

Magazine of St John's Anglican Cathedral, Brisbane
August 2019 — Vol 15 No 2



The Eagle

LGBTIQA+ Christians



*by Rev'd Julia
Van Den Bos*

This edition of the Eagle focuses on the stories of LGBTIQ+ Christians. In the ongoing debates about the full inclusion of LGBTIQ+ Christians in

the Anglican Communion and in other Christian denominations, there is a risk the conversation can become overly theoretical and disconnected from lived experience of people. In this edition, we hear directly from people whose lives are affected by these debates.

Eight people have generously shared their stories of life and faith: these are, Roz Rogers, Wynona Newby-Clark, Rod Rogers and Terry Albone, Angie Mooney and Morag Clark and the Reverends Jo Inkpin and Penny Jones.

In addition, Dean Peter Catt has written an article exploring the marginalization of LGBTIQ+ people and how a post-resurrection community can move past division and Lana Hadgraft has written a short piece about the death of English schoolgirl, Lizzie Lowe. This edition also includes the text of the speech given this year at the annual Loaves and Fishes Luncheon by Peter Greste on the power of collective action. As usual we include a collection of poems and book reviews.

EUCCHARISTIC CRISIS II

*I dare not brave the table, bread, or cup
heedless of Love's acuity in searching out
that which only Love through grace can heal.
I have so camouflaged my secret deeps I baulk
at granting the Spirit access to my inward self,
for fear of cautery; even by Love. Yet Grace
requires I strive to polish up as spruce as
I can bear, before and during; then the Son
confronts me at the table, at the rail, asking
if with reckless prudence I would dare
stake my life on his?*

*Tread the path he'd stamped
with resurrection hallmark
as benchmark for his own?*

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Mount Coolum, Queensland
9 June 2019

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The Eagle

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The Eagle is published three times a year
by St John's Anglican Cathedral, Brisbane.

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Contributions and letters are invited. They
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Contributions may be edited for length and
style.

More information about St John's Cathedral
and its activities is available on the
cathedral website:
<http://www.stjohnscathedral.com.au>

Printed by: JT Press, Redcliffe, Queensland

Image source acknowledgements:
Cover – Dreamstime.com stock photo
Other photos public domain or supplied by
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Behind the scenes of the LGBTI debate *by Peter Catt*



Josephus¹, a first century historian, and the Talmud², a later collection of rabbinic writings, held that women were unreliable and untrustworthy. These flaws have their genesis in the “fact” that women lie for hope of gain and are prone to levity. A woman’s testimony, therefore, was to be regarded as

reliable as that given by a robber and for that reason was not admissible in court.

While it is tempting to dismiss such a view as laughable, it is worth noting that ‘blond jokes’ and jokes about women drivers point us to the way that such views carry over into our day.

The early church challenged this cultural diminishment of women through its telling of the Jesus story. The church’s countercultural understanding of women is illustrated by the fact that the writer of Matthew has two women act as the first witnesses to the resurrection. It was the testimony of Mary Magdalene and Mary that led to the story of the resurrection becoming known throughout the world. That two women played such a pivotal role in the story stands as a pointer to the radical nature of what Easter is and stands for. It also points us to what the Christian faith should look like and so be doing in the world.

The scene that the writer of Matthew paints for us at the tomb early on that first day of the week, sets the agenda for the new Creation. The resurrection brings to birth a new way of living and being, a new way to be human and a new way to live in community. And it starts with these women, with a change to their self-understanding and the way they are understood by their community. In the post-Easter community, these women were trusted and valued, trusted to handle the precious gem that is the news of Easter. Mary Magdalene, who previously, because of her gender, was to be doubted and dismissed, becomes a hero of the faith, the Apostle to the Apostles. In the recreated humanity, Mary, a nobody, becomes a somebody.

When one looks back over history one can see how the new humanity project, the Easter project, has been unfolding. As the song of the new Creation has been sung by generation upon generation, slaves have been liberated in many parts of the world. Children have been set free from working in mines and sweat shops. Women have attained some measure of equality and

race-related segregation has been overturned in some places. The new humanity is taking shape amongst us.

For each of these shifts to take place, the ‘God-gloss’ that was and is used to diminish those to be liberated and to legitimise the ontological attacks upon them, had to be challenged and overturned.

Josephus and the writers of the Talmud would have legitimised their view of women by appealing to the way women had been created by God as helpers to men. Those who challenged slavery were resisted by people who used the Bible to show that Jesus and the early church did not challenge the practice. Those who challenged the use of child labour were assured that, ‘God made them high and lowly and ordered their estate’. Apartheid was justified as an expression of predestination.

In the past little while I have read some absolutely dreadful pieces about LGBTIQ+ people which demonstrate that the new humanity project is still a work in progress. These articles resort to ontological attacks that describe LGBTIQ+ people as ‘disordered’. They use assumptions about the ‘homosexual lifestyle’ to ‘prove’ that LGBTIQ+ people are incapable of commitment or fidelity. This is cast against the virtue of the ‘heterosexual lifestyle’, a dynamic which ignores the fact that a staggering 50% of people in monogamous heterosexual relationships have had an affair at some stage.

Language which uses a God-gloss to denigrate LGBTIQ+ surfaced during the marriage equality postal vote. At present it is being rehashed as the so called ‘freedom of religion’ debate gathers steam.

In the letter to the Galatians, Paul invited his readers not to understand themselves or others in terms of the great binary classifications that were applied to humanity at the time.

