

Special Services

Saturday 24th August

2.30 Parish Concert

Sunday 25 August

11.30 am Chinese 5th Anniversary.

Sunday 1st September

6 pm Taizé St. Aidan's Day service at St. Aidan's

Sunday 29th September

9.30 MU 85th Anniversary

Saturday 12 October

Spring fair

Sunday 13th October

9.30 am Shoebox Sunday

Sunday 20th October

Blessing of the animals.

Sunday 27 October

10 am FESTAL EUCHARIST FOR PARISH 130TH ANNIVERSARY

PARISH CLERGY

Vicar.

Rev SHANE HÜBNER

(0432 681 177)

shane.hubner@hotmail.com

Sudanese Priest

Rev. Joseph Arou 0431 541 535

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Chinese Priest

Rev. Esther Zhang 0405 602 439

Family Minister

Barbara Plumridge 9898 5193

Honorary Clergy

Rt Rev'd George Hearn, 9840 7816,

Rev. Betty Bracken, 9939 5881

Rev. John Stockdale 9890 8388

Rev. Harry Kerr 9893 4946

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GOOD NEWS

好消息

WELPIATH



Parish Magazine of the Anglican Parish of Box Hill
August 2019

The Vicar Writes

Welcome to another edition of our parish 'Good News.' I want to take this opportunity to thank all members of the parish community who have offered their condolences and support since the death of my Dad, Ken Hubner on 20 June 2019. While Dad and I were not particularly close, his passing has affected me deeply and I have appreciated all the care and love shown to me and Janet in this time.

There is always lots happening in our community life and I wish to draw parishioners' attention to three important events to occur in the next three months. The first is our **Stewardship**

Program which begins on Sunday 11 August, and runs until 'Thanksgiving Sunday' 9 September, 2019. The theme of our program this year is 'Living a God-inspired life.' There are three Sundays which have a focus:

11 August:

Faith is the Foundation

25 August:

Discipleship is the key

1 September:

Generosity is the hallmark.

The next Sunday after this is 'Thanksgiving Sunday' at which we return our pledges of time, talents, and treasure for the on-going ministry life of our parish for 2019/2020. Please be on the look-out for information concerning this program and prayerfully respond as best you are able.

I also want parishioners to be aware of our **'Creation Season'** set of liturgies for 2019. There will be five

Sundays where our focus will be on God's creation:

22 September: **Trees and forests**

29 September: **The Land**

6 October: **Wilderness**

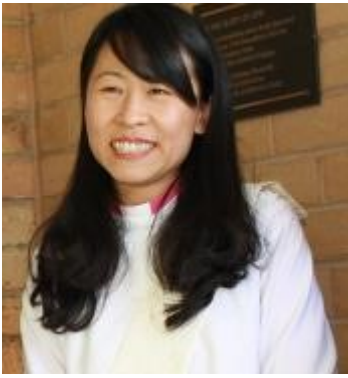
13 October: **Rivers and water**

20 October: **St Francis and the Blessing of our Pets service.**



Our services on these Sundays may be a bit different from what we are used to but are designed to enable us to reflect upon our place in and our role in maintaining God's beautiful creation.

The third thing I want to draw parishioners' attention to is our 130th anniversary celebrations. We will celebrate 130 years of Anglican worship in Box Hill on two occasions. The first is a special musical concert on Saturday 24 August at 2.30pm. For a gold coin donation please join us in the church for a wonderful afternoon of entertainment followed by refreshments in the hall. We will also be having a special combined parish service at 10am on Sunday 27 October at which our Archbishop and Primate is the guest preacher and celebrant. This is shaping up to be a great celebration and will be followed by a lunch in the hall. Later that day you are welcome to attend the Cathedral for a free concert at 2.30pm by the Australian Welsh Male Choir. Please continue to pray for the on-going life of our parish as we give thanks for 130 years and plan for the next 10!



Mission Trip to Fiji

Revd. Esther Zhang

Fiji, where I came to know our Lord Jesus, is my third home country besides China and Australia. Every second or third year, I am grateful that I have opportunity to go back and to bless and be blessed by the people there. In January 2019, I went to Rakiraki again to do some mission work at the local Indian churches. Rakiraki is a little town on the northern coast of Viti Levu, which is populated mainly with Indian people. Most villagers do not have a job, they depend on farming, like sugarcane, home growing vegetables, fruits, animal farming, fishing, or running a small business. Most people are lacking many necessities of life. A Korean missionary, Hannah Kim, has planted two churches during the last twelve years. Grace Community Church is in the town and Shalom Community Church is located in a remote area. Their gospel ministry has led many Indian people to Christ. The majority of church members are widows with children, plus a few working-class people. These people are among the poorest of the poor. For many, three meals a day is a luxury lifestyle. But thank God, through this Gospel ministry, many people have been blessed in every way. These Churches support some children's schooling fees, and provide widows and elderly with food on a regular basis.

