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Journal of the TCMA

EDITORIAL

This new styled edition of the TCMA's journal is made up of the conference papers from the 1997 and 1998 conferences - in Perth and Sydney respectively. Part of our mission as the TCMA is to publish material which reflects and enhances the professional lives of tertiary chaplains in Australia.

At the 1997 conference it was decided that we should move towards a more professional way of disseminating information and discussion. Initially this will involve occasional papers primarily focusing on material emerging out of each annual conference. In the long run it is hoped that we will be able to produce more frequent editions, not only of a selection of our conference papers but also of material written by chaplains about chaplaincy issues.

This new beginning for the TCMA Journal has been held up for some time by technical and other difficulties. I would like to thank Dr Morag Logan for preparing the initial editorial work, such that when I took over the editor's role much of the preliminary work had been completed.

The wide range of topics explored in this edition are a reflection of the breadth of interest and professional work of tertiary chaplains around the country. As a consequence there are a variety of writing styles represented. There has been no attempt to standardise the style of presentation, rather each author has been encouraged to speak out of his or her own context.

The volume falls broadly into two sections. The first section offers a number of reflections about the wider social, legal, religious and theological context of tertiary chaplaincy. The second section engages with some of the specific issues related to tertiary chaplains as professionals.

I welcome your feedback and also your contributions towards further editions of this journal.

Erich von Dietze
Editor
Journal of the TCMA

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Equal Access to Justice: A Woman's Right

Keynote Address given at the 1997 Perth conference by:
The Hon Justice David Malcolm AC
Chief Justice of Western Australia

INTRODUCTION

I am very pleased to have been invited here to address the national Tertiary Campus Ministry Association, University Chaplains' Conference. In keeping with the social justice theme of the Conference my address this evening is entitled *Equal Access to Justice: A Woman's Right*.

The issue of women's access to justice is linked to broader issues of gender bias and inherent systemic inequality in the legal system, in respect of which there has been much conjecture in recent times. This debate reflects the far reaching demographic and social changes which have occurred within the fabric Australian society over the past three decades. If the legal system is to truly reflect these changes continued debate of the issues is not only desirable but essential.

An important tool used to redress inequality is education. In this regard, universities play a vital role and they do so on a number of levels. In a practical sense, there has been a marked increase in the number of women attending universities. This is illustrated by a 1994 survey which indicates that in Western Australia, women make up 45.9% of people whose highest qualification is a bachelor degree; and of those, 25.9% have higher degrees. This is significant in that as I shall further illustrate a lack of education in every sense, is an important underlying causative factor of women's inequality in accessing justice.

On a theoretical level universities provide an important forum in which women's issues can be researched, discussed and communicated to the broader community. The theoretical discussion emanating from universities is pivotal in changing entrenched attitudes and better educating the general public.

In the course of my address I will consider the complex issues underpinning the goal of attaining adequate and equal access to justice for women. These issues can be grouped under three broad headings. First, are structural and practical obstacles such as, for example, lack of education, finance and adequate legal services. Secondly, are issues of political and economic equality and thirdly, is the development and reformulation of legal principles which impact on women's rights and subsequently directly impact on access to justice issues.

1. PRACTICAL AND STRUCTURAL OBSTACLES TO JUSTICE.

In March 1994 the Australian Law Reform Commission released an *Interim Report* entitled *Equality Before the law: women's access to the legal system* ("Interim Report").¹ The *Interim Report* identified a number of obstacles faced by women in obtaining access to justice, including: lack of awareness of the law, lack of financial resources and a comparative absence of legal services specifically designed for women. It also noted the special disadvantages suffered by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, women from a non-English-speaking background, women in rural and remote areas and older women.

For women to obtain adequate access to justice, they must first be able to recognise that the particular difficulty which they face can be dealt with as a legal problem, that they have certain legal rights and that legal remedies are available to enforce those rights.² Without this level of awareness, it is impossible for women to make effective use of the law.³ Therefore, it is critical that women are able to obtain accurate legal information which is in a readily understandable form.

The cost of legal services is, for many potential litigants, a significant barrier to the pursuit of legal remedies. This is a matter for general concern, because, as the Australian Law Reform Commission has observed: "*A legal system which is not affordable is not accessible.*"⁴ However, women are particularly disadvantaged due to the fact that, as a group, they generally have more limited financial resources than men.⁵ Indeed, the 1994 Report of my Taskforce on Gender Bias said that women: "... *form the major lower socioeconomic group in Australia.*"⁶

This barrier can be overcome where a litigant has access to State funded legal assistance. However, many women are unable to obtain access to this form of assistance. Because legal aid funds are limited, priority tends to be given to defendants in criminal law matters.⁷ As a result, there is less funding available for matters which may be of particular importance to women, such as proceedings relating to the custody of children, property settlements upon divorce or separation, and protection from domestic violence.⁸ This can be illustrated by the fact that in 1992-93 only 37% of net legal aid expenditure related to women, \$35 million less than that which related to men.⁹

¹ Aus. Law Reform Commission (1994) Report 67 ("*Interim Report*")

² See *Interim Report* at 16 *Equality before the law* DP 54 ("*Discussion Paper*") at 50.

³ Aus. Law Reform Commission (1993)

⁴ See *Discussion Paper* at 52

⁵ See *Interim Report* at 21-22

⁶ See *Report of the Chief Justice's Taskforce on Gender Bias, 1994* ("*Taskforce Report*") at 46

⁷ See *Taskforce Report* at 31

⁸ See *Discussion Paper* at 53; *Interim Report* at 22

⁹ See *Interim Report* at 53.

The issue of underfunding of the legal aid system assumes particular importance at the present time. The decision by the Federal Government to reduce funding to the States legal aid systems to the tune of more than \$100 million over three years which became effective on 1 July 1997 have the potential to seriously undermine the rule of law in his country which depends on an adequately funded legal aid system. The seriousness of this problem is illustrated by the fact that in 1994, the Law Council of Australia reported that the legal aid system was already underfunded by some \$55 million. In light of this, the reality of the situation is, that if proposed funding cuts come into effect (as in all likelihood they will) it will not be possible for Australia to maintain the rule of law and to meet its international obligations and to have a fair system of justice. Needless to say, the problems referred to above in respect of the cost of legal services and access to justice for women will also be exacerbated with potentially disastrous consequences.

The form in which legal services are made available can also affect women's access to justice. The absence of childcare facilities and restricted opening hours, can make it difficult for women with young children to obtain legal advice and attend court proceedings.¹⁰ Women may feel intimidated by the thought of approaching a legal firm and discussing their problems with a male lawyer who may be insensitive to their needs and experiences.¹¹ As Sydney's Women's Legal Resources Centre has observed:

*Women are often distrusting of men after they have been abused or exploited in a relationship ... Sometimes [they] are embarrassed by their lack of knowledge of the legal system, or their family finances, or simply the humiliation of having been abandoned. They feel more comfortable talking to other women about these matters because they trust they will not be further humiliated by them.*¹²

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women have been identified as a group which is "least well served by the legal system"¹³ and receives from the law "Little or no protection."¹⁴ Among the difficulties which they face are a lack of cultural sensitivity on the part of those involved in the legal system, an absence of appropriate legal services in remote communities and a lack of access to Aboriginal and Islander legal services where this would involve the representation of one indigenous person against another.¹⁵

¹⁰ See *Discussion Paper* at 54.

¹¹ See *Interim Report* at 17; *Taskforce Report* at 32

¹² Aus. Law Reform Commission (1994) *Equality before the law: justice for women* Rp. 69 (1) ("*Report*") at 111.

¹³ *Report* at 118.

¹⁴ *Report* at 120.

¹⁵ See *Interim Report* at 32; *Taskforce Report* at 44, 120-22

Those involved in the legal system may not appreciate the cultural barriers which prevent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women from discussion issues regarded as exclusive to women with men. As a result, lawyers and the courts, may only be presented with half the story.¹⁶ This can be a particular problem in remote communities where, if any legal services are available, they are usually provided by men. As the Aboriginal Women's Legal Issues Group has observed:

*Aboriginal women need to be able to make an informed decision. That is, whether they choose to use the law or whether they choose not to use the law. In most instances, the choice has been taken away from them by the legal system's inability to provide a culturally appropriate and sensitive legal service.*¹⁷

Women from a non-English-speaking background can also face particular difficulties in obtaining access to justice. Their cultural background may lead them to incorrectly assume that they do not have certain legal rights or are not entitled to legal protection in particular situations.¹⁸ Language difficulties, and cultural traditions, may make it difficult to obtain appropriate legal advice or adequately present evidence in a courtroom situation. The *Interim Report* noted:

*Lacking the ability to communicate effectively in English, NESB women are less likely to understand the law, to learn about their legal rights and how to exercise them.*¹⁹

Women in rural and remote areas, of which there are over 2 million in this country, may find that their ability to obtain legal advice and access to legal processes is severely affected by their geographical isolation.²⁰ General legal services in rural and remote areas have been described "*inadequate*", those that cater to women's needs as "*virtually non-existent*".²¹ Where legal services are available, they may be inappropriate. For example, in a small country town a woman wishing to take action against her husband might be forced to seek advice from a lawyer who has an ongoing business relationship with her husband and is a social acquaintance of them both.

Older women are another group which may suffer from an inability to get access to appropriate legal advice. They may, because of social isolation, be particularly vulnerable to those who would take advantage of their lack of legal knowledge to

¹⁶ See *Report* at 122.

¹⁷ *Report* at 127.

¹⁸ See *Interim Report* at 57.

¹⁹ See *Interim Report* at 34

²⁰ See *Interim Report* at 36.

²¹ See *Report* at 117.

deprive them of their property of their right to freely determine how that property is to be distributed upon their death.²²

2. POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC EQUALITY

Potential barriers to women's access to justice are also to be found in the political and economic status of women. I will now examine these potentialities in an historical context.

In Australia, the right of women to participate in the political process is now taken for granted. However, it was not until 1894, in the State of South Australia, that women were first given the right to vote. In 1898, my maternal great aunt, Edith Cowan, formed the Women's Franchise League to campaign for women's voting rights in my own State of Western Australia. As a result, women in Western Australia were granted voting rights in 1899 by amendment to the State *Constitution*.²³ In 1902, shortly after the formation of the Commonwealth of Australia, all women were given the right to vote in federal elections.²⁴ By 1909 women had been granted voting rights in all States.

It was some time later that the right of Australian women to stand for election was recognised. In Western Australia this was achieved in 1920.²⁵ At the very next election, Edith Cowan was returned as the member for West Perth, unseating the sitting member, then Attorney General Mr TP Draper KC who was promptly appointed a Judge of the Supreme Court. She was the first woman elected to an Australian Parliament, and only the second woman to be elected to a Parliament of the British Commonwealth. Edith Cowan immediately demonstrated the capacity of women, as political representatives, to contribute to women's equality by the introduction and enactment of a Private Member's Bill which became the *Women's Legal Status Act 1923 (WA)*. It consisted of only one substantive provision which provided that:

*A person shall not be disqualified by sex from the exercise of any public function, or from being appointed to or holding any civil or judicial office or post, or from being admitted and entitled to practise as a practitioner within the meaning of that term in the Legal Practitioners' Act 1893, or from entering or assuming or carrying on any other profession, any law or usage to the contrary notwithstanding.*²⁶

²² See *Interim Report* at 37.

²³ See *Constitution Amendment Act 1899 (WA)* s15.

²⁴ See *Commonwealth Franchise Act 1902 (Cth)*.

²⁵ See *Parliament (Qualification of Women) Act 1920 (WA)* s2(1).a

²⁶ *Women's legal Status Act (WA)* s2

The original purpose of the legislation was to overcome a 1904 decision of the Supreme Court of Western Australia which had held that women were not entitled to be admitted as legal practitioners because the word ‘person’ in the context of the *Legal Practitioners Act 1893 (WA)* could not have been intended to include a female.²⁷ However, the scope of the act was extended to cover all professions and public offices, for as Edith Cowan explained to the House in her second reading speech:

*...women [should] be given the privilege, or rather the right, and the common justice of competing and standing side by side with their brothers wherever it is possible to do so ... women are very desirous ... of being placed on absolutely equal terms with men, leaving it to be a matter of survival of the fittest. We ask for neither more nor less than that.*²⁸

Today, legislation designed to prevent both direct and indirect discrimination against women exists in all States and Territories and at the Commonwealth level.²⁹ The representation of women in Parliament is also steadily increasing. In 1992, women accounted for 13% of representatives in State and Territory Parliaments.³⁰ By 1994, they accounted for 16% of representatives.³¹ In 1996, on a state level, women comprise 19.3% of Members of the Legislative Assembly and 14.7% of Members of the Legislative Council. While these figures are still relatively low, there is reason for optimism given that the total number of women in Australian Parliaments doubled between 1983 and 1993.³² However, it was not until 1989 that a woman was first elected to head a government in Australia.³³ Since that time we have had two other women as Premiers, one in my own State.

Legislative guarantees of equal opportunity have not yet resulted in economic equality for women in Australia. In 1972 women’s average earnings were 58% of those of men. By 1988 this figure had increased to 67%.³⁴ In 1990, 50% of women earning an income received less than \$10,000 a year. Only 22% of men earned less than this amount. On the other hand, 33% of men earning an income

²⁷ See *In re Edith Haynes* [1904] 6 WAR 209

²⁸ See Western Australia *Parliamentary Debates* (1923) 1 Vol.68(New Series) at 594.d

²⁹ See *Sex Discrimination Act 1984* (Cth); *Anti-Discrimination Act 1977* (NSW) Part 3; *Equal Opportunity Act 1995* (Vic); *Anti-Discrimination Act 1991* (Qld); *Equal Opportunity Act 1984* (SA) Part III; *Equal Opportunity Act 1984* (A) Part II; *Sex Discrimination Act 1994* (Tas); *Discrimination Act 1991* (ACT); *Anti-Discrimination Act 1992* (NT).

³⁰ See *Report of Chief Justice’s Taskforce on Gender Bias* (30 June 1994) at 186 fn. 27.

³¹ See Aus Law Reform Commission (1994) Rep.69 (1) *Equality before the law: justice for women* at 25.

³² See Aus Law Reform Commission (1994) Rep.69 (1) *Equality before the law: justice for women* at 24.

