ANGLICANISM FOR AUSTRALIANS

Canberra Goulburn Schools Conference

3 June 2010

Bruce Kaye[1]

The New Testament if full of images of the Christians in order to describe their identity and how they should live out the terms of that identity. One of the most famous of these passages is Rom 6.3,4. 'Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? Therefore we have been buried with him by baptism into death, so that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the father so that we too might walk in newness of life.' Christians are baptized people.

IDENTITY AND TRADITIONS

What is said of the Christian individual is also said of the Christian group as in 1Peter where Christians are called a royal priesthood, a holy nation or resident aliens depending on the context.

Yet it remains the case that the Christian and the Christian community are pilgrims on a journey and their identity is being enlarged and grows as they themselves are changed from glory to glory, as they work out their salvation as God is at work in them.

What is true in these embryonic terms in the New Testament is true of the various traditions of Christian faith that have emerged over the course of time. Different

[1] This paper was first given at a conference of senior staff of the Anglican Schools in the dioceses of Canberra and Goulburn on 3 June 2010. The Anglican Schools Association was launched at that conference.

practices and traditions in church life emerged from the earliest times and are reported in the New Testament.

But we are concerned here with Anglicanism and that immediately places our question in the Christianity that was located in the far northwestern part of the Roman world.

Hadrian's wall running from Wallsend in the east to Bowness-on-Solway in the west was built in the second century to mark the far northern frontier of the Roman Empire. It draws attention to the fact that Britannia, what we today call England (and Wales) were very much on the periphery of the empire and developed their own style and culture. Those identifiable differences were beginning to appear by the eighth century and are recounted in Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People. This, like Manning Clark's History of Australia, set out to provide a narrative of the nation under review in the light of an idea of what the nation might become. In the case of Bede this was the Christianity that he came to learn in his monastery in Gateshead on the river Tyne just south of Newcastle. It was marked by close correlation between King and bishop, between church and people, with a strong sense of the role of monasticism in the church. It was also marked by an appeal to the early church and through that to the scriptures of the New Testament for its image of apostolic Christianity. Bede gave us the idea of a calendar that went back to the incarnation and saw scriptural commentary as key to fostering this apostolic early church identity that he wished to see flourish in his own land. This tradition has lived on and points to the time that belongs to the activity of God under which the church exists in contrast to secular time, which walks to a different beat. It reminds that we reside here as pilgrims and sojourners.

AN ENGLISH ANGLICAN STORY

But how might one characterise modern Anglicanism within this broad narrative of western Christianity? Four main traditions emerged out the tumult of the sixteenth century reformation. The Roman Catholic tradition consolidated its claims to universal jurisdiction that had been formally declared in 1075 by Pope Gregory VII. The Church of England emerged with its own tradition modified by the theology of the English reformers and Tudor political ambitions. But it remained in tact as a national church which was able reasonably to claim continuity with its pre-existing

traditions. Then there were the Lutheran churches and the Reformed or Presbyterian churches. Each looked to define their identity in terms of the theological emphases of their founding inspirations, Luther and Calvin. The Roman Catholic Church identified in this period with the theology of Thomas Aquinas, but the central definitional point of reference remained institutional. It was the Pope as the jurisdictional head of a clerical church organization.

Text and institution were the continuing points of reference for the identity of these particular church traditions. In common with other Christian traditions they also looked back to the origins of the faith and to key classic texts. They appealed to the early church and the early general councils[2] and the creeds that emerged from this period, the Apostles and Nicene creeds, though in ways which could be construed in terms of continuity with their own tradition's specific texts, narrative and institutions.

However Anglicanism, as represented at this stage by the Church of England, was different from the other three. The Church of England did not adopt any theologian as its founding teacher. Not even the widely influential Richard Hooker could qualify for such a status. Nor did it adopt an institutional structure that claimed universal or absolute authority. It continued the close enmeshment of spiritual and temporal powers both of which were presided over and were subservient to the crown through the Royal Supremacy. Its identity was that of a tradition of western Christianity that was shaped within a particular location – England. In other words it continued with an understanding of the church that was also a Christian nation. Ecclesiology thus became the factor of significant continuity into the modern period.