In the past 12 years, I have seen how challenging the missionary work is. The missionary work does not only focus on praying, evangelizing, preaching and pastoral care. More than half the time, the missionary needs to work as a construction worker to build the church, as a tradesman to maintain the building or fix things, as a cleaner to clean the church weekly, as house servant to cut

the lawn, raise bees, feed the sheep, plant and water the fruit trees and vegetables, to send food to the poor, as a doctor to bring medicine to the sick, and an administrator to do all the administrative tasks. I am her remote helper; if possible, I would help her with some of the administrative works. This trip, before I went, she gave me a list of tasks to do within three weeks. 1. Preach at two churches every Sunday. 2. To do some office administration, 3 to teach computer classes to some church youth. I felt that's a lot of work! but I gladly accepted these tasks. Surprisingly, on my arrival, the missionary thought I am an expert in everything, she brought me four very old laptops to fix up and install the software. Though I am not a computer specialist, I had to say "yes", because there is no other way to fix them up in that small town. They have been waiting for me for a long time! Preaching weekly wasn't very hard, administrative works and teaching basics of computer was relatively easy, but to fix four laptops gave me a lot of headaches. The church Wifi is slow and expensive during the day, so when I downloaded programs, I had to get up at midnight or very early in the morning, because by then data is free and faster. And some hardware problems were really beyond my ability, I prayed, searched on YouTube for the solutions. Unbelievably I really don't know how some of the problems were fixed, on the last day they were all in a working condition! I then understood why Paul says "when I am weak, then I am strong" (2 Corinthians 12:10b). His power made perfect my weakness. The most enjoyable time was daily morning prayer time with the missionary in the church. While I was walking around the church and praying, through the window, I could see the beautiful landscapes, sea, cows, sheep and sugarcane, praising the Lord together with the birds, dogs and cows! The best food I had there was crabs, one day a retired couple invited us to their home for dinner,

and cooked my favorite crab! I was so thankful to witness how a diabetic patient's feet were healed through day by day applying honey on the wound. We visited almost everyday to clean and dress the wound with honey, day after day the flesh grew out. At the end, his feet were 90% healed. The most unforgettable thing was seeing the transformation of a lady with mental illness who lived in a horrible condition. This lady has lived by herself in a small government house for the last 30 years. She didn't have electricity, and her toilet had been blocked for some time. What's more, her head was covered with lice, and her bed with many body lice. After a few trips to visit her, she allowed us to cut all her hair and get rid of all the lice, allowed us to remove her bed, burn all her stuffs which were covered with insects. I have to cut the story short, eventually, we managed to throw out almost all her contaminated clothes, and replace them with new clothes. After all the cleanups, her hair, her body, her house, I had a strong sense of victory, a sense of a hope for her future in Christ. I was really thankful that as servants of God, we could go to the place as Jesus would go, and experience the victory Jesus brought to one's life... The thing I missed most in Fiji was sleep... On the last day when we came to the airport, eventually I have time to do my hair, while the hairdresser was cutting and straightening my hair, I fell asleep! The works in the mission field were really challenging but rewarding. I received a special tailored beautiful Fiji "Sulu" (a wrap dress in a red and white flower print) and much love from the people. And although my body was tired, my spirit was renewed and blessed. It's really a privilege and honour to be a part of God's global mission. I pray that we can boldly witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ, be prepared in season and out of season, when we hear the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" that we would answer, "Here am I; send me!" (Isaiah 6:8)



St Peter's Mother's Union 85th Birthday



We will celebrate this parish milestone at
the 9.30 am Eucharist

On the Feast of St Michael and All Angels
Sunday 29th September 2019

Preacher: Revd Carmel Hunter
Melbourne Diocesan Chaplain

Morning tea follows the service

A stall with fancy goods: cakes, biscuits
and a raffle. *Watch for the tickets!*

The "travelling suitcase" from the M.U.
Office will also have a stall with birthday
cards, wrapping paper and Christmas Gifts.

M.U Fashion Parade by Blume's Fashions

Wednesday 23rd October at 1.30 p.m
in the undercroft.

Display of Spring-Summer Garments for sale.
Afternoon Tea Will follow

Samaritan's Purse Boxes.



Yes it's that time of year again.

Boxes available and starter bags for \$10.

Use the bags and add, T shirts and shorts
Fun things: Sunglasses, fold up hat, skipping
rope and your box is done.

**Don't forget to remove all packaging and
add \$10 for freight.**

I have cloth bags for pencils and marbles.

Boxes are delivered to countries like Fiji,
PNG - a child receives only one in their life.

Shoe Box Sunday, 13th October.

Anyone wanting to participate but not do a
box can make a donation towards freight,
knit a beanie or soft toys, I have directions
or I will do a box. Talk to me. *Jan Gunst*

Concert

To celebrate St Peter's 130th Anniversary

An enjoyable program of choral/instrumental groups

- vocal and instrumental solos
 - St Peter's Choir
 - The singing vicar
 - Much, much more

Organized and directed by Lewis Plumridge

SATURDAY 24 AUGUST, 2.30 pm



Chinese congregation turns 5

We thank God for His power and faithfulness that we survived and ready to thrive!

**On 25th August, we will
have our 5 Year
Anniversary Celebration.**



You are all welcome to join us to celebrate for what the Lord has done and to look forward to the unimaginable riches of his glorious inheritance among the saints. We also want to give heartfelt thanks to our brothers and sisters in English and Sudanese Congregations for your love and support. As one body, we are here together to witness the glorious Gospel of Our Lord Jesus.