*There is no longer Jew or Greek,
there is no longer slave or free
there is no longer male and female;
for all of you are one in Christ Jesus.*³

In the world that Paul knew, gender, slave or free, Jew or Gentile were the means for slicing and dicing humanity; three clear, binary classifications. Paul suggests that recognising oneself as being in Christ invites one to transcend these three binaries and to realise one’s identity through membership of a common humanity.

continued to page 4

¹ Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, 4.8.15.

² Talmud, *Rosh Hashannah* 1.8.

³ Galatians 3.28



My God Story

by Morag Clark



As a child I had little religious upbringing, although I attended Sunday school for a while. In

Scotland my parents went regularly to church but stopped when they moved to Australia.

As a child I remember a sense of connection with something. When I felt scared I would feel a comforting energy. At home God was expressed as someone who only loved you if you were good, and I was not always good! As I got older I had a sense there was something better in my life but fear of not being good enough stopped me looking for it.

This created a void in my soul which I filled it with alcohol, drugs and food for most of my teenage and young adult years. I was led to a Christian counselor to help with my drinking who was very happy to save my soul so long as it was a straight soul.

My mother had returned to church by the time I came out as a lesbian. They instilled in her that I was going to go to hell for who I was. This fed my prejudice and confirmed church wasn't a place for me.

At 25 I found a community that helped me find sobriety and introduced me to a Power greater than myself that loved me good or bad. Over the years I grew in this relationship with this Power and found that hole in my soul was now filled by a loving God of my own understanding. Through my Creator I have been able to live a wonderful life free from alcoholism and addictions with acceptance of my sexuality.

Ten years later as I flew over Brisbane one night I saw an image in the lights. Three years after that at Westminster Cathedral I saw the same image in a picture. I said to my partner Angie "that is the image I saw in the lights". She looked at me and explained I had a vision of Mary. I said "Mary WHO?" I had no knowledge of the importance of this.

Again the seeking feeling returned I wanted a deeper connection and understanding. So the search was on. I went to spiritual healers and tried younger hip musical churches. I loved the music and had an amazing experience when they called for people to give themselves to Jesus. My head said "you don't need to do that" but a voice louder in my soul said "Who are you to deny me?" My hand went straight up and my tears flowed deeply. I attended for a while but they had very strong opinions on being gay and due to my lack of understanding of Jesus I felt my beliefs were wrong too.

Christmas Eve 2017 Angie and I wanted to go to a service. We felt led to St John's cathedral. As we arrived we were surprised to see the rainbow flag outside. We were welcomed by the stewards, the service moved me to tears and I got a blessing for the first time.

Afterwards we were welcomed by both Rev Sue Wilton and Dean Peter Catt. We left feeling very moved, awakened and most importantly accepted. This started my journey to become a member of this congregation. After many Sunday afternoon sessions with Peter, Bronwyn and Sue I made the decision to be Baptised at Easter 2018. Today I attend regularly; I still don't understand a lot of the Bible but more importantly I feel accepted for who I am and that my God as I understand Him is perfectly acceptable for me to believe in. I am forever grateful to St John's for showing me the wider path for my spiritual journey.

Morag Clark is a member of the St John's Cathedral community

.....continued from page 3

I think this is one of the most profound insights found in the New Testament, one which the church has rarely allowed to shape its approach to people. The ordination of women over the past thirty years has seen us struggling to get back to first base. Paul highlights the three great divisions of humanity at the time. As I see it, this invites each generation to discern what are the great divisions of its day.

For me, Paul's insight stands as an invitation to allow people to be people and to love whom they feel called to love, if any one. It allows them to be accepted as the person they are without having to be labelled and differentiated. It is a call for our common humanity to be the source of our identity.

The Very Rev'd Dr Peter Catt is Dean of St John's Cathedral, Brisbane



Husband and Husband Terry Albone and Rod Rogers



When we met one of us was a widower and one a divorcee, both in our sixties. One retired one working, one with a teen son one with two daughters and three small grand-children. One had emerged from a long marriage that ended tragically one from a shorter marriage ending in acrimony. Both with a long background in church, both needing to explore the implications of being gay. Both alone and trying not to be lonely.

Terry and Rod signing the marriage register, 2018

From the first we enjoyed each other's company and rather tentatively spent time together. We came to love each other and we made a life together as the love grew. We knew that our relationship was fully a

marriage - a relationship that was mutually supportive, spiritually enriching, affectionate, sensual and sexual and one which drew us out of ourselves and turned us toward others. We experienced some of the 'in sickness and in health' bit too. We held a reception to celebrate our relationship amongst friends and family. We said our vows and exchanged rings before those whom we loved and valued, with grandchildren wrapped around our knees. We were husbands to each other.

Some of our friends from St John's Cathedral were there for our vows, endorsing our relationship. St John's Cathedral was important to us for we worshipped together in St John's Cathedral, we sat on council and chapter, we were involved in the children's program, we were stewards and sacristans, we cooked and barbecued for the community. Together we were much more in the community than we could have been separately. We were welcomed by those around us, but we were quite emphatically rejected by the Anglican Church.

A secret relationship is one under strain. To hide the affection of one for the other is to lose a lot. Not to be recognised as partners inhibits joint action and shared responsibility. Not to make an open, public commitment denies significant possibilities to enrich the relationship. Public commitment in marriage helps to redirect thought and action to the development of the relationship by establishing a moment after which different priorities are both appropriate and expected. Public marriage helps others understand and support the relationship. As a next step we registered our relationship, the most public and substantial form of relationship law allowed us.

