

ON THE ROAD

**Newsletter of the Anabaptist Association of
Australia
and New Zealand Inc**

Issue 6 November 1999

From the 1999 conference

- **Anabaptist perspectives on church**
- **Peacemaking and conflict resolution**

Homepage on the Internet
(<http://www.northnet.com.au/~gbaker/>).

CONTENTS

From the Editor's Desk

President's Column

Treasurer's Report

- Auditor's report

News

- House Church conference in Canberra

Articles & reports from the 1999 conference

Graeme Chatfield

- My journey with Anabaptism

Mark Hurst on:

- Anabaptist perspectives for today's church
- Peacemaking and conflict resolution

Book Extract

- Before the Bruderhof was... a House Church!

Book Review

- Tim Costello - Tips of a Travelling Soul Searcher

Book Notes

Resources

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From the Editor's Desk

About this issue

As promised in the last newsletter there is some material from the June conference. Mark Hurst's notes provide an introduction to some recent literature on the issues of church from an Anabaptist perspective and conflict and reconciliation. The material he has provided go beyond providing a valuable guide to recent theological reflection to highlight some critical issues.

If it is at all possible, the material on peacemaking and reconciliation has become even more relevant and timely than when it was delivered back in June. Events in East Timor, so close to home for Australians have pushed the challenge of peacemaking and the relationship between justice and forgiveness to the point of heartbreaking agony.

Graeme Chatfield gives a personal face to the dialogue between the Anabaptist tradition and the journey of discipleship for Australian Christians. There will be some historical material from Graeme in the next issue.

Publishing Schedule

My intention and hope is that the year 2000 will see a move to a quarterly publication schedule for the Newsletter with the first issue for the year due out in late February. It seems to be the right time to make the move after two years of producing three somewhat irregular issues each year.

I am looking for more contributions and response from readers to further enrich the dialogue and conversation, to provide an occasion for mutual encouragement and challenge.

Finally a title?

After nearly two years this newsletter has a title of its own. After extended reflection the Committee has agreed on the title **On The Road** - a title which contains echoes of the early church where Christians were referred to as followers of the way and also to the theme of discipleship, a key theme in the Anabaptist tradition.

There are some Australian echoes to this title. The writing, life and witness of Athol Gill and the music of Ross Langmead's come quickly to mind.

The resonances also echo in a recent work by the recently departed Morris West. In one of his last works **The View from the Ridge: The Testimony of a Pilgrim (Harper Collins, 1998)** the image that he recurs to in describing his life is that of the pilgrim.

The fact is we can survive only in communion with our present, our past and with our dusty footsore fellows on the road. (p.3)

As a description of what this newsletter is seeking to assist that quote pretty much sums it up.

I hope that in some small way this newsletter may assist you in continuing in or perhaps discovering afresh that communion that West describes.

Peace

Doug Hynd (Editor)

Making it on the Web - Third Way Café

An Internet web site where the menu includes current events from a christian perspective and information on Mennonites.

www.thirdway.com

Presidents Column

Reflections on a title

Last committee meeting Doug Hynd shared a mediation based on the Emmaus Road experience of the two disciples who met the risen Christ "on the road" to Emmaus. Later in the same meeting the committee agreed that "On the Road" would be an appropriate name for the AAANZ newsletter.

"On the Road" is an appropriately Anabaptist title because it brings to the fore the pilgrim nature of our faith, and reminds us that as people of "The Way" we are called to a daily walk of discipleship that does not rest content with mere verbal assent to doctrine. It also brings to mind the words of sixteenth century Anabaptist Hans Denck who said 'No One can know Christ truly except [they] follow him daily in life'.

The title has an Australian connotation, too, as it was the title of one of the late Athol Gill's books that dealt with the theme of discipleship. One can also say we are pilgrims "On the Road" together in community, seeking not only to learn from our Lord but also from what he says through our brothers and sisters on

the same journey. Being "On the Road" journeying together also has connotations of availability and openness to others who want to join us. So, we look forward to learning and growing together and to connecting with others who choose to join us "On the Road".

Update on Recent Committee Activities

Membership

One of the issues the committee has discussed recently has been the issue of membership. One of the problems is that although our incorporation papers included the Statement of Purposes together with the Rules, the membership application makes no reference to the Statement of Purposes. The committee sees this as a problem that should be addressed at the next AGM so that people who join AAANZ have clarity as to what they are joining!

Another membership issue that has arisen is that of group membership. There is no facility for groups to join AAANZ, unless individuals join one by one. We decided that this situation was acceptable as the Association is actually a network of people not a conference of churches or groups and has no intention of trying to become a denomination. We exist to encourage one another in discipleship, following Jesus "On the Road"!

A further question we will need to look at relates to clarifying what we mean by "Anabaptism". This question emerged from discussions with a group who found agreement with most Anabaptist principles, but not the peace position. While we want to remain in dialogue with such groups, the committee felt that this tenet is foundational to

Anabaptist Christianity, but saw the need to develop a clear statement of the core Anabaptist values we wish to uphold as an Association.

Melbourne Conference - January 2001.

The committee decided that the next conference of the Association would be held in Melbourne on the Australia Day weekend in 2001. Planning is now under way and Bessie Pereira is getting together a local sub-committee to plan for this event.

