

# Lambeth – to go or not to go

**In a courageous move the Bishops of the Sydney diocese have responded to the Archbishop of Canterbury's invitation to Lambeth with a "regret unable". Instead they will be attending GAFCON (Global Anglican Future Conference) in Jerusalem during June this year. A special briefing was held at the Cathedral in March to explain this position.**

**S**PEECHES WERE MADE BY Mark Thompson, Robert Tong, Russell Powell and Phillip Jensen. The basic thrust was that Lambeth should be rejected on the basis that Bishops who supported the consecration of Gene Robinson have been invited. In addition to this, the Bishop of New Westminster has been invited despite his actions against parishes like St John's Shaughnessy in Vancouver. To attend Lambeth would be an expression of

fellowship with people that the Scriptures warn against associating with. GAFCON on the other hand is a more exclusive meeting of orthodox believers that aims to establish fellowship, renewed identity and a new future among Bible believers in the Anglican communion.

Phillip Jensen made his position very clear when he said, "I would urge those bishops who believe that unrepentant active homosexuality is wrong not to compromise their own beliefs, the Scriptures, the church of God and the holiness of Christ. If they have already accepted the invitation (*to Lambeth*) they should repent and apologise."

The organisers of GAFCON insist that it is not an alternative to Lambeth. Russell Powell, the Archbishop's Senior Media Advisor, pressed the point that the nature of GAFCON is very different to Lambeth. It will be held at a different time and will be made up of Bishops, clergy and laity. Bishops are free to go to both.

So is it a protest? "The organisers have never seen it as a protest. It is more positive than that", Russell informed.

Regardless of what the organisers have intended, GAFCON will be interpreted as both an alternative and a protest to Lambeth. Its inception coincides with Bishops, like those in Sydney, announcing that they won't be going to Lambeth. Many Anglicans have decried [Continued page 6](#)

**'As [man] gives and allows the Word the precedence that is its due, his action necessarily fits into the irreversible order in which God is the Lord and man is simply the servant who must hear and obey him'.**

**KARL BARTH, THE CHRISTIAN LIFE, 203.**

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## Moore College becomes Co-ed Peter Bolt

**2008** IS AN HISTORIC YEAR FOR Moore College. Since 1856 the College has trained men for ministry. Since 1891 women have been trained at Deaconess House, then Mary Andrews' College. Since 1992 Mac has had a joint enrolment arrangement with Moore. But from 1st January 2008, the full-time training of women for ministry will be fully integrated into Moore College, with the establishment of the Mary Andrews' Department of Women's Ministry.

This is an exciting development that comes as the result of some lengthy conversations between the two institutions. There have been good reasons in the past for a separate approach to training men and women, but as the discussions proceeded, it became more obvious that the best way to train men and women was by being genuinely together.

Although it is difficult to generalise about institutions, since they are made up of people, which means that variety of opinion is usually the rule, [Continued page 8](#)

# The God who gives us all things richly to enjoy

John C Chapman



John Chapman rejoices in God's generosity in an active retirement.

**M**Y FIRST EXPOSURE TO Christianity was in a little Sunday school. I had not started school and so everything was mysterious.

In that particular Sunday-School each week, a man stood up with a large bible and read out the commandments. Gravity was the way to describe the general mood of that gathering. Somehow in my mind I thought that God probably didn't have much fun and I wondered if He was for it or against it.

Several years later I came across these verses in 1 Timothy 6:

*<sup>17</sup>Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. <sup>18</sup>Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. <sup>19</sup>In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life.*

God was a generous God who had given me all things richly to enjoy. Not only had God given me the world around me with all its wonders but God had given me Himself to enjoy.

He had sent his only Son into the world to die and take the punishment my sins deserved, so I could be completely forgiven. I am able to enjoy the wonder of forgiveness.

How good that is! To know that at any given time we are right with God.

Day by day I am able to enjoy the wonder of God's guiding hand on my life. I am never alone.

**I thought that God probably didn't have much fun.**

Probably best of all is the prospect of being with God throughout eternity.