Please come and join us this celebration.

**The service is at 11:30
followed by Agape Lunch.**

Blessings, Esther

St. Aidan's Day 2019



TAIZE SERVICE FOR ST AIDAN'S DAY
SUNDAY 1ST SEPTEMBER 6 P.M.
AT ST AIDAN'S
(Surrey St., Box Hill South)

Spring Fair on October 12 here at St Peter's



**Our parish has the very best Spring Fair.
Yes it is time again!**

Wonderful opportunities available!
Join our team!

Places: Box Hill Central, here St Peter's, and in your homes.

What: Crafts, baking, confectionery creations, growing plants.

Would you like to try your charm with sales? In early September we will have a kiosk sale at Box Hill Central to publicise our Spring Fair. Date to be advised in the Link.

We would love to hear from you about any offers to support the Spring Fair.

People to set up, clean up, staff the stalls and provide quality saleable goods.

Thank you to all who have already started making items and their donations.

Parish Raffle

is again offering the same quality prizes.

Tickets available now!

Still \$2.00 a ticket!

Great odds of winning one of
6 wonderful prizes.

Bunnings voucher, Jen Walker hand woven woollen shawl, Gourmet hamper, Wine Hamper, Coles Myer voucher or a chocoholics hamper!

During September we will again ask for donations for our traditional hampers.

We have valued the great generous support we have already received and look forward to another successful time.

Contact Hilary on 9899 7553 or
cchrb@hotmail.com with any queries or comments.

130th Anniversary of Anglican Parish of Box Hill



Celebratory weekend Saturday and Sunday October 26 and 27

Saturday October 26

VINTAGE CAR DISPLAY courtesy of the Dymond Family and some general Parish history
Time: to be advised

Sunday October 27 at 10.00am

Festal Eucharist for the whole parish

Archbishop Philip Freier will preside and preach
Lunch to follow.

and later...

Free Australian Male Welsh Choir concert at St Paul's Cathedral

2.30pm, followed by further refreshments and singing at Y and J's over the road.

JOHN PAYNE 1934-2019

This is an edited version of the eulogy at John's funeral prepared by his sons Stephen, Richard and David

It is a privilege to speak on behalf of John and Margaret's children.

Dad was born on 5th October 1934, the second son of parents Frank and Vera. the second son of parents Frank and Vera. His three sisters, Dorothy, Melva and Glenyce are here today. Frank his older brother passed away in 2008.

They were a close family sharing lots of great times together.

Dad started work at the age of 14 in Payne's iron factory in North Melbourne. It was tough work for a 14 year old boy. Later on, Dad worked with his brother Frank who taught him carpentry.

As a youngster, Dad was an excellent cricketer and played district cricket for

Coburg. He was selected for the Victorian team but couldn't afford the long pants let alone the trip costs to Tasmania.

Dad enjoyed ballroom dancing at All Saints Preston and at Coburg Town Hall and Holy Trinity Church where he met Margaret Murray who was only 16 at the time. Dad was 19. Mum and Dad began their courtship. Not having a licence, let alone a car, Dad rode his bike or caught a bus to see Mum. They courted for 2 years and were married at All Saints Preston and honeymooned in Mackay.

They built the family home in Garden St, Box Hill North and have lived there ever since. Three years later Stephen came along, followed by Kerrie, Robert, Glenn and David and a wonderful surprise when Richard arrived four years later. Having a big family was a

great experience growing up especially with Christmas and birthdays. Dad always pre-planned and marked these occasions with a yellow dot in the calendar 12 months out.

Dad had a strong work ethic for his employer and in his private life. His early work experience in carpentry led him to the building industry including 20 years with Glenville homes as a Building Supervisor. His reputation was of an honest hardworking man who helped many tradesmen. Dad enjoyed working with a multicultural workforce. Once he discovered good sub contractors he was always loyal, providing them with constant work and regular pay. Their appreciation was obvious from the gifts he received every Christmas, including alcohol, dishwashers, and Italian statues for the garden.

During his tenure at Glenville Homes, Dad had dozens of homes on the go directing the tradesmen, all without a mobile. Our home phone was always busy between 7 & 9.30 at night as he organised trades for the next day. In the late eighties, in the “recession we had to have”, Dad was made redundant. He worked doing any job he could find. These jobs included cleaning schools and on and off jobs for neighbours and parishioners of St Peter’s. This supported the family and allowed Richard to successfully complete his secondary education. As we were growing up we had many family holidays together travelling in our well known orange combi van- and we always had many ring-ins on these holidays. Dad was always happy to share the holidays with our friends. That combi van had only a 14cc engine and struggled to carry 9 people, pets and a fully laden trailer. As a family we spent many a hot summer on the banks of the Kiewa river, swimming, fishing and avoiding bush fires and snakes. These were family times, simple and without hassle. One great story happened on a family holiday to Leongatha where the farmer asked us to remove a single rogue trout from his dam so he could re-stock. After 10 days of madly fishing for one trout, Dad called us all peanuts and threw the gill net across the dam to catch this single trout. Dad stood back and said: “That’ll catch it!” We all threw rocks into the dam at one end to scare the rogue trout into the net. Next day there were half a dozen rogue trout and they were all monsters and all identical. As we got older we fished further afield with numerous trips to the Goulburn and Murray rivers, where we camped for days, chasing trout and watching camp fires at night Dad invented this new fishing technique where he would climb on a branch over the river and drop baits on to unsuspecting trout below. Dad never really thought how he would reel in his catch, perched 10 feet above the water. As a builder it is strange he did not consider the stability of the branch. One day the branch broke with him on it. Luckily there were enough snags on the water