Eventually marriage equality came to a head nationally in the 2017 plebiscite. The Anglican Church did not support marriage equality, and some parts of the church campaigned vigorously and viciously against it. Sydney diocese poured a large sum of money into the campaign against same-sex marriage and attacked those of us who were LGBT+, defaming us and belittling our relationships. Thankfully a few scattered voices in the Christian community spoke up for same-sex marriage, including some courageous voices in Brisbane.

We were hurt by the attacks made on us by some church leaders and by the complicit silence of others. After the success of the struggle for equal marriage we decided we should be legally married, using the new law to make a statement about who we are. In October 2018 we married in the Registry Office in Brisbane. The celebrant made us feel welcome, made us feel valued. Her approach affirmed us in our relationship: we chatted, laughed and hugged. A civil servant provided us with the affirmation of our love that the Anglican Church refused us. Perhaps the novelty of celebrating the marriage of two men in their seventies was enough to give her pleasure, perhaps she just did genuine very well, but we accepted her delight at face value. In a room in a Registry Office, we found ourselves affirmed.

That affirmation in the Office of the Registrar of Births Deaths and Marriages delighted us, and to our surprise intensified our commitment to each other. Affirming loving, respectful and creative relationships strengthens them: attacking them debilitates. The pain of the 2017 plebiscite has been superseded for us by the affirmation we find in legal marriage. We long for such affirmation of faith, love and integrity from our church.

Rod Rogers and Terry Albone are members of the St John's Cathedral Community



You too can be a safe space - and why it's so important

by Wynona Newby-Clark

Being LGBTQIA+ and Christian comes with its struggles. When you first start figuring yourself out, it can feel like you must be one or the other but when you look to 'living your truth' you are met with the feeling of 'But I am both'.

For myself, I was raised Anglican and taught from a young age that God loves us no matter what. So later on, when I worked out that I was LGBTQIA+, I had no doubt that God loved me. But I had a fear that this was in spite of my being gay.

Consequently, I was ashamed of that part of me. I felt I had to squash and ignore it so as not to live a life that God did not approve of. Then I did what most people do these days and turned to the internet. There I found others like me who loved God with all their heart and all their mind and all their soul AND were LGBTQIA+, living comfortably with their faith.

I had found a community I wanted to get involved in. So I started a blog on Tumblr called @lgbtqafaith, where I began posting affirming messages and bible passages for LGBTQIA+ Christians and talking to others— this was my first safe space. Then I started looking for a group of others like me, with whom I could share in the love of God without worrying I was going to be judged if I said the wrong thing.

Thus I found Equal Voices. This was the first place I ever encountered other LGBTQIA+ Christians in person. I made firm friends there and started my process

of coming out to people in 'real life'. These safe spaces affirmed that God loves me just as I am, and living my truth as a gay person was not a sin. This was vital to my own acceptance of myself.

I was also lucky enough to find another safe space in my priest. He had made his accepting and affirming stance widely known when he said 'All are welcome', He meant 'ALL'. This assured me that he was a safe person to whom I come out and bring any questions or concerns about my faith and relationship with God.

Between my priest and Equal Voices, I was also given resources to do my own research.

My journey, unlike some, is not a tragic one. This is because I had people accepting me and assuring God's love for me from all sides. Having a church that loved and accepted me as I am made such a difference. I was taught "Come as you are, that's how I want you" not "Come when you are perfect and heterosexual."

You can make yourself or your church someone's safe space by being affirming of LGBTQIA+ persons and making it known. This can be done by doing things like flying a rainbow flag, having a candle or a sign and being an advocate and a voice for

those who it is not safe to do so. As an LGBTQIA+ person, you can find resources such as safe churches and books by going to or enquiring about Equal Voices at the cathedral.

Your Rainbow Community



Wynona Newby-Clark is best known for her blog

Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as you have done it unto one of the least of these my brothers or sisters, you have done it unto me.

Matthew 25.40



Quest for Acceptance

Angie Mooney



Having struggled with rejection and negativity, I undertook my spiritual journey despite my sexuality and my belief that being

gay was unacceptable in God's eyes. Today I can honestly say that I rejoice in who I am because I know the depth of God's love through direct experience not theology or doctrine.

I grew up in a rural community and adopted the prejudiced views against anyone that was different. Despite attending church weekly and being educated in Christian schools I never followed the commandment of Jesus to love everybody.

I had a beautiful childhood love of God. I adored two relatives that were nuns. I had an amazing experience at 8 years old when I communicated freely with God for one day. With God I felt invincible.

Puberty hit me and I was ashamed of my new emotions. I felt weak because I couldn't stop them and believed I was unfavourable in God's eyes. I turned away from God and by the time I realised I was gay, at age 23, I had intense hatred towards it all.

I was disgusted at my feelings towards other women. I had immense fear of what family and society thought of me. At a pivotal point I weighed up the option of ending my life; deciding instead to reject people before they had a chance to reject me.

Try as I might I couldn't push the idea of God out of my life completely. I approached my hometown clergy to see if God had changed His views in the time I had been absent! His response placed homosexuality in the same category as bestiality and paedophilia and that I shouldn't receive communion or be the God parent of my nephew. He was convinced that someone must have turned me gay. I knew definitively that he was wrong

but I was no closer in knowing what God thought of me.

I was also fighting another battle - alcoholism. It had a devastating impact on my life. At age 27 my life intersected with a gay woman, Morag, who had experienced a transformation in her life as a result of God's grace. It was the turning point in my thinking that perhaps God might love me also.