He is indeed a very generous God. He calls on us to be generous as well. The opposite is to acquire wealth in the hope that it can bring security. What foolishness that is. Give it away and trust God who gives generously. ●

# The Gospel According to Dolphins

Alison Blake



Alison Blake ponders dolphins quite a few kilometres from the sea.

**I**HAVE JUST BEEN REMINDED, BY THE dolphins, of the importance of sharing the gospel.

Let me explain. In the car today, leaving our local primary school, I heard on the radio of two pygmy sperm whales stranded on New Zealand's Mahia Beach. Conservation workers had tried pushing them back out to sea, 2 or 3 times, but the whales kept stranding themselves on a sandbar, reluctant to move offshore. "They kept getting disorientated – they obviously couldn't find their way back past the sandbar to the sea" the conservation officer in charge said. He was contemplating putting the whales out of their misery, to

prevent further distress. Then along came Moko, a well known local dolphin, flying through the water. Moko appeared to be responding to their distress signals and in the space of a few minutes she did what the humans hadn't been able to do in an hour and a half – she escorted them 200 metres along the beach, to the end of the sandbar, did a right turn towards the channel and led them out to sea. The conservation worker said, "I've never heard of anything like this before". And the talkback callers began ringing in, one in tears, praising the dolphins amazing rescue of the whales!

Earlier in the day I was at an Easter Scripture assembly at school. With drawing, puppets, drama and fun, we heard about Jesus the King over nature, sickness, sin and death. After seeing Jesus heal the paralysed man and declare that he has God's authority to forgive sins, the people rightly praise God, exclaiming "We have never seen anything like this!" Isn't that the more amazing rescue?

How tragic that people can be brought

to tears when they hear of dolphins rescuing whales, but remain ignorant, unimpressed or dismissive of God's rescuing us from sin, death and judgement. Our world is full of men, women and children who, like the whales, are disoriented. Their future is bleak without a rescuer. And along comes Jesus Christ who communicates with us, rescues us, and leads us to safety, through the narrow channel of his death and resurrection.

Dolphins who rescue whales are something special. But what a privilege to be partners with our God who rescues people. Will you make, take and pray for opportunities to share Jesus' amazing rescue with the men, women and children in your family, workplace, neighbourhood and church? And generously use your time, skills, training, finances and energy to point others to Jesus, the King over sin and death? Whales may follow dolphins, but people need to follow, trust and obey Jesus, who rescues them from sin and death, and brings them into friendship with God. ●

**G**AFCON IS A VERY GOOD thing for international Anglican relations, and an opportunity for Sydney to make new friends and influence people for the evangelicalism for which we have previously stood firm.

As an international event, it is sure to impress upon the participants that its agenda is important. Even if it is not officially an alternative to Lambeth, it is sure to be seen as making a statement in regard to the Archbishop of Canterbury's failure to take a stand for true biblical Christianity by refusing to give problematic Bishops a guernsey at his conference. He had the opportunity. He has missed it. GAFCON, however, is making the right kind of statement.

But, as impressive as such big, all-encompassing, global – and even held in Jerusalem! – events are, the tower of Babel has to stand as a reminder that the real action is NOT in international church affairs at all. Sinful human beings love to make a name for ourselves, and to build towers whose tops are in heaven. But Jesus, and his movement, always operates at the other end: the first shall be last, and the last shall be first. True Christianity is a grass-roots movement, and what is happening in the local churches is the true test of the 'success' or the 'failure' of gospel work within the sad and withering denomination known as 'Anglican'.

As GAFCON delegates pack their toothbrushes for Jerusalem, the anti-Christian-marriage Australian press will begin their onslaught. Why is it that the Anglican Church did not divide over bishops who do not believe the resurrection? Or over women's ordination? Why did we have to wait for the Gay agenda before Anglicans were prepared to stand up and be counted? Isn't this just a case of global homophobia?

Typical Australian Press: there have been Anglicans all over the world (not just Sydney) protesting about each and every one of these issues. Little do people realise how closely related they each are, in fact. The denial of the resurrection of Christ, and so the absolute uniqueness of who he is and what

he has done for us, was, in a sense, the first chink in the armour. The ordination of women was the next, and those who ordained women (as Archbishop Robinson pointed out at the time) have acted schismatically, by moving away from the apostolic faith. The ordination of women has already divided Anglicanism. The opposing voices have not managed to stop the schismatic moves of those within global Anglicanism that are hell-bent against the apostolic faith and order, but this does not mean they have not been speaking against the corruption at every point. And now it is perfectly proper that those same voices should be raised against the next assault on divine revelation and upon the true humanity that Christian morality maps out for us.