to stop Dad from drowning. . It didn’t take much to make him laugh. Once when young Robert was considering getting his ear pieced Dad came to the dinner table wearing a shower curtain ring in his ear! He changed Robert’s mind immediately and never said a word. Dad and mum had a remarkable balance raising 6 kids. They allowed us to make mistakes without over parenting. We all have a very good work ethic because of their influence. They instilled into us a sense of responsibility to be self reliant. Dad warmly welcomed all partners into the family. He called each of the girls “sweetie” which in the early days ensured there were no name stuff ups! He loved them all. Then along came the grandchildren. He loved them all—each one was special. They loved him reading them a story, walking round his garden, playing games (particularly UNO, Trouble and Downball). He loved seeing them grow from babies into adults. He truly loved family events where everyone would get together. On week-ends Dad attended to gardening, mowing and general construction. The ultimate construction was the conversion of the garage into a playroom. Many fun and competitive times were had playing pool or table tennis there. Dad was tireless in helping all his children in anything from home construction, moving mulch, painting and general labour. He always did it with a smile and gentle advice: “I’ll give you a little tip.”

Some of dad’s quirky ways included: Serving up hi AllBran cereal the night before into a bowl with cutlery ready to go for the next day- could it get any staler?

Dad was pedantic with shirts - they must have a top left hand pocket to contain his famous blue biro and writing cards- imperative to write down anything and create work lists. Dad was forever chewing PK chewing gum with multiple packets strewn throughout his car and home. He hated paying for mushrooms - he picked them wild wherever he could. He was violently ill on several occasions after cooking up a stink.

Nicknames: a family tradition. Dad gave nicknames to many family and acquaintances. They included: Emptyhead, Timmy, Ribbit Peanut, Screw loose, and Ginger Nut. The family and others reciprocated with names including Jack, Dude, Daddio, Peanuts, Papa, Gramps and JPG (aka John Payne Glenville). In his fifties, Dad Played competition tennis for St. Peter’s Box Hill where he was given the nickname “coach.” This was due to his constant “I’ll give you a little tip.” Later in his career at the age of 83, Dad served 4 double faults in a row to which mum stated, “Have you got muck on the pluck?” Dad replies: “I’m gonna give this up.” And he did.

To our mum, dad was a loyal, caring and loving husband for over 61 years. They loved and enjoyed the same things as each other. Our mother writes: *We built a good life together in Box Hill, bringing up our 6 children. Jack was a wonderful husband, a good provider and although we had good and bad times as all families have, he was always there, happy and cheerful. We are very fortunate to have been granted so many years together and I thank God for our life together.*

We would like to acknowledge our mum for her tireless love and care given to Dad in the final weeks of his life.

A final story of our Dad. During a family holiday In Leongatha, David fell off a tractor and almost lost his life. He was very upset and in shock. Dad carried him back in his arms

through the paddocks. This symbolises what Dad has done for us all, all his life. He has carried us through the good times and the bad. He has

always been there for his children, his grandchildren and most importantly, his wife. Today we have the privilege and honour of carrying you, Dad.

You have impacted us in the most profound way. We love you Dad and will never forget you.

HOW THE CHURCH IS MARGINALISING ITSELF AND BLAMES EVERYBODY ELSE

The Very Reverend Dr Peter Catt

When did you stop believing in science?"

I have been asked that question an amazing number of times over the past 30 years. I am usually asked it by someone who has little, if anything, to do with the church when they discover that I completed a PhD in evolutionary biology before I was ordained.

These people believe that all Christians are Creationists who think that God made the world in seven days in the year 4004 BC. They therefore assume that we pay no heed to science.

For them, we are numbered among the anti-vaxers and flat-earthers. They see us, at best, as benign adherents to quaint fairy tales. In terms of their life, we are marginal and of no practical consequence.

The constancy with which I am presented with a question that assumes an incompatibility between science and religion demonstrates how effectively such ideas can get traction in the public consciousness and how long such perceptions can last. Partly this is to do with the media's fascination with the weird and the wonderful.

But it also illustrates the determination and dedication of those driven by such ideologies. A dynamic we see not only in religious groups but also in politics and other spheres of life. They hold that the ideology of Climate Change Denying has on our politicians being a case in point.

In terms of the mission of the church, the perception that Christians don't take science seriously and are given over to reality-denying ideologies is

incredibly detrimental. It causes people to look for meaning, direction and purpose elsewhere. The growth of "the spiritual but not religious" group is partly an expression of this.