³³ In the Australian Capital Territory. See Aus. Law Reform Commission (1994) Rep. 69 (1) *Equality before the law: justice for women* at 25

³⁴ See Graycar, R. & Morgan, J (1990) *The Hidden Gender of Law* at 83.

received more than \$30,000 a year. Only 9% of women earned more than this amount.³⁵

There are also fewer women earning income. In 1990 only 57% of women earned income, compared to 79% of men.³⁶ A lot of work done by women is unpaid work. It has been estimated that in 1993 the value of that work was in the region of \$150 billion, or over half the value of our official measure of national production.³⁷

3. LEGAL PRINCIPLES

The development and reformulation of legal principles relevant to women's rights directly impact on women's access to justice in that recognition of women's rights in judicial determinations is crucial to redressing inequality. An examination of relevant case I saw in relation to these key principles clearly illustrates this point.

Assessment of Damages for Personal Injury

The assessment of damages for personal injury raises questions about the way that the law values women's work, both when it is performed outside the home and when it is performed in the home.³⁸

Loss of Earning Capacity

When a court is required to assess damages for loss of earning capacity, it is engaged in an exercise in prediction. It must deal not with facts which may be proved but with possibilities. In particular, it must determine the likelihood that particular possibilities would or would not have eventuated if the plaintiff had not been injured.³⁹ Because it requires an assessment of probabilities, this process is inherently susceptible to the making of assumptions about women's work which may not be justified.

A recent Australian case which raised this issue very directly was that of *NSW Insurance Ministerial Corporation v Wynn*.⁴⁰ The facts in that case were that the female plaintiff was injured in a car accident when she was about 30 years of age. She was then working for the *American Express* company as Manager of Authorisations, a position which was described as carrying "... a significant amount of responsibility."⁴¹ She had been promoted within the company three times in the preceding two years. A year after the accident she was promoted again, this time to the position of Director of Customer Services, with responsibility for three managers and 120 staff. Due to the effect of the injuries suffered in the car

³⁵ See Aus. Law Reform Commission (1993) Discussion Paper 54 *Equality before the law* at 123.

³⁶ See Aus. Law Reform Commission (1993) Discussion Paper 54 *Equality before the law* at 122.

³⁷ See Aus. Law Reform Commission (1993) Discussion Paper 54 *Equality before the law* at 123.

³⁸ See Graycar, R *Women's Work: Who Cares?* (1992) 14 Syd L Rev 86 at 91.

³⁹ See *Malec v JC Hutton* (1990) 92 ALR 545 at 548-49 per Deane, Gaudron & JJMcHugh JJ.

⁴⁰ (1994) ¶ATR 81-304

⁴¹ (1994) ¶ATR 81-304 at 61, 737 per Handley JA.

accident the plaintiff was forced to abandon her career a year later. At the time, work occupied eighty per cent of her time each week. There was evidence that the plaintiff and her husband had planned for at least one child but that the plaintiff would have returned to work thereafter.

The trial judge assessed damages for loss of earning capacity on the basis that the plaintiff would have continued in her employment with *American Express* to age 60. He applied a discount of 5% for contingencies, taking into account both the possibility that she would have undertaken maternity leave, and the possibility that she would have received a further promotion to Vice-President within *American Express*.

The new South Wales Court of Appeal held that the trial judge had erred in allowing a sum of \$705,980 for future loss of earnings and reassessed that loss at a sum of \$411,350, but making a deduction for contingencies of 28%. The Court of Appeal discounted the possibility that the plaintiff would have continued in her employment to age 60. In its view, the allowance for contingencies did not adequately reflect the possibility that the plaintiff would have chosen, or been forced, to give up work or accept a less demanding job. In reaching this conclusion, the Court of Appeal pointed to that it described *the physical, mental and emotional strain of working indefinitely such long hours and in such a demanding job*" and noted that the job had "...placed heavy demands on her time, energy and health and the love and patience of her husband."⁴²

The Court of Appeal also discounted the possibility that the plaintiff would have received a promotion to Vice-President. It did so on the basis that such a promotion would have involved an overseas posting. With respect to this possibility, Handley JA observed:

*Although ... the plaintiff's fiancé had been 'extraordinarily supportive' the contingencies associated with any further promotion for the plaintiff to an overseas posting were very great indeed. It would have involved separation from her fiancé, or husband, whose business interests would have kept him in Sydney, except during holidays, and likewise either separation from any children or a decision not to have any ... The plaintiff was thirty two when she resigned and her childbearing years were already limited.*⁴³

The Court of Appeal's decision was subject to strong academic criticism. It was said that it exemplified an approach whereby courts: "...routinely reduce damages by reference to assumptions about women's lack of attachment to the paid labour

⁴² *NSW Insurance Ministerial Corporation v Wynn* (1994). ¶ATR 81-304 at 61, 741-42 per Handley JA.

⁴³ *NSW Insurance Ministerial Corporation v Wynn* (1994). ATR. ¶81-304 at 61,741 per Handley JA.

*market in view of their child bearing capacity and an assumed inability to have successful careers and children.”*⁴⁴

On appeal, the High Court of Australia rejected the approach which had been taken by the Court of Appeal.⁴⁵ The High Court did not accept that the Court of Appeal had correctly assessed either the plaintiff’s prospects of a reduced participation in the workforce or the plaintiff’s prospects of promotion. As Dawson, Toohey, Gaudron & Gummow JJ explained:

*...there is nothing in the evidence to suggest that the appellant was any less able than any other career oriented person, whether male or female, to successfully combine a demanding career and family responsibilities. Rather, the evidence of her rapid promotion ... her ambition to advance further and her desire to remain in the paid workforce ... clearly justified the trial judge in forming the view that there was a prospect of her further advancement.*⁴⁶

What the decision in *Wynn’s* case made clear was that it was not appropriate to make invalid assumptions about a female plaintiff’s ability to balance the demands placed on her time by her career and other matters. Men and women were to be treated equally, that is in the same way, in assessing damages for lost earning capacity. These cases were to be decided on the evidence rather than assumptions founded on stereotyping.

The Value of Caring Work

The value that is put on caring work performed in the home is an issue of relevance to all care providers. However, it is of particular relevance to women, given that it is still true that the overwhelming majority of care providers are women.⁴⁷

In 1977 the High Court of Australia, with its decision in the case of *Griffiths v Kerkemeyer*,⁴⁸ brought about a fundamental change in the way in which the work of care providers was regarded by Australian law for the purpose of assessing tortious damages. In that case, the plaintiff became quadriplegic as a result of severe injuries sustained in a road accident. He was wholly unable to care for himself and required constant nursing care. At the time damages were assessed, that care was being provided by the plaintiff’s fiancée, with the assistance of members of his family. Without what was described by Major J as their “selfless devotion” the plaintiff would have had to enter a nursing home.⁴⁹

⁴⁴ Graycar, R *Damaged awards: the vicissitudes of life as a woman* (1995) 3 TLJ 160 at 164.

⁴⁵ See *Wynn v NSW Insurance Ministerial Corporation* (1995) 70 ALJR 147.

⁴⁶ *Wynn v NSW Insurance Ministerial Corporation* (1995) 70 ALJR 147 at 151.

⁴⁷ See Graycar, R *Damaged awards: the vicissitudes of life as a woman* (1995) 3 TLJ 160 at 161

⁴⁸ (1997) 15 ALR 387

⁴⁹ See *Griffiths v Kerkemeyer* (1977) 15 ALR 387 at 404 per Mason J.

The High Court held that the plaintiff was entitled to recover damages for the value of the nursing services which were being provided, and would in the future be provided, by his fiancée and family. The conceptual basis of the decision was that in such a case the relevant loss is the plaintiff's accident-caused need for the services. In assessing that loss, it is convenient to refer to the value of the services required to meet the plaintiff's need. However, the plaintiff is not being compensated for the cost of obtaining those services, but for the loss of capacity which gives rise to the need for the services. Therefore, the fact that the services would, or might, be provided gratuitously did not, of itself, affect a plaintiff's entitlement to receive damages.⁵⁰

Of the judges who decided *Griffiths v Kerkemeyer*, Gibbs J was alone in suggesting that a court should still determine, as a condition of recovery, whether an accident-caused need was likely to be productive of financial loss.⁵¹ However, on the basis of this statement, a number of lower courts began to restrict the ambit of the *Griffiths* principle.

For example in 1979 the New South Wales Court of Appeal decided in the case of *Johnson v Kelemic*⁵² that damages were not recoverable because the services provided to the plaintiff involved "the normal incidents of family life", the care providers suffered no financial loss by providing the services, and the plaintiff would not, in any event, have engaged a person to provide the services for reward. For these reasons, the gratuitous services were viewed as going to the satisfaction of a need would not be productive of financial loss.⁵³ Similarly, in 1982 the New South Wales Court of Appeal in the case of *Kovac v Kovac*⁵⁴ denied recovery under the *Griffiths* principle on the basis that services, described as "not unduly demanding", were viewed by the Court as part of "the ordinary currency of family life and obligation" and could be performed by the plaintiff's spouse without suffering financial loss or substantial emotional and physical pressure.⁵⁵ These services included cleaning, doing laundry, shopping, cooking, encouraging the plaintiff to eat, supervising the plaintiff's shower and toilet, ensuring that the plaintiff took medication and did not come to harm and providing companionship.⁵⁶

⁵⁰ See *Griffiths v Kerkemeyer* (1977) 15 ALR 387 at 397-98 per Stephen J & 412-13 per Mason J.

⁵¹ See *Griffiths v Kerkemeyer* (1977) 15 ALR 387 at 393 per Gibbs J.

⁵² (1979) FLC ¶90-657

⁵³ See *Johnson v Kelemic* (1979) FLC ¶90-657 at 78, 495-96 per Mahoney JA.

⁵⁴ [1982] 1 NSWLR 656

⁵⁵ See *Kovac v Kovac* [1982] 1 NSWLR 656 at 668-69 per Samuels J.

⁵⁶ See *Kovac v Kovac* [1982] 1 NSWLR 656 at 668 per Samuels J.

In 1988 the Full Court of the Supreme Court of Queensland in the case of *Veselinovic v Thorley*⁵⁷ placed a further restriction on the *Griffiths* principle by holding that where a care provider had left the workforce to care for a plaintiff, and by so doing had lost less in wages than the market cost of those services, it would be appropriate to measure the plaintiff's loss by the provider's loss.⁵⁸

The approach of the lower courts was criticised for its reliance on the assumption that the relationships people are in at the time of trial will continue unchanged. It was pointed out that the evidence of care providers as to their future intentions could be unreliable, and that family relationships are often significantly disrupted by the strains involved in providing care to an injured plaintiff. For these reasons, it was said that the only way to ensure that the future needs of a plaintiff were met was to provide the full market cost of the services which the plaintiff required.⁵⁹

In 1992 the High Court of Australia had an opportunity, in *Van Gervan v Fenton*,⁶⁰ to correct some of the misconceptions about the *Griffiths* principle that had gained currency in the lower courts. In that case, the plaintiff required almost constant care as a result of injuries sustained in a motor vehicle accident. In order to provide that care, his wife gave up her work as a nurses' aide. The trial judge assessed damages for the plaintiff's past and future care on the basis of the wages that his wife had formerly earned.

The High Court held that this was not an appropriate way to assess the value of the services provided gratuitously to the plaintiff. The true basis of a claim under the *Griffiths* principle was the plaintiff's need for the services. The task of the courts was to place an objective monetary value on that need, not to determine whether it involved an actual or potential financial loss to the plaintiff. So far as the comments of Gibbs J in *Griffiths v Kerkemeyer* had led the lower courts to impose limitations on recovery by reference to the likelihood that the need would be productive of financial loss this was misconceived as those comments had represented a dissent on the point of principle.⁶¹ Therefore, it was inappropriate to assess damages by reference to the actual cost to the plaintiff of having them provided or by reference to the income foregone by the provider of those services. The appropriate measure would, in general, be the market cost of the services.⁶²

The High Court said that as a matter of *policy* it was not reasonable that the defendant's liability should be reduced at the indirect expense of the care provider by invoking notions of marital or family obligation to provide the services free or

⁵⁷ [1988] 1 Qd R 191.

⁵⁸ See *Veselinovic v Thorley* [1988] 1 Qd R 191 at 195 per Connolly J & at 200 per Thomas J.

⁵⁹ See Gray, R *Women's Work: Who Cares?* (1992) 14 Syd L Rev 86 at 89, 101 - 103.

⁶⁰ (1992) 109 ALR 283

⁶¹ See *Van Gervan v Fenton* (1992) 109 ALR 283 at 285-87 per Mason CJ, Toohey & McHugh JJ.

⁶² See *Van Gervan v Fenton* (1992) 109 ALR 283 at 287-88 per Mason CJ, Toohey & McHugh JJ.

at less than market rates. It also recognised that in any event it was not possible for a court to predict how long gratuitous services might be provided to a plaintiff. As Mason CJ, Toohey & McHugh JJ observed: “... *the market cost criterion enables the plaintiff to be properly compensated by the award of a reasonable sum whether or not the gratuitous care provider continues to provide that care.*”⁶³

Loss of Capacity to Work in the Home

A plaintiff may lose as a result of negligence, not only a capacity which gives rise to a need for services, but a capacity to provide those services to others. Where a woman loses a capacity to perform domestic services on behalf of her family how should a court assess that loss? In 1977, in *Sharman v Evans*⁶⁴ Murphy J suggested in the High Court that the loss was equivalent to a loss of earning capacity. In his view, no relevant distinction could be made between a loss of working capacity which was previously exercised outside the home for wages and that which was previously exercised within the home doing non-earning work of economic value. In both cases there was an economic loss.⁶⁵

However, this has been a very much a minority view.⁶⁶ At present, Australian law views the loss of a capacity to perform domestic services for others as analogous to a loss of amenity, rather than as analogous to a loss of earning capacity. For example, in 1982, *Burnicle v Cutelli*, the New South Wales Court of Appeal dealt with a case in which the plaintiff had suffered injuries which deprives her of the capacity to perform household duties which she had formerly carried out for her family. Reynolds JA had no doubt that what he described as the plaintiff’s “loss of a capacity to render services to others” could attract an award of damages.⁶⁷ However, he did not accept that this loss of capacity could be quantified by the value of the services if performed by a third party.⁶⁸ Rather he concluded that:

*... an assessment must be made as a component of an award of general damages, just as might be done in respect of any other deprivation which does not produce financial loss. The injured plaintiff has in such a case as this lost part of a capacity, the exercise of which can given to her pride and satisfaction and the receipt of gratitude, and the loss of which can lead to frustration and feelings of inadequacy.*⁶⁹

⁶³ See *Van Gervan v Fenton* (1992) 109 ALR 283 at 289

⁶⁴ (1977) 13 ALR 57.