But the rot has spread pretty darn far. Sydney Synod will this year once again talk about women's ordination. How many of our congregation members really understand the reasons why we have been agin it? By the same token, how many of the people in our congregations have managed to resist the pull of the gay agenda, since our whole society seems to have been swayed?

Our Church leaders and denominational officials from the Archbishop up, need to be teaching on these issues. Will the Synod once again have to put up with appalling arguments, such as women were the first to see Jesus' resurrection, therefore they should be ordained? There is a crisis in our congregations, and our ministers and bishops ought to be addressing these issues well before Synod sits again. The hearts and minds of Sydney Anglicans need to be captivated by the gospel of Christ, for sure, but they also need to be captivated by the wonderful vision of male/female relations set out by the New Testament. Properly ordered humanity; properly ordered sexuality. Without proper leadership on these issues, while everyone is warming themselves at the international bonfire, the home fires may well be snuffed out. ●

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# The Two-Sides of the one coin

Peter Bolt

**In the sequence of revolutions of the last forty years in Western society, the cry for gay liberation followed hard on the heels of the cry for the liberation of women.**

**C**HURCH POLITICS HAS DEMONSTRATED this same sequence. As soon as the battle for the ordination of women was declared to be won, the agenda shifted towards gay and lesbian issues.

Many of the players in the church debates are quite content to see the two issues as two sides of the one coin. Both arise from a concern for equality and justice based purely on merit, rather than gender or sexual orientation.

But within the numbers of those who wish to be called evangelical, the coin is often divided.

Some similarities are admitted: equality and justice issues are involved in both. And there have been cultural changes in both that have then found a counterpart in the church.

Once, both church and society agreed that the relationship between the sexes was asymmetrical, with the male having the responsibility for initiative, leadership and care. Both church and society also agreed that homosexual behaviour was wrong. After the successive 'liberations', Western society has done an about face on both issues.

What does that mean theologically?

**In the name of equal opportunity and equivalent justice for all, women called for the right to be treated equally to men, in every respect.**

Roman Catholic theology has long given a place to church tradition. According to Roman Catholics, the Spirit of God works through the church to ensure that she is 'led into all truth' and that her dogma is therefore always applicable to the contemporary generation. But this is the Spirit of God at work within the church, not in the outside culture. With the rise of the movement labelled 'modernism' by some at the time, and 'Liberalism' or 'Critical Scholarship' by others at a later time, there arose a new focus for the Spirit.

The Reformation had questioned the



PHOTO: ISTOCKPHOTO.COM

Roman Catholic understanding of how God works. God works through his word and, like breath and speech, God's Spirit and word go together. God's Spirit led the apostolic authors to such an extent that their words were recognized as the word

was a necessary institution of society and the New Testament did not speak directly against it. As human culture changed, and, in particular, as it changed under the influence of the Christian gospel, slavery was recognized as an evil thing and was eventually abolished.

What about the case for the liberation of women: does the same argument from cultural change apply? In the name of equal opportunity and equivalent justice for all, women called for the right to be treated equally to men, in every respect. When it comes to the teaching of the New Testament, however, the situation is somewhat different to that of slavery. Whereas the New Testament regulated slavery, rather than critiquing it,<sup>1</sup> the apostolic writings appeared to endorse, approve and specifically teach a structure of male/female relations which the changing culture was rapidly discarding.

of God (1 Thess 2:13), and the New Testament became 'God's word written'. It was acknowledged that God is at work in his world in a general sense, supervising and over-ruling the events of human history, but this is not where we find his revelation.

Modernism did not like this. The modernist turned God's general work in the world into a teaching activity. The Spirit of God worked in the world. This meant that, as human culture changed, God's revelation could be discerned in the changes.