While the Creation Bus was finally parked about 10 years ago and *Creation Magazine* these days caters to a small niche market, and while the bulk of Christians have moved on from a dogmatic and narrow reading of the Creation stories, that same way of using the Bible has been repeated again and again.

And every time it is used, the mission of the church is trashed, and the church finds itself further marginalised.

When society began to come to terms with the fact that some marriages are destructive, that some marriages die as people change, and that people do get divorced and are often lucky enough to find a new life-giving relationship, the church dug in its heels. Based on a particular reading of the Bible it insisted that the destructive relationships needed to be defended as holy and battered women were to be encouraged to stay in order to protect the institution of marriage. Again, ignoring reality and good evidence, divorced people were treated like second-class citizens, their new relationships were left unacknowledged and uncelebrated, and many vulnerable people are still coerced into staying in destructive marriages.

And, while much of the church has moved on and in many places has found that it can celebrate with divorced people their new life-giving relationships, the pain of the years of

prohibition remains and in some pockets of the church the anti-divorce rhetoric has escalated.

The destructive pattern is repeating itself as the church tries to deal with gender roles. Again, a particular way of using the Bible has people determined to protect culturally bound stereotypes as divine fiat. And while much of the church has found a way to move on and to be enhanced by the leadership of women, in other places men can only be taught by men, and men are required to be the leaders of churches and heads of households. Once again, the lessons from science and societal evolution are cast aside and many in the church portray themselves as social Neanderthals who think of women as literally the weaker sex.

Also, in recent memory there is the churches' contribution to the marriage equality debate. Some of the "No" case was offered in sensitive ways. Other contributions were based on a particular use of the Bible that led its proponents to once again ignore good science and experiential evidence to advance arguments that were both untrue and profoundly damaging. In the wake of the marriage equality debate, some church communities have developed a fixation on gender diversity and as well as continuing their crusade against same-sex-attracted people. As a result, Victoria has found it necessary to ban "Gay Conversion Therapy" and other States are considering the need to do the same.

Late last year I attended a Queensland Government sponsored consultation on the need for such legislation in that

State. I was honoured to be a Church voice in that forum but also horrified by the stories of what some church communities are telling people. Each and every story helped to trash the mission of the Church. We are in a sad place when people who are noted for being open to evidence and are experienced as welcoming, accepting and compassionate are seen as anomalies.

Some churches are holding "Making Sense of Gender Confusion" sessions. Given that they are being led by people whose only academic expertise is in using the Bible in a particular way, one can see where these sessions are heading. One session organiser told me that they didn't have enough time in the session to consider evidence.

There are signs that the marginalisation that sections of the church are working so hard to achieve for the whole church is bearing other fruits as well. As the Israel Folau case illustrates, there is a narrative developing that interprets resistance to the furthering of the destructive practices as religious persecution. Religious persecution is a very serious matter, a matter of life and death for many Christians and people of other faiths throughout the world. To align oneself with them, because one's

teaching about women being subservient to men or the proclamation of approaches to human sexuality that lead to increased rates of youth suicide, is being called out as self-indulgent and trivialises the plight of those who are genuinely threatened for holding to their faith. The saddest aspect of this tale is that there are many, many Christian communities in this country who are as horrified as anyone outside the church as to the way this is playing out. In these communities, people of goodwill are seeking to be a positive and progressive influence on their communities.

In these places, the Bible is taken seriously but is also understood to be a complex set of documents. These communities are sensitive to the fact that for the bulk of Christian history the Bible has been read in a variety of ways, and that modern biblical scholarship provides a way to use these complex documents to speak a life-giving word to a complex world. It is not just people like me, who some would want to dismiss as a liberal or unorthodox, who hold this concern for the way the mission of the church is being trashed.

In his book *Amazing Love: Theology for Understanding Discipleship, Sexuality and Mission*, Andrew Davison, an Anglican priest based at Cambridge,

who sees himself as belonging to the evangelical wing of the church, writes to those of his own camp to invite them to review their current approach to marriage equality, and gender and sexuality diversity. He seeks to remind them that the Bible is complex and biblical interpretation is not a simple thing and that mistakes have been made in the past. Above all, he asks them to have an eye on the effect that taking hard-line positions has on the mission of the church.

Hopefully some will hear his voice. No doubt, others will dismiss his call as "following the way of the world". Finally, I would want to add that Christianity, with its deep insights into human nature and its understanding of the giftedness of life and the planet, could be making a very positive impact on some of the global issues that we face.

Confronting poverty, pursuing the way of peace, building a just world, setting people free from the things that bind them, looking after the planet and dealing with climate change are all issues that the depth of Christian theology and spirituality can help the human family address.

The Very Reverend Dr Peter Catt is the Dean of St John's Anglican Cathedral, Brisbane

(First published in the Brisbane Times)

MIKE PENCE IS WRONG

Theological disagreement is not religious discrimination. By Jack Moline

AS PART OF his annual commencement speech tour, Vice President Mike Pence warned graduates at Christian colleges such as Liberty University that they would be "shunned or ridiculed for defending the teachings of the Bible" and adherence to "traditional Christian beliefs." As an example, Pence cited the backlash he and his wife, Karen Pence, received after she took a job at Immanuel Christian School in Springfield, Va., a private Christian school that bans LGBT employees and students and the children of gay parents.

