31</sup>

Accountability will begin for small congregations when they give an account of the faith and the hope that sustain them. Accountability will thus spring from the *sensus fidei*. It will in turn put these congregations in contact with other worshipping communities. Accountability will mean that congregations will be open to receiving the gifts that other congregations have to share with them. This leads to a mutual exchange of gifts. Accountability will expose them to diversity in church life – the sort of diversity that hopefully will enrich their own congregational life.

### **Conclusion**

There are many practical questions that churches have to face as they head into the future. The core elements I have outlined in this paper give churches a positive way to think about these issues. While there are no easy answers to the challenges they face, there are some basic tools to assist them: giving attention to the core mystery that marks ecclesial existence and the consequent mission that characterises church life; actively remembering the Christian story and being ready to purify that memory as needed; being accountable to God and to each other; and being attentive to what we can learn from each other.

<sup>31</sup> *Called to be the One Church*, n. 7. This text is available at <http://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/assembly/porto-alegre-2006/1-statements-documents-adopted/christian-unity-and-message-to-the-churches/called-to-be-the-one-church-as-adopted.html>.

## Rural Worship

Ross Neville

A report by Ray Hartley



The theme of the conference was *Worship in Small Congregations* (with or without an ordained person). Pastor Ross Neville (left) has worshipped with more small congregations than most. For the past nine years he has been travelling around the state of New South Wales and beyond working with well over 200 different congregations and faith communities. He has been doing this in his role of Evangelism, Mission and New Congregation Consultant with the NSW Uniting Church Board of Mission.

Ross made a keynote presentation to the conference drawing on his wide experience to provide an overview of the current situation in rural communities and ideas as to how the challenges can be addressed.

Ross noted the changing demographics and dwindling rural population (in NSW 7% live inland and 93% along the coastal fringe). Many rural communities could no longer afford a traditional ministry agent, a person who had been the focus of identity for the congregation. A response to this was the training or retraining of the laity to be able to lead worship when no minister is available and to recognise 'we are the church, the people of God'.

The new situation called for changes in the style of worship, Ross said, often tending to be more informal and with more participation. Leadership could be shared and more people contribute from their experience. To enable this to happen appropriate resources were needed and Ross outlined some of these.

*Project Reconnect* is a resource prepared by the NSW Uniting Church Board of Mission. The elements of worship are on a DVD. The DVD contains hymns/songs; children's talk or activity; discussion starters; readings; introductory message; words for worship. *Project Reconnect* provides a way for small communities to worship with resources from which they can choose. It is an ongoing resource with material for each Sunday.

*Rediscovering Hope* is a resource offering a five-week programme to help build a congregation. It is designed to help a 'congregation, faith community or fellowship group understand, experience and respond to the hope we have in God, through the hospitality of Jesus Christ, in the strength of the Spirit'. The resource provides an outline for a planning meal; five worship events; and an evaluation and celebration meal.

In his presentation Ross provided examples and anecdotes of how different congregations were coming up with fresh expressions of being church. More examples are to be found in the periodical newsletter *Evangelism Resources Direct* edited by Ross and published by the NSW Uniting Church Board of Mission. For more information on any of these resources you can contact Ross at [bomrural@bigpond.net.au](mailto:bomrural@bigpond.net.au)

From his practical experience Ross provided material for the conference participants to respond to the challenge presented by the changing situation and the need for small congregations to worship without the leadership of an ordained person. While the focus of the presentation was on the Uniting Church in rural NSW many of the ideas and resources would be applicable to other areas and for worship in other traditions.

*Members Papers*

**Worship, formation and small seminary communities**

**Stephen Burns**

***Introductory comments***

Not all seminaries are small, although my reflections focus especially on formation in small seminaries, arising as they do out of the Australian Academy of Liturgy symposium on Worship in Small Congregations.<sup>1</sup> They also emerge out of experience of moving from larger theological colleges in the UK (The Queen's Foundation for Ecumenical Theological Education, Birmingham, and Cranmer Hall and the Wesley Study Centre, Durham) to a smaller one here in Australia: United Theological College in Sydney. Aside from the numbers of students at the various places with which I am familiar, a very important feature is that the British colleges are more pervasively ecumenical, embracing several traditions, with students from different denominations sharing the lion's share of curriculum as well as chapel services. By contrast, ecumenical range is inevitably narrowed in a stand-alone seminary of the Uniting Church, albeit even as the Uniting Church is itself a confluence of various prior traditions. This being so, as Robert Gribben has noted, the Uniting Church's connections with its world communion partners and their traditions can be 'tenuous'.<sup>2</sup>

The Uniting Church in Sydney also has a culture shaped by strong popular rhetoric about 'the priesthood of all believers' – which is not simply akin to common ecumenical talk about recovering a 'baptismal ecclesiology', but something more than that, involving downplaying of, if not disparagement of, ordination. This reflects and continues to shape the short history of the Uniting Church in which there have been strong marks of confusion and contest about the role of ordained ministry among the baptismal ministry of the whole people of God. This is demonstrated by a 1994 report of the Assembly (the national governing body of the church) which overturned the earlier 1991 Assembly report on ministry, deeming it 'faulty'.<sup>3</sup> The earlier report was called 'Ministry in the UCA'; the latter one was called 'Ordination and Ministry in the UCA', and the prefixed 'ordination and' was central to the corrective it offered to the earlier document.

***Representation***

The aforementioned 1994 UCA document includes one of the Uniting Church's most luminous statements on ordination, and it shows that in spite of pockets of strong popular opinion tending in another direction, the Uniting Church has a nuanced and deeply ecumenically-sensitive understanding of ordained ministry. A lengthy, and illuming,

<sup>1</sup> Australian Academy of Liturgy, Trinity College, Melbourne, January 17-20 2011.

<sup>2</sup> Robert W. Gribben, 'Sharing Mary MacKillop' in Alan Cadwallader, ed., *In the Land of Larks and Larrakins: Australian Reflections on St Mary MacKillop* (Adelaide: ATF Press, 2010), 69-82, p. 77.

<sup>3</sup> Robert Bos and Geoff Thompson, eds., *Theology for Pilgrims: Selected Theological Documents of the Uniting Church in Australia* (Sydney: Uniting Church Press, 2008), 231.

extract runs: ‘The new status into which a minister has been placed by ordination means that a Presbyter or Deacon may stand on behalf of the community before others, or before the Congregation itself, as a representative of the wider Church. The minister presiding at the Eucharist represents not only the local Congregation (both those present and those absent) who together celebrate the sacrament, but the universal Church at all times and places which joins us ‘with choirs of angels and the whole creation in the eternal hymn’. In another liturgical sense, the minister may represent Christ, although all Christians share that responsibility. At other times, the presence of a Presbyter or Deacon anywhere may symbolize the presence of the Church catholic in what God is doing in the world’.<sup>4</sup> What we find in this statement is a multifaceted approach to representation: the minister is a representative of the catholic church to the local church (perhaps even a particular kind of embodied link between the catholic church and the local church<sup>5</sup>); in certain circumstances, she is a representative of Christ; and beyond the gathered community, she may symbolize not only the presence of the local church but what God is doing in the world.

### *Mythical moreness*

These perspectives from the Uniting Church’s teaching lead to wider considerations of the role of those in orders. Gordon Lathrop describes the pastor (writing, as he does, from an ecumenically-centrist Lutheran perspective) as ‘a communal gathering place for wider meaning’.<sup>6</sup> The task of growing into such a perspective of oneself is at the very centre of formation for public ministry. An ordained minister is, to borrow a phrase from Gail Ramshaw’s writings, always ‘mythically more’ than herself.<sup>7</sup> In cross-reference to the UCA report, she may be said to be mythically more than herself as representative of the church, as representative of Christ to the church, and as representative of what God, through the church, is doing in the world.

As is quite clear (if not elaborated) in the Uniting Church’s statement on representation, what I am referring to as an ordained minister’s mythical moreness involves not only representing the church, but representing the divine, and as Uniting Church liturgist Graham Hughes elaborates, such representation is focused in the liturgy, and more precisely at the presider’s chair and altar-table. Hughes’ writing on ‘liturgical direction’ is a splendid articulation of the representative entanglements of liturgical presidency.<sup>62</sup> His appeals are for very careful consideration of embodied embrace of the basilican position, east and west facing in particular ceremonial scenes, and special attention to what we might call liturgical turnings: when, how and why presiders make turnings in direction, towards or away from – then with – the assembly. Some of what Hughes wishes to see mediated in his own approach to liturgical direction can be carried in a

<sup>4</sup> ‘Ordination and Ministry in the UCA’, paragraph 10. Bos and Thompson, 363.

<sup>5</sup> The Uniting Church’s *Basis of Union* states that ‘The Congregation is the embodiment in one place of the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church.’ paragraph 15a. Bos and Thompson, 202.