This provided some interpreters with no problem at all. At this point, the modernist hermeneutic comes nicely into play: History has moved on, human culture has changed and the Spirit of God is in these cultural changes. The New Testament may have been right for the first century, but

The argument can be put quite simply by reference to the issue of slavery. Once, slavery

that was then and this is now. It simply depicts a cultural situation that is now out of date, passé, and, in fact, by present day standards, clearly wrong. The Spirit of God has clearly gifted many women today and called them to ministry. To stand against the exercise of these gifts would therefore be tantamount to resisting the Spirit of God. In the interests of 'equality' and 'justice', merit should be the only criterion. Discrimination on the basis of gender is simply unjust and such distinctions between people are damaging to all. The Spirit's word for yesterday cannot be forced to be the Spirit's word for today.

Since evangelicals have traditionally had a high regard for the normative role of Scripture, they tend to be slow to adopt such a cavalier rejection of the teaching of the New Testament. The various cultural changes worked with more subtlety within the evangelical camp. As R. T. France explains: "No hermeneutical activity takes place in a cultural or historical vacuum. The history of biblical interpretation is the story of new insights discovered often under the pressure of changing circumstances and of cultural shift; the eventual abolition of slavery is a celebrated example."<sup>2</sup> According to France, the "wider debate about the place of women in society, and the recognition that a church which refuses to ordain women was finding itself increasingly out on a limb and subject to misunderstanding and abuse from a more 'liberal' culture" was the trigger for a re-examination of the New Testament witness.<sup>3</sup>

This re-evaluation led to the conclusion that the New Testament spoke with 'forked-tongue'. There was a 'confusion' detected in the pages of the New Testament itself. Passages which teach an asymmetrical, male-led relationship between man and woman—a position that the culture was declaring an evil to be rooted out and discarded—must be placed alongside passages said to be 'more positive' to women, and/or read against some broader theological theme.<sup>4</sup> This 'confusion' has even been labeled a 'text-jam',<sup>5</sup> as if the Scriptures simply cannot be interpreted with a single voice. Those who love the drama of a dichotomy<sup>6</sup> picture an interpretive battle with each 'side' pitching their favourite verses at each other. The choice is left to the interpreter, who usually interprets from within his/her tradition. Human traditions can change, however, and so many, like France, have followed the cultural lead as if it were God's leading.<sup>7</sup>

Perhaps surprisingly, this modernist strategy has been eagerly embraced by

some evangelicals in the name of postmodernism, and, apparently taken further. In a changing cultural setting, "there is a sense in which genuine faithfulness to the authority of Scripture means that we must go not only beyond the biblical text but sometimes even *against* the text."<sup>8</sup> This is because, we are told, that the Spirit is at work *outside the text* in our ever-changing culture. "In a postmodern context we need

## This modernist strategy has been eagerly embraced by some evangelicals in the name of postmodernism.

first to ask the Spirit to open our ears so that we can hear. Postmodernists are right: the voices of the marginalized, of those who have been left outside the story line that has been dominant in the West, need to be heard."<sup>9</sup> It is in their voices we can hear the voice of the Spirit of God.

Well, what about the other voices 'out there'? What about the gay and lesbian voices, also clamouring for equality, justice, marriage, and ordination? Their cry for liberation also has a claim to be evidence of the Spirit's work in the world.

The strength of the pull in this direction is shown by the need for those who claim the name evangelical to want to split the coin in two. Those who have changed their mind on women have had to insist that their arguments do not lead to the legitimacy of homosexuality.<sup>10</sup> In 1997 the EFAC Consultation 'Called to Full Humanity' even found it necessary to insist on the split between the two issues:

*Attempts have been made to link the blessing of homosexual unions and ordination of practicing homosexuals with the ordination of women in one agenda of 'liberation'. However, proposals for the ordination of practicing homosexuals and for the blessing of homosexual unions attract two questions. Firstly, are homosexual acts sinful, forbidden by God? Secondly, if they are sinful, may the church formally bless and ordain people to live in unrepented and continuing sin? These questions have no parallel in the debate which surrounded the ordination of women. The state of being female is nowhere regarded in Scripture as sinful. The attempted linkage is disingenuous.*<sup>11</sup>