We became a couple, I stopped drinking and in time I adopted a new way of living under the care and direction of a loving Higher Power. My life changed. For the next 14 years I searched all things spiritual. An amazing Anglican female priest told me that I was an out lesbian but a closet Christian! She invited me to find a place by the water and to imagine that if Jesus came to me, like He did to the woman at the well, what would he say. I did this and was deeply moved by God's outpouring of love.

Three years ago I suffered depression and again could see no way out until I experienced a spiritual encounter that sprung me out of depression. I glimpsed a life of beauty behind the veil of everyday reality. It gave me unshakable conviction in God's power and I became in awe of God's universe. I searched again for a community to celebrate this and was led through intuition to visit St John's Cathedral on Christmas Eve 2017. I was so moved to see the rainbow flag flying. I wept throughout the service and was warmly welcomed by the clergy after. Another piece of my healing was put in place - joining a loving community. I was received into the Anglican community the following Easter.

Today I know that the light of God is one pure white Light that shines through the prism of human beings and reflects as a multitude of colours into the world: a diversity of all people created by and loved by one Light. My periods of deconstruction have been necessary in order for me to be reconstructed by God, not for my own gain but so that my life could be a demonstration of God's love for everybody.

Angie Mooney is a member of the St John's Cathedral community

Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

Matthew 11. 28-29



Revealing the rainbow nature of marriage

Josephine Inkpin and Penny Jones reflect on their journey together

'I didn't marry a gender. I married a person.'

- this has always been a truth of our marriage, before and after Josephine came out as a transgender woman. Just as God 'looks on the heart' not 'outward appearance' (1 Samuel 16.7), our gender and sexuality are not the core of our lasting relationship. What matters is the love we have for one another, part of God's greater love. In that way, 'rainbow marriage' is also a gift for all.

Fragments of the Journey

Better together

We married in 1985 at St Barnabas, Homerton. It was a gorgeous expression of generous Anglican hospitality and 'pioneering' lives we have shared. We were beneficiaries of the big-heartedness of people in London's poorest borough, who not only catered for us from their own resources, but made Penny's wedding dress, and joyfully sent us off on honeymoon in the permanent deacon's ageing but beloved Mini. We also made an interesting altar party: two ordinands committing the almost cardinal sin of marrying whilst in formation (having met and fallen in love at theological college), a best man who was/is gay and became a prominent UK politician, and a bridesmaid who became the first British born black female Anglican priest – all presided over by a remarkable loving Rector who was one of the Church of England's foremost conservative Evangelicals. How did all that come together? Rather like Jo's gender identity, that is just the way our lives have developed – like a good marriage, a weaving together of many diverse strands into a multi-coloured tapestry. Perhaps negotiating the different, sometimes challenging, aspects of our lives is why God gave us each other. Our Rector in our first married years used to say that we were 'greater than the sum of the parts.' This is true of every marriage that reflects God's desire, expressed in Genesis, that human beings should not be alone.

Marriage is always about transitioning

Gender transition has inevitably involved challenges for us. It is not an easy process, even outside Church employment. Sadly, the personal is often made political

by others. We were helped by experiencing earlier struggles, with Penny one of the first female priests in England, and being one of the first clergy couples. Yet it has been an 'interesting' journey, as individuals, and together. We have had to negotiate our fears, reshape identities, and renew relationships, as well as cope with misunderstandings and transphobia. Financially, as well as emotionally, it is taxing. Yet, in other ways, our marriage is really nothing special. Every marriage

lasting any significant time has to make transitions, and some, with health demands, can be devastating. Our marriage has thus always required reshaping: not least when our children were born; we emigrated (for children's health); jobs, roles and locations altered; loved ones died; health conditions emerged; and, recently, with grandchildren's arrival.

Christian marriage has helped

us make such transitions, so why keep that from others? As we hope our marriage shows, whilst rainbow relationships can flourish without church approval, it is even better when love and institution support each other.

Fresh joys in rainbow marriage

Part of our marriage gift is indeed in the fresh joys of our transitions. These, more recently, include wonderful new relationships. We are keenly aware of how blessed we are in this. Unlike many same-gender couples, few of our other relationships have been negatively affected by gender transition. Those that have been are a painful reminder of the realities so many LGBTIQ+ people face, including similarly married friends who are now cut off from family members and/or other former loved ones. We are grateful therefore for everyone who, in relating more positively to us, show how relationships can actually thrive much better when the truths of our lives are valued. Personally, we are now closer, with greater intimacy, than we have ever been. For to live as the people God has created us to be is to flourish fully, which benefits others. Such is the intention of marriage as a social aid, as well as a space for inter-personal joy and growth.



Looking to the future

The need for celebration

Outwardly speaking, we were married as male and female, with no hoo-ha from church or society. However, when Jo publicly transitioned to her authentic gender, and revealed we were in essence a same-gender couple, we began to experience obvious, and more extraordinary, responses. On the simplest levels, it is still a shock when we are invariably asked ‘do you want to split the bill?’ when we have a coffee/meal out. That rarely happened before. For through our marriage we know firsthand the privilege which heterosexual people have and can take for granted. Today we share in the under-acknowledged ‘minority stress’ of the LGBTIQ+ community. Yet we have also come to recognise even more powerfully how little so many straight people appreciate about the nature and rich depth of LGBTI+ relationships. Marriage equality in wider society makes a significant difference. Yet, especially in Churches, there exists a continuing lack of genuine celebration and reception of gifts.