I would encourage you to begin making plans now to attend what will be a very interesting and rewarding experience in Anabaptist fellowship, inspiration and challenge. Bessie will be issuing news updates as the planning for the event develops.

Visit of Milka Rindzinski

A recent visitor to Sydney was Milka Rindszinski representing the Mennonite World Conference. Several committee members spoke to Milka by telephone and appreciated her desire to make contact with fellow Anabaptists. She was also hosted by Dr. Graeme Chatfield to speak at Morling College.

Hurst Visa Progress

I am delighted to report significant progress with the visa application for pastoral workers Mark and Mary Hurst. We have recently been informed that the Melbourne office of DIMA has approved the application. However ratification by the Australian Embassy is still required when Mark and Mary apply for their visas in Washington. We feel it is highly unlikely the embassy would negate the DIMA decision. We

hope and pray that Mark and Mary will successfully negotiate the last hurdle and soon take up residence in Oz.

Shalom
Ian Duckham

Executive

President: Ian Duckham
Vice President: Doug Hynd
Secretary: Ross Coleman
Treasurer: Gary Baker

Committee members

Bessie Pereira
Tim Dyer
Tim Costello - Public Officer
John Cox
Chris Marshall

We try as a committee to use electronic means of communication and the internet as much as possible to kept in touch with each other. I have enclosed our e-mail addresses to enable you to contact any of us by that means.

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Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer's report this issue includes:

- the auditor's report
- the annual financial statement; and
- the current financial statement

INDEPENDENT AUDIT REPORT

To the members of the Anabaptist Association of Australia & New Zealand Inc.

We have audited the financial statements of the association being the Profit and Loss Account, Balance sheet. We have conducted an independent audit of these financial statements in order to express an opinion on them to the members of the association.

Our audit has been conducted in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards to provide reasonable assurance whether the financial statements are free of material misstatement. Our procedures included examination, on a test basis, of evidence supporting the amounts and in the financial statements, and evaluation of accounting policies.

These procedures have been undertaken to form an opinion whether, in all material respects, the financial statements are presented fairly in accordance with applicable Australian Accounting Standards and other mandatory professional reporting requirements so as to present a view of the association which is consistent with our understanding of the associations financial position and the results of its operations.

The audit opinion expressed in this report has been formed on the above basis.

Audit Opinion

In our opinion, the financial statements of the association present fairly in

accordance with applicable Accounting Standards and other mandatory professional reporting requirements the financial position of the association as at 30th June 1999.

Firm: Henry Bauer ATS Pty Ltd

Address: PO Box 620 Dee Why NSW 2099

Signature of Auditor

Name of Auditor H. Bauer

Dated: **30th October 1999**


.....

The Anabaptist Association of Australia & New Zealand Inc.

PROFIT AND LOSS STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30TH JUNE 1999

	\$
INCOME	
Donations received	5,035
EXPENDITURE	
Bank Charges	22
Confererice & Seminar	2,358

	2,380
NET OPERATING PROFIT	2,655

BALANCE SHEET FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30TH JUNE 1999

PROPRIETOR'S FUNDS	
Donations	2,655
 Represented by:	
CURRENT ASSETS	
NAB 46 486 7622	2,655

	2,655
 NET ASSETS	 2,655

Treasurer's November Report

The Association has remained in a positive balance and have met the legal fees to date.

Thank you to all that have made donations.

Since the beginning of the new financial year:

- \$3,060 has been donated in response to the appeal.
- Legal fees of \$3,315.24 have been paid to date.
- The current balance is \$2,384.
- The Conference was self-supporting and a small profit from the registration fees was made.

The 1999 Audit, reported on above, encompasses the period February 1999 to 30.6.99, when the Treasurer was appointed and the AAANZ bank account was first established.

Regular donations are helpful. For periodic donations please ensure that your surname will appear on the receiving banks receipt. This is important for the record of our transactions. For periodic transfers, the AAANZ's National Australia Bank account number is 46 486 7622 and the branch number is 082-407. Donations made out to the Anabaptist Association of Australia and New Zealand Inc (or AAANZ) can also be sent to me, at PO Box 1514 Armidale NSW 2350 Australia.

Shalom
Gary Baker

News

House church conference in Canberra

About 100 people, mainly from the Canberra and Sydney Home churches, met for the 4th National Gathering of Home Churches in Canberra on the long weekend of the 1st to 4th October. This was a time of full participation by everyone without keynote speakers or pressure to take part in every activity. In fact the chief benefit of these times of gathering is the opportunity to deepen relationships and to make new friends. Inherent in these times of relating is the sharing in understanding of ways of being church. A coffee shop run by some of the members provides an atmosphere conducive to this.

Very effective Teens and Kids programs ran through the weekend. We are always impressed by the way the Home Church children blend in such gatherings. They are used to participating and having their ideas and opinions respected, and so there is no need to draw attention in inappropriate ways.

The overall theme of the Gathering was to look at the radical streams of Christianity through the centuries, beginning with Rome and the earliest Church, the Waldensians, Franciscans, the Celtic Church, Anabaptists, Quakers, Early Methodists and the Latin American Base Communities. The weekend began with a series of mime performances prepared and 'staged' by some of the Canberra and Sydney folk. These were informative, entertaining, and effectively provided a backdrop to the rest of the program.