In other words, EFAC states that the ordination of women is not a moral question

('sinful' or 'not sinful'). The EFAC statement also draws the dichotomy between *person* and *behaviour*. In other words, "the homosexual question is distinguished primarily from the woman and slavery debates by being an essentially moral question. It relates to how people behave, which is not the case in the other two examples, which are about the worth of people as people."<sup>12</sup>

When it comes to the moral question of

homosexual behaviour (despite those who dispute the exegesis on every point) it is argued that the Scriptures have no inner tension on this issue; they are "uniformly hostile",<sup>13</sup> and so homosexual behaviour remains a sin.<sup>14</sup>

But there is a slippage in the argument here: why is it that those who oppose the ordination of women are implicated with saying "the state of being female [...] is sinful", whereas when it comes to homosexual issues it is their *behaviour* that is declared to be sinful? Is the use of this dichotomy between *behaviour* and *person* really consistent with other arguments? Hasn't the asymmetrical relationship between males and females actually been attacked because the regulation of the female's behaviour implied something about her person, or, because it was deemed inappropriate to draw implications from her person about her behaviour in relation to the male? Others, of course, have been far more consistent, arguing that 'the state of being homosexual' needs endorsement by the church, as it already has been by Western society.

And the rhetoric of the dichotomy has reared its ugly head in yet another direction. Is it right to draw another dichotomy between 'order' and 'morality'? If God gives a direct instruction about 'order' and it is disregarded, doesn't it become sin? The apostle Paul certainly seemed to think so (1 Cor 14:38). In other words, if the New Testament has several clear prohibitions of women teaching men, and these prohibitions are given by God to be normative for all time (given that they are grounded in the way he has created us), then to *disobey these prohibitions* would most certainly be sinful. If this were the case, then the EFAC statement could be reformulated to show that there is an *exact* parallel between the two debates: 'Firstly, is the teaching of men by

women sinful, forbidden by God? Secondly, if it is sinful, may the church formally bless and ordain people to legitimate and propagate continuing sin?

The 'slippage' in the argument may be a good debating ploy, but it is neither kind nor logical. Which of those who are opposing the ordination of women actually claimed that their opposition was because "the state of being female" is sinful? On the contrary, the "state of being female" is to be relished and to be enjoyed. The clear instructions about asymmetrical male/female relations actually provide divine guidance upon what it is to live in "the state of being female" in a godly way. This is the way to

with creation, which reached its apex in Jesus Christ", but then to argue that revelation should not be limited "to the incarnation [or] to what the incarnation reveals of the Son" arguing that "the economy of God's self-revelation begins at creation and is consummated only at the end of time."<sup>15</sup> Or, again, "the incarnation is only one scene in the unfolding, God-directed drama of creation, redemption and consummation".<sup>16</sup> How different this sounds to the New Testament itself, which speaks of God's revelation as being *in Christ*, as the fullness of God, the final revelation of the Son that prevails across all these last days (Heb 1:1-3).

eration (as a subset of the larger sexual liberation) arose at the same time in Western history. Theologically, they are two sides of the one coin. Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's. ●