⁶⁵ See *Sharman v Evans* (1977) 13 ALR 57 at 86 per Murphy J.

⁶⁶ See however *Burnicle v Cutelli* [1982] 2 NSWLR 26 at 35 per Glass JA (refers to loss as “depreciation of economic asset”) and *Maiward v Doyle* [1983] WAR 210 and 212 per Wickham J (refers to “loss of working capacity as a housekeeper” as a “loss of earning capacity”).

⁶⁷ See *Burnicle v Cutelli* [1982] 2 NSWLR 26 at 27.

⁶⁸ See *Burnicle v Cutelli* [1982] 2 NSWLR 26 at 29 per Reynolds JA.

⁶⁹ *Burnicle v Cutelli* [1982] 2 NSWLR 26 at 28 per Reynolds JA. See also Mahoney JA at 36.

This issue was also considered in 1983 by the Full Court of the Supreme Court of Western Australia in *Maiward v Doyle*.⁷⁰ In that case, the plaintiff had, before the accident, provided nearly all the housekeeping and domestic services for her husband and four children in addition to holding down outside employment. Both majority judges were careful to draw a distinction between household services performed for the benefit of the plaintiff and those performed for the benefit of her family.⁷¹ With respect to the latter, the cost could not be recovered under the *Griffiths* principle because they did not relate to the accident caused needs of the plaintiff.⁷² However, the plaintiff was entitled to general damages for loss of amenity. As Olney J put it: "... for being deprived of the satisfaction which she formerly derived from attending to the needs of her family."⁷³ This approach has been criticised as failing to recognise that the real nature of the loss is economic.⁷⁴

Criminal Law Defences

Criminal law defences raise questions about the extent to which objective standards of conduct are capable of accommodating the different experiences of women, particularly in the domestic violence context.

Provocation

The classic example of an act caused by provocation is an immediate angry response to provocative words or conduct. However, it is argued that this model of provocation is contrary to the response patterns of most women who experience violence.⁷⁵ It is said that many women remain passive during an incident of spousal violence, and only react later when some 'triggering event' occurs which causes the relevant loss of self-control.

In Australia it has been acknowledged that a provocative incident should be analysed against the history of the relationship between the accused and the deceased.⁷⁶ On this basis, an apparently innocuous statement by a husband could in the context of a background of abuse, be regarded as a provocative incident sufficient to raise a defence of provocation in a case of spousal homicide.⁷⁷ However, any retaliation would still generally be expected to closely follow the provocative incident.

⁷⁰ [1983] WAR 210.

⁷¹ See *Maiward v Doyle* [1983] WAR 210 at 217 per Kennedy J & at 234 per Olney J.

⁷² See *Maiward v Doyle* [1983] WAR 210 at 226 per Kennedy J & at 238 per Olney J.

⁷³ *Maiward v Doyle* [1983] WAR 210 at 238 per Olney J. See also at 226 per Kennedy J.

⁷⁴ See Graycar, R *Compensation for Loss of Capacity to Work in the Home* (1985) 10 Syd L Rev 528 at 553.

⁷⁵ See for example Tarrant, S *Provocation and Self Defence* (1990) 15 Leg. Serv. Bull. 147 and 149

⁷⁶ See *Stingel v R* (1990) 97 ALR 1 at 10.

⁷⁷ See *R v The Queen* (1994) 72 A Crim R 127 at 132 per King CJ.

In 1994 the New South Wales Court of Appeal considered the issue of immediacy of response in the context of domestic violence in the case of *Chhay*.⁷⁸ The defendant in that case was a Cambodian woman who had been forced to marry her husband by the Cambodian authorities. She and her husband later came to live in Australia. She had a very unhappy marriage, because her husband was a heavy drinker and was frequently violent towards the defendant, physically abusing her over many years. On the evening in question the defendant and her husband had a noisy argument, mainly about the failure of a business enterprise, and the husband threatened divorce proceedings saying that his wife would then have to look after their three children. The defendant claimed that she killed her husband a few hours later after her husband had threatened her with a meat cleaver. The Crown case was that this incident had not occurred, and that she had killed her husband while he was asleep. The question for the Court of Appeal was whether a defence of provocation should still have been left to the jury, even if they did not accept the defendant's story about her husband threatening her with the meat cleaver.

The Court of Appeal held that the issue of provocation, absent an acceptance of the alleged attack by the husband, should still have been left to the jury. In the course of his judgment, Gleeson CJ expressly referred to criticisms of the immediacy of response requirement as being male normative, and referred with approval to the underlying point of these criticisms which was that women:

*... typically respond by suffering a 'slow-burn' of fear, despair and anger which eventually erupts into the killing of their batterer, usually when he is asleep, drunk or otherwise indisposed.*⁷⁹

Gleeson CJ highlighted as the critical feature of the defence at common law the occurrence of a "sudden and temporary loss of self control".⁸⁰ He explained that the central concern had been to distinguish between a killing which results from a loss of self-control and that which may result from emotions such as hatred, resentment, fear or a desire for revenge.⁸¹ The immediacy of response requirement was merely one way in which this distinction could be enforced. Therefore, regard should be had to the interval between the incident or conduct of the deceased and the retaliation as a matter of fact rather than law to determine whether what occurred could be attributed to the necessary "sudden and temporary loss of self control".

This approach views retaliation following immediately upon a provocative incident as merely a more clear example of a case in which it could be said that the

⁷⁸ (1994) 72 A Crim R. 1.

⁷⁹ Nicholson, D & Sanghvi, R *Battered Women and Provocation* [1993] Crim LR 728 at 730 quoted in *Chhay* (1994) 72 A Crim R 1 at 11 per Gleeson CJ.d

⁸⁰ *Chhay* (1994) 72 A Crim R 1 at 10 per Gleeson CJ.

⁸¹ *Chhay* (1994) 72 A Crim R 1 at 9 per Gleeson CJ

provocation had caused a sudden and temporary loss of self-control in a defendant.⁸²

Self-Defence

It was in 1991 in *R v Runjanjic & Kontinnen*⁸³ that the existence of “battered woman’s syndrome” (“BWS”) was first recognised by an Australian court. In that case, the Court of Criminal Appeal of South Australia accepted that BWS was so outside the ordinary experience of jurors that the court should receive expert evidence in relation to it.⁸⁴

In receiving this evidence, the Court of Criminal Appeal was following the lead of the Supreme Court of Canada, which had dealt with the subject in 1990 in *R v Lavallee*.⁸⁵ In that case the defendant shot her de facto spouse in the back of the head as he was leaving her room. The background to their relationship was that the defendant had been subject to repeated physical abuse and threats from her de facto spouse over the course of a number of years. The killing itself occurred after a boisterous party had concluded and most of the guests had departed. The defendant’s de facto had suggested to her that she would suffer some retribution once all the guests had departed. The question for the Supreme Court was whether expert evidence of BWS was admissible to help explain the defendant’s actions in the context of a defence of self-defence. For the defence to be made out, the relevant legislation required, in terms which are typical,⁸⁶ that the defendant reasonably apprehends death or grievous bodily harm and believes, on reasonable grounds, that she could not otherwise have preserved herself from death or grievous bodily harm.⁸⁷

Wilson J pointed out that it was probably impossible for the average member of a jury to appreciate the mental state of the defendant without expert evidence on the psychological effect that battering has on a woman.⁸⁸ She pointed out that the concept of self-defence had its origins in male experience, referring to the “paradigmatic case” of a bar room brawl between two men of equal size and strength.⁸⁹ In such a case it might well be regarded as inherently unreasonable to apprehend death or grievous bodily harm unless and until a physical assault was actually in progress.⁹⁰ However, expert evidence of BWS could show that it might not be inherently unreasonable for the defendant to have acted as she did. In

⁸² See *Chhay* (1994) 72 A Crim R 1 at 10 per Gleeson CJ.

⁸³ (1991) 53 A Crim R 362.

⁸⁴ See *R v Runjanjic & Kontinnen* (1991) 53 A Crim R 362 at 369 per King CJ.

⁸⁵ (1990) 55 CCC (3d) 97.

⁸⁶ See *Criminal Code* (WA) s248.

⁸⁷ See *R v Lavallee* (1990) 55 CCC (3d) 97 at 110 per Wilson J.

⁸⁸ See *R v Lavallee* (1990) 55 CCC (3d) 97 at 112 per Wilson J.

⁸⁹ See *R v Lavallee* (1990) 55 CCC (3d) 97 at 115 per Wilson J.

⁹⁰ See *R v Lavallee* (1990) 55 CCC (3d) 97 at 116 per Wilson J.

particular, the cyclical nature of the physical abuse which “battered women” suffer, can allow them to accurately predict the onset of violence which would be capable of causing a reasonable apprehension of death or grievous bodily harm.⁹¹ The psychological effect of that physical abuse may also assist in explaining why a defendant would not attempt to escape at the critical moment when she apprehends her life to be in danger.⁹²

Where self-defence is raised, courts and juries have to judge a defendant’s conduct in accordance with objective tests. However, without the special insight provided by BWS evidence, those tests cannot be applied with due recognition for the different experience of women in a domestic violence situation. As King CJ observed in *r v Runjanjic & Dontinnen*: “... a just judgment of the actions of women in those situations requires that the court or jury have the benefit of the insights which have been gained.”⁹³

Having considered the issues underpinning women’s access to justice, I now turn to an examination of situations where women fail to obtain adequate access to justice and possible solutions to access to justice problems.

The Consequences when Women Lack Access to Justice

Women’s failure to obtain adequate access to legal information, advice and, where appropriate, representation, can have serious consequences. A woman may lose custody of her children, may lose her home and possessions, may suffer injury or death as a result of domestic violence.⁹⁴ A study conducted by the Domestic Violence Advisory Service of Sydney found that over half of the women interviewed would not have stayed in the violent situation from which they wished to escape if they had received adequate or accurate information about the legal avenues to obtain protection.⁹⁵ As the *Interim Report* observed:

*Inadequate information and poor advice leaves women unprotected. They are likely to remain in unacceptable situations or to ensure violations of their rights simply through lack of knowledge of alternatives.*⁹⁶

There is also a strong link between legal representation and successful court outcomes for women. Indeed, it has been said that a lack of representation: “... effectively prevents domestic violence legislation from working because women’s

⁹¹ See *R v Lavallee* (1990) 55 CCC (3d) 97 at 118-19 per Wilson J

⁹² See *R v Lavallee* (1990) 55 CCC (3d) 97 at 124 per Wilson J

⁹³ (1991) 53 A Crim R 362 at 369.

⁹⁴ See *Interim Report* at 54.

⁹⁵ See *Interim Report* at 17.

⁹⁶ *Interim Report* at 17.

success rate in court is so severely affected."⁹⁷ In the Northern Territory, successful applications for protection orders in the Darwin Magistrates' Court rose from 43% to 72% in the three months which followed the establishment of a special domestic violence legal service.⁹⁸ In this State, the Legal Aid Commission's Domestic Violence Legal Unit, which opened in December 1994, has a 95% success rate on defended restraining order applications.⁹⁹

Possible Solutions to Access to Justice Problems

In Order to meet the need for improved access to justice identified in the *Interim Report*, the Australian Law Reform Commission proposed a national women's justice program which would: "...operate as a central focus for advancing women's access to the legal system and ensuring that the legal system responds to Australian women in an appropriate and adequate manner."¹⁰⁰ The key elements of the program were: measures to increase women's access to legal representation, the establishment of specialist women's legal services in each State and Territory, and the provision of resources to facilitate community legal education and development of the law through test cases.¹⁰¹ Similar recommendations were made by my Taskforce on Gender Bias.¹⁰²

At the time that the *Interim Report* was released, there were only three specialist women's legal services operating in Australia: the Women's Legal Resource Centre in Sydney, the Women's Legal Resource Group in Melbourne and the Women's Legal Service in Brisbane. The Women's Legal Resource Centre, established in 1982, was the first service of its type established in this country. It offers telephone advice, face to face interviews and information kits, and makes contact with 4000 individual women a year.¹⁰³ The Women's legal Resource Group, originally established as a one night a week advice service, has grown to be a 5 day a week advice service.¹⁰⁴ The Women's Legal Service in Brisbane is said to have been established when: "...a group of women collected \$250 to buy an answering machine." It offers a 5 day a week telephone advice and referral service, and makes contact with 5000 individual women a year.¹⁰⁵

The Australian Law Reform Commission considered that the "*overwhelming demand*" placed upon these specialist services was convincing evidence of a need

⁹⁷ *Interim Report* at 23

⁹⁸ See *Interim Report* at 23.

⁹⁹ See Legal Aid Commission of WA *Annual Report 1995* at 26.

¹⁰⁰ See *Interim Report* at 50.

¹⁰¹ See generally *Interim Report* Chapter 4

¹⁰² See *Taskforce Report* at 5-6, Recommendations, 1, 5, 6, & 9.

¹⁰³ *Report* at 112, 114

¹⁰⁴ *Report* at 113.

¹⁰⁵ See *Report* at 113-114.

for the services which they provided.¹⁰⁶ In its view, women's legal services were "a proven product" which could "...directly increase women's access to justice."¹⁰⁷ As the *Interim Report* observed:

*Specialist women's legal services ... are currently performing a vital function. They are highly regarded by women's organisations and those who use them. They provide advice, information and referral on legal matters that affect women. They are considered sensitive to women's needs and experiences. They can play an important role in overcoming the attitudinal barriers that women confront in the legal system ... help court[s] to understand female perspectives, and ... assist in the development of legal principle.*¹⁰⁸

This view was endorsed by my Taskforce on Gender Bias,¹⁰⁹ which also noted with regret that at that time, due to lack of funding, the Women's legal Service in Western Australia: "... exists virtually in name only."¹¹⁰ Since my *Taskforce* has reported, however, I am pleased to note that is no longer the case, with the advent of a properly funded women's legal service, the Women's Legal Services Inc (WA).