<sup>6</sup> Gordon W. Lathrop, *The Pastor: A Spirituality* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2006), 5

<sup>7</sup> Gail Ramshaw, ‘Pried Open by Prayer,’ in E. Byron Anderson and Bruce T. Morrill, eds., *Liturgy and the Moral Self: Humanity at Full Stretch before God: Essays in Honor of Don E. Saliers* (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1998), 169-175, 174.

wider range of deportment, posture and gesture, so, for example, whether or not eyes are open or closed, arms are aloft or extended or resting, and so on. But nevertheless, Hughes's work provides a faithful midrash on his own tradition's stated understanding of representation, very helpfully focusing it in terms of liturgical practice, as it were, bringing it from the book of doctrine to the practice of the chapel, including the seminary chapel.

### ***Non-conversation***

Seminary chapels are notorious for being places of what Todd Johnson calls 'non conversation'.<sup>8</sup> What is so often not talked about is the struggle to clarify an institution's understanding of the role of chapel in the life of the seminary. There is also commonplace resistance to regarding chapel as a formative, as opposed simply to an expressive, exercise for members of the seminary. Conflict is common between liturgical scholars in seminaries and their colleagues who may or may not themselves be liturgically formed, and who may do much in their own presidential 'style' to undermine what is taught in liturgical studies. Attempting to address questions of accreditation of attendance of chapel, of the arts of Christian assembly, and of presidency in particular, is also problematic.<sup>9</sup> These are only some of the issues about which there is so much pervasive, intentional and/or ignorant, silence.

Seemingly, it is unimaginable to some in seminaries (though hopefully not to too many liturgists on their staffs) that presiding style – not to say the related issue of a basic understanding of what one is invited to do when presiding – might somehow be assessed. This is astonishing, given that the ministry of presiding is very closely related to aspects of how a local church has its catholicity depicted – impressed upon itself – or by which coming into a sense of its catholicity may be bungled, to great loss. Furthermore, in sacramental celebration – especially in manual acts in or around eucharistic prayer – christological understandings are, for better or worse, impressed upon the congregation. Presidency in its broader range is always related to questions of the representation of the church (the church larger than the congregation), and in more focused ceremonial scenes in the communion rite, is inevitably enmeshed with questions of representation of the divine. Presidency within the worshipping assembly is in these respects a visual and kinaesthetic theology, and one which powerfully teaches the congregations presidors serve core doctrines of Christian faith. Moreover, presidency exercised over time is also very likely to teach more consistently than anything that can ever be *said* – whether in pulpit, classroom, catechism or any other kind of print. It may be naïve to imagine otherwise.

<sup>8</sup> Todd Johnson, 'Ora et Labora: Reflections on the (Non-) History of Seminary Chapels,' in Siobhan Garrigan and Todd Johnson, eds., *Common Worship and Theological Education* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2010), 1-23, 9.

<sup>9</sup> These tensions emerge at various points in the Garrigan/Johnson collection, with questions of assessment powerfully focused in Garrigan's chapter: Siobhan Garrigan, 'Crediting Chapel: Worship and the Theological Curriculum,' in Garrigan and Johnson 179-199.

### *Spirituality for Presiding*

Quite apart from questions of assessing the arts involved in liturgical celebration, this raises sharp questions about spiritual practice appropriate to ministerial formation (for presiding in particular), and how such things might be scrutinised and assessed.<sup>10</sup> At the very least, loyalty to the lectionary, a broadly sacramental spirituality, and an appreciation of the calendar (*temporale* and *sanctorale*)<sup>11</sup> are important practices for growing into an appreciation of catholicity. This is not of course to suggest any static or supine engagement with these ‘classics.’ Familiarity with them not only fuels an ecclesially-oriented spirituality but also in turn allows them to be subjected to critical theological reflection: familiarity with such practices is the very least of what is needed for their serious interrogation, as may well sometimes be necessary.<sup>12</sup> Practices of catholicity might also embrace the learning of the prayers of the church (some ‘by heart’<sup>13</sup>) – both those ‘we have in common’ and those that may have been produced and promoted by one’s denominational body (whatever the status of such resources as standard or norm<sup>14</sup>), as well as disciplines of extempore prayer.<sup>15</sup> Ancillary lists of what might also make for lively engagement with a sense of catholicity might be extensively and appropriately varied from place to place. But whatever might be regarded as important for such engagement, formation for ministry must involve questions about such engagement might be evaluated and accredited. Assessment may not be easy, and from the evidence in *Common Worship in Theological Education* the attempt to assess such things is likely to be a site of particularly demanding struggle in the midst of wider challenges involved in establishing common worship as a valued part of ministerial formation. It is also clear that silence about the difficulties involved in the struggle has offered little help to seminary communities – no doubt not least to candidates for ministry, who in their turn may come to mirror in their parishes and placements their training institutions’ confusion. To flourish, candidates who are to be entrusted with the responsibility of presiding in liturgy need to be formed deeply in the sensibility that worship engages congregations, whether larger or smaller, with the wider church – and as is implicit with reference to the calendar, the wider church, living and departed.

The shaping of candidates’ spirituality by the church’s patterns of reading the scriptures, celebrating the sacraments, and marking time can be jeopardized by a seminary’s avoidance of calendar, lectionary, and an intentionally sacramental common life in its

<sup>10</sup> In addition to Garrigan and Johnson, eds., *Common Worship*, see Charles Foster et al, eds., *Educating Clergy: Teaching Practices and Pastoral Imagination* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2006), 275-280.

<sup>11</sup> On the Uniting Church’s *sanctorale*, or equivalent, see Robert W. Gribben, ‘Saints Under the Southern Cross: The Uniting Church in Australia,’ in Stephen Burns and Anita Monro, eds., *Christian Worship in Australia: Inculturating the Liturgical Tradition* (Strathfield: St Pauls, 2009), 91-106.

<sup>12</sup> For critique of various ‘traditional’ practices of presidency, for example, see the range of essays in Nicola Slee and Stephen Burns, eds, *Presiding Like a Woman* (London: SPCK, 2010).

<sup>13</sup> See Lathrop, *The Pastor*, on ‘learning the tasks by heart,’ 21.

<sup>14</sup> The Uniting Church’s *Uniting in Worship 2* (Sydney: Uniting Church Press, 2005), acknowledges, with its predecessor *Uniting in Worship* of 1988, that ‘The status and authority of published services is a matter of some debate in the Uniting Church,’ (p. 8) but nevertheless asserts that it is the ‘standard’ and ‘normative’ core of the Uniting Church’s liturgical life,’ 8-9.

<sup>15</sup> This is important not only if such prayer forms part of one’s more immediately enveloping church-style, but because extempore prayer is part of an expansive appreciation of the tradition, both contemporary and classical (consider the prayer over the gifts in the *Apostolic Tradition*) - not to say an aspect of pastoral ministry regardless of church-style.

patterns of worship (or neglect of patterns in preference for a ‘free-flowing’ liturgical melee). Even where such things are present, an ecclesially-oriented spirituality can be undermined by a seminary’s failure to regard such spiritual practices as part of formation – as themselves formative – as well as by a view of such practices simply somehow as the arena of candidates’ ‘personal’ spirituality. Any of these under-reached views may be deeply detrimental to *ministerial* formation because they unwittingly or otherwise discourage candidates’ capacity for imbibing a sense of their representative function in relation to catholicity, and in relation to representing the divine. At least, this latter diminution is a risk if candidates are taught and encouraged to affirm that word and sacrament are indeed gracious means of divine self-revelation into which presiders invite worshippers: as Gordon Lathrop says, presiders, ‘with dignity and focus and love, invite a community to gather around the central signs’<sup>16</sup> of book, bath and table. Arguably, if that affirmation is *not* made, other serious diminutions of the liturgy then ensue. In any case, potential presiders’ own ‘inclination to mystery’<sup>17</sup> – not to say their own sense of ‘unselfconscious absorption in God during services’<sup>18</sup> – needs by one means or another to be open to scrutiny – and to intentional moulding - in formation for public ministry.

### ***Expanding understanding of representation***

The Uniting Church 1994 report on ordination cited above points towards various, nuanced, dimensions of representative ministry, but there are yet other dimensions which might be added to the UCA document’s vision. One particularly important addition is the idea of the minister being not only representative of the local church *in* the wider community in which it is set and of which it is part, but also of the minister as – on occasion – representative *of* that wider community.<sup>19</sup> If we need to be convinced of this potential capacity, we might consider Stephen Cherry’s searing narrative of the ordeal of accompanying the family, the trial and the neighbourhood after a young boy’s body turned up, dismembered, in the town’s canal.<sup>20</sup> Not only did the church building become a major public focus for shock and grief and rage and sorrow in the unfolding of horrible circumstances, but so also did Cherry as parish priest, receiving spoken and unspoken permission to speak and act on the local community’s behalf. Such costly and demanding experience is an exemplary instance of truly being, in Lathrop’s terms, a communal gathering place for wider meaning.