ENDNOTES

- 1 Although we should note that despite the fact that this is usually overlooked, the New Testament never provides slavery with an abiding theological foundation, nor does it argue for or promote it. In addition, 'slave-trading' is listed as an evil (1 Tim 1:10), slaves are encouraged to gain his/her freedom should the opportunity arise (1 Cor 7:21), and Christian brotherhood provided a platform that overturned the usual social relations that prevailed between master and slave (Col. 3:11; Philemon 1:16).
- 2 R. T. France, 'From Romans to the real world: Biblical principles and cultural change in relation to homosexuality and the ministry of women', in S. K. Soderlund and N. T. Wright (eds.), *Romans and the people of God: Essays in honour of Gordon D. Fee on the occasion of his 65th birthday*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999, p. 252.
- 3 France, 'From Romans', p. 252.
- 4 This strategy is clear in France, 'From Romans', and in K. Giles, *Trinity and Subordinationism: The doctrine of God and the contemporary gender debate*, Downers Grove: IVP, 2002, especially Appendix C.
- 5 Giles, *Trinity*, pp. 2-3. Giles asserts the same confusion of texts for the issue of "the status and ministry of women", and for the subordination of the Son to the Father. He also recognizes that the passages against homosexual behaviour can be read in a different way than traditionally. See pp. 9, 25, 271-273. He also asserts that the problem of competing interpretations can be found "on almost every doctrine or ethical question imaginable" (p. 9). But, of course, differing interpretations and contradictory texts are two very different things.
- 6 The dichotomy has been (and remains) a feature of feminist rhetoric. There are some feminist academics, however, who have attempted to point out that a dichotomy is not an argument and, if the feminist cause is 'truth', then it should be capable of being situated on a logical foundation. See, for example, J. Curthoys, 'Do men and women live in the same world?', *Quadrant*, April 1998, pp. 9-16.
- 7 France, 'From Romans', p. 243.
- 8 J. R. Middleton and B. J. Walsh, *Truth is stranger than it used to be: Biblical faith in a postmodern age*, Downers Grove: IVP, 1995, p. 184.
- 9 Middleton and Walsh, *Truth*, pp. 189-190.
- 10 France, 'From Romans', p. 234; Giles, *Trinity*, Appendix C.
- 11 Theological Resource Network of EFAC, 'Conference report: Postcard from Kingston', *Anvil*, 14/3, 1997, p. 217.
- 12 Giles, *Trinity*, p. 244, n. 29.
- 13 France, 'From Romans', p. 245.
- 14 France, 'From Romans', p. 245.
- 15 Giles, *Trinity*, pp. 17-18.
- 16 Giles, *Trinity*, p. 30.

## If cultural change takes us further away from the apostolic witness, then it is taking us further into slavery, and it is not liberation at all.

true God-given freedom. While this may be different from our culture, "if the Son shall set you free, you shall be free indeed".

Likewise for homosexual behaviour. This is part of the slavery of sin. True freedom is found in the Son, who truly sets people free. True freedom is found in properly ordered relations between men and women, and true sexual freedom is found only in the context of the one man, one woman, one flesh relationship known as marriage.

The modernistic hermeneutic may promise liberation, but it actually leads us deeper into slavery. It is fundamentally mistaken to say, on the one hand, that "there is no independent access to knowledge of God outside of God's interactions

God has revealed himself in his Son. The apostolic word bears witness to the Son and shows what a life 'in Christ' should look like. Cultural change may promise greater liberation, but if the cultural change takes us further away from the apostolic witness, then it is taking us further into slavery, and it is not liberation at all. The Son shall set you free. And that freedom is found within God's proper order.

If you muck around with the proper ordering of the proper context of human sexuality, such as the asymmetrical order between man and woman, grounded in creation, then you end up mucking around with sexuality. It is really no surprise that women's liberation and gay and lesbian lib-

## Lambeth – to go or not to go [CONT. FROM PAGE 1]

GAFCON as unsettling Lambeth, one of the Anglican instruments of unity. It will be difficult to go to both considering they are only a month apart. "Don't go to Lambeth, go to GAFCON" has been the call of many conservatives.

So who's going to GAFCON? It is expected that over 1,000 people will attend. 25% will be bishops and 75% clergy and laity. Approximately 50 people from Australia will be there, including 9 bishops.

Many breakaway conservative groups such as AMiA (Anglican Mission in the Americas) and CANA (Convocation of Anglicans in North America) will be represented. Three bishops and seven laymen from CESA (Church of England South

Africa) will be there. All of these groups have been left off the invitation list for Lambeth but for the first time in history all orthodox Anglican groups could be represented at the one meeting.

What will they do there? The agenda will include Bible studies, listening to speakers and church services. It is not expected that any resolutions will be passed. This means there will still be no formal solution to the issue of alternative Episcopal (or primatial) oversight. If beleaguered parishes and dioceses in The Episcopal Church are hoping for a solution to this issue, their hopes may be dashed.

The organisers of GAFCON must be applauded by orthodox Anglicans. It is a step



in the right direction. Time will tell whether or not it is a step away from Lambeth and toward a new centre for Bible believers in the Anglican communion. One may also hope that it will grow more teeth with time and include decision making that will offer refuge to Bible believing Anglicans. ●

# The Rhetoric of the First Strike

Peter Bolt



Peter Bolt shares an opinion — then ducks!