It is not easy for us to cast our minds back to the idea that a christian nation could think of itself as the church. The Royal Supremacy was the key theoretical model. The Crown represented the nation. The monarch thus had a responsibility for both the physical and spiritual aspects of the people. Under the sovereignty of the crown the

---

[2] The Church of England accepted the first four Councils. Nicaea, 325, condemned Arius and clarified dogmas of Christ's divinity. Constantinople, 381: expands third clause of creed to define the divinity of the Holy Spirit and condemned Apollinairius. Ephesus, 431, defined Christ as the incarnate word of God and identifies Mary and *theotokos*, God bearer, or mother of God. Chalcedon, 451, defines Christ as having divine and human nature in one person.

nation was made up of two parts, spiritual and temporal. The spiritual was the bishops and clergy. The temporal was parliament, particularly the House of Commons. In modern terminology we might say the spiritual was the clergy and the temporal the laity. George Shaw puts it succinctly, Supreme authority in ecclesiastical matters belonged to the whole church; and it was vested in the crown only so long as the crown represented the whole church.'[3]This model becomes very important when Anglicans had to face the situation when they no longer lived in such a christian nation. These are fundamental questions about the nature of the church, that is to say, ecclesiology.

Christianity had existed in England from the third century and the influence of the Pope waxed and waned from the time of Augustine of Canterbury (595-604) right through until the radical separation in the sixteenth century. Throughout the thousand years before the Reformation the Church of England maintained a connection of fellowship and respect for the Pope and sometimes there was a jurisdictional element in the relationship. In 1075 Pope Gregory VII instituted his radical reform of the Roman church and when he demanded fealty from the new King William I of England he was politely told fellowship but not fealty. So the Church of England was a national church but with a sense of belonging to the wider fellowship of Western Christianity and even beyond that to the east.

The break with the jurisdictional claims of Rome in the fifteenth and sixteenth century was decisive and theological differences in the reform process focused on authority, justification and grace and the theology of the sacraments. These disputes were essentially about the difference between a church that was clerical and Episcopal under the ultimate authority of the Pope. It was also a church with a monopoly intermediary role between humanity and God. On the other hand the Church of England was thought of as a community called to worship God together, to hear his word and receive his sacraments.

The Church of England retained the historically traditional pattern of ministry of bishops, priests and deacons, though it did so in a way that sometimes looked more pragmatic than theoretical. The Thirty Nine Articles define a visible church as a

---

[3] GP Shaw, *Patriarch and Patriot, William Grant Broughton 1788-1853* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1978), p.251.

'congregation of faithful men, in which the pure Word of God is preached, and the Sacraments be duly ministered according to Christ's ordinance in all those things that of necessity are requisite to the same.' (Article 19). In other words the church is not defined by a particular kind of ministerial office, but rather as a community of people in which a ministry of word and sacrament is delivered. Similarly in the ordinal the task of the role of the priest is defined in terms of the character of the church to which that ministry is directed rather than the specifics of ministerial authority.[4] The fact of the ministry of word and sacrament is the fundamental ecclesiology issue that requires the means of an ordered ministry.

Thus after the turmoil of the Reformation and Commonwealth periods Anglicanism can be seen as a tradition of Christian faith which is formed by a history of the English Christian nation. In that nation there was shared power and service between spiritual and temporal. In theological terms this meant notions of dispersed authority and activity, an appeal to antiquity and thus to the first four councils of early Christianity and ultimately to scripture as the supreme authority for what needs to be believed. It meant the rejection of jurisdictional authority beyond the national church in tandem with degrees of respect and fellowship beyond the nation's borders according to the congruence of the faith of those churches with the core doctrinal beliefs of the Church of England. Within a framework of Tudor political and constitutional interests, the Thirty-Nine articles reflect these tendencies.