<sup>16</sup> Gordon W. Lathrop, *Holy Things: A Liturgical Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), p. 167.

<sup>17</sup> Kimberly Bracken Long, *The Worshipping Body: The Art of Leading Worship* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2009), 2.

<sup>18</sup> Brenda Blanch and Stuart Blanch, eds., *Heaven a Dance: An Evelyn Underhill Anthology* (London: SPCK, 1992), 90.

<sup>19</sup> For a strong argument, see Alan Billings, *Making God Possible: The Task of Ordained Ministry Present and Future* (London: SPCK, 2010), 49.

<sup>20</sup> Stephen Cherry, “Representation,” in Samuel Wells and Sarah Coakley, eds, *Praying for England: Priestly Presence in Contemporary Society* (London: Continuum, 2008), 21-41.

These comments about wider dimensions of representation of course in turn relate to many questions about ‘cultural exegesis’ of contemporary society.<sup>21</sup> Beyond the extreme yet real occurrences about which Stephen Cherry writes, the contested and unsettled nature of such exegesis with reference to Australia is striking, and as such, engaging. To take just some Australian or Australia-based perspectives, the writings of Gary Bouma,<sup>22</sup> Ian Breward,<sup>23</sup> Tom Frame,<sup>24</sup> Clive Pearson<sup>25</sup> and Stuart Piggin<sup>26</sup> contain differences in their accounts of the legacy and the contemporary vigour of Christian traditions in Australian cultures. These authors offer accounts of the history of reception of Christian ministry among Australian persons, in their sense of the current state of interplay between the churches and the so-called ‘public square’ (itself a construct that invites questions), and in their assessment of the intensity or otherwise of what Bouma calls the ‘shy hope in the heart’<sup>27</sup> which may or may not characterize Australian spiritualities, religious or ‘alternative’. Notably, as in all attempts at anything akin to ‘public theology’, the denominational identity of these authors shapes their assumptions and therefore their conclusions in their own cultural exegesis. (This dynamic is of course extended by their readers: Mark Hutchinson’s review of Piggin’s book tellingly reveals that ‘every readership in Australia read the [first edition of the] book from their own perspective and loved or hated it accordingly’).<sup>28</sup> One important reason for exploring the contrasts in the work of these authors, as well as their convergences, is to resist the temptation for empathizing with a supposedly shy hope in the heart to such a degree that a correspondingly shy ministry develops that under-reaches its potential in heterogeneous common (‘public’) space. Yet whilst it is evident that some remain more hopeful than others about that public space’s continuing capacity to be engaged by forms of Christian ministry, there is no clear agreement about what that might mean. For example, Frame, an Anglican, critiques Uniting Church theologian Gordon Dicker’s appeal for ‘a genuinely Australian’ church as ‘naïve and mistaken’. At the same time, Frame affirms Dicker’s appeal for more cultural exegesis of the Australian scene: ‘much of what we are attempting at present is based, for lack of firmer foundations, on general observations and impressions and may be in error or true only of certain sections of the community’.<sup>29</sup> But whilst Frame’s *Losing My Religion* gives an account of many struggles of clergy among the early European settlers in Australia, it makes little attempt to as it were write in a role for the clergy in the contemporary

<sup>21</sup> Cherry’s narrative is from a British (English, Anglican, established church. . .) context and I turn next to consider Australian contexts. As my appeal is for more attention to nuance, I am in no way assuming that Cherry’s experience is directly transferable. But nor am I assuming that it has no Australian resonance.

<sup>22</sup> Gary Bouma, *Australian Soul: Religion and Spirituality in the Twenty-First Century* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 2008).

<sup>23</sup> Ian Breward, *A History of the Australian Churches* (St Leonards: Allen and Unwin, 1993).

<sup>24</sup> Tom Frame, *Losing My Religion: Unbelief in Australia* (Sydney: UNSW Press, 2009).

<sup>25</sup> Clive Pearson, ‘Australian Contextual Theologies,’ in John England et al, eds., *Asian Christian Theologies: A Research Guide to Authors, Movements, Sources*, Volume 1 (Delhi: ISPCK, 2002), pp. 599-657.

<sup>26</sup> Stuart Piggin, *Spirit of a Nation: The Story of Australia’s Christian Heritage* (Melbourne: Strand Books, 2004).

<sup>27</sup> Bouma, *Australian Soul*, 2.

<sup>28</sup> See: [http://atbr.atf.org.au/atbr/images/review\\_spirit\\_of\\_a\\_nation.pdf](http://atbr.atf.org.au/atbr/images/review_spirit_of_a_nation.pdf) Accessed February 01 2011

<sup>29</sup> Frame, *Losing My Religion*, 72. The need for continuing research – towards contemporary cultural exegesis – has not abated since Dicker originally wrote these words.

situation he surveys, marked as it is by ‘unbelief’, but, Frame believes, no distinctively Australian forms of unbelief.<sup>30</sup> My own sense is that at least pockets of the Uniting Church are sliding into a very low view of the capacity of the church’s ministers to engage the (of course disparate, fluxing) ‘public’, opting for under-ambitious notions of the potential scope of ministerial representation, as well as of the symbolic freight of ordination (not to say of the liturgy itself<sup>31</sup>) to open into space for mythical moreness. Uncritical notions of ‘the priesthood of all believers’ bolted on to rather selective or still-awaited cultural exegesis threatens to undermine imagination about robust public ministry in contemporary Australia. Among the many reasons to question this is the fact that religion in Australia has become more public and visible with the ever-evolving multi-cultural and multi-faith make-up of contemporary communities, so that appeal to the legacy of the (ambiguous) role of the clergy in the legacy of ‘settlement’ cannot be accepted as sole or primary determiner of what makes for the appropriate public and visible presence of religious representatives at the present time. Rather, the multi-faith and multi-cultural context of contemporary Australia provides a new context in which to keep testing the hospitality of Australian society to Christian ministry. In short, it should not be assumed that the measure of such hospitality is settled, and settled low at that.

***Conclusion: Size matters***

The number of persons making up a seminary worshipping community may or may not be significant in and of itself, but size certainly does seem to matter when allied with understandings that tend to see the church simply as those persons in the room, or even as those who constitute the local congregation, rather than a more expansive imaginary that envisions the persons in the room as (amongst other things) taking their small but sure place in the communion of saints, led in their praise by ‘angels and archangels’ singing ‘holy, holy, holy’. Theologically, this great company is always part of the context of any small congregation, but allied with other dynamics, the smallness of a seminary community can exacerbate ministerial formation, malforming understanding of ministry to such a degree that the pastoral and missiological opportunities of ‘mythical moreness’ are under-estimated, or lost. Small seminary communities, as all seminary communities, need to take intentional steps to lead candidates for ministry into expansive understandings.

<sup>30</sup> Compare Billings’ *Making God Possible*, which at least sketches a theology of ministry in the context of a society that involves “new atheism”, 139-161.

<sup>31</sup> Ramshaw’s argument in the original context from which I lift her notion of ‘mythical moreness’ is a discussion of the Good Friday reproaches. She suggests: ‘Christian prayer, having given me a self far greater than myself, sends us out to get to know that self. . .’ Ramshaw, ‘Pried Open by Prayer’, 174.

## Reflections on the Canonisation of Saint Mary MacKillop in Rome

Carmel Pilcher rsj



Image © Trustees of the Sisters of St Joseph 2010: used with permission of the Trustees & photographer Anne-Marie Gallagher rsj <http://www.marymackillop.org.au>

For many contemporary Australians the process of canonisation in the Roman Catholic Church is a curious phenomenon. The miracle requirement evokes the whole gamut of opinion from total scepticism to firm conviction and a variety of comments from those of us who stand somewhere in between. However on 17 October, 2010 when Benedict XVI arrived in Saint Peter's Square to declare Mary MacKillop a saint, tens of thousands of Australians had made the long pilgrimage to Rome to witness this historical event first hand. Many others back home tuned in to the

extensive coverage that flooded our electronic and print media. As one who had a hands-on role in preparing and organising some of the events in Rome I can report that all, including many in the media, became emotionally charged by the experience.

### *The Sisters of St Joseph gathered in a surprising location*

The first gathering for the Sisters of St Joseph in Rome was a significant event not only because we had travelled from many parts of the world, but also because all congregations of Josephites that were founded by Mary MacKillop and Julian Tenison Woods had sent significant delegations. For the first time we stood together as one – a sea of teal coloured pashminas! This event culminated in eighty five years of preparation, so it was not surprising that we should begin by lifting our hearts and minds to God in worship. To hear Mary's words to her Sisters, written in that same city of Rome some hundred years before, was a deeply emotional experience for each of us.