Transgender relationships and Church double-standards

Christina Beardsley is one of the first transgender priests, a dear friend and mentor. In conversation about marriage, she observed: ‘Rob and I were once the reprobates, and you two were respectable. Now the position has reversed (though not entirely).’ For trans people shine a particular light on the double-standards of much official Christian marriage teaching. Tina and Rob lived, outwardly, as gay partners for many years, but, with transition and UK law changes, they were able to marry in an Anglican Church a few years ago. For now they look straight. Today, we, and couples like us, could no longer be married in an Anglican Church, here or in England – because we no longer look straight. Again, we have to ask, how does this fit with the teaching of Jesus: ‘Do not judge by appearances, but judge with right judgment’ (John 7.24)?

Embracing all in God’s love

God moves in mysterious ways. Might our relationship, like those of many LGBTIQ people, be a pointer to a renewed understanding of marriage? Christians are now invited to embrace fully the God-given experiences of love in everyone. In doing so, we can move beyond gender and sexuality, whilst valuing them in other ways, to the heart of the matter. For, in Scripture, marriage is above all about God’s covenantal relationship with us,



*The Most Rev'd Dr Phillip Aspinall,
Archbishop of Brisbane and
The Very Reverend Dr Peter Catt,
Dean, St John's Cathedral*

invites

You and Your Guests

to

***The Tenth Anniversary Celebrations
of the Consecration of
St John's Cathedral***

on

Sunday 27th October 2019

3pm – celebrations

5pm – concert

*6pm – Evensong followed by
drinks and nibbles*

No RSVP is necessary

and all creation, in all our rainbow variety. Queer or straight, human relationships can be signs of that greater love, which is about just dealing, fruitfulness and faithfulness, not mere appearances. Like Ruth and Naomi’s biblical covenant, our prayer is that our own marriage may continue to enable us to walk in those paths, come what may.



The Revd Dr Josephine Inkpin is Lecturer in Church History & Senior Tutor at St Francis College & The Revd Penny Jones is Director of Formation and Priest-in-charge of Milton Anglicans





Anglican Diocese of North Queensland

Suitable Anglican Priests are invited to contact the Bishop of North Queensland in relation to opportunities for full and part-time ministry. At present the following full stipended ministries are vacant:

Cloncurry & Julia Creek (Bush Church Aid funded)

Mackay (Assistant Priest)

Mareeba

Innisfail & Tully

Kowanyama

Pormpuraaw

Ross River (Townsville)

West Cairns

Ayr

There are also a number of ministries with a fractional appointment available and further appointments will arise upon retirements.

North Queensland is an extraordinarily beautiful and diverse Diocese which extends from Sarina (south of Mackay) all the way to the Torres Strait Islands and the PNG border. Most of the population live on the Pacific Coast, but the Diocese also goes inland all the way to the Northern Territory border. For more details on the Diocese or conditions of service for clergy please visit our website (www.anglicannq.org) or contact Ms Shelley Thomas on bishoppa@anglicannq.org or (07) 4771 4175, option 1.

To be appointed you must be an Anglican Priest in good standing and hold or be eligible to hold a Queensland "Blue Card". The Diocese ordains women clergy. Priests who would like to make an expression of interest are encouraged to contact the Right Rev'd Dr Keith Joseph, Bishop of North Queensland, on bishopng@anglicannq.org or (07) 4771 4175 option 1.



The Power of Collective Action

(A reconstruction from his working notes of the speech delivered by Peter Greste in aid of Hummingbird House.)



Surely it was a bold move on your part to have a convicted terrorist at a church fundraiser. (I can see the headlines in the Courier Mail now...)

There are two ways of understanding the story of what happened to my two colleagues and me, and the one I want to focus on today is the power of collective action, of community.

Let me take you back to Egypt in 2013. The country was engulfed in a political crisis, the struggle between the remnants of the old Mubarak regime and the supporters of the Muslim brotherhood, and all the ancillary issues flowing from that.

I was there covering the crisis for Al Jazeera, filling in over the Christmas/ New Year period. My stay would be some two – three weeks, in journalistic terms treading water, getting and sending on ministerial statements, all very bland, and completely above board.

My arrest could not have been anticipated, and I assumed it must have been some kind of mistake. To be charged with treason or espionage was as ludicrous as it was inconceivable, but it was real, and deadly serious.

We struggled to understand what was going on. First we considered competing narratives between a misunderstanding of what we were doing; or a reaction to the wider conflict between Egypt and Qatar. We realised, however, that it was a crackdown on press freedom, and framed it that way in letters smuggled out of prison.

Our arrest triggered a wider international reaction that galvanized support. The media community, usually hugely competitive and fractured lined up behind us.

The social media campaign, one of the biggest in history - #FreeAJStaff – got 1.3 billion impressions. My family became a driver of the campaign, and social pressure enabled politicians to take a bi-partisan position. Because the politicians were enabled, the diplomats had the top cover they needed.

The campaign worked.

This is the good news. The bad news is that it took one of the biggest social media campaigns in history to spring three innocent blokes from prison.

But the takeaway is that when we pull together and support one another we can achieve remarkable and seemingly impossible things.

In that spirit, I would urge you to support Hummingbird House: a remarkable institution, truly inspiring.

Peter Greste is an award-winning foreign correspondent who now holds the UNESCO Chair in Journalism and Communication at the University of Queensland.