Modern Anglicanism is the result of the adaption of these broad traditions of practices and beliefs in the face of the collapse in stages of the uniform Anglican nation in England, to a plurality of religious traditions within the body politic and the spread to other locations where the national institutions of England did not apply, or did not survive. The story of the spread of this faith is entangled with the story of empire, British, American and Japanese, with the story of the movement of religious practices through the incidentals of commercial and exploratory expansion and the missionary movement of the nineteenth centuries.[5] Australia is just one part of that story and has its own balance of continuities and differences with the parent tradition.

---

[4] The Ordinal in APBA changed this approach and thereby eclipsed an important issue in Anglican ecclesiology.

[5] See Kevin Ward, *A History of Global Anglicanism* (Cambridge, UK ; New York:

AN AUSTRALIAN STORY

In 1962 Manning Clark published the first of his monumental six-volume history of Australia by framing the European settlement of the country in terms of a struggle between the sons of the enlightenment, Roman Catholicism and Protestantism as represented by the Anglican ascendancy. 'Catholic and Protestant pointed to the Fall as the cause of evil. The enlightenment taught evil as the product of economic and material environment'.

He was distinctive amongst Australian historians in the twentieth century in putting religion front and centre in his account of Australia. Throughout his story the Anglicans suffered from their association with the established order and government, especially in the colonial period. His portrayal of the Anglican chaplain Marsden as the 'flogging parson' was emblematic of this fatal association. At the end of his Short History of Australia he outlines the end of this struggle as it stood in 1986.

> After the disappearance of God, Australians had clung all the more firmly to the Judaic-Christian morality. For decades Australians had had a morality without a faith. By the 1960s the horrors of the First World War, compounded by the holocaust of the Jewish people during the Second World War, and the dropping of atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945, had weakened belief in either a benevolent, caring God, or the capacity of human beings to build a better society. This time the puritan morality was gradually dropped.
>
> The voices of the Catholic who had spoken of a land dedicated to the Holy Spirit, the Dutch Protestants who had called for rather the discovery of a land that would yield 'uncommonly large profit', and the pleas of the followers of the Enlightenment with their faith in human perfectibility, had all dropped from a roar to a whisper. Mammon had won: Mammon had infected the

---

Cambridge University Press, 2006) and Bruce Kaye, *An Introduction to World Anglicanism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

> ancient continent of Australia. The dreams of humanity had ended in an age of ruins…
>
> The life-deniers and the straighteners have been swept into the dustbin of human history. Now is the time for the life affirmers and the enlargers to show whether they have anything to say, whether they have any food for the great hungers of humanity.[6]

Clark looked forward to others to characterise the phoenix that might rise from this dispiriting conclusion to the coming of civilisation to the Australian continent.

Clark places religion, that is to say Christianity, in the forefront of his story only to show how the sons of the Enlightenment and the attraction of materialism had defeated it.

However, there is no doubt that institutional religion has profoundly influenced the Australian story. From this perspective that story begins with an Anglican establishment in a military colony of which the Church of England was, as in England, the official religion and supported by the state. That established position was soon eroded by exceptions of various kinds, but Anglicans remained in the ascendant for much longer.[7] The important turning points came in the period from 1836 to 1880. First came the Bourke church acts of 1836 which removed the monopoly position of the Anglicans with government aid was extended to the other main churches. Bourke thought that the only way to deal with the plurality of churches in the colony was to treat them each equitably according to their distribution in the population and thus to favour none.

At a stroke the quasi-established position of the Anglicans was removed, though Anglicans long retained establishment attitudes usually to the annoyance of others.

---

[6] C. M. H. Clark, *A Short History of Australia* (New York / Melbourne: New American Library, Penguin Books, 1963 Revised ed 1986) pp. 250f..

[7] See N Turner, *Sinews of Sectarian Warfare? State Aid in New South Wales 1836-1862* (Canberra: Australian National University Press, 1972), Rowan Strong, 'An Antipodean Establishment: Institutional Anglicanism in Australia, 1788-C.1934, *Journal of Anglican Studies* 1.1 (2003), pp. 61-90 and Rowan Strong, *Anglicanism and the British Empire 1700c. 1850* (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2007).