The workshops gave an intensive look at some of these threads and in most cases gave participants an experience of the radical stream rather than only a provision of facts. The Anabaptist workshop was capably led by John Cox and Doug Hynd who are committee members of AAANZ. While there would have been some at the weekend who knew the history and ideals of Anabaptism, (several AAANZ members were present), for many who attended the workshop Anabaptism was a fresh revelation! It was timely and helpful that this opportunity came our way and that John and Doug were available to capably lead.

Home Churches are fertile soil for Anabaptist ideals because they identify readily with the radical and grassroots nature of the Anabaptist stream. Many Home Churches see themselves as 'in the margins' and embrace the need to see Church and state as separate.

However, many in this country have not had a felt need to confront the issues of peacemaking in any overt way, although some of the more established ones have. Opportunities such as this to present Anabaptism to the Home Church scene are very helpful.

Bessie Pereira - Editor OIKOS - Reaching Home Churches Across Australia

A world wide perspective

Courier

A Quarterly Publication of Mennonite World Conference seeks to nurture community, communication and cooperation in the worldwide Mennonite family. For subscriptions contact Mennonite Press PO Box 307 North Newton Kansas, 67117, USA.

Articles

My journey with Anabaptism.

by Graeme Chatfield.

This talk was given by Graeme at the conference in Wollongong in June 1999

Being involved with a Baptist church in Western Australia was the result of the family moving from one area of Perth to a new suburb. For some time my parents drove the family back each Sunday to their Methodist church, but eventually their desire to have us children involved in church activities more frequently than on Sunday saw them move us as a family to the local Baptist church. I was about 7 or 8 years old at the time.

Church life as part of a vibrant youth group was very positive. However, the only form of the church I was aware of was my local Baptist church and a few other Baptist churches from the Perth area. That changed when my family moved to Papua New Guinea and we attended the Boroko Baptist Church in Port Moresby. People from many different denominational backgrounds attended the Boroko church. Also I was now a little older, having completed my High School education. Times of serious thought about joining the Baptist church led to exploration of other traditions in the Christian faith. It was at the Boroko church that I took the step of believer's baptism.

My year off study between High School and University came to an end and I found myself at the University of Western Australia studying history.

Already I had in my mind that God was calling me to missionary service, so I deliberately chose to study units that would relate to the history of the church. Under the direction of Dr John Tonkin I was introduced to the area of the Sixteenth Century Reformation, and a group of radicals known as the Anabaptists. In an honours seminar group we studied Ernst Troeltsch's book which explored "sect types" in Christianity. He chose the Anabaptists to represent this "type" of Christianity.

For me there were strong echoes between these radicals and their views of the church as presented by Troeltsch and what I believed about the church and had experienced it among Baptist churches. The separation from the establishment of government, the voluntarism linked to baptism, the focus on conversion and personal confession of faith were all there for me.

Towards the end of my time at University, the Principal of the Western Australian Baptist Theological College, Dr Noel Vose, invited me to present a few lectures on the Reformation at the College's evening classes. There is nothing like presenting a paper to clarify thinking, and so I was able to think through what it was that attracted me to these Anabaptist radicals of the sixteenth century. At that time the strongest area of attraction was their critique of "Constantinian Christianity", the corrupting of the church in the period of Constantine and the later Byzantine Empire which identified all the inhabitants of the nation with one expression of the church. One nation, one church and the power of the state to

enforce religious observance and expression of doctrine.

With the Anabaptists and Luther I objected to the enforced nature of such an expression of Christian belief. Where was the liberty of conscience that Baptists claimed as fundamental to New Testament Christianity? Yet Luther, who claimed that he was bound by Scripture and his conscience and not the established church of his day, refused that same privilege to the Anabaptists.

Dr Vose encouraged me to continue to explore the Anabaptist heritage and what it might mean for the modern church. Specifically he suggested I look at the Hutterite education model if I was to think about undertaking postgraduate studies.

However, postgraduate studies did not immediately follow on the completion of my University course. Instead, after a few years of work my wife and I responded to the call of God and the confirmation of that call by our local Baptist Church to train for the Baptist ministry. We chose to train at Morling College, the NSW Baptist Theological College for no profound reason, rather for a pragmatic one, so that we might be nearer to my wife's family who had recently returned to Sydney from overseas missionary work.

My interest in Anabaptism simmered during my years in training for the Baptist ministry. I had the privilege of teaching in the Bible College section of Morling College while I was completing my own training and that kept the Anabaptists in my thinking. However, it was after I completed my training and had spent some time in pastoral work that an opportunity came for me to undertake postgraduate studies in England. By now I was wanting to explore the various models of the relationship between the church

and state, and the radicals of the sixteenth century attracted me. I didn't even think about studying the seventeenth century Baptists!

So the family moved with me to England where initially I explored the Anabaptist teaching on pacifism. Yet that area of work did not become the topic for my thesis. Instead the enigmatic figure of Balthasar Hubmaier became the focus of my attention, with his odd mixture of Anabaptist teaching and some teaching that many modern descendants of Anabaptism would utterly reject, including his teaching on the right to resist oppressors.