The *Taskforce* I convened made a number of other recommendations with respect to improving women's access to justice including:

- The use of support workers as paralegals be greatly expanded;
- That more resources be made available for women to access information about and support from the legal system;
- That Community Legal Centres be resourced to provide better for the demands for legal advice and court representation for them;
- That a system be developed whereby the complainants, defendants or applicants for restraining orders are provided with a list of organisations or persons who could be help to them; and
- That a community legal education system (particularly for schools) be developed to deal with the vast lack of knowledge by women in relation to their rights and the protection of them. The dissemination of information should be discreet (to avoid conflict between the sexes) and should be made available in community languages.¹¹¹

CONCLUSION

¹⁰⁶ *Interim Report* at 50.

¹⁰⁷ *Report* at 114.

¹⁰⁸ *Interim Report* at 55-56.

¹⁰⁹ See *Taskforce Report* at 32, 184-85.

¹¹⁰ *Taskforce Report* at 185.

¹¹¹ See *Taskforce Report* at 34.

In conclusion, I think it can fairly be said that Australian courts and judges have displayed an ever increasing awareness of the potential for women's inequality in terms of the practical and structural obstacles facing women; the relative inequality of women's political and economic status as compared to men and the potential for inequality to be perpetuated by the law and the way in which it is applied. Whilst entrenched attitudes to women's rights are changing, like most things, the process of change takes time. I am of the firm view, that it is only through open, honest and earnest debate of the underlying issues that the inequality that undoubtedly exists can be further redressed.

The Historical Jesus Puzzle

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In this paper I shall address three main questions: Why ask about the historical Jesus? What new data do we have to warrant more research? and What, if any, findings can we identify in current research?¹

I WHY ASK ABOUT THE HISTORICAL JESUS?

The first is a serious question. Why enquire about the historical Jesus? One might counter: Why not? There are many reasons why some would consider the pursuit as only marginally relevant if not useless. From the perspective of Christian faith, is it not a living Jesus who concerns us? Does concern with the historical Jesus not reflect a failure to take resurrection faith seriously? Others might point to the message of Christ's death for us on the cross and his resurrection as the core of the Christian message. What more can detailed information about Jesus' life offer us?²

¹ There are a number of very useful reviews of current Jesus scholarship. Among the most recent I include the following: Borg, M. J. *Jesus in Contemporary Scholarship* (Valley Forge, Penn.: Trinity Press International, 1994); Carlson, J. and Ludwig, R. A. (eds) *Jesus and Faith. A Conversation on the Work of John Dominic Crossan author of The Historical Jesus* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1994); Crotty, R. *The Jesus Question. The Historical Search* (Blackburn, Vic.: HarperCollinsReligious, 1996); Johnson, L. T. *The Real Jesus. the Misguided Quest for the Historical Jesus and the Truth of the Traditional Gospels* (San Francisco: Harper, 1996); Witherington, B. *The Jesus Quest: The Third Search for the Jew of Nazareth* (Downers Grove: IVP, 1995); Wright, N. T. *Christian Origins and the Question of God Vol 2. Jesus and the Victory of God.* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996).

² In his critical review of recent research, Luke Johnson, *The Real Jesus. The Misguided Quest for the Historical Jesus and the Truth of the Traditional Gospels* (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1996) writes: "But looking at the 'story of Jesus' not in terms of a collection of facts or in terms of a pile of discreet pieces, but in terms of *pattern* and *meaning*, we found a deep consistency in the earliest Christian literature concerning the character of Jesus as Messiah" (p.165). "If the expression *the real Jesus* is used at all, it should not refer to a historically reconstructed Jesus. Such a Jesus is not 'real' in any sense, except as a product of scholarly imagination. The Christian's claim to experience the 'real Jesus' in the present, on the basis of religious experience and conviction, can be challenged on a number of fronts (religious, theological, moral), but not historically" (p.167). J. P. Meier, *A Marginal Jew. Rethinking the Historical Jesus. Vol 1. The Roots of the Problem and the Person* (New York: Doubleday, 1991), expresses himself similarly, "What, then, - ask the objectors - is the usefulness of the historical Jesus to people of faith? My reply is: none, if one is asking solely about the direct object of Christian faith: Jesus Christ, crucified, risen, and presently reigning in his Church. This presently reigning Lord is accessible to all believers, including all those who will never study history or theology for even a single day in their lives. Yet I maintain that the quest for the historical Jesus can be very useful if one is asking about faith seeking understanding, i.e., theology, in a contemporary context" (p.198). Meier is strongly committed to the critical role which historical research may play for theology, not least because theology, itself, "is a cultural artifact" (p.198). He sees such historical research serving the interest of faith in resisting attempts "to reduce faith in Christ to a content-less cipher, a mythic symbol, or a timeless archetype .. to swallow up the real humanity of Jesus into an 'orthodox' emphasis on his divinity .. to 'domesticate' Jesus for a comfortable, respectable, bourgeois Christianity" and to have Jesus "easily coopted for programs of political revolution" (p.199). One of the strongest cases for the relationship between the historical Jesus and the faith of the Church is in the

Is Paul not an impressive example of someone who could set forth the heart of the Christian message without apparently having much knowledge of the early ministry of Jesus and, at least in his letters, showing next to no interest in such detail? From a literary point of view we might argue that the attempt to use gospel texts as windows through which to imagine that we can peer across 30-50 years to the historical Jesus is to misuse the texts. They are their own reality and in themselves contain a world where we meet our Jesus, the Jesus of faith.³

Behind such responses are serious theological issues which have dogged attempts to pursue the historical questions. Martin Kähler was one of the first to expose the fragility of faith founded on the historical enterprise.⁴ It found its echo in Bultmann, who faced with realism (and today we would say with the pessimism characteristic of the early part of the century) the attempt to recover the words and deeds of the historical Jesus.⁵ Schweitzer, in early post modernist mode, had exposed the fallibility of nineteenth century lives of Jesus.⁶ The issues he raised about the propensity of authors to fashion Jesus according to the presuppositions of their age are just as pertinent at this end of the century.

Sectional interests are as much likely to fashion their Jesus as a warrant for their own ideology as they were then, some with more, some with less sophistication. Jesus is a likely candidate where people seek an authoritative basis for their views. Christians of all kinds will want to find justification in Jesus for cherished values. Sometimes this will be as part of a serious attempt to counter other moods and movements within Christianity. The “brokerless kingdom” which Crossan sees at the heart of Jesus’ message stands in contrast to the brokering institutional authority which the Church has become for many.⁷ The Jesus Seminar set itself up deliberately to offer an alternative to the fundamentalism and fundamentalist

work of John Knox who emphasised the foundation of faith in the impression created by the event of the historical Jesus preserved in the Church’s gospels. See J. Knox, *Jesus Lord and Christ* (New York: Harper and Row, 1958) and also an application of this approach in P. Carnley, *The Structure of Resurrection Belief* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1987).

³ This is the argument of R. Crotty, *The Jesus Question. The Historical Search* (Blackburn, Vic.: HarperCollins Religious, 1996). See also my review of this work: W. R. G. Loader in *Colloquium* 29.1 (1997), pp.69-72.

⁴ M. Kähler, *The So-Called Historical Jesus and the Historical Biblical Christ* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1964; originally published in German: *Der sogenannte historische Jesus und der geschichtliche, biblische Christus*, 1892).

⁵ R. Bultmann, *Jesus and the Word*, (London: Collins, 1958; first published in German, 1926); *The Theology of the New Testament*, 2 vols (London: SCM, 1952, 1955 first published in German, 1948-1953), esp.3-32.

⁶ A. Schweitzer, *The Quest of the Historical Jesus. A Critical Study of its Progress from Reimarus to Wrede*, (London: A & C Black, 3rd edn., 1954; German original published in 1906).

⁷ Crossan, J. D. *The Historical Jesus. The Life of a Mediterranean Jewish Peasant* (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1991). Crossan believes Jesus offered the “brokerless” kingdom, that is, access to God without intermediaries, was radically egalitarian, and trying to change society accordingly through the villages.

portraits of Jesus in American society.⁸ It has been long popular to play off Jesus against Paul, usually on the basis of false assumptions about Paul, often as the creator of atonement theory. An Australian variant is the extraordinary enterprise upon which Barbara Thiering has embarked in developing a new Jesus story borne of speculation about Qumran connections and secret gospel codes.⁹ Its appeal is that it offers an alternative image of Jesus to the established church view which many find so alienating.

Growing appreciation of the complexity of the gospel traditions and their development has led to attempts to favour one or the other early stream, if not to side with the historical Jesus against all or much of what emerged in the development of christology. Burton Mack has isolated the lost gospel of Q, giving prior weighting to its earliest sapiential layer (according to Kloppenborg's analysis) and its close relative, Thomas, and disenfranchising Mark as an imaginative construction.¹⁰ The Jesus Seminar has decided for a non

⁸ Robert Funk, founder of the Jesus Seminar, and co-chair with J. D. Crossan, called scholars together in 1985 to participate in an ongoing Jesus Seminar. Around 200 have participated, with about 40 ongoing. They discuss, then vote with beads on historicity (red=yes; pink-maybe; grey: probably not; black: no). Not much of Mark survives; Lord's Prayer goes; mostly sayings surviving in the Q-Thomas tradition are left reflecting particular presuppositions about eschatology and about Q and Thomas.

⁹ Her theories first appeared in *Redating the Teacher of Righteousness* and *The gospels and Qumran: a new hypothesis and The Qumran origins of the Christian church*, published in 1979, 1981 and 1983 respectively in the ANZSTS/Colloquium monograph series, Australian and New Zealand Studies in Theology and Religion, in Sydney. She developed her approach further in *Jesus the Man. A New Interpretation from the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Sydney: Doubleday, 1992), and it keeps being extended as she has been applying her so-called peshar approach to New Testament writings. See most recently her *Jesus of the Apocalypse* (Sydney: Doubleday, 1994). Her approach entails the belief that just as the Dead Sea Scroll writers saw their own history predicted in Old Testament texts, so they wrote the New Testament writings to refer to their story (that is a very big assumption). It allows Thiering to create a Tolkien like world of John the Baptist, Jesus and his followers, which includes Jesus' life after the so-called death, subsequent marriage, travels and so on. Apart from the methodological assumption, the other major weakness is the dating of the scrolls which on the latest carbon dating and religio-social research best fits in the period beginning two hundred years earlier. Thiering's work appeals (to the media and the public), because it offers an alternative view of Jesus to the traditional church picture. Despite a complete absence of scholarly agreement, her work goes on.

¹⁰ Mack, B. L. *The Lost Gospel. The Book of Q and Christian Origins* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1993). See also his *A Myth of Innocence. Mark and Christian Origins* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988) and Mack, B. L. *Who wrote the New Testament? The Making of the Christian Myth* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1995). For Kloppenborg's influential analysis see J. S. Kloppenborg, *The Formation of Q. Trajectories in Ancient Wisdom Collections*, Studies in Antiquity and Christianity, (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987). Mack dismisses Mark as a rationalisation by Mark of Christian failure. Q (its earliest sapiential/wisdom saying layer) and Thomas tell us Jesus was a Cynic type sage, challenging the establishment, not interested in eschatology nor in Jewish Law and history. Mack has done useful work on the form of the early traditions, but his historical reconstruction is extreme. It assumes a community of early Q (pre- or even non Christian) read only one source. Mack, Crossan, Borg and those dismissing the relevance of future eschatology face difficulties: how to explain the close link with John the Baptist and the many Christian traditions (including Paul) who clearly espoused a future eschatology. Answer: Jesus and John fell out or Jesus changed his mind after John's arrest - who is writing fiction now? Even harder to explain is the transition to the Church. Answer: diverse Christianities, of which only Q/Thom retains the original emphasis.

eschatological Jesus who emerges as a more comfortable stirrer in an age of stirring and questioning established structures.

Pulpits and pressure groups have witnessed a wide range of Jesus figures. More than once I remember hearing Jesus' encounter with the Samaritan woman in John 4 held up as modelling the counselling interview: Jesus, the counsellor (an absurdity at many levels). More recently there have been serious appeals to Jesus as a liberation theologian, feminist, radical egalitarian, liberal humanist, champion of social justice. There is some justification for each of these, although it is anachronistic to impose on Jesus the sophisticated social analysis which they presuppose. The temptation is then for these pieties to cover over the huge gaps and explain away the silences to preserve a Jesus who could make it with the sophisticated ideologues of the movement. This is a form of docetism which too often fails to let Jesus be a first century human being. It is no better than more traditional efforts to find the chalcedonian Christ on the streets of Capernaum in some literal sense.

It would be easy for any or all of the above reasons to abandon the search. In response to Bultmann Käsemann reasserted the legitimacy of the historical question in 1953, but did so, fully in touch with the extraordinary historical difficulties and potential self deception for faith.¹¹ There is value in examining the connection between the historical Jesus and what subsequently emerged. Some things are unlikely to be invented, like Jesus' baptism by John the Baptist. Käsemann's first tentative use of the criterion of dissimilarity which identified what appeared distinctive of Jesus prised open the door. As a principle applied more generally it had severe limitations; identifying what is distinctive is far from identifying what is characteristic about a person.¹² The important thing was that, at least in circles convinced of the rigours of Bultmann's method, the cautious reconstructions recommenced.

At a broader theological level, people were also acknowledging that faith cannot be satisfied with making historical claims and then surrendering them to uncertainty. It became a matter of how much is claimed. For Bultmann the simple fact of the Christ event, that God acted, sufficed¹³. Paul needed little more. But such a stance crumbled on a number of sides. Paul's understanding of the cross event, especially as a model of vicarious suffering, faces major hurdles. Sometimes one could get the impression that Jesus himself was only a saviour once he died and was raised. It has become increasingly clear that this was not a view shared by gospel writers. At least the year or so of Jesus' ministry was to be seen as a momentous event. John's gospel fitted Bultmann's model best, since it consists of variations on the

¹¹ E. Käsemann, "The Problem of the Historical Jesus," in *Essays on New Testament Themes* (London: SCM, 1964) 23-65.