The state aid to churches by Bourke's Act was removed in 1862 in New South Wales at a time when the funds available for distribution did not meet the needs because of increased population and churches.

The identification of Anglicanism with the colonial power changed its form over the nineteenth century but it continued on until the last quarter of the twentieth century in the form of a social association with the informal power establishment of the emerging nation.[8]

Bitter sectarian rivalry between the churches, especially between Anglicans and Roman Catholics surrounded these issues. Bourke looked to religion as an ally in social control and equitable favours to the competing churches as a way of diminishing the sectarian conflict. The first may have occurred, but the second certainly did not and sectarian rivalry lived on vigorously through the period when major public institutions were being formed. It shaped key elements in the foundation of the University of Sydney and lay behind the compromises of the 1880 Education acts. It was alive and well after the second world war and re-appeared in the 1960s in the state aid debates. After the Menzies compromise the conflict seemed to diminish, though there were clearly other forces at work in the decline of sectarianism in the last forty years of the twentieth century,[9] not least large scale abandonment of institutional religion.

In the mean time the Commonwealth constitution (section 116) as interpreted by the High Court adopted the broad lines of the Bourke solution to religious plurality. There could be government involvement with religion as long as it was on terms equitable to all religious bodies.

This emerging framework in Australia inevitably shaped the way in which Anglicanism formed in England as the faith of the nation came to adapt itself to this new and different environment. It was an environment characterised by plurality of

---

[8] It emerged in bickering between Roman Catholic and Anglican bishops about precedence at Federation celebrations both drew attention to Anglican assumptions and looked unsavoury to most people.

[9] Benjamin Edwards, *Wasps, Tykes and Ecumaniacs : Aspects of Australian Sectarianism 1945-1981* (Brunswick East, Vic.: Acorn Press, 2008) and Bouma

religions and of Christian churches, and of a state that saw itself as having a religious component as long as government support for religious bodies was equitably delivered. What had emerged was a constitutional state, which was plural rather than secularist, that recognised religion as part of the life of the community and religious institutions as potential partners in social activity.

AN ANGLICAN STORY

How then should we characterise the Anglicanism that emerged in this process?

It may help to frame these moves if we look at it from the perspective of the position settled by the sixteenth and seventeenth church acts and under which Anglicans first came to this country. That is certainly where our predecessors quite understandably began. Under the Royal Supremacy were spiritual and temporal arms of government. We might say bishops and clergy in the dioceses and on the one hand and the laity in Parliament, particularly the House of Commons.

How was this model to be adapted when it was transferred into a situation where there was no Christian nation with one established church and no Royal Supremacy? There were broadly two ways. Either you can begin with the Bishops and clergy element in the model and ask how can the lay voice represented in the Royal Supremacy model be given a voice in the church. This was the question Bishop Broughton asked himself in 1850. He saw the church as in the first instance ordered by the bishops and clergy. Thus he saw the new church order as being a synod of bishop and clergy with the possibility of a lay convention sitting alongside this synod but with limited powers of initiative and decision-making.[10] Or alternatively you could begin with the lay element and ask how can the spiritual or clerical be given a place in the decisions of the church community. This was the point pressed by the laity in the parish meetings in Sydney in response to the recommendations of the 1850 bishops' conference. It is not surprising that they appealed to the crown against the bishops in pleading their case. The question at issue was how was the governance of the church to be understood in this new environment. It was a serious question of ecclesiology.