Surprising though, we did not gather in one of the churches where Mary MacKillop sought spiritual solace as a lonely and sometimes physically ill young Australian woman so far from home. Nor did we gather in one of the many hundreds of Catholic churches in the eternal city. Rather, we were warmly and graciously welcomed by Rev Dr Trevor Hoggard into Ponte Saint' Angelo Methodist Church of Rome. It was 'truly right and just' that we should join the Methodist minister in prayer in his church when Mary herself counted amongst her dearest friends and benefactors Protestants and those of other faiths. Hopefully the media throng that awaited us outside recognised this sign of our continuing commitment to ecumenism.

### *Preparing the Roman ceremonies*

The traditional Roman Catholic liturgies for the canonisation of a saint are a prayer Vigil, the Rite of Canonisation during a Papal Mass and a Mass of Thanksgiving to honour

the officially named saint. A number of AAL members were part of the canonisation liturgy committee, headed by Peter Williams that met over many months. Amongst the tasks for which we were responsible, was preparing the two ceremonies that took place either side of the Canonisation: the Vigil Celebration of the Life of Mary MacKillop, held in Auditorium Conciliazione, and the thanksgiving Mass that took place at St Paul's Outside the Walls.

The liturgies and some of the challenges faced by those who co-ordinate liturgy from afar have been described in *Liturgy News* (40/4). Here I will restrict my remarks to one or two that might be of interest to this readership.

***The Vigil Celebrating the life of Blessed Mary MacKillop***

In the ancient Christian tradition a prayer vigil is a time for keeping watch on the night before a religious festival or some other significant occasion. Its tone is anticipatory and memorial is a central element of this liturgy. With this in mind we decided to retell aspects of the story of Mary MacKillop, and focus our worship on one aspect of her spirituality. The Australian Catholic University was invited to repeat a concert they had performed a year earlier to mark the hundredth anniversary of Mary MacKillop's death. This was a celebration of Mary's life in drama and song. We prepared a Liturgy of Word with a focus on the cross in Mary's life.

The ceremony evolved and developed. At first we saw the concert and the liturgy as two separate events. Over time we decided to meld the two components – concert and worship – into one Vigil celebration, but not until we had faced a number of challenges. Each component of the Vigil had a different character. How would we link the two together? The liturgy of its very nature needed to be inclusive and participatory, while a concert entertains the audience. How would we make the transition from spectator to full involvement?

The concert was spectacular, a professional production that exuded the dynamism and energy of the young people who were the performers and musicians. Would the prayer seem like an add-on, an emotional letdown or even worse, an afterthought?

After some deliberation and careful choices we did produce one seamless Vigil. This occurred largely because the producers of the concert understood Christian liturgy and the liturgists knew the significance of ritual, gesture and symbol in worship. Fortunately the World Youth Day cross was available and when placed on centre stage became a focal point of the celebration. The actors told Mary's story with the cross as backdrop. The final song of the first part of the celebration moved us into a more reflective mood. We completed the transition by turning up the house lights and processing a group of people from the auditorium onto the stage. The audience moved to become an assembly with the simple invitation to stand and join in song.

Those who accompanied the book of the gospel ceremonially onto the stage were carefully chosen to represent the diversity of pilgrims and were identifiable by their distinctive national dress. After the scriptures were enthroned at the place of the word all then returned to their places in the assembly. As each scripture passage was proclaimed a comparable word from the writing of Mary MacKillop was read by one of the Sisters from the place of the World Youth Day cross. Having dwelt on the significance of the cross in Mary's life we were invited to recognise and accept the cross in our own lives. This was ritualised by the pilgrims (who had processed the book of the gospels earlier) returned to the stage to reverence the cross, each according to the custom of their country of origin.

The Vigil ended to the rousing strains of 'On Penola's Plains,' written by Australian composer Michael Herry and set to the familiar melody of Gustav Holst's *the Planets*, but not until we were sent forth with a blessing to rest in anticipation of the celebration of the morrow.

***The Papal Mass of the Canonisation of Mary MacKillop and five other saints***

A declaration of universal sanctity is always announced by the pope as head of the Catholic Church. It is fitting that this takes place in St Peter's Square. When I arrived early at the Vatican on the morning of 17 October I soon became caught up in the excitement as busloads of people bearing the colours of one of the six saints to be canonised poured into the Square. Needless to say the Australian groups were obvious – not just because of the distinctive brown and yellow aboriginal motif pilgrim scarves but also because of their noisy enthusiasm!



The excitement of the previous night was heightened as pilgrims gathered in joyous procession from all parts of the world. They could not miss the six portraits, including an image of Mary MacKillop that hung from the pillars of St Peter's Basilica. There was no need for an unveiling during the ceremony – this is a ritual for a beatification ceremony. It is assumed that by the time a saint is to be canonised her image is familiar and has served as an icon leading those who are inspired by her to Christ.

The anticipation led to palpable excitement as each saint was heralded with word and song. But just before the

official procession, we were instructed that there was to be no spontaneous acclamations during the ceremony, even at the moment of the pronouncement of sainthood by Benedict XVI. This I found a strange pronouncement, and hardly in continuity with our tradition where there is evidence from Patristic sources and even as late as during the Eucharistic Prayer in 13th century England, that spontaneity has been part of the Roman liturgy.<sup>1</sup>

In our own time the assembly is invited to acknowledge a couple at a wedding, a priest at ordination or a newly baptised Christian. And yet we were directed not to respond to the joyous moment of canonisation.

I have since pondered this directive and speculated about the reasons. I initially assumed that there would be provision in the ceremony for the assembly to respond in a formal manner. I recalled the Beatification ceremony at Randwick Racecourse in 1995, when immediately after Mary was announced blessed by Pope John Paul II the choir and assembly broke into a triumphant singing of the Gloria as dancers surrounded the altar in a movement of praise or moved through the aisles enveloping the assembly with blue ribbons.

Instead, after hearing from the procurators who assured the pope of each candidate's sanctity, Benedict XVI declared in Latin that the names of Mary MacKillop and her companions would be entered into the book of the saints. The choir then sang an alleluia and the assembly remained silent, some not even sure that the rite had occurred. This was followed by a procession of relics was presented to the pontiff and the Mass continued. Ritually it felt like an anticlimax for many.

### ***The Mass of Thanksgiving for Saint Mary MacKillop***

The Mass of Thanksgiving was celebrated the day after the Canonisation ceremony. The original St Paul's Basilica was built in the Constantinian era and after it was destroyed by fire, it was rebuilt; its replica grand and extremely large. It comfortably held the more than four thousand pilgrims who arrived for the Mass. As soon as the presider, Cardinal Pell, mentioned St Mary MacKillop in his introductory remarks, a cheer and applause echoed throughout the basilica. The assembly was permitted to voice its excitement in a manner that had not been possible the day before. Rather than detract from the solemnity of the occasion this spontaneous response set the tone for a wonderful celebration of praise and thanksgiving.

If the pilgrims were asked for their strongest memory of the celebration at St Paul's some might say: the emotional charge of so many Australians gathered in a magnificent Roman Basilica, and the sound of thousands singing with one voice. But an equally

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<sup>1</sup> Jungmann, J: *The Mass of the Roman Rite*, New York: Benziger Brothers Inc., 1950, vol. 1, 119-122.



strong memory is the procession of ‘first peoples’ who brought gifts, including bread and wine, to the table of Eucharist. The sharp and familiar sound of the didgeridoo heralded the hymn that accompanied the procession with gifts, which was especially composed for the occasion by Australian Jesuit Christopher Willcock. Many would not have realised at the time that the didgeridoo that sounded at the entrance to the Basilica was but a few metres from the place where a teenage Australian aboriginal Benedictine (and perhaps more than one) was buried many years ago.<sup>2</sup>

The procession was led by a cross that had been crafted by aboriginal Australians and transported from Brisbane especially for the event. The dancers were followed by Torres Strait Islanders, Maori, Timor Leste

and Peruvians, each bearing gifts and dressed traditionally. Two Sisters of St Joseph brought bread and wine. The dignity and reverence of these people whose own people suffer such degradation and oppression and live in abject poverty was not lost on any of us. It was also significant that these first peoples were the gift bearers because although most in the assembly probably had a greater abundance of material gifts to offer, these ‘first’ people were the strongest sign of the face of the suffering Christ whose memorial of death and resurrection we were celebrating.

In the sixty thousand year Australian history there have been many heroes and many unnamed saints. Perhaps the challenge from the experiences of the canonisation of St Mary MacKillop is to find a way to acknowledge and ritualise these heroes, and to include at least some of them in our own calendar of saints and holy people.

<sup>2</sup> Six aboriginal students were sent over to Italy from New Norcia to study as monks. One of them, Francis Xavier Conaci, is known to have died at St Paul’s outside the walls on the 10th October 1853 at the age of 17, and is reputed to have been buried there. It is possible that some others of the six could also be buried there.