Basics for a safe life

Franklin Delano Roosevelt proclaimed the necessity of four freedoms for a safe life: freedom of speech, freedom of conscience (religious belief), freedom from want and freedom from fear. All but the first have failed in many parts of the world, and sadly a free press is on very shaky ground in a growing number of regimes. We know about these deficits only because of free speech manifested in the press, and more recently, social media. Action can be taken to put pressure on offending governments, or to provide aid only if we know what is going on and where. Freedom to speak out and report truth is the key to collective action, but the media are vulnerable to hostile government action. Without the freedom to disseminate knowledge of what is really happening, all these freedoms are in jeopardy. To silence the press and social media is to suppress people power and ultimately justice by muzzling the potential call to collective action.



Sometimes, I need a hug

by Roz Rogers



About 6 weeks ago when I was first asked to contribute an article on the topic of lgbtqi people and the church, I said an immediate, “Yes!” as this was a great opportunity to actively lobby for my community. Anyone who knows me also knows I have been lobbying hard, for decades now, on behalf of my lgbtqi brothers, sisters and elders – but for once in my life I unexpectedly found that my words had dried up. I kept avoiding the task of sitting down and doing it. Why was this, I kept asking myself. Such a simple little task, a short article, I should have been able to knock it up in 5 or 10 minutes and send it off. So, why the procrastination and lack of energy?

Well, a lot has happened in this past 5 or 6 weeks and these events starkly illustrate the sometimes brutal and cruel reality of life in the Anglican church for a lesbian who is not only open about her sexuality but who is also a passionate advocate for her community.

I recently took up a new ministry appointment in an interstate diocese and in the publicity for this appointment it was mentioned that I am married to a woman. No problems there as far as I and the parish are concerned. However, it is a problem for some of the diocese’s more conservative clergy. So ..

When I recently attended my first Synod here, I became the subject of the very first piece of business on the first full day of sitting, in a question to the Bishop, and the traditionalists weren’t subtle about it. I was very deliberately named in the question and it was an unabashed attempt to condemn the bishop by questioning his licensing of a married lesbian. It attempted to paint my appointment as having a damaging effect on the diocese and by way of inference it also questioned the legitimacy of any legally married lesbian or gay person being appointed by a bishop to a licensed ministry position on the grounds that the church does not recognize same sex marriages (which is not true, but what did the questioner care for the facts?).

If I was a less self-assured person this could have been a devastating experience of public naming and shaming. Instead, I found myself surrounded by affirmations from the vast majority of the synod members who were shocked and embarrassed by this crass attack on myself and our bishop. I stood firm, surrounded by love, and I remained dignified. The bishop and chancellor defended my appointment, and I received a public apology from the questioner for having named me in his question. So even though it all ended comparatively well for me, and the haters did themselves no good in the eyes of the others who supported me - little did I know it, a small damage was done to my spirit.

They weren’t done with me yet. Very soon after synod was over, a complaint went in to the Primate! Yep, right to the top. Again, I was named and this time they slandered me by putting lies into my mouth (again, no respect for the facts). Again, the bishop was being called on to answer for the appointment of a married lesbian and this time my parish priest was also being attacked for his role in all of this. So, yet more dirty tactics; and yet again I was being attacked for being who I am – and daring to be public about it. The true facts were passed on to the Primate and nothing more has come of it, so I soldiered on with a victory of sorts, but again I didn’t realise that another small damage was being done to my spirit.

The straw that temporarily broke this camel’s back was, in the larger scheme of things, a comparatively minor setback in an overseas Anglican diocese that voted down the possibility of same sex marriages in the church. I am used to this, it happens all the time, I know we are making good but slow progress and this was indicated by the narrow margin of the loss .. but it hit me - and for some reason it hit me hard. I dropped my involvement in all the lobby groups I was in, I cried, I wallowed in my grief, I couldn’t find the energy to write this article. I needed a break, and I needed to do what I so often tell others to do – self-care! So I took some time out to lick my suddenly exposed wounds and to get my energy back.

The happy ending is that I do have my energy and commitment restored. With the support of my gentle and loving wife and family, with the support of my parish, with the support of friends and colleagues, I am again ready to get back into the endless, tiring rounds of lobbying and strategizing and meetings and talking, talking, talking; and I

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Collateral damage

by *Svyetlana Hadgraft*



In all the debates and discussions about sexual preferences, the trumpeting of biblical passages taken out of context and the refusal to accept difference, does anyone stop to think of confused adolescents? Indeed, those educators who advocate considering alternative sexual preferences as part of sex education are too often accused of trying to convert, or even pervert, young people.

Sadly, this sort of objective, rational discussion could have saved the life of English schoolgirl Lizzie Lowe. Fourteen years old and in all the turmoil of puberty, Lizzie found that she was attracted to other females, something that conventional wisdom as she understood it deemed to be unnatural and abhorrent.

She told her friends that she thought she might be lesbian, but what sort of counselling can fourteen year-old girls give? She shrank from telling her parents, never dreaming that their love would offer acceptance and support. A devout Christian, she was afraid of rejection by the church she loved, probably aware of the prohibition in Leviticus 18.

Just imagine her dilemma: on the one hand her “unnatural” feelings, and on the other a shamed sense of isolation from all she held dear. For teenagers in whom emotion is magnified by swirling hormones and bodily changes, a frightening secret can grow into an insurmountable catastrophe. In her despair, Lizzie hanged herself.

No one had seen it coming.