---

[10] This is what came out of the bishops' conference of 1850, though the minutes do not represent the views of the bishops put forward in the conference. See BN Kaye, *GA Selwyn in Australia.*

It is not surprising that different balances were struck in the then existing dioceses and the residue of those different balances remain in the constitutions of our dioceses in Australia today. In general, however, it was universally accepted that the whole church had to be in the one body with responsibility for the life of the church. Thus in Australia synods contain laity and clergy and bishops all in the one house, a synod. In the General Synod the synod normally votes as one body, though on contentious or important issues a vote by houses my be required in order to meet a more demanding majority. This is in contrast to, say, Nigeria where there is a separate synod of bishops with extensive authority including the appointment of all bishops. Or the US where the house of bishops contains all bishops, though retired bishops may speak but not vote, and a house of deputies, containing clergy and laity from each diocese. These two houses rarely meet together but send messages to each other. It is a shadow of the US Federal constitution. Or in England where the house of bishops has independent areas of action and authority while meeting in one synod with clergy and laity, albeit they sit in their houses rather than their dioceses. In the Anglican Church of Australia the synod members sit in small groups of diocesan representatives of bishops, clergy and laity and these groups are scattered throughout the synod.

There is an important addition that needs to be noted in this picture. In an earlier age the religious orders constituted, among other things, a capacity for independent initiative and action within and for the life of the church community. That element in the church was lost when the monasteries were abolished in the sixteenth century but it re-appeared in a different form with the emergence of independent church societies in the eighteenth century. The formation of charitable, missionary and educational societies that were related to the official ecclesiastical structure but not part of it point to an important issue in the understanding of the church as a community. The ecclesiastical structure existed to sustain that ministry of word and scarcement that was necessary to the life and witness of the church. The structure did not have a monopoly on action within the church, though it did have a defining and identifying role as to what was a genuine Anglican activity.[11] In the Australian context one can see this at work in the different relationships between Anglicare agencies and the

---

[11] The Church Name canon of General Synod is a striking example of how a diocese may recognise and influence an independent initiative that is not part of the parish structure.

diocesan or provincial structures and of course it is visible in the same way in Anglican schools.

The distinction can be seen rather neatly in the two categories of reports that go to each meeting of the General Synod. There are reports to the synod from agencies that exist under a canon or other decision of the Synod or Standing Committee and there are reports that are presented to members of the synod for information. This second group identify themselves with the Anglican Church of Australia but are not part of the synod structure. All sorts of institutions have a variety of ways of being part of the church community and of serving some aspect of its mission and this is part of Anglican ecclesiology.

I underline this in order to sharpen the point that in the adaptation of the tradition of faith nurtured in previous centuries in England the key focus of adaptation concerned ecclesiology the form of which was markedly changed in its adaptation to the Australian context. This adaptation had to do not just with governance issues, but how the church should see itself when it is one of a multitude of voluntary associations and where Christian faith is not universally practised.

This adaptive element in Anglicanism contrasts with Roman Catholicism whose ecclesiastical structure is uniform in every location, no matter how different, because of its conception of jurisdiction and discipline as universal in character. Anglicanism on the other hand retains jurisdiction and discipline to the local reach of the province and reserves relations beyond the province to those of fellowship, goodwill and collaboration.

This arises in part from the long history in the Church of England of national independence and a long-standing pattern of ambiguous relations with the Pope. It also derives from an understanding of discipline and power within the church as dependent on proximity of connections rather than just institutional form. What is at issue here is the nature of power in the church. If you are the only true church and your focus of authority is universal and located in one institutional place, the papacy, then coercive authority is more readily available to you. If you think of the church as one local tradition among others then power in the church depends on the effectiveness and character of the relations within the church, and that means that power in the generality of the Anglican church community is more likely to be

persuasive than coercive. The bishops and clergy are in a somewhat different position and are subject to disciplinary arrangements in relation to their ministry. The two models represent quite different starting points for the conception of the church as community.

The local focus also points to another characteristic emphasis in Anglican ecclesiology, namely the commitment to the idea that the church and Christians are called to live out the character of their vocation in relation to the context in which they are placed. The local points to the challenge of contextualising the witness of the church. It seems to me to be an interesting question for each diocese and parish to ask what is there about their context that should be influencing their witness both as a church community and as a community serving their members in their witness in this local area.

The characteristically Anglican model calls for greater attention to the shaping of the church as a community. The old tag *lex credendi lex orandi*, the law of believing is the law of praying, describes a two way street. We pray what we believe and in time we believe what we pray. In other words there is a symbiotic dynamic between the practices of the church and the beliefs of the church.