**Mary MacKillop: The pilgrimage in Rome**  
**Monica Barlow rsj**



On 28th March 1873, Mary MacKillop left Adelaide by coastal steamer to travel across the Great Australian Bight for Albany, Western Australia where she would join the mail-steamer Bangalore bound for Europe. She travelled alone as there was no money for more than one fare. At this time Italy was not safe for religious because of the political and social tension between church and state that surrounded unification and the diminishment of the Papal States, and so she travelled as a widow, Mrs MacDonald (her mother's maiden name). So, why did she undertake such a difficult journey?

In the seven years of its existence the fledging Australian Congregation of the Sisters of St Joseph had come to learn that relying on the good graces of diocesan bishops was a risky business. At first very willing to give their approbation to the rule of the Sisters, the bishops of two of the dioceses in which they were working changed their minds and wanted control of the affairs of the Congregation and it seemed clear that a third bishop was going the same way. Mary's excommunication at the hands of the Bishop of Adelaide and the disbanding of the Sisters showed clearly the uncertainty surrounding this group of women. Though loved and appreciated by the people for their work with those living in poverty and on the margins of society, the Sisters of St Joseph lived in a way that was radically different from that of the European religious that the bishops and priests had hitherto known. Mary was advised that the only way that the Congregation could flourish was to have the Rule sanctioned by the Holy See. Having no experience of how long this might take, Mary assured the sisters that she would be home by Christmas. It was in fact sixteen months and many unexpected experiences later that Mary finally arrived back in Australia.

In October 2010 about 5000 Australians made their way to Rome to see Mary recognised as a saint by the Catholic Church. They were joined there by people from other countries who were related to her or who had been inspired by her living of the gospel life. Among the great ceremonies to mark the occasion there was also the opportunity to take a pilgrimage walk to those places that were significant to Mary during her stay in Rome.

In doing so, these pilgrims were joining the thousands of people through the ages for whom pilgrimage was an important part of their Christian journey as indeed it is among most of the world's religions. While the popularity of pilgrimage has waxed and waned over the years, our times have seen considerable interest in going on pilgrimage even from those who would not class themselves as religious. In our days of travel comfortable to a degree that our forebears would never have imagined many people are choosing to walk long distances, stay in simple accommodation eating simple fare and put up with all manner of inconvenience that they avoid at all costs in their normal lives. Somehow this experience of going on pilgrimage puts them in touch with a deeper reality and experience of life that is missing in their everyday existence. This discovery has of course been intimately known in the great religious traditions.

The sense of pilgrimage seems to respond to a profound need of the human being to go beyond the limits of ordinary experience into the realm of the beyond, and pilgrimage sites seem to have the force of geographical biological-spiritual magnet attracting to the pilgrims into the realm of life-giving mystery. Yet pilgrimage sites are not ends in themselves, but often serve as thresholds into new stages of life. One does not go as a pilgrim to stay, but to pass through a privileged experience that will change us in unsuspected and uncontrolled ways so that we return to ordinary life in a completely new way.<sup>1</sup>

Thus this Roman pilgrimage walk hoped to be of help to people wanting to get more deeply in touch with the life and spirituality of Mary MacKillop and, even more than that, to be open to how Mary's experience of her God might touch into their own experience of God.

Putting together such a pilgrimage was greatly helped by having access to both the diaries Mary kept during that time and the numerous letters she wrote to the Sisters and her family and friends. These provided an insight not only into the places that became important for her but also into the people that helped her and into her own growing awareness of how God was working in her life through these experiences. As well, it was important to link Mary's experience with that of the pilgrim, and so each station included a question and time to help pilgrims reflect. At various points along the way, this was gathered together in prayer. What follows is a small part of that pilgrimage walk.

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<sup>1</sup> Virgil Elizondo, 'title,' *Concilium* 4 (London: SCM Press, 1996), ix.

## PILGRIM ROUTE 1

### *Station 1.*

#### *Stazione Termini – Main Railway Station*

Welcome to Rome.



*It was 9.30 pm on May 11th, 1873 by the time I arrived here after the six weeks at sea and then the long train trip from Brindisi via Foggia and Caserta. We had got into Brindisi at 12 am; it was very cold and wet. I always thank my good God for looking after me on the way here especially to have the company of Uncle Sandy Cameron and his second wife Ellen. It was hard to leave them at Foggia to continue the journey alone. I arrived in Caserta at 6.30 am and remained in the waiting room till 11.15, had coffee there, and started for Rome. They (Uncle Sandy and Ellen) had been put to much annoyance by the Custom House officers, and they feared I might have been the same. There had been an attempt made to get me a pass-port, but without success. When I found that it could not be got, I resolved to put my whole trust in our good God and thus reached my destination without any of the annoyances to which my friends had been subjected.*

*A kind friend whom I had met on the mail boat gave me the name of a hotel, so that even though it was late, with little luggage, it was not too difficult to make my way to*

*the Anglo-Americano Hotel even though I was feeling very tired, weak and hungry. It was hard to believe that I had finally arrived and I was full of hope and expectation that soon our Rule would be approved by the Holy See and that many of our difficulties and problems would be resolved. I little realised that first night that it would be almost two years before I once more returned home.*

Mary speaks of being full of hope and expectation as she begins her time in Rome.

- When have I experienced a time that was full of hope and expectation?
- How has this hope and expectation been sustained in my life journey?

**Station 7.**

***Convitto San Tommaso, Via degli Ibersesi 20 (formerly Monastero della Compassione and before that the first Irish College in Rome)***

*It was Monsignor Kirby who arranged for me to reside here with dear nuns who thought they could not do enough to show their charity and love, even though they spoke French and so communication was very difficult although one novice spoke a little English. I had such a nice room and from the windows could see many old ruins.*



*I often found Italian ways of doing things very different from what I knew and the food seemed rather strange but very enjoyable. It was such a blessing to join the Sisters in their Chapel for Mass and Rosary, the Office and often Benediction when I was well enough. There were many mornings when I could not get up especially as the summer progressed and the heat became almost intolerable for me. Though I loved Rome, Rome did not love me, for after the first month I was scarcely a day well in it. I would come home weak and tired and the Sisters were so kind and concerned for me.*

*Here I could find the quiet and space necessary for me to write the documents that were needed to facilitate the process for the approval of the Rule and could meet with Monsignor Kirby and Fr Anderledy. When I could, I would write letters*

*to those back home who were awaiting news. I often found it hard to get enough time to write as there were many demands on me that I had not anticipated.*

*With the Sisters here, there was no need for explanations about my travelling as Mrs MacDonal as they too were affected by the troubles besetting our beloved Church at*

*this time. Many religious houses were taken over by the State and used for government offices and military headquarters. They made it possible for me to get to St Peter's for the audiences with the Holy Father and took me to visit many beautiful Churches, the like of which I would never see in Australia! I knew that many difficulties would probably arise, but, in some way, I did not fear them.*

Mary suffered with persistent ill health while in Rome and said that the Sisters here could not do enough to show their charity and love.

- Who have been the people along the way who have shown me incredible kindness, love and hospitality during times of struggle in my life?
- What has that gift of kindness and hospitality meant for me?

Let us pray...

Psalm 46

*Litany of Thanks* (based on the reflection questions of Stations 1 - 7)

For the hope and expectation that has sustained our life journey,

*Response: We give praise and thanks.*

For the times of awareness of God's providence in our lives, *R.*

For those who have been influential in shaping our life of faith, *R.*

For those pools of quiet where we are able to be with our God in an intimate way, *R.*

For the people along the way who have shown us incredible kindness, love and hospitality during times of struggle, *R.*

For the friends that have stood by us in times of challenge, *R.*

For... *R.*

For... *R.*

Bountiful God

You are our good God, the Giver of all gifts,  
we praise you, the source of all we have and are.

Teach us to acknowledge always

the many good things your infinite love has given us.

Help us to love you with all our heart and all our strength.

We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.

In working with the Company organising groups to take the pilgrimage walk, quite an amount of time was spent discussing and exploring what pilgrimage is about and how it is different from a tour. The results were well worth the effort as they wholeheartedly entered into making this time of pilgrimage a significant one. They set up a pilgrim route with street signs and banners at each station. They made sure that guides understood what was involved in pilgrimage, giving adequate time for reflection and prayer. All this was a significant contribution to making the experience one into which the pilgrims could enter deeply and wholeheartedly.

That this happened for many pilgrims is evident from the many spoken and written responses received.

“The acts of simple kindness given and received along the way have left a mark that will forever remain in the heart. That by listening and caring for each other, we like Mary are called to be the human expression of God’s love in our world today.”

“We followed the steps of Mary MacKillop today and our lives have been transformed. My life will never be the same after hearing and reflecting on the journey of Mary MacKillop’s life.”