¹² On this see the useful discussion in Meier, *Marginal Jew*, Vol 1, 168-174.

¹³ R. Bultmann, *Jesus and the Word*

theme that in Christ God encountered us, but this was still bound up with a christology of pre-existence which many (including the other evangelists) did not share.¹⁴

Substance mattered as much as honorific titles. There had to be content to the Christ event beyond the mere fact of its happening. Early forms of this development focused on Christ as the suffering servant.¹⁵ It was not just the dying for our sins, but the particular attitude towards suffering and towards life which preceded it. Studies of the kingdom of God as Jesus' message produced too often a history which stalled at Easter, after which the proclaimer became the proclaimed.¹⁶ Luke's version of what early preachers might have proclaimed indicates that this was only half true. Easter meant the vindication of Jesus' message which therefore remained the central content of the message. In particular many features of the early church, whether reconstructed on the basis of gospel or pauline traditions, revealed a continuity between pre-Easter and post-Easter expectations which made sense against the background of eschatological expectation, in particular: resurrection, the gift of the Spirit, (meals, baptism) and the continuing expectations of God's imminent intervention.¹⁷ The reconstruction of the earliest community beliefs also pressed backward asking about the connection with Jesus and his disciples before Easter. Against the background of such developments it has been inevitable that people have seen research on the historical Jesus as not only demanded by historical inquiry but also desirable in the process of coming to terms with what is an adequate theology.

II SO WHAT IS NEW?

At one level we have to say: very little. The primary sources are still the four gospels. Despite some healthy and vocal dissent (espoused now at a popular level by Selby Spong),¹⁸ there is still a broad consensus that the hypothesis which makes

¹⁴ Bultmann, *Theology*, Vol 2, esp. 59-69. For discussion of Bultmann's demythologising interpretation of John which argued that the evangelist also treated pre-existence as a metaphor, see W. Loader, *The Christology of the Fourth Gospel*, Beiträge zur biblischen Exegese und Theologie 23, (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2nd edn., 1992) 1-7; J. Ashton, *Understanding the Fourth Gospel* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1991) 44-66.

¹⁵ For instance J. Jeremias and E. Zimmerli, Art. "παῖς θεοῦ," TDNT 5 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1967; first published in German 1957) 654-717; V. Taylor, *Jesus and his Sacrifice* (London: Macmillan, 1937); T. W. Manson, *The Servant Messiah* (Cambridge: CUP, 1953).

¹⁶ Cf. the major studies by N. Perrin, *The Kingdom of God in the Teaching of Jesus* (London: SCM, 1963); *Rediscovering the Teaching of Jesus* (London: SCM, 1967); *Jesus and the Language of the Kingdom* (London: SCM, 1976).

¹⁷ See Bultmann, *Theology* Vol 2, 31-42; J. D. G. Dunn, *Unity and Diversity in the New Testament* (London: SCM, 1977)

¹⁸ J. S. Spong, *Liberating the Gospel. reading the Bible with Jewish Eyes* (San Francisco: Harper-San Francisco, 1996) espouses the view that Luke use both Mark and Matthew, a view argued by Goulder, M. D. Luke: a new paradigm *Journal for the study of the New Testament*. Supplement series 20 Sheffield: JSOT, 1989. On this see the convincing refutation by M. S. Goodacre, *Goulder and the Gospels. An Examination of a New Paradigm* JSNTS133 (Sheffield: JSOTPr., 1996). For as recent

best sense of the relations among the gospels is that Matthew and Luke have independently used Mark as a source and also another source Q and, beyond that, had their distinctive sources and redactional interests which account for the way the gospels have come down to us. John is seen either as independent of the others or acquainted at some distance, but with some early elements of historical worth now overlaid with creative reworking in symbolic mode which renders much inaccessible.

The new element in gospel research comes partly from continuing research on Q and from the Gospel of Thomas. While many still see the latter as dependent on the Synoptic Gospels,¹⁹ there is an increasing number of scholars who see the Gospel of Thomas as containing at least some traditions which are earlier.²⁰ This comes at a time when one influential study of Q, that of Kloppenborg, has proposed that the earliest layer of Q consisted of a collection of wisdom sayings, expanded secondarily by material with a stronger eschatological flavour.²¹ Kloppenborg himself does not argue that the earlier layer necessarily existed in isolation from other traditions of the kind later introduced into Q,²² but this has been the conclusion of some scholars, notably Mack. There is a fascinating similarity between the kind of early collection people posit in Thomas and the one believed to be at the basis of the Q tradition. If these are seen as the most authentic traditions and others are discounted as secondarily rationalising myths, a very different kind of Jesus emerges who is only just Jewish and certainly not focused on eschatological hope.

Crossan seeks to grapple with the methodological issues which face the historian in using gospel sources by crediting what are widely held to be later gospels with considerable historical worth. Gospels of Peter, Hebrews, Egyptians, Nazoreans, Ebionites, (Secret) Mark, various fragments, dialogue and apocryphon writings, now stand beside the four canonical writings and Thomas.²³ The matter becomes problematic when all such gospels count more or less equally as sources. Crossan's attempt to make the passion narrative of the Gospel of Peter the source

restatement of the Griesbach hypothesis according to which Mark abridges Matthew and Luke see McNicol, A. J. et al. (ed.) *Beyond the Q impasse: Luke's use of Matthew: a demonstration by the research team of the International Institute for the Renewal of Gospel Studies Valley Forge, Pa.*: Trinity Press International, c1996.

¹⁹ See the discussion in C. M. Tuckett, *Nag Hammadi and the Gospel tradition* Studies in the New Testament and its World (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1986).

²⁰ H. Koester, *Ancient Christian Gospels. Their History and Development* (London: SCM, 1990) 84-124. For discussion of the contrasting views see F. T. Fallon and R. Cameron, "The Gospel of Thomas: A Forschungsbericht and Analysis," *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt* II 25.6, 4195-4251; Meier, *Marginal Jew*, 123-139.

²¹ Kloppenborg, *Formation*, (see above)

²² Kloppenborg, *Formation*, 244-245.

²³ Crossan, J. D. *The Historical Jesus. The Life of a Mediterranean Jewish Peasant* (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1991) 427-434.

of the passion narratives in the canonical gospels has won little support.²⁴ It has yet to be demonstrated that these later gospels should be accorded such historical worth.

Beside developments in gospel research and the discovery of the Gospel of Thomas, the major event affecting historical research in the field has been the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls and, more particularly, their final release for full publication in 1991. The major sectarian documents had already been made public in the 1950's, but it took another 40 years before their full release. Apart from excesses of a few journalists and somewhat extreme speculation about Christian connections on the part of Thiering and Eisenman,²⁵ the chief impact on the Dead Sea Scrolls has been to transform our understanding of Judaism. It was not just what the Scrolls themselves revealed of a diverse Judaism which freely employed dualism more familiar to us from the language of later gnosticism. They not only alerted us to diversities in understanding Torah, but also led to a rediscovery of the rich sources which Jewish literature of the period offered. As a result there has been an explosion of interest in the apocalypses, testament, histories, legends, midrashic compilations, wisdom collections, and liturgical collections of Judaism. At the same time there has been much increased attention given to the extensive works of Josephus and Philo. This has occurred at a time when in rabbinic studies there has emerged a much more critical assessment of the value of traditions alleged to be early. It has become very complicated to assess the degree to which material now preserved in the Mishnah, Tosefta and Targums, reflects traditions and practices in the period before the destruction of the temple in 70 CE. Doubtless many do, how do we measure this?²⁶

New documents and renewed attention both to the content of and the complex methodological questions posed by the extant Jewish sources has had the effect of enhancing a sense of diversity within pre-70 CE Judaism. It is no longer meaningful to speak of Jesus just in relation to Sadducees, Pharisees, Essenes, and, perhaps, Zealots, discussions which often came down to Jesus and the Pharisees.

²⁴ Crossan, J. D. *The Cross that Spoke The Origins of the Passion Narrative* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1988); Crossan, J. D. *Who killed Jesus? Exposing the Roots of Anti-Semitism in the Gospel Story of the Death of Jesus* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1995). See the convincing critique in Brown, R. E. *The Death of the Messiah. From Gethsemane to the Grace*. 2 vols The Anchor Bible Reference Library (New York: Doubleday, 1994) 1317-1349; see also Wright, N. T. *Christian Origins and the Question of God Vol 2. Jesus and the Victory of God*. (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996) 47-52.

²⁵ Most recently R. Eisenman, *James the Brother of Jesus. Rediscovering the True History of early Christianity. Vol 1 The Cup of the Lord* (London: Faber and Faber, 1997). Cf. also his earlier works: R. Eisenman and M. Wise, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Uncovered, Maccabees, Zadokites, Christians and Qumran. a New Hypothesis of Qumran Origins* Leiden: Brill, 1983); James the Just in the Habakkuk Peshet (*Leiden: Brill, 1986*). On Thiering see above.

²⁶ See E. P. Sanders, *Jewish Law from Jesus to the Mishnah* (London: SCM, 1990) and, in response, J. Neusner, *Judaic Law from Jesus to the Mishnah. A Systematic Reply to Professor E. P. Sanders* Studies in the History of Judaism 84 (Atlanta: Scholars, 1993). See also Sanders, E. P. *Judaism: Practice and Belief, 63 BCE - 66 CE* (London: SCM, 1992) and B. D. Chilton and J. Neusner, *Judaism in the New Testament. Practice and Beliefs* (London: Routledge, 1995).

Even within Pharisaism there appears to have been considerable diversity. One of the effects of the more differentiated understanding of Judaism and the pervasive nature of Jewishness has been that it has become much more natural to seek to understand Jesus as a Jew and to see Jesus as fitting within the diverse spectrum that was Judaism.

In a socio-religious perspective it is hard to imagine a Jesus who would not have conformed to the broad expectations of Jewish life which included tithing, observance of domestic purity requirements, and the like, without which he would have set himself up for ostracism and offered his opponents an easy target. Nor are scholars as willing as they once were to speak of Jesus acting against Torah.²⁷ Scholars like Sanders make the point convincingly that much of Jesus' teaching makes the Law stricter and that he was not alone in doing so and that other comments should be seen as well within the range of interpretation of the day.²⁸ Our Jewish sources also offer examples of the kind of emphasis on attitude in relation to sexual behaviour and anger which characterised Jesus' teaching.²⁹

The socio-political dimension has also received much attention through the work of scholars like Hengel, Freyne and Horsley.³⁰ The eschatological focus of much of the Jesus tradition makes good sense in the light of the diverse eschatological expectations of the day, which also sometimes crystallised around individual figures, would-be messiahs or prophets of hope. Some like Borg and Wright have sought to collapse all such eschatological material into religio-political comment on impending dangers facing Israel and soon to become reality in the disaster of 66-70 CE.³¹ The first half of Crossan's major work on the Historical Jesus provides an excellent survey of the socio-political context. In addition he draws attention to the use of generic models from social anthropology, such as the likely

²⁷ cf. J. Jeremias, *New Testament Theology* (London: SSCM, 1971) 205-208.

²⁸ Sanders, *Jewish Law*, esp. 1-96; Sanders, E. P. *Jesus and Judaism* (London: SCM Press, 1985)

²⁹ See for instance Test Reubenb 3-6; Test Issachar 5-7; Test Dan 2-4; Test Gad 3-7.

³⁰ Hengel, M. *Judaism and Hellenism*. 2 vols (London: SCM; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1974); Hengel, M. *The Charismatic Leader and his Followers* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark; New York: Crossroad, 1981); Hengel, M. *The 'Hellenization' of Judaea in the First Century after Christ* (London: SCM; Philadelphia: Trinity, 1990); Freyne, S. *Galilee, Jesus, and the Gospels: Literary Approaches and Historical Investigations* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988); Horsley, R. A. *Jesus and the Spiral of Violence: Popular Jewish Resistance in Roman Palestine* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1987), a very useful discussion of the political situation in Galilee, though tending to impose a spiral model of revolution which fits Jesus in at a certain stage. The problem is, as Freyne and others have shown, that Galilee was relatively quiet under Antipas. His most recent work on Galilee, Horsley, R. A. *Galilee: history, politics, people* (Valley Forge: Trinity Press, 1995), argues a continuing Israelite tradition independent of Judea and the Samaritans; however archaeological evidence does not support the thesis.

³¹ Borg, M. J. *Conflict, Holiness and Politics in the Teachings of Jesus* (New York/Toronto: Edwin Mellen Press, 1984); Borg, M. J. *Jesus in Contemporary Scholarship* (Valley Forge, Penn.: Trinity Press International, 1994); Borg, M. J. *Jesus: A New Vision* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1987); Borg, M. J. *Meeting Jesus Again for the First Time* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1994); Wright, *Jesus*.

structure and dynamics of peasant economies (though ‘peasant’ seems hardly to fit Jesus and his group, who appear to be a step higher on the scale) and the Mediterranean honour-shame culture. Such models will always require reality testing against the data available.

Archaeology has also made its contribution, not least in confirming the theses of Hengel and others, based on literary sources, that Hellenisation was widespread in Palestine from the third century BCE onwards and certainly made its mark in the large cities of lower Galilee and the neighbouring Decapolis.³² The rejection of Hellenistic syncretism in the early second century CE associated with the tensions which led to the Maccabean crisis by no means stemmed the tide. The rich and the rulers, including the high priestly rulers, adopted the fashions, even though selectively. Galilee, on a major trade route, would have had some exposure to the ways of the Greeks. Some have drawn parallels between Jesus as popular sage and the popular sages of the Hellenistic Roman world, commonly identified as Cynics, though usually reflecting a mixture of Stoic and Cynic values.³³ It is hard to move from parallels, which Downing has assembled among teachers who appear over a wide time span and across many parts of the empire, to evidence which might claim to play a role in the context of Jesus.³⁴ Gadara just to the south east of the lake Galilee was, at least in the second century CE, the origin of the Cynic Oenamus (?). Both Jesus’ challenge to authorities and to the power systems of wealth, family and religion, and his use of pithy sayings (and the anecdotes which record them) bear a fascinating resemblance.³⁵ Did Judaism have its own brand of such wisdom? Crossan speaks of Jesus as a peasant Jewish Cynic.³⁶ In Mack he is less Jewish and more a Cynic.