The Ordinal in the 1662 Book of Common Prayer describes the role of the priest in terms of the formation of a congregation or community in ways that exemplify the theologically defined character of that community.

> See that ye never cease your labor, your care and diligence, until ye have done all that lieth in you, according to your bounden duty, to bring all such as are or shall be committed to your charge, unto that agreement in the faith and knowledge of God, and to that ripeness and perfectness of age in Christ, that there be no place left among you, either for error in religion, or for viciousness in life

The community envisaged here is Christologically shaped and it is shaped by a ministry of word and sacrament with a view to the living character of the community and its members. The church is thus to be a community in which the Christian virtues are nurtured.

The Anglican Church of Australia defines its beliefs in terms of the heritage of the Book of Common Prayer. That prayer book defines the church as marked essentially by the preaching of the word of God and the administration of the sacraments. That does not mean that the church community may not foster all sorts of other activities of mission and engagement. Indeed it would be surprising if it did not. The long history of Anglican involvement in education and welfare are just two of the most obvious activities that have been inspired and shaped by the life of this community. But if the core of the community is not word and sacrament then its capacity to form the Christian virtues, to shape its life towards 'ripeness and perfectness of age in Christ' is diminished if not extinguished.

ANGLICANISM FOR AUSTRALIANS

Adaptation is a matter of working with the past in the present with a view to creating new lines of continuity and faithfulness into the future. It clearly should be recognised that not all parts of our Anglican heritage have been helpful in forming the Australian Anglican story. The establishment mentality has been hard to discard. The idea that we live in a Christian state where we have a privileged place has been even harder to lose. The precise challenges of our multicultural and multi religious society have consequently not been fully engaged. We have not developed the conceptual tools to do so and we have only marginally experimented with practices that assume the context and work with it. Our church style sometimes looks atrophied and at certain points quaint and mildly ridiculous in terms of the society around us. On the other hand our reputation as being part of the oppressive government of the past still lingers on in the mists of public memory and the long running and bitter sectarianism has been a shameful and difficult legacy. Post war immigration has brought several generations into our society who have no knowledge of a Church of England heritage that is worth knowing about.

I have argued in this paper that the key issue in the adaptation of the Anglican tradition in Australia has been focussed on aspects of ecclesiology. The key doctrines of the nature of God and salvation have been held with high level continuity. Issues of authority have been more ambiguous in part because of the institutional use of the monuments of the English reformation and the entanglement of these texts in the

Tudor political interests of their day. There has been a clear focus on the community of the faithful and the service character of a disciplined ministry of word and sacraments. I would like therefore to conclude this paper with three points about ecclesiology in an Anglicanism for Australians, and to make one point about effective agency.

i. A Relational Community

In terms of the overall governance and formal decision making in the church the adaption of the Royal Supremacy into synods made of lay, clergy and bishops together has been a valuable and significant Australian contribution to broader Anglican ecclesiology. It has suited our political and social attitudes and preceded later developments in the broader community. Its format is however a way of conducting argument and handling conflict in decision making and as a consequence it involves the usual issues of compromise and negotiation. It does not enable so easily the inspirational encounters that a more informal gathering can do. The level of sharing on issues not under discussion, but nonetheless important to many involved in such gatherings is often disappointing. Other more informal gatherings with different modes and arrangements could very effectively complement the synod experience. Sharing is a powerful dynamic in enabling witness in our local situations. It is, after all, one aspect of the catholicity in the church.

ii. Relations with Society at Large

This is the arena of greatest challenge for Anglicans in Australia today. How we handle it shapes how we respond to a wide range of questions about how we are to live as Christians. How are we to witness to such a society that is multicultural and whether we like it or not religiously plural. Yet at the same time our society is shaped and served by institutions which embody and support values about human life and the character of society. Yet we do not always understand these institutional dynamics and are unable to defend or challenge them. For a church with a long and significant institutionality in our ecclesiology, we are remarkably inept in dealing with institutions in the broader society. This is not just a challenge for the church community, it affects directly all Christians whose lives are housed in these institutions.