There is little doubt that this time away from home and all that was familiar to her profoundly changed Mary MacKillop herself. Being in foreign countries in uncertain times and with no one she knew to offer support, Mary learned a greater self-reliance based deeply in her growing complete trust in her God. She returned to Australia not only with a Rule for the Congregation but also with a clear vision of what living out that Rule meant for herself and for the sisters and so she was able to staunchly defend that Rule in the face of opposition. As she reflects on this time, she is aware of just how life-changing a transformation she has undergone:

*I see some wise design of our good God’s in it all. All the suspense and mental conflicts I have had, together with some other passing things, has had a wonderful and, I hope, a lasting effect upon my mind. I feel more trust in God than ever, more hope for the Institute, and more love for the awe-full mystery of God’s ways. I see how much He expects of us all and how much glory we can give Him if we are but faithful... Let us all have courage. I shall leave Rome with a happy and grateful heart. Let us thank God for all.<sup>2</sup>*

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<sup>2</sup> Letter to Bishop Reynolds, 13 April 1874.

*Conference reports*

**AAL 2011 Conference – Three Liturgies, Four Venues and Five Experiences**

**Steve Millington**

One of the highlights of the 2011 AAL Conference in Melbourne was the time spent in worship. This short report of the liturgies at the 2011 Conference describes five experiences at four different venues consisting of three basic liturgies.

The liturgies were prepared by Nathan Nettleton<sup>1</sup> with the following principles in mind:

- Liturgies at a liturgical studies conference do not have to meet the usual criteria of familiarity and broad acceptability. They can contribute to the learning experience of the conference by stretching boundaries and breaking rules in ways that might provoke spirited discussion and debate.
- In keeping with the conference theme, the liturgies intentionally worked within some of the constraints that small and under-resourced churches often face; most notably, singing without instrumental accompaniment. However, so that delegates were able to enjoy the organs in the various chapels we visit, they were played as participants arrived and departed from each liturgy.

The five liturgies of the 2011 AAL Conference were held in four different locations to allow delegates to experience the range of chapels available in the Melbourne University College precinct. The five experiences consisted of a gathering, three services of Morning Prayer and a closing liturgy. The Morning Prayers utilised one liturgical format with minor variations, though the style and setting meant that the three services were very different.

***Gathering Liturgy 7:00 p.m. Monday  
Trinity College Chapel***

Both the gathering and the closing liturgies took place in the (Anglican) Trinity College chapel. The opening was focused around the Word and the Renewal of Baptismal Faith. The structure was fourfold: a Gathering, Service of the Word, Celebration of Unity through Baptism, and a Sending Forth.

The powerful expression of unity through our baptism was the high point of the liturgy, which was an appropriately meaningful way to start the conference. All present were invited to come forward to the baptismal font,



<sup>1</sup> This report is written with thanks to Nathan Nettleton for the background information provided in the conference liturgy booklets which is replicated here.

and receive a blessing from another member of the academy, following which they gave that same blessing to another member. This blessing was the declaration ‘Sister/Brother, we are one in Christ. Alleluia,’ which was accompanied by tracing the forehead with water from the font. The person receiving the blessing responded, ‘We are one indeed. Alleluia.’ This tactile blessing, like the imposition of ashes on Ash Wednesday, was powerfully symbolic, both demonstrating and creating unity.

***Morning Prayer 8:30 a.m. Tuesday  
Chapel of the Holy Spirit, Newman College***

In this magnificently austere chapel, the liturgy was conducted in a Roman Catholic fashion but utilising non-Roman texts, complete with processional and incense. The structure was a gathering, praise, word, intercessions, and a sending.

The liturgy was the same each morning with minor variations found in: the opening hymn, the expression of gratitude and honour to those in whose premises we worshipped, the opening saying of Jesus, the Psalm, and the scripture reading. Additionally, for the Tuesday Morning Prayer, the personal petitions during the intercessions were made silently, while on the other two days everyone was invited to offer free prayers out loud or silently.

The austere classic stone chapel, the procession, the incense and the silence during the intercessions created a feeling of formality and order; something very familiar to many conference delegates. As one friend remarked afterwards, ‘Ah the sweet smell of incense in the morning.’

***Morning Prayer 8:30 a.m. Wednesday  
Centre for Theology and Ministry (UCA)***

One thing that is being tried to help some small congregations, especially those who have to share a presider, is to share resources via audio-visual hook-ups so that a single liturgy can span two locations. This was not one service being beamed to an audience elsewhere, but a two-way link that allowed interactive participation from both locations. So in our prayers on Wednesday morning, we replicated something of this experience, even though the two locations were within the one building.



The technology was good enough for those in each venue to hear and see on screen what was happening in the other venue. The presider and the cantor were not in the same room, and apart from the video and audio links, had no form of communication, so both had to be very clear about their responsibilities in the liturgy. The successful operation of the technology was imperative for the liturgy to flow without unwarranted interruption or distraction. The process worked well (much to Nathan’s relief).

In the past the technology necessary to make this interactive shared liturgy work would have been unavailable, too expensive or too complicated for members of small congregations. All that is changing, and the experience of Wednesday Morning Prayers at the 2011 AAL Conference proved it could work. There was a fair degree of novelty to the conference experience, but with regular use that such novelty would wear off and the worship experience could, I believe, come close to one where all felt as though they were co-located. And that raises an interesting question: do the words spoken and the liturgical actions performed in one location have the same efficacy in another, especially in regard to the Eucharist?

***Morning Prayer 8:30 a.m. Thursday  
Queen's College Chapel***

In this Methodist (now Uniting) space, with its pews facing each other in classic Oxbridge chapel mode, we followed another approach to conducting liturgies in the absence of a regular presider. It came from the ethos of the radical reformation, which took greater liberties with the liturgical possibilities of the priesthood of all believers. The various prayers were distributed among the congregation and almost everything was led from among the people, not from the front.



Many of the Morning Prayer booklets used for the conference had been marked with coloured highlighters. Persons who received one of these marked booklets read the portion highlighted at the appropriate point in the liturgy. The liturgy ran smoothly, though the uncertainty of where the next speaker was seated / standing made for a service with unexpected flow around the congregation. Nevertheless it worked, and provided an unusual liturgical experience for most who were used to a central presider (or presiders.)

Following the service many lingered to admire the somewhat unexpected range of stained glass windows, including an exceptional set of 1920s glass behind the altar-table depicting scenes from the life of Christ, a magnificent rose window above of the Ascended Christ, several of saints and doctors of the church: the Venerable Bede, St Francis, St Bernard and Abelard (beside each other!), and John Wesley (a modern window by Louis Kahan). Two extraordinary windows are placed high on the quadrangle side, an earlier contemporary window representing Noah's Ark connected by a new window (2010 by David Wright with glass work which has been layered), depicting the Baptism of Christ, set in central Australia and the Mary River in flood, the Holy Spirit represented by a Rainbow Bee-eater bird. It is dedicated to the memory of the late Professor Eric Osborn. Queen's Chapel certainly has some of Melbourne's most outstanding stained glass.

***Closing Liturgy 11:00 a.m. Thursday  
Trinity College Chapel***

Back where we held the gathering liturgy (in Trinity College Chapel), the closing liturgy

focussed around the Word, lament for our inability to all share together at the table, and our Sending out on Mission. While the gathering liturgy was able to celebrate unity through baptism, the closing liturgy lamented our inability to celebrate communion for, as the words in the invitation said, 'If I break the bread, some of you will not be permitted to come. If we change places, there are some of us who you will not be permitted to invite.' Nevertheless we were invited to stand before the table, feel the pain but to know that in Christ, 'suffering can be redemptive.'



A Prayer of Great Thanksgiving followed a Eucharistic pattern up to the institution narrative, which was cut short with a recognition that we were 'divided by our allegiances to powers who will not recognise each other.' The cry 'How Long, O Lord, How long?' reflected the feeling of those gathered; a yearning for unity and complete communion. The

prayer concluded with a plea for forgiveness, an epiclesis that the Holy Spirit would come and 'brood over us, your broken people' (rather than bread and wine), and a petition that we might be the real presence of Christ for the world until the eschatological banquet where our inability to share at table would end forever. Then followed a Sharing of the Peace, and the liturgy ended with a powerful Sending Forth; a commission to go with 'eyes open for signs of God's kingdom emerging', to bring hope and unity, and to make love our first work.

While the truths recognised in the liturgy were painful, there was a strong awareness that verbalising these truths achieved a deeper level of worship and unity. There was also a perception of redemption through the shared pain that all experienced. This redemption was keenly felt during the Sharing of the Peace and it gave the Sending Forth a deep sense of calling to members of AAL to continue on their journey together despite the many challenges we all face.