³² See L. Levine (ed.) *Galilee in Late Antiquity* New York/Jerusalem: Jewish Theological Seminary (1992), which contains a number of contributions directly or indirectly dealing with Galilean archaeology.

³³ Mack, B. L. *A Myth of Innocence. Mark and Christian Origins* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988); Mack, B. L. *The Lost Gospel. The Book of Q and Christian Origins* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1993); Downing, F. G. *Cynics and Christian Origins* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1992); Downing, F. G. *Christ and the Cynics: Jesus and Other Radical Preachers in First-Century Tradition* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1988); Downing, F. G. *Jesus and the Threat of Freedom* (London: SCM, 1987); Downing has promoted the view that Jesus should be seen as close to the Cynics, who in the first century were wandering preachers, turning up at market places or meals, espousing critique of accepted norms, including the cult, challenging dependence on wealth and the wealthy and calling for honesty and integrity, often in a way that shocked, and frequently with wit and smart pithy sayings. They called for simplicity and trust in God, as the birds and plants are cared for. Many parallels with Jesus and his manner. Problems: the parallels are drawn from many centuries, though some. See esp. the collection in A. J. Malherbe (ed.) *The Cynic Epistles* (Missoula: Scholars, 197). Were they in Galilee? Yes in Gadara - a school, but we have to guess. Would Jesus have espoused their ways, ignored them, been indirectly influenced? Sepphoris, built on Hellenistic lines, near Nazareth, but settled by Jews.

³⁴ See the critical discussion in Wright, *Jesus*, 66-74; see also H. D. Betz, ‘Jesus and the Cynics: Survey and Analysis of a Hypothesis’ *Journal of Religion* (1994) 453-475.

³⁵ See Mack, *Myth of Innocence*, 172-207.

III WHAT THEN EMERGES FROM CURRENT STUDIES?

In seeking to offer an overview I will inevitably not do justice to the distinctiveness of the contributions of those mentioned and none at all to those whom space prevents me from discussing. In general I believe there are two main trends: the Cynic sage non eschatological model and the Jewish eschatological model. There are also a number who share aspects of both.

The Jesus Seminar established by Robert Funk belongs more within the first trend. It appears to have been persuaded by Mack and others to esteem Q and Thomas highly and Mark less highly. It also (accordingly, perhaps, since there are inevitable circularities) tends to espouse a non-eschatological model of Jesus. Mack's position is extreme in focusing almost entirely on the earliest layer of Q. The Jesus who emerges is a witty Cynic confronting the established values of society, with scarcely a trace of Jewishness. It is an image which will have contemporary appeal in the corridors of academia. That correspondence in itself may arouse our suspicion, but should no more count against the construct than any other such correspondence.

The weakness of Mack's position is that he has to explain away too much of the rest of the Jesus tradition. Crossan is more tentative about the Cynic analogy, but employs the socio-economic model, along with equal votes for all gospel sources, to produce a non eschatological Jesus, arguing for a brokerless kingdom: an immediacy of access to God beyond and outside of the institution and seeking to transform society accordingly. Borg's Jesus has more Jewish traits but strongly emphasizes the model of sage, Spirit person, which allows Borg wide scope in popularising his work and connecting Jesus to popular religious models of our day.³⁷ All are members of the Jesus Seminar. One of the major weaknesses in all three is the attempted elimination of material which preserves Jesus' eschatological focus. As a result we are asked to imagine a Jesus who began with an eschatological John the Baptist and was followed by an eschatological Church, but himself had no interest in such matters. It is scarcely convincing to explain the disparity with theories of a split with John (or that the link with John was secondary) and of a Jesus group all but swamped by others who espoused the different eschatological agenda.

The other major trend has been to emphasise Jesus' Jewishness. The Jewish scholar, Vermes, acclaimed Jesus' Jewishness, proposing that he should be seen as a holy man, *hasid* after the model of Honi the circle maker and Hanina ben Dosa.³⁸ The proposal has had some impact on Borg's construct. The problem has been that Vermes's rabbinic sources are late. More significant has been the work of Sanders

³⁶ Crossan, *Historical Jesus*, 421.

³⁷ On Borg see above.

³⁸ Vermes, G. *Jesus the Jew: A Historian's Reading of the Gospels* (London: Collins, 1971); Vermes, G. *The Religion of Jesus the Jew* (London: SCM, 1993).

who brought to focus the need for a reassessment of Judaism within New Testament scholarship. Looking back it appears now to have been relatively easy to demonstrate that across the diverse writings which are extant there is a fairly constant emphasis on Torah as God's gift and on the priority of God's grace.³⁹ Caricatures of Judaism as a system of self justification by accumulating merit, borne of reading Paul's disputes with fellow Christian Jews as a source for understanding Judaism as a whole and of historical disputes within post Reformation western Christianity, are slowly giving way to more sensitive and differentiating assessment. While Sanders' attempt to portray a 'common Judaism' has not convinced all,⁴⁰ there can be no question but that he has made a strong case for understanding Jesus in his Jewish context. In doing so (with a healthy scepticism about reconstructing sayings and an emphasis more on likely events) Sanders emphasises Jesus' faithfulness to Torah and his espousal of restoration eschatology. Conflict emerges in particular over Jesus' declaration of God's judgement against the temple. To my mind Sanders is unnecessarily sceptical about anecdotes portraying Jesus in dispute with extremists over sabbath law and company at meals.

The importance of Sanders' exposition of restoration theology is that it provides a context for Jesus' preaching about the kingdom. The hope was not some vague utopian dream but a vision of changed reality, especially for Israel. For the poor and for oppressed Israel it is good news. It will bring reversal. The imagery associated with this hope in the Jesus tradition reflects prophetic hope for Israel's restoration, the gathering of the lost and scattered sheep, the eschatological banquet, the renewal or rebuilding of the temple, the establishment of new leadership on the twelve thrones of Israel, and signs of healing and deliverance. This makes sense of the particularity of Jesus' vision and ministry, focused on Israel.

Sanders emphasis on the Jewishness of Jesus' eschatological hopes finds affirmation in Wright's massive volume on the historical Jesus, part of an ambitious undertaking to write a comprehensive account of New Testament Theology.⁴¹ Wright's work, very readable, and replete with strong assertions, sometimes not argued in detail, but mounted as 'surely reasonable',⁴² takes Sanders's notion of restoration eschatology further. He speaks regularly of the hope for the completion of the return from exile. The language feels somewhat imposed on the material, more so than the general language of restoration which Sanders used. It suggests the strength of a motif which is not directly present. Nevertheless my chief difficulty with Wright's construct is that it has been set

³⁹ See the demonstration in E. P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism* (London: SCM, 1977). See also Sanders, E. P. *Judaism: Practice and Belief, 63 BCE - 66 CE* (London: SCM, 1992).

⁴⁰ See Neusner's criticism above.

⁴¹ Wright, *Jesus*

⁴² At a number of points I find Wright, *Jesus*, uncritical. For instance his treatment of the Sermon on the Mount 287-292, the Lukan Nazareth manifesto 179-180, and the Jerusalem chapters of Mark, 489-510.

within the frame espoused by Caird and influential in Borg's work.⁴³ According to this perspective we misread Jewish apocalyptic if we think it is talking about the end of the world. We should understand its colourful imagery as expressing warning and hope about Israel's immediate future. Jesus was offering an alternative to the way of being Israel, which, if pursued, would lead the nation to disaster.⁴⁴

There is doubtless much truth in this, but I find Wright overplays this emphasis. Eschatological imagery is not to be collapsed into contemporary politico-religious commentary. Ideas of a judgement day, of resurrection, of being at table with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the restored Israel, suggest something of grander scale established by divine initiative. Wright's analysis, though much less sceptical than that of Jesus Seminar scholars, nevertheless is vulnerable to similar criticism. How then could there be such discontinuity between the alleged understanding of eschatology shared by Jesus (and Wright would argue, John the Baptist) and that of the early church? The problem is that he has posed the alternatives too sharply. We may agree: not a prediction of the end of the world; but a good deal more than return and renewal. Transformation and transfiguration, judgement and resurrection, do suggest something in between.

The most careful, painstaking, current project is that of J. P. Meier, who introduces his project as based on a fantasy of what a Catholic, a Protestant, Jew, and an agnostic scholar, using the resources of the Harvard library, might agree to say about the historical Jesus.⁴⁵ Thus far two volumes have appeared, already 1500 pages! While conscious of the difference between faith in Jesus and the task of historical reconstruction, though not as sharply as Luke Johnson,⁴⁶ Meier proceeds with methodological rigour, but always, it seems to me, with a keen eye for how faith might respond to his constructions.⁴⁷ What emerges is more the reality of a careful Catholic biblical scholar attentive to the Church's agenda, yet seeking not to be too bound by it, after the model of Raymond Brown. It is still too early to comment on his work as a whole, since his treatment of Jesus and the Law, for instance, is still outstanding. Thus far it represents a cautious, some might say more conservative, approach to the historical data, with fine discussions of Jesus'

⁴³ G. B. Caird, *Jesus and the Jewish Nation* (London: Athlone, 1965); G. B. Caird and L. D. Hurst, *New Testament Theology* (Oxford: OUP, 1994).

⁴⁴ So Wright, *Jesus*, 320-368. Wright makes much use of the motif of return from exile. I found this a disturbing feature of the book, because it occurs constantly and frequently feels forced on the material of the gospels, which do include related motifs but these are not all encompassed by that image or necessarily connected with it as motif (eg. the dominant motif, kingdom), however close its origins may be to the kind of hope expressed in Isa 52:7

⁴⁵ Meier, *A Marginal Jew*, 1.

⁴⁶ see n. 2 above

⁴⁷ This is especially so in his treatment of Jesus' birth in the first volume and in treatment of miracles in the second.

origins, Jesus and John the Baptist, the kingdom of God, and miracles. It is less racy than Wright's work and more rigorous in methodology.

IV THE HISTORICAL JESUS PUZZLE

Historical Jesus research is like working over a jigsaw puzzle. We are far from just having emptied the box onto the table and exposed 1000 or 2000 fragments. From the musings of many generations of scholars we can identify clusters, larger pieces of the puzzle. For many of us the constellation of unfinished work as it stands is already enough to suggest meaningful contours. History needs a good dose of imagination for anything to emerge and deceives itself if it believes it can produce completed puzzles. History remains a matter of degrees of probability. It seems to me that there are some large identifiable clusters, even if, like reconstructions of the sky and the sea, we may eventually find the clusters are not perfectly put together in themselves.

One cluster is Jesus' eschatological outlook, commonly linked with what must have been his favoured term: 'the kingdom of God', which we might paraphrase as the expectation and hope that there will come a time when God will rule, restoring Israel to wholeness, liberating her from her oppressors, and bringing righteousness and peace to the land. It seems to me that there is little doubt that his was a version of Israel's hope and that it stood beside other versions, many of which would have been in conflict with his own. He appears to have spoken of this hope primarily in relation to what it would mean for ordinary people, but not just as individuals but as part of the community of Israel. His vision had to entail changes in Israel's leadership and liberation from oppressive powers, but does not appear to have entailed a political or military strategy. It is clear that he spoke of this hope with the kind of immediacy with which John the Baptist had warned of God's impending judgement and that he saw his own ministry as already being an indication that the hope was beginning to be realised.

The vision of inclusiveness expressed itself already in his radical inclusiveness in reality. The vision of liberation already expressed itself in reality in individual acts of healing and exorcism, which, in turn, reinforced the reality of what was to come in fullness. I think we see in Jesus' kingdom sayings both the joy of anticipation of what is to come and the celebration that it had begun to advance into the present. But major components of the vision were still outstanding. Still to come was the great restoration, establishment of justice and peace, the resurrection and the judgement. Still his followers (and the poor and hungry who had received promises) are to pray, 'Your kingdom come!' I am not convinced that Jesus' vision of the kingdom should be collapsed into individual or community well being in the present. Nevertheless the strength of its hope was grounded in more than faith; it was grounded in what people saw happening in the present which went beyond hopeful anticipation. This large piece, as I see it, must retain its awkward shape: Jesus' hope did not become reality as he apparently supposed, but that is a problem for theology.

In this context I have already mentioned a second cluster of pieces. Jesus appears to have practised exorcism and, despite the accretion of many doubtful features, the tradition gives weight to the conclusion that he was also a healer. Such activities were seen (by him and those around him) as evidence that Israel's prophetic hopes were reaching fulfilment. It seems very likely that they were seen as manifestations of God's Spirit, as promised for the time of salvation. This cluster should not be shunted aside in the interests of appeasing the modern world.

Another cluster already touched upon is the radical inclusiveness which appears characteristic of Jesus. This may need some qualification because his stance towards the Syrophenician woman was initially far from inclusive.⁴⁸ Nevertheless, at least within Israel and perhaps with initial reluctance towards Gentiles, Jesus appears to have shown an inclusiveness which in turn led to controversy. This behaviour must be directly related to the value given to compassion in his sayings and the theology of compassion which informs his statements about God, including the nature of God's coming reign. It was in that context that the radical inclusiveness is to be understood: doing now what is envisaged as coming about then. The theology establishes its warrant by appeal to every day experience in family life rather than to Israel's epic traditions. This all coheres well with a stance which gave value to the ordinary in contrast to the institutionalised forms of religious experience and tradition ('not as the scribes'). The inclusiveness ranges across acceptance of the disadvantaged like the poor, women, the sick and disabled, children to keeping company with sinners (toll collectors and prostitutes), although the precise nature of the statement Jesus was making by being in such company is still, to my mind, somewhat uncertain.