How to witness in a plural environment where there is a cut and thrust of beliefs and assumptions about the human condition is difficult and challenging. This is especially so if we find our lives encased in the more comfortable environment of church life and forgo the more fundamental vocation to live as Christians in the world in which have been placed by God. A serious Christian view shaped out of our Anglican heritage goes lacking because we have not and do not provide the resources to understand these issues or for people to exercise their imagination to see a way into this daily challenge.

These remarks inevitably takes me to the sad record in our church of the theological enterprise. We have not made the effort to provide the resources to grow and foster theologians to do the hard thinking that will provide the conceptual tools for us to understand our situation. When a bright young theologian comes on the scene we find that we have not created the institutions in which she can pursue the vocation of a theologian of the church. It is not just that the theological life of Anglicanism in Australia has been so thin and unsupported, it is that the church community has lacked the service of theologians and has suffered in terms of understanding the nature of what their faith might look like in the wide brown land.

I fear that our regionalism by which we hide ourselves in our own dioceses contributes to this problem. It seems to me to facilitate careless and defensive conversation because it does not encourage serous engagement with differing and contrary points of view. Out of courteous argument with someone who is genuinely informed and thoughtful and who is prepared to offer the gift of extended conversation, can come a deeper wisdom from which the church community can benefit. It is not as if the Church of England did not have a substantial and serious theological life. It did, and it is a reasonably shameful failure that we have not found an Australian way of continuing that rich tradition.

Perhaps on this point you will allow me a passing reference those institutions that necessarily are at the interface between church and society. These institutions face day by day the challenges of witness and Christian integrity. Not just in the way they deliver their services, but in the way they are able to identify their priorities and ambitions in accord with their Anglican identity and heritage. In order to do this they need serious thought and reflection and, may I say informed theological input. But

the wider church might reasonably expect these intuitions not only to inform themselves with theological resources as to their own activities. The wider church community might reasonably expect to have some benefit from their struggle with these issues, which are also the issues of all Christians in being faithful witnesses in this society. It seems to me that in general the church community does not expect them to do these things and does not encourage them to be so engaged. I have in mind here our welfare agencies, our schools, university colleges and our university related theological colleges. These institutions live in a context of witness in and to the wider society. They are at an extraordinarily important interface with our society and they warrant our utmost encouragement and support. On the other hand ought they not also be encouraged and supported, even expected, to find space in their life for such serious theological work done in the crucible of that interface as will illuminate the life of the church community generally?

iii. Mission and Outreach

Witness exercised by Christians in their daily lives is the bedrock of mission, but it is not the whole story. To be effective witness and mission must affect the character of our church community and its activities. Sunday services may be crucial to sustaining and growing the faith of the community and they need to be sympathetic to any serious witness and mission. But they are not the whole story. If we are serious in seeing that our kind of socially enmeshed Christian tradition is going to be faithfully represented in modern Australia there remains a great deal of imaginative adaptation to be done with new and different socially relevant things to be tried. A relational community, effective engagement with the wider society, and serious engagement with the terms of our witness and mission are key areas for contemporary Anglicans in adapting their Church of England heritage and they are fundamental to our capacity to be faithful witnesses in this wide brown land.

EFFECTIVE AGENCY

The heavy hand of the tradition of a Christian nation lies deep in our story as Australian Anglicans. The residual assumption of stasis has long been a part of our mental furniture. The question is not just understanding the issues, but having a way

of effectively getting something done. That is the agency deficit we face. It is a deficit that requires understanding, a better sense of our identity in a plural society and of the dynamics of that society. In other word it requires a rich theological gift in the church.

But it also requires effective motivation for us all. Knowing is not the whole story. Human weakness debilitates action and diminishes agency.

If we are to make some way in adapting our heritage of faith in modern Australia, to adequately witness to our identity as Anglican Christians, we will need to develop practices of church life which make it possible to imagine what the challenge of witness and mission really means and to nurture the virtues and life skills that enable mission and witness actually to happen.