Eventually the focus of my research was Hubmaier's teaching on the clarity of Scripture and the idea of the whole congregation reading, hearing and interpreting the Scriptures under the leading of the Holy Spirit. This idea appealed to me as more in keeping with the New Testament teaching on the church than those traditions that formally or informally restricted correct interpretation of Scripture to an ordained group, be they priests or pastors.

It was while I was researching for my thesis that I made contact with the London Mennonite Center and met Alan and Eleanor Kreider, and had the joy of sharing with them and others who were also exploring the Anabaptist tradition in both its historical form and its modern expression. The meetings where people gathered to discuss their research and to engage in debate and dream about the establishment of an Anabaptist network throughout the UK were exciting times. I also met other Baptists such as Nigel Wright and Stuart Murray who were also exploring the Anabaptist heritage and was stimulated to return to Australia to

inform Baptists of the positive contribution that the Anabaptist heritage had to offer them.

Since returning to Australia I have pastored one church and now teach Church History full time at Morling College. My journey with Anabaptism continues as I read more and seek to integrate the ideas and ideals of Anabaptism with my own heritage as a Baptist.

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Mark Hurst - Anabaptist Perspectives for Today's Church

At the Wollongong conference in June 1999 Mark Hurst discussed the relevance of Anabaptist perspectives for today's church by way of reference to some recently published books. Mark has supplied the notes from his talk at the conference, which are published below.

Walter Klassen wrote an article in 1993 entitled "The Significance of Anabaptism for today's church". (*Mennonite Reporter*, November 15, 1993, p.10) In it he listed three emphases that Mennonites, and other Anabaptists, offer the broader church today:

1. A strong emphasis on the community of faith as a people which is visible in the world ... the church as a people, a worshipping, disciplined, witnessing body of believers.
2. A strong emphasis on the visibility of the Christian life, referred to as Nachfolge, following Christ,

discipleship ... something learned in the visible community of the people of God, through worship and the sacraments, engagement with scripture, and mutual admonition and support.

3. Adult baptism ... The baptism of infants really makes full sense only in a Christendom context. We live in a "post- Christendom" era but many Christians ... find it hard to come to terms with this reality.

Klassen predicts that adult baptism will again become the norm in the church ... *because of the kind of world into which we are moving ... a world in which Christians are in the minority and have no special privileges.* He says: *We Christians will increasingly need to be certain in a seductive culture of who we are and what we believe. Baptism as an adult has the advantage of strengthening our consciousness of Christian identity.*

I want to explore with you some of these themes from authors I've recently read. One of the best books I've read this year is **A Peculiar People/ The Church As Culture In A Post-Christian Society**, by Rodney Clapp, former associate editor at *Christianity Today* and senior editor at Intervarsity Press. He attempts to write a theology that will help him "survive, and survive Christianly, the Powers That Be." (p.13)

I knew I found a soul mate when he described himself as "*often happy to be cynical (not least because it seems that cynicism is the only faithful response to hypercommercialized Christianity.* He says "*in the work of John Howard Yoder and Stanley Hauerwas I was drawn to and profoundly influenced by Anabaptist theology and social ethics ... it is the neo-Anabaptists and the*

postliberals who, among contemporary theologians, I think most faithfully and adeptly fit us for the challenges of this day and place. (p.15) He ends his section called "Where I'm writing from" by saying ... *these really are days of blurred borders. Be careful whom you hate or dismiss out of hand. Tomorrow you may have to pass them the kiss of peace.* (p15)

Church as chaplain

Clapp says "*Since the 4th century emperor Constantine, too many Christians have too readily equated the church's work with religious sponsorship of the status quo.*" (p.22) This was illustrated for me in a recent editorial in *Christianity Today* ((May, 24, 1999) by Chuck Colson about the war in Kosovo. He applied the just war theory to what was going on and said something about how the church is to be the moral conscience of the nation. Colson likes the chaplain's role for the church. The problem is that the powers that be usually ignore chaplains.

Clapp argues that ... *living in a pluralistic, postmodern world" is "one of God's mysterious and severe graces" because it "forces us closer to a pre-Constantinian relation to the cultures around us.* (pp.22-23) He further contends that:

Christians feel useless because the church feels useless. And the church feels useless because it keeps trying to perform Constantinian duties in a world that is no longer Constantinian. So the grace is this.- Christians feel useless because they are no longer useful for the wrong thing ... namely serving as chaplains in a sponsorial religion. (p.23)

From Christendom to Postmodernism

Clapp goes on to critique Christendom.

Constantinian culture appears to promise much in return for the church's sponsorship, but the contract carries terms that actually, if subtly at first, require the church to stop being the church, a people who worship and follow not the amorphous god of deism but the quite specific God of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Jesus. (p.29)

Clapp sees difficulties but also promises in postmodernism. The church now can be truly the church, a way of life - its own culture. He notes that:

.... early observers of Christianity were not struck by its religious (in our privatized sense) qualities. What struck outsiders .. was the church's total way of life .. its culture. The Romans called Christians "atheists" (they refused cultic emperor worship) and classified Christianity as a political society.(p.81)

Worship and evangelism

Alan Kreider in **Worship and Evangelism in Pre-Christendom** talks about these early Roman Christians who lived out their faith in the midst of a hostile pagan culture.