After the Sending Forth, Paul Taylor played 'Carillon' by Herbert Murrill (1909-1952) on the chapel organ. This rousing piece of music, played exceptionally well, provided a cathartic and uplifting experience with which to end the conference. All remained listening, not chatting, just absorbing the sound and the feeling with which it was played.

### ***Final Comments***

The liturgies are often a highlight of AAL Conferences and the 2011 conference was no different. This year we were further enriched by the variety of locations and styles, where delegates enjoyed a twofold benefit; they enjoyed excellent liturgy as well as learning from the experiences. Three liturgies in four locations resulted in five very different, but enriching experiences. Nathan Nettleton is to be commended for his outstanding preparation of them.

*News from the Chapters*

**Queensland**

The Queensland chapter met on 5th April, greatly enjoying the hospitality of Fr Joe Duffy at Stella Maris in Maroochydore. We were delighted that Jim McPherson and John de Lange came down from Maryborough for the gathering, and we welcomed new member, Erica Marshall, to her first chapter meeting. John Fitz-herbert gave a stimulating presentation on some aspects of his doctoral thesis, tentatively titled ‘Saying Sorry to First Australians: implications for Roman Catholic liturgy’, which develops intersections between the civic rituals of National Sorry Day and the church’s National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Sunday in the context of an ethnographic engagement with members of local Indigenous communities. The next chapter meeting will be at St Francis Theological College on 7th June, when Tom Elich will present some of his research into the representation of sacraments on baptismal fonts in European churches. The complete 2011 meeting schedule is on the AAL website.

*Inari Thiel*

**New South Wales**

The first of our five meetings for the year was well attended. After sharing about our recent activities, lively discussion ensued from the very thought-provoking paper presented by Stephen Burns on Presiding in Liturgy. As always the hospitality provided by the Caroline Chisholm Centre at Pennant Hills was much appreciated.

*Monica Barlow rsj*

**Victoria**

Meeting Details: We meet from 4:30 pm to 6 pm on the second Wednesday of March, May, July, September and November at St Francis Pastoral Centre, Lonsdale Street Melbourne.

At the January 2011 AAL Conference the VIC Chapter members chose Stephen Millington for the role of the Chapter convener.

The first chapter meeting of the year was held on 16th March. (The normal meeting date of the second Wednesday of March was Ash Wednesday, so the meeting was delayed one week.) At that meeting we discussed the question: ‘Can the words spoken and the liturgical actions performed in one location have the same efficacy in another, especially for the Eucharist, when those words and actions are conveyed over a two way electronic communication medium, such as Skype or video conferencing?’ This discussion originated from one of the morning prayer liturgies at the AAL Conference where an audio-visual hook-ups was used to enable a single liturgy to span two locations. (This was not one service being beamed to an audience elsewhere, but a two-way link that allowed interactive participation from both locations.) We had an extremely interesting discussion and a stimulating evening.

At our next meeting (11th May) we intend to discuss involvement in planning and conduct of multi-faith services that follow large disasters such as the recent floods, earthquakes and tsunamis.

*Steve Millington*

### **South Australia**

The Adelaide Chapter of the AAL currently represents four traditions: Lutheran, Uniting, Ukrainian Catholic and Roman Catholic. Since our Anglican member moved to Melbourne, we are without an Anglican representative but hope that can be rectified later this year.

Our meetings are held in a different location each time we gather in order to have a sense of each person's 'context' and visit their place of worship. We choose a particular topic for each meeting, and different people take turns at leading the discussion. Currently we are on our second round of discussing the liturgy and theology of our various initiation rites. This topic has engendered so much discussion that it will be continued for yet a third time at our next meeting in June. Given the size of our group (7 at most) and the heavy workloads of each member, we meet four times a year and this seems to work better in terms of attendance than when we met more frequently. Our third meeting for 2011 will be held in the Ukrainian parish where Dr. Paul Babie will speak about the liturgical space and iconography of the Ukrainian Catholic rite.

*Ilsa Neicinieks RSM.*

### **Western Australia**



The chapter had its first meeting for the year in March. We had a good attendance and a very celebratory air was obvious. The members congratulated Angela McCarthy on her election as President and expressed their confidence in her for the task. We are also particularly grateful to John McCarthy and Rev. John Dunn for taking on the task of Secretary and Treasurer respectively. The members who were not able to be present at the conference in Melbourne were very interested in hearing how successful it had been and that there were many moving

moments during the time together. We also spent time in talking and reflecting on our final gathering of the year 2010. Those who were able to go reflected on the experience of meeting together at New Norcia Benedictine Monastery in December. It was agreed by all that this must be an annual event if possible. Whilst we did not have a text to discuss at our meeting it was nevertheless a rich time together and we are looking forward to our bi-monthly meetings for the rest of the year.

*Viv Larkin*

*Book Reviews*

Gail, Ramshaw, *Christian Worship: 100 000 Sundays of Symbols and Rituals* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2009).

Ramshaw offers an accessible, back-to-basics introduction to Christian worship. Nothing is taken for granted. Even the most elementary terms such as Bible, church, symbol, liturgy and doctrine are defined. Christian worship is placed in its anthropological and sociological context of human ritual and rites of passage, the variety of cultural contexts in which Christianity has found a place, and the history of Christian thought and practice itself.

The first three chapters introduce basic vocabulary and concepts for Christianity, symbols and rituals. A set of five chapters follows developments in Christian worship practice from 100 000, 75 000, 50 000, 25 000 and 10 000 Sundays ago. One chapter is specifically devoted to Baptism, with Eucharist having been amply covered in the preceding set of chapters. A quick survey of Christian worship outside Sunday services is offered, followed by a chapter which provides some comparisons between Christian worship, that of the other two 'peoples of the book' (that is, Judaism and Islam) and then other religious traditions including Hinduism, Buddhism, indigenous religions and contemporary syncretistic variations. The final chapter gives twelve principles for the way in which Christian worship (and to some extent, ritual generally) affects the daily life of worshippers.

The layout of the text draws out key words, definitions, important quotes and diagrams that contribute helpfully to the explanations offered. There are some beautiful full-colour illustrations in the centre of the book. These illustrations include images from the Roman catacombs, a Reformation altar-piece, and a modern icon of dancing saints including Elizabeth I at St Gregory of Nyssa Episcopal Church, San Francisco.

Each chapter ends with a list of suggested activities ranging from straight vocabulary recall through discussion of popular culture examples (e.g. films such as *Whale Rider* 2003), suggestions for personal reflection and visits to particular worship and other cultural settings. A list of suggested further reading is also supplied for each chapter.

In an Australian theological college context where background awareness of the basics of Christian worship cannot be assumed, this text would make a very useful pre-reading assignment for an introductory worship class. It would be a good basis for a secondary or TAFE sector religious studies course on Christianity. A parish or congregational study group could have a lot of fun with the material, and learn a lot in the process. *Christian Worship* is a welcome inclusion to material that helps make sense of the Christian faith in a contemporary, multi-faith and secular world.

Anita Munro

Janet Wootton, *This is our Song: Women's Hymn-Writing* (Peterborough: Epworth Press, 2010).

Janet Wootton is Minister of Union Chapel, London, and Founder and Co-chair of the International Congregational Theological Commission. In *This is Our Song*, she has sought to gather insights from various women composers who have made an extensive contribution to hymnody through the centuries.

Wootton has been involved with Church music since her childhood. After her ordination within the Methodist tradition in the United Kingdom, she became involved with the compilation of the Methodist resource: *Hymns & Psalms*. Over the past fifteen years, she has worked with and interviewed many women who are established hymn writers, and researched early hymnals from as far back as the eighteenth century. As she 'trawled through the books of the "hymn explosion" of the 1960s to 1980s' (ix) she came to realise that male hymn writers dominated the publications, and the number of women writers was very small 'sometimes less than 1%'.

The book is written in two parts. Part One Wootton by detailing some significant historical developments. The first chapter is entitled 'Virgins, Visionaries and Heretics', commenting on the fact that 'very little writing of hymns by women survives from the first millennium' (3). However, in spite of the culture of the time, women such as Macrina, Marcellina, Paula, Marcella, influenced the writing of poetry & hymnody. Other women of influence were Heloise (1101-64), and Hildegard of Bingen (1078-1179) -- a giant of medieval women's hymn-writing, whose work has been rediscovered and translated in recent years after being 'banned' for a certain period of her life. The chapter 'Reforms in Theology and Technology' deals with the publication of hymnbooks and the writing of hymns during the late middle ages and into early modern times.