Jesus' Jewishness, including the assumption that he was Torah observant, must be a central cluster in the puzzle. Images of Jesus as somehow standing above or outside his own religious tradition strain credibility. He was not a Christian among Jews but a Jew. His interpretations of Torah, whether in witty defence or in occasional exposition of its values and sometimes its specific commandments, fall within the range of Judaism known to exist in the period. This makes it all the more interesting to identify his particular slant or slants in interpretation and to understand the areas of conflict. The Markan tradition preserves anecdotes which portray a clever Jesus engaging in refutation by wit and aphorism rather than by argument, and doing so seemingly over against rather extreme legalist positions. There seems to be a common feature across all main streams of the tradition of Jesus rejecting sham and espousing compassion as the primary value and criterion for applying scriptural law. But such prioritising still included observance of purity laws, tithing and such like, even at times detailed observance. It makes sense to me that beside the compassion oriented stance of Jesus we sometimes

⁴⁸ See W. Loader, "Challenged at the Boundaries: A Conservative Jesus in Mark's Tradition" *JSNT* 63 (1996) 45-61.

glimpse a conservatism in some areas such as sexuality and dealings with Gentiles which may reflect the conservative Jewish upbringing which the family names suggest.⁴⁹

Scholars who see parallels with popular Cynicism are identifying in particular those sayings and behaviours which portray Jesus as tilting at hypocrisy, scourging opponents with wit and aphorism, confronting the established values with challenges to the power of wealth and family, including in his lifestyle, and arguing from common every day experiences about faith and providence. Such behaviours also bring Jesus into close connection with Israel's wisdom tradition. He may even have used wisdom mythology to explain his ministry and John's.⁵⁰ It remains striking, however, that there is so much material which appears to have close parallels in the popular philosophy of the time. The problem remains understanding the connections, if any. Were there such secular philosophers in Galilee? What would a conservative Jesus be doing imitating them? Was he, like second century Christian writers, employing their wiles to attack the evils of his day? Is the connection rather more secondary? Was there a Jewish tradition which, like Israel's wisdom tradition, drew on the wisdom resources of surrounding cultures? I think these pieces form a coherent structure. I can see how they connect to Jesus' radical message of the kingdom and to his theology, but for the moment the connections beyond that remain incomplete. But these pieces are not the unattached grouping Mack would have us believe.

The most worn pieces of the puzzle reflect Christian preoccupations with titles of authority. Of messiah there are few and these are so ambiguous that the most we might dare to say is that if Jesus saw himself in this light, he left history to define its connotation, so that during his ministry it could have only a chameleon-like quality, a cause for chiding those who espoused it. Yet the strength of its presence in the early accounts of Jesus' trial and death may indicate that it belonged in some sense to Jesus' self understanding and surfaced in the final conflict. Otherwise it seems strange that what seems incidental soon became the symbolic focus of Jewish Christian faith and usurped the kingdom of God as the dominant motif of

⁴⁹ See my also Loader, W. R. G. *Jesus' Attitude towards the Law. A Study of the Gospels*. WUNT 2.97 (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1997) and also forthcoming: Loader, W. R. G. *Jesus and the Fundamentalism of his Day. Jesus, the Bible and the Church* (Melbourne: Joint Board of Christian Education, due late 1997).

⁵⁰ Schüssler-Fiorenza, E. *Jesus. Miriam's Child, Sophia's Prophet: Critical Issues in Feminist Christology* (London: SCM, 1994) focuses on the few sayings in Q which have Jesus speak of Sophia (Wisdom) or in wisdom language, to argue a theology of Jesus with God as Sophia, and of an egalitarian inclusiveness (women, especially) related to a compassionate parent image of God, but now overlaid by men's reporting, argued earlier in her *In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christen Origins* (New York: Crossroad, 1984). A strand like this is there and in different ways it reappears in John (Logos and Wisdom Torah images, bread, light, life) and Paul (firstborn, mediator of creation, image of God). The issue of overlay is hard to assess - feasible, but what are the controls? There may be a danger of ignoring less acceptable traditions - what if Jesus does not reflect the ideal? Borg favours the sage approach in his *Meeting Jesus as does Witherington, B. The Jesus Quest: The Third Search for the Jew of Nazareth* (Downers Grove: IVP, 1995).

their preaching.⁵¹ One dark piece of the puzzle seems to fit in two different directions: Son of Man. It sits quite well with the imagery of future hope as one of a few strands of speculation expounding the great vision of Daniel 7.⁵² Others see in it a self effacing self designation of some anonymity.⁵³ Certainly the pieces do not constitute an image of a pre-existent revealer such as appears in John's model of the heavenly envoy and formed the basis for the church's great christological constructions of later centuries. The presence of God is more to be found in the events and encounters than in self claims, but the former certainly gave rise in time to seeing the whole as a divine encounter.

The sombre colours which make up the image of Jesus' last days reflect responses to Jesus' provocative behaviour in the temple. These two pieces clearly fit together in some way. The larger picture indicates in my view that Jesus understood himself (and God) to be on a collision course with the temple authorities and he must have suspected it would cost him his life. We cannot imagine his imaginings so we do not know whether he expected some kind of divine intervention to be occasioned by his pilgrimage. Vindication would have to have been part of it and resurrection at the end time would have been a standard expectation, even if vindication had not been an issue. It is probably irrecoverable whether at the last supper he really foresaw his death as having vicarious significance, as some early strands of Christian tradition were to believe and make the focal point of their message, indeed of the whole story. It was clearly not the whole point of the story during Jesus' ministry; at least none of the early traditions suggest this was so. The later image of a Jesus coming to die for our sins has very few pieces on the table of the historical puzzle, however aptly it may interpret his death in retrospect. Yet the last days complete an image not of deluded visionary or failed reformer, but of one who confronted systems of power to the point of ultimate vulnerability. The result is an enigma which some find revelatory and others find pathetic or tragic.

It is a matter of debate whether the colourful resurrection and appearance pieces belong in the puzzle or constitute their own secondary puzzle. Their story is about the disciples' perceptions, perhaps more than about an empty tomb which may be more of a deduction than a reality. But there is little doubt that in the minds of the disciples Jesus had been vindicated as he would have in some sense hoped and that this event provided not only evidence of his exaltation to God's presence but also of the truth of his claim that the kingdom of God was at hand. Disciples with a

⁵¹ See the discussion in N. A. Dahl, *The Crucified Messiah and Other Essays* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1974); and "Messianic Ideas and the Crucifixion of Jesus," in J. H. Charlesworth (ed.) *The Messiah. Developments in Earliest Judaism and Christianity* Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992) 382-403.

⁵² H. E. Tödt, *The Son of Man in the Synoptic tradition* (London: SCM, 1965); F. Hahn, *The Titles of Jesus in Christology* (London: Lutterworth, 1969); A. Y. Collins, "The Origin of the Designation of Jesus as 'Son of Man'," *HTR* 80 (1987) 391-407.

⁵³ Vermes, *Jesus the Jew*; B. Lindars, *Jesus Son of Man* (London: SPCK, 1983); D. R. A. Hare, *The Son of Man tradition* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990).

different anthropology and eschatology might have seen it differently, but theirs implied that to live on had to mean he lived in an embodied state even though at a higher order of reality and that to be raised in this way was a promise preserved for the climax of history. They were indeed living in the last days.

The pieces lie on the table. I have tried to depict them as I see them in their own setting and with their own integrity. This has included sensing where they are strange to us and where they at present appear unconnected and unable to be connected. It is my conviction that any historical reconstruction must take these pieces or clusters of pieces seriously. The temptation will always be to leave the awkward ones to one side or to bring together only those which give us a more commendable image. Unfinished puzzles drive some people to distraction. Forcing the pieces never really works because it creates other gaps. We can only visit and revisit the table, try new possibilities, sense the contours which emerge, and sometimes, maybe, take much of what we thought fitted together well apart and start all over again. For some, puzzles are a distraction, a wonderful time waster and historical Jesus research little different. For others, each puzzle is a challenge. But this is one which will not be conquered. I think there is enough of a pattern there on the table for me to recognise where my faith in the Jesus story connects to some reality. But I am not there desperately hoping for faith's validation. The story fascinates me. It belongs to a history which has given shape to who we are. In it we find again the fragility of knowing and not knowing and beyond it the lonely responsibility of decision and faith which creates community.

Interpreting Academic Practice Christianly

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INTRODUCTION

In this presentation¹ I have been asked to reflect on some of the issues and challenges facing Christians involved in contemporary academic life. I'm not going to look at my own particular experience as a university teacher and researcher over the past fifteen years. Rather, I want to reflect on the changing nature of 'academic practice' in the contemporary Australian secular academy and how we might interpret that practice "Christianly". What I mean by "interpreting academic practice Christianly" will, I hope, become apparent in the following discussion. At the outset, though, I want to say that I don't think this is just a matter of applying "Christian principles" to the various tasks and activities of academic life. Instead, our greatest challenge is to learn how to see - to 'imagine' - what we do as academics in terms of the Christian gospel and to express in the various dimensions of academic life a distinctive ethos of Christian truthfulness.

We are all of course aware that the institutions of Australian higher education have been going through a period of upheaval since the Dawkins reforms initiated in 1987. These reforms have brought: the end of the old binary system, ongoing cutbacks to higher education funding, and the continuing pressure to incorporate universities into the broader economic system.² These changes have put considerable pressure on the conditions of academic life. They are changes that ought to have stimulated greater soul-searching by academics, and a more spirited defence of the core meanings and values of an academic vocation.³ Sadly, academics have by and large not been particularly reflective and have adapted to, rather than protested against, the transformations taking place around us.

In this context of academic upheaval, I want first to talk about the traditional ideal or ethos of academic practice that we Christian academics have been happy to work within. I shall then argue that the present dramatic changes in academic culture, particularly the various pressures upon this traditional ideal, creates an opportunity – even necessity – for Christians to recover a more distinctively Christian academic vision and practice of 'gospel truth'.

¹ This paper was presented at the Tertiary Campus Ministry Association (TCMA) conference held at the University of Western Australia in Perth in September 1997.

² See Simon Marginson, *Education and Public Policy in Australia*, Melbourne, Cambridge University Press 1993.

1. ACADEMIC PRACTICE: WHAT DO ACADEMICS ACTUALLY DO?

The kinds of things for which you can get promoted should be a reasonable guide to what is central to ‘academic practice’. In my university (Murdoch University), this means research, teaching, university administration, and community service. Of course these are very ‘bald’ descriptors for the rich diversity of things that academics do. With the still considerable degree of professional autonomy that we enjoy, styles of academic work vary significantly in terms of how we interact with students, forms of teaching, what we research and for what purpose, how we relate to our colleagues, our involvement in professional bodies, participation in conferences and contributions to community life and public debate. Indeed, a distinctive feature of ‘academic practice’ is the need for judgement and deliberative skill which enable us to interpret what it means to be an academic’.

2. THE ‘ETHOS’ OF ACADEMIC PRACTICE: THE IDEALS OF A LIBERAL UNIVERSITY

As a ‘practice’ (in the sense described by Alasdair MacIntyre⁴) academic work involves the development of the particular virtues which are integral to being a teacher, researcher, administrator and servant of the wider community. Formal codes of practice can only capture some aspects of the moral character of academic life. This is better expressed in terms of an ‘ethos of practice’: a sense of the attitudes, values and vision appropriate to an academic way of life which is acquired through participation in its central activities.

An academic ethos shapes the way we go about our work. It sustains a sense of the substantive purposes of academic work, of the importance of scholarship, knowledge and learning (although these days we are much less likely to express this in terms of the love of truth, let alone the truthfulness of love⁵). It also sustains those procedural and methodological values which support the pursuit of significant truth: academic independence, careful, yet creative and original scholarship, intellectual openness and integrity, and ongoing critical conversation with significant peers. It provides for us a tacit sense of the appropriate mix of competition and cooperation between colleagues. It also guides us in our relationships with students, enabling us to appreciate the processes of intellectual, social and moral formation taking place at a crucial stage of people’s lives, and sustains a sense of care and responsibility for their longer term careers.

An academic ethos, like that of any other social practice is something which is acquired tacitly through initiation into the practices of the community. Whilst it can be supported by the various institutionalised reward – and punishment –

³ Ian Reid, *Higher Education or Education for Hire? Language and Values in Australian Universities*, Rockhampton, Central Queensland University Press, 1996.

⁴ See Alisdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*, London, Duckworth 1985.

⁵ See R. Gaita, ‘Teaching as a Vocation’ *Quadrant*, April 1990, 33-41; ‘Goodness and Truth’ *Quadrant*, June 1991, 40-47.

systems of a university, the diffusion and cultivation of such an ethos depends to a great extent on the forms of collegial interaction, reciprocity and informal ‘apprenticeships’ through which graduate students develop the values, habits and outlook of university life.

3. CHRISTIAN INTERPRETATIONS OF ACADEMIC PRACTICE

There are, I believe, a considerable number of Christian academics employed in the higher education sector in Australia. How we relate our Christian vision and experience to our ‘academic practice’ varies considerably. Most of us, I believe, accept without much difficulty the dominant liberal and secular ethos of the modern university as the framework within which we work. Within the constraints and freedoms provided by this framework, we draw on the resources of our faith to be conscientious, caring, hardworking and responsible academics. For some, Christian faith significantly influences the areas of research we pursue and the research methodologies we employ. Some also participate in the more explicitly ‘Christian’ activities on campus, including formal worship activities, or the fellowship and outreach of student Christian organisations.

Even though Australian public universities were established as avowedly ‘secular’ institutions, and until very recently in many instances excluded the study of theology as a recognised university endeavour, most Christian academics have had little problem actively participating in the knowledge enterprise of the secular academy.⁶ It has been possible to do this because of the considerable degree to which Christianity and secularity still share many values in common: values such as truthfulness, honesty, contribution to the common good, respect for persons and enthusiasm for learning. Many Christians probably feel that, despite its avowedly secularity, the modern university still draws upon a rich legacy of Christian tradition.⁷ There is a feeling that J. H. Newman’s ‘idea of the university’⁸ still informs the ethos of many Australian academics,⁹ Christian or otherwise. In Tony Coady’s words,

[Newman’s] picture of universities is basically that of communities of learning devoted to the pursuit of significant truth, as an end in itself,

⁶ See John Gascoigne, ‘The Cultural Origins of Australian Universities’ *Journal of Australian Studies* 50/51, 1996.

⁷ See Bruce Kaye, ‘Submission to the Review of Higher Education Financing and Policy’ (unpublished), 1997; and Bruce Kaye, ‘Universities and Society’ in *The Silent University? Social Responsibility and Educational Values*, Proceedings from a Symposium on the values underlying the transformation of the contemporary university (ed) Jennifer Nevile, Institute for Values Research, University of New South Wales, 1994.