The ex-Christian emperor Julian, who in the 360's was finding it difficult to reinstate paganism as the official state religion, blamed his problems on the Christians.

It is their benevolence to strangers, their care for the graves of the dead and the pretended holiness of their lives that have done most to increase their atheism .. the impious Galileans

support not only their own poor but ours as well.(p.20)

Julian's attempts to get pagan priests to stir their adherents to comparable practices failed. Kreider says: *The pagans had neither the living traditions., nor the theological understanding., nor the communal disciplines, nor the appropriate rites to make this practice live among them."*(p.20)

Kreider tells the story of one convert being drawn to the Christian faith because Christians ministered to him while he was in prison. Kreider says this type of behaviour on the part of the Christians: *... was the natural product of a community whose common life was animated by deviant values - and was actively attractive. p..20)*

Kreider talks about a three-year catechism period where new believers were taught not only doctrine and liturgy but a new way of life. [The training] *was to re-form pagan people, to resocialize them., to deconstruct their old world, and reconstruct a new one, so that they would emerge as Christian people who would be at home in communities of freedom. (p.23)*

What was it that formed these new believers into "communities of freedom"? Kreider says: *It was worship., expressed in a series of practices .. not only to enable the worshipper to encounter God, but also shape a distinctive common life that would be visible to the world and attractive to it. (p.28)*

Worship & wasting time

Marva Dawn in her recent book **A Royal Waste of Time** comes to the same conclusion:

Sociologists recognize that any alternative way of life that is substantively different from the larger society around it and that wants to maintain itself needs a language, customs, habits, rituals, institutions, procedures, and practices that uphold and nurture a clear vision of how it is different and why that matters. (p.335)

Clapp also emphasizes the importance of worship in shaping the church into an alternative community. Worship allows us to see the world as it is, through God's eyes.

Further, Clapp calls us to "holy madness" and uses this quotation to explain what he means: *To be insane is to reject the given universals., and in so far as those categories are the accepted intellectual currency of the age that produced Auschwitz, holy madness is the only true sanity. (p.99)*

The place and time to produce this "holy madness" is in worship and Clapp says it is important that our worship not become "marginalized" and "privatized". Worship is the place where we are shaped as a people - the place where, to use another image, we learn "the dance". *It is a rehearsal of the Christian story that takes us through the steps again and again. (p.118)*

Reading the bible

In talking about the Bible, another important theme for Anabaptists, Clapp reminds us that ... *The Bible was never meant, first and foremost, to be read alone. (p.127)* It was meant to be the book of God's people, a book that helps

shape us into what Marva Dawn calls a "parallel society". Dawn in another recent book **Is It A Lost Cause?** says, *... the Scriptures form us as we dwell in them, as we inhabit them; then we live out of the character shaped by all of God's Word. " (43)*

Dawn says *When we gather for worship and education, we tell the narratives of the faith, sing our hymns, and say our prayers until we know the truth so well that we and our children can go out to our neighbors and offer alternatives to the lies of the principalities and powers that dominate U.S. society .. I like both words, alternative and parallel, for describing the church. To be parallel keeps us from being so alternative that we don't relate to our neighbors; to be alternative prevents our parallel line from moving closer and closer to modes of life alien to the kingdom of God." (p.49)*

John Driver in his book **Images of The Church In Mission** talks about how the church needs to be this group of different people to truly communicate the gospel in our time. He says:

It takes a community alien to the worldly system of domination and evil to be able to communicate in it a truly saving gospel. As citizens of the city 'coming down out of heaven' (Rev. 21:10), only that community of Jesus has a message of true hope.(p.67)

Being "kingdom people" who are aliens and strangers in this world is our calling. Sojourners at home "on the road" because we know this is not really our home. We seek a city to come. Anabaptism's emphasis on community, discipleship, and peacemaking has helped me and others remember who we are and has nudged us along the path of faithfulness.

Lederach works over and over again with the theme of reconciliation and describes it as a ... *place, the point of encounter where concerns about the past and future can meet.* (p.27)

Using the language of Psalm 85:10 he says it is the place where Truth and Mercy, Justice and Peace meet.

Lederach uses a pyramid to describe leadership in a population affected by a conflict. Level 1 represents the "Top Leadership". These are the military, political, and religious leaders who focus on high-level negotiations. Level 2 are the "Middle-Range Leadership" people - leaders respected in individual sectors. They work behind the scenes holding problem-solving workshops, training in conflict resolution, and on peace commissions. And at the broad base of the pyramid, supporting the rest of the structure, is Level 3 leadership, "Grassroots Leadership". These are local leaders who do grassroots training, work on local peace Commissions, and work at community development.

Pressure from below

In looking at the different levels he makes this comment:

One could argue that virtually all of the recent transitions toward peace - such as those in El Salvador and Ethiopia., as well as earlier ones in the Philippines - were driven largely by the pressure for change that was bubbling up from the grassroots. In fact.. at times it seems that exhaustion., rather than innovative planned transformation, is chiefly responsible for ending conflicts. (p.52)

Our work has been at Level 3, working with families (children and parents), school groups, churches, prisoners, and

community groups. Currently we are promoting the "Family Pledge of Nonviolence" as a Level Three way to promote peacebuilding. The aim of the Families Against Violence Network is to "Eliminate violence, one family at a time, starting with our own."