Her priest, as appalled as the rest of his congregation, said he had considered inviting group discussions about sexuality, but had thought it would stir up a hornet’s nest, and let the idea lapse. With hindsight, objective discussion preserving anonymity may well have made a difference; Lizzie could have understood that she was not unnatural. To discuss such matters under the aegis of the church would help dispel the sense of sin and shame.

It is too easy to say, “Learn to live with it”, “Get over it” or “Just suck it up”. At such a vulnerable age, the adolescent needs reassurance, guidance and love.

Svyetlana Hadgraft is a member of the St John's Cathedral Community

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will not let the attackers wear me down. I stand on the right side of history and time will eventually show that.

However, the moral of this story for you, the readers of this article, is that YOU have to be the ones who give us lobbyists and members of the lgbtqi community the support that we need in order to keep on fighting. It is a hard and sometimes very nasty fight that is being brought to us. Without my bishop, without my parish priest and the other parishioners, without my other supporters, I cannot do it and still come out at the end of it as a sane and healthy person. We cannot do it alone. We need YOU to remember that much of our inner pain often remains hidden from you. We need YOU to remember to ask if we are okay when you hear of a setback or a challenge on issues like same sex marriage in the church. We need YOU to stop saying things like, “just be patient” (trust me, that one wears really, really thin after you have been hearing it for decades). We need YOU to love us and to care for us as we move ahead through difficult times. We need you, we love you, we thank you for your care. We pray for you. Please pray for us.

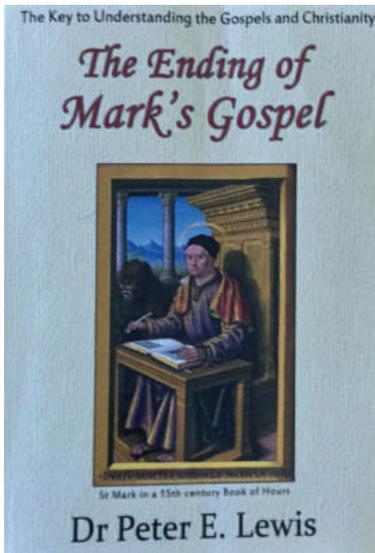
Rev'd Roz Rogers is Associate Minister for Children, Families and Youth. Christ Church Cathedral, Grafton

To love another person is to see the face of God
Victor Hugo



The Ending of Mark's Gospel

by Dr Peter E Lewis



To say that this little book is thought provoking is an understatement, although the Introduction does point at what is to come. The implications arising from the interference with the first and last pages of the gospel are engrossing.

The first pages of Dr Lewis' book must be taken on trust by the lay reader who cannot read Greek, because here Dr

Lewis painstakingly sorts through the textual problems raised by the first and last pages of Mark's Gospel, and lays the ground for his examination.

The central thesis is that the outer leaf of the codex was deliberately removed, thus removing the first and last pages, but subsequently the last page was copied back at the end of some manuscripts.

Apparently Mark believed that the conception of Jesus was natural, not divine, and that he became the Son of God at the time of his baptism when the Spirit entered into him. If the first page had included Jesus' mortal genealogy, some readers would have been outraged. A new first page shows signs of being cobbled together, including textual inconsistencies and a mistaken attribution of a prophecy to Isaiah, instead of Malachi.

Later references, e.g. "the carpenter, the son of Mary..." (Mark 6.3) make no mention of Joseph, and indeed, Joseph is never mentioned in Mark's gospel. This has led to the theory, backed by Jewish tradition and various scholars that Jesus was illegitimate. The arguments put forward are compelling.

This was clearly unacceptable, especially to Gentile Christians, in an era when traditions held that various heroes, e.g. Hercules, were born of a mortal but sired by a god. Later gospels focussed on a virgin birth. They also realigned certain narrative details.

Further controversies arise through Mark's criticisms of Peter and his contention that the disciples did not believe Mary Magdalene when she told of the Resurrection. In Mark 16. 14-15 Jesus appears and upbraids the disciples for their intransigence and tells them to go forth and preach the gospel. If we then omit verses 16-18 we have a carefully crafted conclusion, consistent with Mark's thinking.

The last chapter deals with the reference to a denarius and discusses the coins used for Roman taxes and temple taxes, raising an interesting insight into the "Render unto Caesar what is Caesar's" incident.

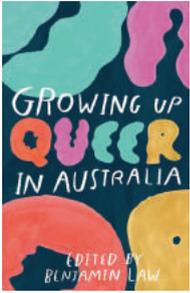
This is a stimulating but demanding book, well worth the concentration required. It is a scholarly work, meticulously researched, and while its content may startle the lay reader, its impact is nevertheless positive and reaffirming.

Svyetlana Hadgraft.

Adapting to the unfamiliar

A generation who learnt to write on slates, rote learnt the multiplication table, imperial weights and measures, and historical and geographical facts, and grew up with sterling currency: how likely are they to embrace new ideas? They saw and accepted television, calculators, computers, mobile phones, antibiotics, and the first Sputnik. Later, they witnessed the wonder of a man walking on the moon. They adjusted to a new world order which saw the decline of the British Empire, and Japan transformed from hated enemy to valued trade partner. America colonised the entertainment industry, and particularly film and popular music, so that in some contexts the American accent was as familiar as those of Great Britain. The standards of modesty that governed their youth were jettisoned and now they cope with risqué movies and uncouth language on television. In their day, what was seen as "deviant behaviour" was illegal, and not discussed, but is now socially acceptable. They may not agree with new ideas and practices but their track record demonstrates adaptability and a readiness to accommodate change. How else would they have survived?