THEY SAY THE BEST FORM OF DEFENCE is a good offence. If you didn't already have a good justification for being offensive, this proverb gives it to you. Why wait to be hit? Hit hard before your opponent even thinks about hitting you.

This proverb has its counterpart in what

passes for 'argument'. The rhetoric of the first strike can take various forms, but all are equally as effective. As soon as you hear an opinion, criticise it for its weak points—to praise its strengths is to give the game away. If that doesn't work, criticise it for where it could potentially lead—for the 'slippery slope' theory seems to work quite well despite its illogicality. If that doesn't work, criticise the supposed origins of the opinion—even though this has been labelled the 'genetic fallacy', it still wields a lot of power. And if all else fails, just declare that 'this is just an opinion'—which, judo-like, uses the weight of relativism to topple relativism itself!

If you allow me a moment of sexism, it seems that we males are pretty good at the

rhetoric of the first strike. Don't voice an idea without destroying everyone else's ideas to start with. Never allow another male to hold an opinion unquestioned. Claim to have already thought of it before the other man did. Don't allow any of 'your' females to listen to another male without you helping her to call into question his intelligence, his pedigree, his reputation, or the way he drives. Get that blow in somewhere. Find that underbelly and hit it hard. Yes, males have been perfecting the rhetoric of the first strike for centuries.

Any wonder there is often a deadly silence about so many issues. For who wants to be the one to share an opinion, just to field the barrage of 'first strikes' that will follow? ●

## D.W.B. Robinson Selected Works now available to all

Gav Poole



Gav Poole is busy reading his three new volumes in Sydney's northwest.

Donald Robinson served on the faculty of Moore College for over 21 years ... but that was a long time ago. His writings were prolific ... but much of it was left unpublished. Now Donald Robinson's writings are available to all thanks to a joint publishing project by Moore Theological College and The Australian Church Record.

The result is two volumes containing the selected works of Donald Robinson and an appreciation volume by authors dubbed "the next generation". These volumes were released at two separate occasions and Donald Robinson himself was at both.

The first release was at a special EFAC (Evangelical Fellowship of the Anglican Communion) meeting at CMS Summer School during January this year. There were many there including family and close friends of Donald Robinson. Peter Jensen spoke warmly about how Donald Robinson's teachings are deeply etched into Sydney Anglican thinking, including his own. Donald Robinson was on hand to

sign books for the many who took the opportunity to buy a set for themselves.

The second launch was at Moore College during a chapel service. Donald Robinson was interviewed by Paul Barnett, a close friend and colleague, and Geoff Tacon, a current fourth year student. Donald Robinson gave entertaining answers to the questions using wit and anecdote. Moore Books was busy after the service with many who waited in line to have their new volumes signed.

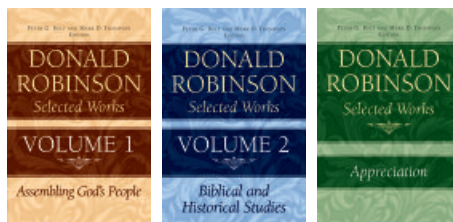
The volumes were edited by Peter Bolt and Mark Thompson. Donald Robinson quipped that they gave his works order and structure that he didn't realise existed. I asked Peter Bolt what value the volumes could give. He replied, "In recent years there have been several awful books about the Sydney Diocese published by those outside. "Awful" because they did not do the work on understanding things from the inside, but foisted their own prejudices upon the Diocese. With the publication of these volumes, alongside those of Broughton Knox, already in the market-place (Matthias



The editors enjoy some afternoon tea with Bishop Donald and Marie Robinson after the launch.

Media), people can now get to know the Sydney Diocese more carefully. Alongside Broughton Knox, Donald Robinson has helped shape the way we think in this diocese. I am hopeful that both those outside and inside the diocese will rediscover Donald Robinson's careful exposition of Scripture, and that desire to understand God's word on its own terms, and only then move towards application and practice."