The Reformation had a huge influence in some parts of Europe, on education of women, and the invention of printing had an impact of the ready access of hymn texts, and opened up the spread of women's writing. A further chapter is devoted to 'The Nineteenth Century: Evangelical and Evangelistic, and Political and Social Revolution'. This is followed by reflections with a more contemporary focus, called 'Explosions and Outpourings'. Here, Wootton cites the publication of *Hymns Ancient and Modern* as a landmark in hymnody of the mid-nineteenth century. However, very few texts by women hymn writers were included. Other significant hymnbooks published were *The English Hymnal* (1906), and *Songs of Praise* (1925, with a later edition in 1931). The explosion of the more contemporary style of hymnody began in the mid-twentieth century. The lack of women hymn-writers was still evident even with this development, though some were beginning to emerge as significant, such as: Eleanor Farjeon and Jan Struther, Emily Chisholm, Rosamund Herklots, Marion Collihole, and Valerie Dunn.

Within the Roman Catholic Church, there was an explosion of a different kind of hymns following the Second Vatican Council. The publication in 1971 of *New Catholic*

*Hymnal* responded to the demand for singing that had been evident in the Churches of the Reformation. Catholics were now singing at Mass! A plethora of hymnals began to be published, but the number of female writers were, again, few. However, one of significant person of note was Estelle White (1925-2011), whom Wootton had interviewed for the journal *Feminist Theology* (of which Wootton is a co-editor) in 1991. Many of her texts were written with children or young people in mind, and are contained in *Celebration Hymnal* (1984) and *New Songs of Celebration* (1989). Towards the end of Part One, Wootton reflects on the development of the charismatic movement and its influence on hymnody. She cites the work of the Iona Community who explores the women of the Bible, and opens up some discussion of feminine language and imagery for God. Here, she deals with insights from many contemporary hymn-writers from parts of Europe, North America, Australia and New Zealand. The extensive footnotes at the conclusion of Part One are indicative of the breadth of Wootton's scholarship and a rich resource for those who wish to explore this topic in depth.

In Part Two of this book, Wootton includes ten portraits of contemporary hymn-writers – Marian Collihole, Elizabeth Cosnett, Marjorie Dobson, Ruth Duck, Kathy Galloway, Sue Gilmurray, Shirley Erena Murray, Cecily Taylor, June Boyce-Tillman, and an interview with Betty Carr Pulkingham. All of these women tell the story of their journey to influence in church music – a journey so often challenging and complex. This Part explores some of their hymn-texts, and shows the influences on their writing by spiritual leaders and prophets of our time such as Mother Teresa of Calcutta. Finally, Wootton's bibliography is a library in itself! The sources include early and medieval, early modern to eighteenth century, nineteenth century, twentieth and twenty-first century and general. She also includes sources of hymns, poems and translations. I recommend this book as an excellent resource for students of church music, particularly those who are seeking to explore the scholarship of Wootton's research into women who have made a huge contribution to hymn writing through the centuries of Christian worship from the beginnings of Christianity, through the Middle Ages into the modern era.

Ursula O'Rourke

Kimberly Bracken Long, *The Worshiping Body: The Art of Leading Worship* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2009).

Kimberly Bracken Long is assistant professor of worship at Columbia Theological Seminary, a college of the Presbyterian Church in the USA, in Decatur on the outskirts of Atlanta, Georgia. She formerly held a role in the national worship office of PCUSA, which is relevant to her opening gambit that she 'write[s] from a Reformed theological framework'. She adds immediately, however, that she has also 'been informed by leaders of the liturgical renewal movement in North America' (3). So Gordon Lathrop (a Lutheran) is the first person she quotes, and Robert Hovda (Roman Catholic) the last. And in-between fragments from the like of Don Saliers (Methodist) and William Seth

Adams (Episcopal/Anglican) give shape to her own thought. Like those she quotes, she is especially indebted to Hovda, and his presiding ‘bible’ *Strong, Loving and Wise*, and in fact with this book she has written one of the best things on presiding since Hovda’s classic. She has achieved this not only by distilling the very best of the ecumenical literature on liturgical renewal by others (Lathrop and all the rest) but by ‘blending’ this with stories, poetry, prayer-text, memoir, discussion of scenes from cinema, and personal vignettes – and so making it her own, to tremendous effect. Throughout, her idiom is highly accessible, constantly manifesting a gracious way with words and a quite delightful style.

The result is a guide to presiding, ‘the art of leading prayer’, that can be put into the hands of liturgical leaders, lay and ordained alike, and which most certainly should command attention in communities of ministerial formation in the arts of Christian assembly. For not only does it provide vision of a ‘big picture’ in which to contemplate the tasks of leading prayer – Hovda on the work of ‘creating a kingdom scene’ and so on – it also gets down to the nitty-gritty of actual practice, attending, for example, to the sound of prayer, how posture and gesture communicate, thinking about looking and touching and the ways in which the body ‘shows’ and ‘tells’ (95). In fact the chapters are organized around awareness of different bodily experience: through eyes and ears, the mouth, hands, and feet. Bracken Long frames this discussion with reflection on the presider’s own calling ‘out of the body’ – that is, out of the communal body, the assembly – in such a way as to situate liturgical ministry firmly within its necessary communal context, and she ends by contemplating ‘the heart’, which the body seeks to express.

This book’s merits notwithstanding, it does have shadows – small ones, but there nevertheless. The cover is awful, giving no clue to the beauty beneath it. And when Bracken Long uses her own texts for prayer as examples (as, the prayers being otherwise unacknowledged, she presumably has done), these sometimes seem a tad banal compared to the treasure she draws from various liturgical directories and resources (and this seems odd, given the flair of her prose style in the main text). Most markedly, at one point there is a danger of her verging into a romanticization of poverty, in her tale of interacting with homeless persons in her home church. For although the reader learns that her church has a ‘homeless shelter’ (43), one might have wished for a more robust sense of the crucial interplay between presidency and the practice of pastoral care, including its ‘political’ dimensions. The consciousness elsewhere in the text about connecting ‘the sanctuary and the world’ rescue it from crashing around it’s underdeveloped accounts of what worship, and solidarity, with homeless persons may demand. But forewarned, readers should not be put off, and navigate this hazard. All in all, *The Worshiping Body* is an excellent book which will edify more than the Reformed and beyond North America. It could offer a great deal of help in the Uniting Church in Australia, and will encourage all who seek the churches’ liturgical renewal.

Stephen Burns

*Other liturgical news*

Press release: New Association of Pastoral Musicians

The Australian Pastoral Musicians Network Inc. (APMN), a new Not-for-Profit association of pastoral musicians and composers involved in liturgical, catechetical and religious music, is set to host its inaugural AGM in Sydney on Saturday 25 June, 2011 at 11am EST following a series of meetings over the past year.

This AGM will bring to fruition the vision of a group of composers and musicians who met in Sydney in July 2009 and resolved to work together to help make a national association a reality. A follow-up meeting in December drew interest and financial support from publishers such as the University of Notre Dame (Pastoral Liturgy Journal) and Willow Publishing (As One Voice).

The group's vision is for a national association, with regional chapters and special interest sections, providing networking and support for its members and having a significant role in evangelisation and the development and growth of a vibrant Church in Australia.

APMN includes a broad spectrum of musicians and singers, composers and publishers, teachers and educators, parishes and dioceses, clergy and other pastoral leaders involved in developing music ministry in the Church.

In the weeks leading up to the inaugural AGM, the interim steering committee for the APMN is looking to expand its current APMN membership. Membership is open to all who are involved or interested in pastoral music. Further information may be obtained from the website at [www.apmn.org.au](http://www.apmn.org.au) or by email to [secretary@apmn.org.au](mailto:secretary@apmn.org.au).

To nominate for the inaugural APMN Inc. committee or to vote for those nominated please visit the webpage [www.apmn.org.au](http://www.apmn.org.au) and download the appropriate forms. AGM meeting details are also available on the website.

For more information, contact:

Paul Mason  
Interim steering committee spokesperson  
0414 436 017

## **Our Contributors**

Sr **Monica Barlow** rsj and Sr **Carmel Pilcher** rsj were much involved in preparing the celebrations for the canonization of St Mary MacKillop, founder of their Community, in Rome in October 2010.

Rev. Dr **Stephen Burns** is book reviews editor for the *Australian Journal of Liturgy* and Research Fellow in Public and Contextual Theology, Charles Sturt University.

**Kerrie Handasyde** is Historian for Churches of Christ in Victoria and Tasmania, and Editor of the Australian Churches of Christ Historical Society's *Historical Digest*.

Rev. Dr **Gerard Kelly** is the President of the Catholic Institute of Sydney, where he lectures in Theology. He is chair of the Faith and Unity Commission of the National Council of Churches, and Co-chair of the Australian Lutheran–Roman Catholic Dialogue. His article is a modified version of a keynote address given at the Conference of the Australian Academy of Liturgy in Melbourne in January 2011.

Rev. Dr **Anita Monro** is an ordained minister of The Uniting Church in Australia, currently in placement in the Armidale Congregation, Presbytery of New England North West, Synod of NSW & ACT. She is an Academic Associate with the School of Theology of Charles Sturt University and Adjunct Faculty of United Theological College.

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