What the vice president and many like him are describing, however, is not an infringement of their rights or

persecution, but theological disagreement and different beliefs that are as protected as their own. While the Constitution protects their right to choose their religion and how to practice their beliefs, the Constitution does not protect against theological or philosophical disagreements. Pence's assertion that his rights are being infringed upon ignores the historical understanding of the constitutional guarantee of religious freedom. The First Amendment protects my Judaism just as it protects another's Christianity, Islam, Sikhism, Hinduism, Buddhism, or atheism. The long-held understanding of the First Amendment has also enabled different expressions of each religion

to flourish in our country. Those who advocated for and wrote the Bill of Rights rejected the idea that a single interpretation of Christianity was legally the "right one." Thanks in part to what those men put down on paper in the 1780s, the number of Christian denominations in the country has ballooned from fewer than 10 to the perhaps hundreds in the country today. And that doesn't include the multitude of nondenominational Christian groups.

Even within the denominations, however, there can be a wide range of theological understandings. Both former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and former Attorney General Jeff Sessions are members of the

United Methodist Church, which itself is in the midst of turmoil over theological disagreements and different scriptural interpretations. So, when Pence advocates for “traditional Christian beliefs,” it’s important to ask whose tradition he’s talking about and to recognize that he, like all of us, has the right to his biblical interpretation and faith. But what he’s doing is conflating disagreement with infringement of rights and ignoring the rich diversity of faith in this country, including in his own chosen faith of Christianity. Infringement on religious rights in this country is when your movements are restricted because of your faith, as

has happened for some Muslims through Trump’s Muslim ban, or when your ability to wear religious garb is prohibited, as has happened for some Sikhs who wear kirpans, or when you are denied service or health care because of someone else’s religious beliefs.

Freedom to practice your beliefs is endangered when your sense of safety is shattered after a hate-fueled attack on members of your faith community as those in Jewish, Muslim, Sikh, and African-American Christian communities across the country have experienced through shootings, arson, and violent protests.

Objections to Pence’s views on LGBTQ people or other rights are not an infringement on his—or anyone else’s—religious freedom. Suggesting that they are or that evangelical Christians are “under attack” is not only wrong, it is dangerous. It devalues the reality of religious persecution at a time when people in this country and around the world are being killed because of their faith.

A forceful disagreement with someone’s religious beliefs is simply not the same as the violent acts targeting houses of worship. **Rabbi Jack Moline** is president of *Interfaith Alliance, USA*. Article from “*Sojourners*,

FACING OUR DEMONS

Rev’d Margaret Ayo

Rev’d Margaret Ayo is Honorary Assistant priest at St Phillip’s, Earls Court, London. Harry & Pam were there when she preached this sermon.

Luke 8:26-39

I was baptised by the late Archbishop Janani Luwum in the parish of St Philip back in Uganda. And that is where my journey to priesthood started many years ago. And here I am today with you in the Parish of St Philip, so I have come full circle. I WAS told by my parents that one of the things I used to do as a little girl was pray to ask God for everything even when it was impossible. The one that was always told so much, was the story when I knelt down under this huge wild tree and prayed to God to allow the fruits to fall down, so that I would pick and eat. And my prayers would go like this, “I thank Jesus for my family, and please!, please! Jesus, let this fruit fall down so that I share it with my sister. Amen.”... It didn’t work.

As a child, I knew that Jesus loved me, and I loved him, and that I could ask him for what I wanted. Not bad for a six year old’s thinking, as all those things were true. Jesus did love me and I could ask him for things. Jesus gives us what we need, and many times, what we want, as well. But when this is the extent of our

doctrine, this idea of a kind fairy-god-mother Jesus who makes wishes come true, we eventually find ourselves disappointed and disillusioned. We cannot turn Jesus to King Midas who turns everything he touches into gold.

Despite asking Jesus in prayers for things, occasionally I was not the best of a little girl.

I remember my first experience as the outsider. It was in my primary school. As it happen my best friend Laura, was playing with another girl at a learning station in our class. I went to join them, but to my disappointment she promptly told me that the station was full. This is a small thing, but I remember it like it was yesterday. You probably have stories like that, too. I found out later that I had been mean to her earlier on and that hurt her feelings. That was the reason, I was left out.

And here like mine is a man who has been left out. Naked, living in the tombs, demon-possessed! He was lonely.

Maybe the man invited the demons in. Maybe he made some mistakes that led to his predicament.

Sometimes, we are cast out for good reason. Or maybe he cast himself out. Sometimes, because of the things we’ve done or experienced or because of our disappointment with ourselves, our own demons and shame drive us

away from the community, from the family and from the church.

Perhaps this man’s problems did not have an easy answer. Like many of the outcasts of our day, perhaps his troubles were just a fact of his being; random and unstoppable. We have to remember that regardless of the reason for this man’s loneliness and for ours, Jesus comes to restore all of us to God and to each other. He builds relationships; He puts us back in our community from which we have been excluded.