The Pledge includes the following commitments:

- To Respect Self and Others
- To Communicate Better
- To Listen
- To Forgive
- To Respect Nature
- To Play Creatively
- To Be Courageous

The place of forgiveness

The fourth part of the pledge is "To Forgive". In a chapter entitled "The Politics of Forgiveness" in *Transforming Violence*, Dr. Chaiwat Satha-Anand argues that an essential part of nonviolence is forgiveness. He says the fundamental source of conflict in our world is not primarily ideological or economic but cultural.

The question for people used to be "Which side are you on?" but now it is "What are you?" He also draws from the wisdom of Kenneth David Kuanda of Zambia who included the idea of forgiveness in his politics. He highlights three points from Kuanda:

- Forgiveness is not an isolated act and therefore is not the same as granting a pardon. It is ... *a constant willingness to live a new day without looking back and ransacking the memory for occasions of bitterness and resentment.*
- Forgiveness is not a substitute for justice. *To claim forgiveness whilst*

- *perpetuating injustice is to live a fiction; to fight for justice without also being prepared to offer*
- *Forgiveness is to render your struggle null and void.*
- Through the power of forgiveness people are freed from the burden of past guilt so that they can act boldly in the present. To forgive one's enemies is not only a moral or religious matter but necessary for one's own sanity. (p.72)

This last point was illustrated for me in the book I read on the plane to Australia, **Forgiving The Dead Man Walking**. The book is the account of Debbie Morris who had been kidnapped and raped by Robert Willie, the man executed in the book and movie *Dead Man Walking*. She tells of her journey through anger, depression, drinking, and guilt to forgiveness. She ends the book with an interesting thought. She says she is still ambivalent about capital punishment.

Does that mean I think a holy God would oppose the execution of a convicted murderer like Robert Willie? I don't know, I'm still wrestling with that question. But I do know this, Justice didn't do a thing to heal me, Forgiveness did.(p.251)

The results of forgiveness

I could talk a long time about the theological reasons to forgive but there are others today talking about the political, physical, and emotional reasons to forgive. The May/June 1998 issue of *Health* magazine had a feature article on forgiveness. They found in their research that ... *Some of the biggest names in mind-body medicine .. are convinced that forgiveness is essential to physical and emotional well-being .. forgiveness is the mind's*

most powerful healing tool."(p.118) They quote one psychologist from the University of Wisconsin who studies forgiveness: *I'm continually surprised by the strong results we get. There's something to this people ought to know about.*(P.118)

The article concludes: *People who learn to forgive suffer less anxiety and depression., and have higher self-esteem. Some studies suggest they even enjoy better physical health.* (p.118)

Myths of forgiveness

For forgiveness to be useful in peacebuilding and in the healing of victimized people a number of myths about forgiveness need to be dealt with:

- Myth 1. Forgiving means forgetting. The reality is that remembering is essential for forgiveness.
- Myth 2. Forgiving means accepting the offence. The reality is that naming the offence as sinful and unacceptable is essential to forgiveness.
- Myth 3. Forgiving is automatic. The reality is that anger, hatred, and bitterness follow naturally from an offence.
- Myth 4. Forgiving is quick and a one-time event. The reality is that forgiveness is a process.
- Myth 5. Forgiving means the relationship is reconciled. The reality is that forgiveness does not equal reconciliation. Forgiveness is part of peacebuilding that allows us to break the chains of the past and enter into a new, more hopeful future.

John Paul Lederach ends his latest book **The Journey Toward Reconciliation** with a chapter called "The Dream". In

it he says *I believe justice, peace, and reconciliation are possible. I believe they will happen.* And then he spells out what he thinks this dream will look like in places like Liberia and Northern Ireland where he has worked for peace.

I'll close with his closing words about this dream:

Make no mistake! It takes courage and tenacity to dream in times like these. We are faced with a world of broken people, a world of violence and war, inequality and injustice, a world of famine and poverty. We are not blocked or restrained by a lack of resources for responding to these problems. We are shackled by a lack of imagination and dreaming that things can be otherwise, by a lack of commitment to live by those dreams with the conviction that they are possible.

So let me close with the encouragement of the letter to the Hebrews. To take up the journey of reconciliation, we keep our feet on the ground and our head in the clouds. Now is the time for great convictions and great dreams. Let us dream boldly. Let us dream boldly that our feet may carry us through the challenging realities that stir around us.

May God grant us the innocence to dream, and the wisdom, courage, and sustenance to take up the journey.
(p.202)

Mark Hurst

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Book Extract

The following extract from *A Joyful Pilgrimage* By Emmy Arnold is reprinted with permission of the Bruderhof.

Before the Bruderhof was... a House Church!

The struggling and searching continued in our open house meetings. The Sermon on the Mount was both our direction and our goal, but there were other voices that made themselves heard too. Some said, "It is impossible to live up to that today! There will always be rich and poor. You can't eliminate competition. Everyone has to do the best he can with what he has. Otherwise people would soon take advantage of each other's generosity." Yet we could hardly ignore the contrast between this attitude and Jesus' words: "If someone wants to take your jacket, give him your coat as well. Live like the lilies in the field and the birds in the air. Have no enemies. Love your enemies. Do good to them!" And so we continued to struggle...