Growing Up Queer in Australia



Edited by Benjamin Law
(Black Ink) 2019; 340 pages; Australian writer

This is a book Benjamin Law wishes he'd had when he was growing up gay in Australia. To ensure today's youngsters have access to such a publication, he invited dozens of writers who have been out of the closet for some years to write autobiographical anecdotes or short essays on their life experiences.

David Marr was 17, gay and fearful of the disapproval of his family and the world when he and other senior year students gathered in the assembly hall for a talk by the school doctor. Dr Day said you can tell whether a person is homosexual. He paused, and quite a few students froze awaiting immediate discovery of their secret. The doctor went on to say you can tell by the decor in their apartments.

Marr writes that he invested a decade of his life determined not to be homosexual. He tried religion, alcohol and marriage. Eventually he realized heaven was not meant for him and decided to just be himself.

Sooner or later, life conspires to reveal you to yourself. Many in the book thought they were the only gay in the village, or in Australia, or in the world. How they coped – and didn't cope – is here for all to see.

Growing Up Queer in Australia is sad, disturbing and, in parts, hilarious. All contributors are to be commended for their courage, their honesty and their tenacity.

It's a book for every youngster who feels they are 'different' and concerned they may not be heterosexual. It's a book for parents, teachers and every school library.

If *Growing Up Queer in Australia* stops one person from feeling shame or self-loathing, from feeling alone in the world, for dispelling thoughts of suicide, it will have done what the author wants.

Reviewed by Clive Hodges, volunteer guide at St John's Cathedral, honorary publicity officer of the cathedral's free morning concerts

This review was originally published in the August 2019 issue of Good Reading magazine

What's On @ St John's

Please check our website for updates or last minute changes.

www.stjohnscathedral.com.au
or contact Cathedral Reception
Phone: 07 3835 2222

SEPTEMBER

- 1 Choral Evensong with Mystics and God-botherers, Catholic Archbishop of Suva speaking, 6-8pm
- 1-4/10 Season of Creation – Photography & Art Display
- 4 Wasting Time with God – A Spirituality of Kinship With the Dean, 9.30am
- 4 Choral Evensong, 6pm
- 5 Dona Nobis Pacem - Conservatorium Singers free concert, 11am-noon
- 6 Wine Before Breakfast, 7-8.30am
- 11 Contemplative Eucharist (Meditation from 5.30pm), 6pm
- 13 Cathedral In-Quiz-itive night, 6.15pm
- 15 A Celebration of Creation Liturgy, 11.30am
- 17 UQ Free morning concert, 11am-noon
- 18 2040 film and Discussion Night - Bread & soup provided from 6 movie at 7, 6-9pm
- 19-28 Peace Lecture Display
- 20 National Day of Climate Action (endorsed by the Public Affairs Commission of the Anglican Church of Australia)
- 21 United Nations International Peace Lecture With Sophie McNeill (Reporter with ABC's Four Corners, a former Middle East Correspondent and the recipient of three Walkley awards), 6-8pm

OCTOBER

- 2 Choral Evensong, 6pm
- 4 Wine Before Breakfast, 7-8.30am
- 6 Choral Evensong with Mystics Theologians and God-botherers, 6-8pm
- 9 Contemplative Eucharist, 6pm
- 12 Brisbane Open House, 9am-noon
- 13 Brisbane Open House, 1-4pm
- 18 Sing Australia National Concert - 500 singers, 7pm
- 19 Christopher Wrench Organ Recital, 6pm
- 27 TENTH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS OF THE CONSECRATION OF ST JOHN'S CATHEDRAL
BBQ lunch, 11.30am
Celebrations including the launch of the Windows book, 3pm
Evensong followed by drinks and nibbles, 6-8pm
- 3 All Soul's Mass, 6pm
- 6 Choral Evensong, 6pm
- 8 Wine Before Breakfast, 7-8.30am
- 8 Cathedral In-Quiz-itive, 6.15pm
- 9 Chamber Choir Concert, Evening
- 13 Contemplative Eucharist, 6pm
- 16h Organ Recital with Andrej Kouznetsov, 6-8.30pm
- 30 Bach Society Concert, 7.00pm



POETS' CORNER

No need to panic!

*One question that forever vexes
Is what goes on between the sexes.
It seems that folk will never learn
It really isn't their concern.
But still they feel they must berate
Relationships that are not straight;
Because they do not understand,
They see this love as contraband.
Why must they get all melancholic
Imagining how others frolic?
Let love be free to celebrate,
And don't despise the choice of mate.
The famous caveat of course is
Don't do it where you'll scare the horses.*

*The heavens have not fallen yet –
The rainbow flag is not a threat!*

A Question of Integrity

*It hurts to be regarded
As an embarrassment,
Or worse, a pervert,
freak,
Queer
a jumble of letters,
But not an individual.

Somehow we're supposed to change,
Become "normal",
See a psychiatrist
(Who can teach you hypocrisy),
Or "pray away the gay"
(As easily pray away the colour of your eyes).
"They should make an effort!"*

*Understand
It isn't a choice.
You can't change your genes.
This is how we were born.

We're all told, "To thine own self be true..."
So please
Let us be true to our own selves.*

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Promised Land

*Home is where the heart is
Yet where can that be
For the dispossessed, the homeless
And the displaced refugee.*

*They do not demand a handout
Just a helping hand
Where else can they turn, and run
When they can see the Promised Land.*

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