We are reminded that the man was chained and guarded by his own community. In fact, I wonder how many of them missed Jesus’ teaching, since they were preoccupied with other matters. It seems to me that they were afraid of Jesus because of the loss of their pigs. The swineherds were out of a job, and the village was out of a large source of economic income.

This man’s restoration came at a cost that the community was not willing to pay. They didn’t see Jesus’ act as one of grace and power, but rather as a threat to their way of life.

This demon exists as well among us today. At least one or more of us have so many demons within us. So what can we do about them?

As the people of God in St Philip, what are we willing to sacrifice to let someone else back into our

community? When they have wronged us, or when they have neglected us, or when they are just a big pain to deal with? Building broken relationship to bring people back into the community is not any easy thing to do. It may costs us something and it forces us to make adjustments. Do we have a place for our neighbours with intellectual disabilities? Learning to be church together might not be easy. Do we have a place for the child who has disappointed us, the friend from whom we are estranged?

Do we want those different from us to be restored or is it too costly for us like the town's people?

Jesus called this man by name and like him, he knows all our names. God loves all of us in our brokenness, in our loneliness, in our live with demons and he makes good

out of it. The man after he received the good news from Jesus, he sat at his feet. The outcasts are the people that God makes something out of them. For this man Jesus ask him to return to his community. The outcasts are consistently God's very best preachers. The person you'd rather keep at a distance, the person whose friendship you know would come at a cost, the people whose inclusion feels like a cost that may be just a little too high for us to bear – It is the poor, and the damaged, the sick, the rejected who will be our preachers, if we will let them.

And it is in our own brokenness, poverty, sickness, and rejection that we are called to preach even to those who kept us at a distance. We cannot hide from our own past, our own exiles, or from the people who have seen us naked in the tombs any more

than the man in our story could. We are called to the uncomfortable and costly business of knowing and being known by each other.

The church is not the place to look for easy answers or escape from pain. It's not the place to come for a fairy-god-mother or the secret to success. Perhaps we should think of the church as messy and vulnerable, costly and uncomfortable.

And like in Luke's story today, no one ever seems to get exactly what they want. And that's okay. In fact, this is the good news. Because it is here that Jesus meets us. It is in the mess that God is at work.

May we be a church that can embrace the mess, that is willing to shoulder the burden for those in need of restoration among and around us. May we welcome those who have been cast out back in, and may we

APOCALYPSE IS NOT A DIRTY WORD

Why we need to talk about heaven, hell, and the end of it all. By Steven Charleston

Steven Charleston is an elder of the Choctaw Nation and the retired Anglican bishop of Alaska. His article is relevant to the Israel Folau controversy in Australia.

I HAVE WORKED WITH progressive Christians for a very long time, and I've noticed that too much talk about heaven seems to embarrass them.

Many people I've encountered have been eager to talk about the gospel of social justice but much less enthusiastic talking about eschatology. They seemed happy, for example, to talk about the feeding of the 5,000, but not so much about the Book of Revelation or the apocalypse.

As a Native American I find this apparent disconnect in the theological mindset of many of my colleagues to be worth some deep reflection. After all, the story of the feeding of the 5,000 and the vision of an apocalypse are in the same book. Why the willingness to talk about one but not the other, especially since Jesus himself saw them as interconnected? I believe the reason lies more in politics than prophecy. The willingness to engage some aspects of Christian theology while being reticent to

engage others is part of the political landscape of the postmodern American church. On both the progressive/liberal side of the church and the traditional/conservative side, there is an understanding about theological turf. Many Christians who identify as living on the progressive side seem to almost intuitively assume that topics such as heaven, hell, judgment, and apocalypse are reserved for fundamentalist Christians. They leave eschatological explanations and interpretations to the Right, partially in fear of guilt by association. At best, they are embarrassed by the topics and, at worst, insulted.

David Crary, in an April 2019 Associated Press article headlined "Poll: Church membership plummets over last 20 years," discussed the perceived ownership of certain theological issues by the Right. Crary noted that church membership among Democrats fell from 71 percent to 48 percent over the past two decades, compared to a smaller decrease from 77 percent to 69 percent among Republicans. Crary quoted Notre Dame political science professor David Campbell, who attributed the partisan divide to "the allergic

reaction many Americans have to the mixture of religion and conservative politics." Increasingly, Campbell said, "Americans associate religion with the Republican Party—and if they are not Republicans themselves, they turn away from religion."

Is this part of the reason many progressive Christians seem to have abandoned eschatology to the Right? The more that conservatives use this ground unopposed to announce Armageddon, the more the public at large associates religion with extremism. The more Christianity is associated with hellfire and brimstone, the less likely that moderate to progressive people will take it seriously.

We are living in a time when fear of tomorrow is the air many people breathe. I would argue that the longstanding, tacit retreat from eschatology on the part of progressive Christians is having a deep and direct impact on the mind of the American public. It is time to take back eschatology. It is time for social-justice Christians to find a new way to talk about subjects such as heaven and hell. It is time to speak about the future in clear eschatological terms

because the fear of that future either drives people out of the church altogether—or into the bunker of fundamentalist religion.