Through reading the Sermon on the Mount, we grew more concerned with finding a practical way to express our inward longings. But what should the new life be like? Many suggestions were made. It became more and more unbearable for us to continue in the old middle-class way of life. We discussed a number of possibilities: folk schools, cooperatives, and land settlements of various kinds. Eberhard and I had the idea of buying a gypsy trailer, or even several, and travelling from village to village, from town to town this way, with our family and anyone who wanted to join us. We would make music, speak to people and try to encourage them, and teach our children as we went along. We would travel without a

destination, staying in a particular place only as long as our help was needed and accepted by the war widows, the children, the sick, and the poor, whose homes we would help to rebuild. Many people were attracted to this vision.

A short time later, in the same open-house meetings, we read from the Book of Acts, chapters 2 and 4, about Pentecost.

Now the multitude of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one said that any of the things he possessed were his own, but they held everything in commons. There was not a needy person among them, for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the proceeds of what was old...Distribution was made to each as had need. (Acts 4:32-35)

Here, we felt, was an answer to our seeking and questioning: community of faith, community of love, community of goods – all born from the energy of that first love. Perhaps we would be an itinerant community, in trailers or on foot, or maybe we ought to build up a settlement. Whatever form it took, we now knew we had to be messengers of a church aflame with love.

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BOOK REVIEW

Tips from a travelling soul-searcher by Tim Costello
Allen & Unwin, 1999

Somewhere, sometime over the past decade, Tim Costello became known to the Australian community at large, well beyond the bounds of the evangelical world. Now he has become “a living national treasure”, with an identity very distinct from that of his brother, the Treasurer in the Howard government.

In so far as you can gain an Appreciation for a person through the written word this book provides some genuine insight not only into what Tim has contributed to public debate in Australia, but also the manner in which that contribution has been made.

This book though presents the reviewer though with something of a puzzle with respect to both subject matter and

genre. It really is quite hard to classify.

To tackle the question of the book's genre first. This is definitely not an academic treatise. It contains evidence of its origins in talks given, traces of conversations and debates in the media but also personal reflections, family stories, reports of a personal spiritual and vocational journey and substantial theological reading and reflection. Perhaps its origins lie in the sermons and testimonies that are characteristic of Baptist worship, transmuted by Tim into their public 'secular' equivalent.

The book as a whole takes the form of a loosely connected series of chapters each devoted to a theme or topic. Around each theme Tim has grouped a collection of personal anecdotes, reporting on current events, material from theology and scriptural stories. The style is personal and informal. In the style and structure of the material Tim does not present himself as an authority beyond question, but as a fellow traveller with us who has changed his mind on some issues or is uncertain about the right way forward.

Categorising the subject matter of the book is not much easier. The National Library cataloguers have done their best by assigning it the subject headings of "Conduct of life" and "Christian ethics - Australia". The first heading has a somewhat old fashioned ring to it, yet it is in a low key and indirect way a book of advice to Australians as both individuals and as members of wider communities. The second heading is likely to mislead if we understand ethics as confined to a formal rational analysis on the way to deciding about a personal dilemma. If we return to the root of ethics and think about it as an ethos, a way of living then we will be starting to get closer to what Tim has sought to

convey to his readers.

What Tim has done is to provide us with a report from Australia in the 1990's. Its discursive nature gives it something in common with the work of social commentator such as Hugh Mackay, transposed into a more personal key. The faith dimension is clear enough but much of the material involves a translation into the vernacular illustrating the meaning of the basic Christian convictions that form the core of the argument.

The chapters vary in content from a consideration of the strengths and weaknesses of the sect and church models of Christian community, to the importance of rituals, via a consideration of risk taking and an account of the politics of grace.

Underlying the book is the conviction that what really matters are the stories we live by and that they need to be "thick" and have a transcendent dimension.

This book is about my ongoing efforts to tell such alternative transcendent stories. I measure storylines by their capacity to be transformative on a personal and communal level. (p.26)

This is a book which has a number of potential audiences. Teachers of contemporary issues, ethics and religious studies for senior school students might well find this a worth while resource. Church study groups might find themselves engaged with substantial theological issues without realising that that were doing so. The chapter on building towers - a contextualising of the story of the Tower of Babel is a good example of this potential.

This book is also a model of witness. Here is a story teller at work who is not afraid to let us see him thinking and contributing his point of view without casting anathemas at those with whom he disagrees. Tim is very clear about the importance of the processes we use in witnessing to the gospel.

When discussing the issue of the church this openness to conflicting views narrowly avoids toppling over into on the one hand, on the other hand approach.

While Tim is clear eyed about the failures of the sect type approach to Christian life, exemplified in his own background in the Baptist church, he is prepared to acknowledge its strengths. Curiously enough the reality of the form of Christian life that he is implicitly advocating is of the church as a contrast community when measured against the forces of social and technical change that are at work. It is of a contrast community which is engaged in the pain of the world and debate in the public arena.

Indeed the public arena if it is to be kept open will depend upon the existence of churches which are in cultural and religious tension with the marketisation of life and provide a place from which to speak and model a different way of life.