Watching Donald Robinson out the front of the Moore College chapel service made me wonder. He was the only one in the room wearing the traditional clergy collar. Most of the students that listened to and admired him will not follow his style of churchmanship. Yet, his theology, his approach to the Scriptures, will live on through what they teach. While the externals have changed, the heart remains the same. Donald Robinson has left an indelible mark on the future of the Sydney diocese. ●



## Women and the Word



Jane serves on the ministry team at St Peter's Barge, London.

### Teaching others how to pray

Jane Toher

Last night a woman asked me how to pray. She is the second woman this month who has asked me and it made me wonder how many people there are in our churches who have never been taught the how and what of prayer. What would you use to teach someone to pray? A friend was visiting a Christian university conference and he was encouraged that the students were all thankful to God in their prayers. However, he noticed that not one student all week said any confession. And we can too easily fall into traps like that, can't we? Why do we pray like we do? What are we teaching others by our prayers? That is why some of the old frameworks that are based on the Lord's Prayer (Lk 11:2-4) are helpful. In my experience many people forget what the 'A' in A.C.T.S stands for, so I am going to stick with, S.T.O.P. This acronym helps us to remember to say Sorry to God, Thank God for people and things, pray for Others, and to Ask for things for ourselves from God. None of these four things we do naturally, and so we need to be taught how to do them, and be reminded to do them. It is good to remember it is not selfish to ask God for things; it just depends on what we ask for.

1. Do you think you were ever taught to pray? If so, how was this done? If not, why do you think this was the case?
2. What is helpful about using something like S.T.O.P in our own prayers and teaching others to pray?
3. How could you include a session on how and what to pray in your church / ministry group if you think it is needed?
4. Pray using the S.T.O.P framework. ●

## MEN AND THE GOSPEL

# The Weakness of the Pastel Lamb— (or was that Paschal?)

Chris Allan

IT WAS A COLOSSAL picture of Bruce Willis (aka John McClean) along the M4 that first had my mouth watering at the prospect of another *Die Hard* movie.

Willis is *different* to the other plastic heroes out there. He seems *just* within reach for the average bloke. Whereas the others are always out of our reach: Arnie has all those muscles; Connery's good looking, suave, played Bond, and has an accent (always Scottish); Van Damme and muscles again; Mel Gibson has the combination; and Russell Crowe, besides playing *Gladiator*, owns a footy team (the Rabbitohs – but still a footy team).

But Willis ... hmmm ... he's not especially tall, was losing his hair (but for the miracle of 'Advanced Hair'), isn't that muscled up, and his apparel in *Die Hard* was a Bonds singlet. Like I said, not that far out of reach. Now that's an action hero I can get on board with.

Men love that tough, 'in your face' hero. But they don't care much for the weak ones (it's not likely we'll see Steve Martin saving us from terrorists too soon).

When men think about Jesus, an image of strength is perhaps the furthest thing



Chris Allan can occasionally be found at the movies in a Bonds singlet.

in their minds. Sadly, what often pops into their heads is an image of weakness. Too many years of 1970's pastel coloured artwork (still on the web!) of Jesus standing in a meadow, white robed, feeding little lambs, as the wind blows through his blonde locks of hair. Those associated with Jesus get the same reputation.

My question is this: how did that guy replace the Jesus of the New Testament? This is not the Jesus of the book of Revelation. It's not the Jesus going to the cross. It's not the Jesus of the New Testament. It seems to me, men need to hear about the real Jesus. They won't hear, unless we tell them. Maybe then they might stop running to Bruce and his mates for 'inspiration' (although I still hope Bruce keeps making movies!). ●

## Moore College becomes Co-ed [CONT. FROM PAGE 1]



Wendy Colquhoun has been appointed Moore's acting Dean of Women.

Moore College basically operates from a complementarian position when it comes to men and women. Egalitarians maintain that there ought to be no differences between the genders. Complementarians

maintain that the differences are what enriches the human race and what ought to make our churches healthy, growing and whole. Unfortunately, despite being theoretically complementarian, it is all too easy to adopt structures and procedures that are, in fact, a form of gender apartheid. The challenge that now confronts the new College is to develop a genuinely complementarian environment in which both men and women can thrive in their theological education, and take the lessons of this rich experience into their future ministries. ●