So how do progressive Christians get back on the field of eschatology when that turf is so dominated by the Right? We move the field.

I am only speaking for myself, but as a Native American I would say from our historical and cultural experience there are two critical things to remember. First, when you are outnumbered, you cannot afford to fight on ground your opponent has chosen for you. Second, you cannot allow your opponent to dictate the rules. Move to new ground. Do the unexpected. Change the rules.

For too long fundamentalist Christians have held the high ground of eschatology because they have controlled too much of the narrative. In this postmodern consumer culture, we would say they have “branded” eschatology. They frame eschatology as a legal process. Human beings are in a cosmic courtroom. They are guilty of crimes worthy of the death penalty. Some will surely be condemned. They frame eschatology as a military campaign. Spiritual warfare is growing all around us. People are divided into winners and losers. There will be casualties—many casualties. They frame it as the only hope for the chosen few. The test for salvation begins. The path to escape is narrow. Not everyone will find it. Survivalist Christianity: This is the field the Right occupies. But is it the only field in town? Have they framed the debate once and for all? Or can we find a very different approach and, by so doing, move the field of eschatology to a new location? Native America offers two answers that can radically alter the shape and content of the theological debate over eschatology:

1) Open the narrative of eschatology up to more than one source. Let other traditions speak.

2) Open the interpretation of eschatology up to more than one experience. Let other histories speak.

First, we need to invite people to listen to what eschatology sounds like when described by more than one voice. For too long the conversation has been one-dimensional. There has been one

source, the Bible, and one voice, the Right. What if there were many sources and many voices?

For example, we have benefited a great deal from the eschatological perspectives of the Hebrew covenant, but very little from other covenants.

While the reliance on the Hebrew covenant as our primary source is integral to our faith, we also need to consider the sources of understanding available to us through many ancient narratives. The wisdom of these other sources is essential to a complete understanding of any theological subject, including eschatology.

Many years ago, I began speaking about the Native covenant. The story of my ancestors in their spiritual evolution is as profound and enlightening as that of any other people on earth. I described how the Creator made a covenant with my people that is extraordinarily similar to the narrative of ancient Israel. Like Israel, Native people remember a time of exodus, a finding of the promised land, and an eternal covenant that made us call ourselves The People, the ones chosen to live here. I also talked about how the Jesus story speaks to and emerges from our ancient covenant, but with a very different accent and meaning. Heaven sounds different when described by a Navajo or a Lakota. Judgment sounds different when spoken by a culture without original sin. The visions of John of Patmos are different from those of Black Elk.

Opening the discussion to hear what other ancient covenants have to say will dramatically change the landscape of the conversation. It will allow eschatology to be redefined. It will broaden the focus from a narrow band of interpretations. It will give us all, whatever our politics, a chance to hear what the future sounds like when articulated by a global experience, with a network of ancient sources, rather than what it sounds like as a political party with a single agenda.

Second, we need to listen to the testimony of people who have already experienced the end of the world and lived to tell about it. Ask the Pequot. Ask the Narragansett. Ask the Shawnee and the Oneida. Ask any of those who walked the Trail of snow at Wounded Knee.

We need to help people understand that eschatology is not some silly topic for conspiracy theorists or religious fanatics. It is an actual experience. It is a process many people have survived. The conquest and genocide of the Americas is only one example. My ancestors experienced the end of the world. They watched prophecies be fulfilled. They saw evil forces arise. They witnessed war and the rumor of war. In the end, they saw an entire way of life, a reality that had existed for eons, collapse all around them. So great was the lament that even the stars would no longer shine. If you want to know what Armageddon feels like, ask Native America. We know.

And we are not alone. Around the world there are many people for whom eschatology is not a polite coffee hour conversation, but a living memory of the day when reality changed forever. Ask Rwanda. Ask Armenia. Ask the Rohingya.

Eschatology needs to be grounded in human experience, not in imaginary speculation. When progressive Christians abandon the field of eschatology to the Right, it forces people who have lived through the apocalypse to remain silent. It allows their story to be ignored. We need to stop treating eschatology as though it were a purely theoretical issue and begin to see it in the same way we see the gospel of social action.

Eschatology is as much about experience as expectation.

Ultimately, I don't know if we will continue to lose more progressive Christians from the ranks of organized religion. I don't know if eschatology will mostly remain the private domain of fundamentalism. But I do know that my ancestors made a sacred covenant with the Creator. I know they survived a cataclysm because they had faith in their own eschatology.

I also know that there are others like them. In the end, I know it is time for open-minded Christians of all walks of life to get back on the field, to open up the subject of eschatology as far as it can go, and to let the people speak who have experienced eschatology in all of its myriad dimensions, as a reality, not as a party line.

St. Peter's Day 2019



It was a joyful celebration at the combined service for St Peter's Day. We thank God that three brothers Andrew, Ray and Jaden were baptised and confirmed and Pingping was received into Anglican Church. They experienced exceeding joy through the water baptism. All of them have showed eagerness to continue to grow in the knowledge of God. They are attending weekly cell groups and prayer meetings on top of Sunday service. We pray for their continued growth in the Lord. *Esther*