The issue is how we engage in the world from such sect type communities. This seems to be pretty much Tim's position and is the model that is actually embodied in many of the stories he tells throughout the book. In closing his chapter on the church he says:

Soul searching needs a firm foundation but it becomes cramped unless it can stretch with imagination and vision in

an application of truth to the broader scheme of things. So my tip is that we must cherish our friendship circles and sects but we must neve let them become complacent about one truth, we must seek beyond them to act for justice within our world.(p.163)

Doug Hynd

(This is an extended version of a review to be published in the Summer 1999 edition of **St Mark's Review**)

Book Notes
- Doug Hynd

I hope that I will be able to publish reviews of some of the books mentioned below in a later edition. Volunteers to contribute reviews would be most welcome.

.....

A recent book by Dave Andrews, **Christi-Anarchy**, Lion Publishing 1999 looks like it is worth hunting down. Dave is an Australian who is a regular contributor to **Target**, the quarterly magazine published by TEAR Fund, Australia, the evangelical relief and development agency.

Dave writes out of his current experience in inner-city Brisbane within the "Waiters Union", a network of creative community workers.

The essence of the theme of *Christi-Anarchy* is that Christianity as a religion has been distorted by its neglect of the actual figure and teachings of Christ.

The book includes sources from a smorgasbord of writers, activists and radical movements. More importantly,

it provides the basis for practical action by local Christian groups

Also worth noting is **The Dissent of the governed: A meditation on Law, Religion and Loyalty** by Stephen L. Carter Harvard University press, 1998.

The author writing with explicit acknowledgment of his commitment as a Christian as well as his role as a legal theorist argues strongly for the importance of dissent and the recognition of the reality of the clash of sovereignties in the loyalty of citizens in a democracy.

An important contribution to a debate that Australian Christians whose first loyalty is expressed in their discipleship will want to engage in despite the overwhelmingly American context of the argument.

The author explores the way notions of allegiance and dissent may interfere "... with the ability of communities of meaning - particularly religious communities - to thrive or even to survive, especially if those communities share visions of reality which are at sharp variance with the vision of the dominant political community." (p.103)

Tim Costello's second book **Tips from a Travelling Soul Searcher** Allen and Unwin, 1999 has just hit the book stores. An article in the *Canberra Times* weekend inset *Panorama* (Nov 13, 1999, pp.3-4) featured an interview with Tim and commentary on the book under the title "A cleric who shakes the tree". Keep an eye out for the reviews in your local paper.

Resources

a Common Place: A publication of Mennonite Central Committee

An attractively produced quarterly which introduces the people, programs and vision of Mennonite Central Committee. e-mail: dlf@mcc.org

Website: <http://www.mennonitecc.ca/mcc/>

Courier: A Quarterly Publication of the Mennonite World Conference.

The latest issue provides an introduction the Anabaptist-Mennonite Family in Latin America. Particularly interesting is the article on "Training Leaders for the Latin American Anabaptist churches in the 21st Century" by Juan Marinez of Guatemala. The questions he raises about training, both with respect to context and content echo across the oceans.

The Plough

Free Subscription Periodical
Plough Publishing is owned and operated by Bruderhof members and sells books on radical Christian discipleship, community, marriage, parenting, social justice, and spiritual life. We also publish a small periodical, The Plough, with articles on current issues the mainstream media tend to ignore, and reflective pieces on personal and social transformation and growth. Sample copies of The Plough are available on request.

The Anabaptist Association of Australian and New Zealand Inc

Background to the Association

The initiative for the establishment of the Association came out of a meeting in Tasmania in May 1995 of Christians

from a variety of denominational backgrounds who had been influenced in a variety of ways by the Anabaptist tradition. To provide a means of building on the contacts established at the meeting the Anabaptist Network of Australia and New Zealand was formed which became the Anabaptist Association of Australia and New Zealand following its incorporation in 1998.

Purposes of the Association

The purposes of the Association are:

1. to nurture and support the Christian faith of individuals and groups in Australia and New Zealand who identify with the Anabaptist tradition.
2. to network and link individuals, churches and groups of Christians who share a common Anabaptist understanding of the Christian faith.
3. to provide religious services including teaching, training, pastoral care, mediation, and counsel to its members and others interested in the Anabaptist tradition.
4. to provide resources and materials relating to the tradition, perspectives, and teaching of Anabaptists to both the Christian and general public.
5. to convene conferences and gatherings which provide opportunity for worship, teaching, training, consultation, celebration, and prayer in the Anabaptist tradition.
6. to extend the awareness of Anabaptism in Australia and New Zealand assisting individuals,

churches and groups discover and express their links with the Anabaptist tradition.

7. to provide an opportunity for affiliation for churches and groups who wish to be known in Australia and New Zealand as Anabaptists.

What is Anabaptism?

Anabaptism is a radical Christian renewal movement that emerged in Europe during the sixteenth-century Reformation. Whilst Anabaptism was a grass roots movement with diverse expressions in its early development, its enduring legacy usually has included the following:

- baptism upon profession of faith
- a view of the church in which membership is voluntary and members are accountable to the Bible and to each other
- a commitment to the way of peace and other teachings of Jesus as a rule for life
- separation of church and state
- worshipping congregations which create authentic community and reach out through vision and service