⁸ J H Newman, *The Idea of a University*, Holt Reinhart and Wilson, 1960.

⁹ See Tony Coady, ‘The Very Idea of a University’ *Australian Quarterly*, 68, 4 (1996) 49-62; Coady and Miller, ‘Australian Higher Education and the Relevance of Newman’ *The Australian Universities’ Review*, 37, 1, (1994); and further comment by Coady and Miller, ‘Knowing, learning and the ideal of knowledge in higher education’ *The Australian Universities’ Review*, 38, 1, (1995).

and, as such, fulfilling a central cultural and ethical role for society at large ... Newman's concept of what he calls 'the gentleman, or as we might say less misleadingly and offensively in a contemporary context, 'the educated person' invoked an ideal of intellectual cultivation and of knowledge (what he called 'the philosophical mind') ... [this] should not be construed as some outlook characteristically available only to a professional 'academic' philosopher ... Rather, it is an attitude towards the activities of intellect which presents as an ideal to be pursued a certain broad ongoing development of the intellectual powers that goes beyond mere knowledge of items of fact, mere acquisition of information, or bare proficiency at such skills as the professions, for instance may require ... Newman's emphasis is upon depth and integrated perspective, and such accompanying intellectual virtues as honesty, intellectual courtesy, indifference to mere fashion in ideas, and a dedication to the regulative ideal of truth ...¹⁰

4. THE CHANGING UNIVERSITY AND IMPLICATIONS FOR CHRISTIAN ACADEMICS

The main point I wish to make in this paper is that I believe that this habit of accommodation to, and support for, the liberal ideal of university education is becoming less and less viable for Christian academics and that we therefore need to articulate a much more distinctively Christian vision – and practice – of 'significant truth.'

There are two basic reasons for making such a claim. The first is that the effective relegation of Christian faith to an essentially private and personal sphere which accommodation to a secular vision of truth entails is ultimately unsustainable and unfaithful to the Christian gospel.¹¹ Despite the supposed 'common values,' there is a much deeper and fundamental conflict between Christian faith and modern secular reason.¹² Whilst enlightenment humanism retains many of the 'values' of Christian faith, it effectively displaces its specifically Christian narrative basis, its eschatological vision of history and its trinitarian metaphysic.

The second reason is that the sustaining secular ethos of the modern university is being eroded from within, in part by the rapid commercialization of Australian higher education resulting from the reforms initiated in the 1980's and in part by postmodern criticisms of the very idea of 'truth.' As Raymond Gaita has commented:

¹⁰ T. Coady, 'The Very Idea of a University' *Australian Quarterly*, 68, 4 (1996) 49-62.

¹¹ L. Newbigin, *Foolishness to the Greeks: The Gospel and Western Culture*, Grand Rapids, MI, Wm B. Eerdmans, 1986.

¹² See John Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory*, Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1990

Truth is now a suspect concept in many academic quarters. Debunking the rhetoric that has sometimes surrounded it has some point and justice. But I think that we will have no serious conception of the life of the mind unless we link it to our need of truth. Without that linkage, the ideal of liberal education degenerates to, at best, an Arnaudian celebration of cultural adornment. The most serious threat to truth in the universities comes not from the various theoretical questionings of its nature and value. It comes from the lies and half truths that academics tell when they rationalise what they have done to accommodate political and economic pressures. They deny the extent of the untruthfulness, but everybody knows that it now pervades university life and that knowledge generates a debilitating cynicism about the higher ideals of the university.¹³

In lamenting the corrosive effects of commercialisation and the new ‘managerialism’, Tony Coady observes that adherence to the Newman ideal has been powerless to resist what he calls ‘the triumph of the visigoths.’

[The Newman ideal] can be widely shared as rhetoric, given extensive lip service, but plays no significant part in people’s engagement with the actual institutions they work in. Broad acceptance of the language and the slogans of the ideal can leave those who genuinely believe in it and base their lives on it unprepared for the undermining onslaughts of those who are mere lipservers . . .¹⁴

In describing the triumph of the managerialist reformers, Coady goes on to say:

The visigoths are basically contemptuous of the ideal and its rhetoric ... They see universities, and other crucial social institutions, such as hospitals, as no more than corporate operations aimed at generating products. These corporations have CEOs Boards, workers and managers of different sorts, products, markets and customers.¹⁵

As mentioned earlier, the present cultural revolution in Australian universities was initiated by the Dawkins green and white papers in 1987 and 1988.¹⁶ Notwithstanding the strong utilitarianism tradition that has characterised Australian higher education from its beginnings,¹⁷ the Dawkins reforms represented a

¹³ Raymond Gaita, ‘Universities’ *Quadrant*, March 1997, 30-13.

¹⁴ Coady, ‘The Very Idea of a University’ *Australian op. cit.* 53.

¹⁵ Coady, ‘The Very Idea of a University’ *Australian op. cit.* 53.

¹⁶ *Higher Education: a policy discussion paper*, circulated by the Hon J.S. Dawkins MP, Minister for Employment, Education and Training, December 1987; *Higher Education: a policy discussion paper*, circulated by the Hon J.S. Dawkins MP, Minister for Employment, Education and Training, July 1988.

¹⁷ Hugh Collins, ‘Political Ideology in Australia: The Distinctiveness of a Benthamite Society’ in ‘Terra Incognita’ *Daedalus*, Winter 1995, 147-169.

significant, more intensive, redirection of higher education policy towards predominantly economic goals. Since the 1980s, higher education has been progressively framed within the discourse and practices of 'economic rationalism',¹⁸ with the applications of the principles, procedures and structures of private sector corporate managerialism.

These reforms have involved a significant transformation in the nature of academic practices. In an essay analysing the changing conceptions of 'academic work', McCollow and Lingard¹⁹ dismiss the Newman ideal as an increasingly anachronistic discourse. The more relevant contemporary discourses are those of the academic as 'state professional' and the academic as 'corporate professional'. In their view it has been the latter, the idea of the 'corporate professional' which has captured 'the imagination of at least some senior academics', although, in reality, the reforms make the work of most academics more like that of other workers.

These changes are not, of course, unique to Australia. In a review of the global emergence of 'academic capitalism', Rhoades and Slaughter comment:

The political-economic context of higher education – whether global, regional, national, or local – is changing. So too, the organizational sites, terms of academic employment, and the nature of the professional workforce in higher education are being restratified, restructured, and reconfigured. In the process, the content of work in the academy – of curriculum development, research and service – is shifting and being redefined. We characterize these trends as the emergence and growth of academic capitalism, of increasingly managed professionals, and of supply-side education focused on economic competitiveness.²⁰

Against this background of changing higher educational policy and the radical commercialisation of academic practice, the effect of post-modern criticism of enlightenment ideas of truth has been to undermine the capacity of academics in the humanities and social sciences to resist these reforms. Post-modern criticism deconstructs truth as inherently coercive. Foucault's notion that 'regimes of truth' only express structures of power or 'systems of governmentalisation' and Lyotard's dismissal of the 'grand narratives' of enlightenment reason means that there are no longer any larger languages of protest, such as Marxism, which can

¹⁸ Peter Karmel, 'Education and the Economic Paradigm' *Canberra Bulletin of Public Administration* 78 (August 1995), 43-52.

¹⁹ J McCollow and B. Lingard, 'Changing Discourses and Practices of Academic Work' *Australian Universities Review* 2/1996, 11-18.

²⁰ Gary Rhoades and Sheila Slaughter, 'Academic Capitalism, Managed Professionalism and Supply-Side Higher Education' *Social Text* 15, 2 (Summer 1997).

help to mobilise and organise collective academic response.²¹ Without any language of common purpose, we academics act primarily to ensure our own survival. We learn to adapt to the language of increased quality, excellence, industry cooperation and so on, knowing full well that they mask the continual loss of that ‘critical distance’ essential to the life of the mind. Yet we go along with the pretence, as long as we can continue to pursue our research projects, improve our c.v.’s and enhance our promotability.

Several years ago, the leading British cultural studies scholar, Stuart Hall, reflected on the way in which the Thatcherite reforms of higher education undermined the ethos of the academy:

One of the key lessons I learnt from Thatcherism was that first of all you struggle about conduct, and hearts and minds follow later. I learnt that through the institution in which I work, the Open University. It is filled with good social democrats. Everybody there believes in the redistribution of educational opportunities and seeks to remedy the exclusiveness of British education. And yet, in the past ten years, these good social democratic souls, without changing for a minute what is in their hearts and minds, have learnt to speak a brand of metallic entrepreneurialism, a new managerialism of a horrendously closed nature. They believe what they always believed, but what they do, how they write their mission statements, how they do their appraisal forms, how they talk about their students, how they calculate their costs – that’s what they are really interested in now. The result is that the institution has been transformed.²²

5. RECOVERING THE GOSPEL AS PUBLIC TRUTH

Whilst many of us who are Christian academics may be dismayed at the direction of higher education policy and the corrosive impact of the current reforms on the older ethos of academic practice, I suggest that we ought to regard these changes as an important ‘window of opportunity’ to recover our own distinctive vision of the gospel as public truth.

My hunch is that the present crisis of enlightenment truth,²³ of which the changes in academic culture are one expression, will in the not too distant future lead to a reappraisal of the present hegemony of the secular and a renewal of interest in

²¹ See Stanley Grenz, *A Primer of Postmodernism*, Grand Rapids, MI, Wm B. Eerdmans, 1996; J.R. Middleton and B.J. Walsh, *Truth is Stranger Than It Used To Be: Biblical Faith in a Postmodern Age*, London SPCK, 1995.

²² Stuart Hall, ‘Thatcherism Today’ *New Statesman and Society*, 26 November 1993, 15.

²³ See John Grey, *Enlightenment’s Wake: Politics and Culture at the Close of the Modern Age*, London, Routledge, 1995.

religious visions of life.²⁴ If my hunch is right, and there are plenty of signs pointing in that direction, the renewal of public religion will not necessarily mean a return to Christianity. The form of a future public religion vision is up for grabs. Whatever shifts in culture might be happening, I believe that it is an opportune time for us as Christian academics to reflect on our present accommodation to the secular visions which still dominate public life, to recognise that a ‘secular’ public culture is not a neutral space in which people of diverse faiths may happily co-exist. We need to see that ‘secular reason’ represents a substantive vision of reality which necessarily marginalises Christian faith as a matter of private preference with diminishing relevance to public life. As David Yeago has recently commented:

Modern secularism is the belief that religious descriptions of reality are always a sort of varnish which can be scraped away to reveal a more basic ‘secular’ account which was always there underneath. The sleight of hand lies in the assumption that the ‘secular’ vision of reality is not simply an alternative to religious accounts, but their underlying presupposition. According to modern secularism, all of us agree (or should agree) on a fundamental secular description of the real, whatever religious elaborations we may lay over it; secular rationality, therefore, is natural, the understanding of reality we all have in common, transcending our divisive particularities, including religious ones.²⁵

Lesslie Newbigin, an influential Christian thinker who has been challenging the church to think more critically about the taken-for-granted enlightenment framework of public culture, speaks of the need to recover the ‘gospel as public truth’. Newbigin makes the point that the Christian gospel entails a radically different ‘fiduciary framework’ to that of secular reason. However, Newbigin does not have in mind the simple fundamentalist re-assertion of Christian propositional truth. Rather, in partial agreement with the approach of post-liberal theologians such as George Lindbeck, he is arguing that we should recover the distinctiveness of Biblical faith as a ‘fiduciary framework’, as a linguistically framed ‘way of life’, with a distinctive concept of truth.

In the remainder of this section I want to follow the approach of Newbigin et.al. in reflecting on the concept of ‘truth’ entailed by the discourse of the Christian gospel and then briefly discuss what ‘gospel truth’ might imply for the way we interpret academic practice.

²⁴ See John Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory*, Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1990

²⁵ David Yeago, ‘Messiah’s People: the Culture of the Church in the Midst of the Nations’ *Pro Ecclesia*, 6, 1 (Spring 1997) 147, 148.

The Christian gospel entails a distinctive vision of God, of truth, of ultimate reality, of the nature and source of things. Yet to understand this vision of truth as a set of stand-alone propositions is to miss the communal ‘web of meanings’ within which such truth is grasped and practised. By recognising the ‘web of meanings’ we are better able to appreciate the several vital dimensions of a Christian concept of truth: eschatological, trinitarian, ecclesial and dialogical (or relational).

First, the form of Christian truth is eschatological. The Christian gospel proclaims a vision of history in which the full realisation and fulfillment of ‘the truth of things’ still lies ahead of us. As St Paul put it, we see by faith and not by sight, as through a glass darkly. Our present grasp of reality has an eschatological provisionality, and thus a historical openness in which the unfolding of human history requires a continual retelling of the central narrative of the death and resurrection of Jesus and its meaning for the creation.

Second, the form of Christian truth is trinitarian. Gospel truth is not just an orientation to the future. It claims that the central drama of salvation history reveals to us the trinitarian nature of God, as the one whose being is relational love. It is this mutual love and self giving of God who we know as Father, Son and Holy Spirit that overflows in the coming to be and ongoing existence of the created universe.²⁶

Third, Christian truth is ecclesial in form. As Don Saliers²⁷ and many others have stressed, Christian assembly and worship is the primary matrix in which theology is articulated. Worship and church life is not simply the site of application for theological understanding formulated in the academy. Christian reason is fundamentally communal, practical reason.

Fourth, Christian truth is dialogical, or communicative, in form. The eschatological openness of Christian faith, its underlying trinitarian ontology and its primary ecclesial context mean that gospel truth is not a matter of monological statement, but of inter-personal communion and communication. As Mennonite theologian John Yoder has observed the incarnational nature of the Christian gospel has meant that it is always vulnerable to the setting in which it is proclaimed as good news, needing to be translated into the language and thought forms of the hearer.²⁸

6. WHAT ARE THE IMPLICATIONS FOR ACADEMIC PRACTICE?

²⁶ See Catherine La Cugna *God For Us: The Trinity and the Christian Life*, Chicago, HarperCollins, 1993.

²⁷ Don Saliers, *Worship as Theology: Foretaste of Glory Divine*, Nashville, Abingdon Press, 1994.

²⁸ John Yoder, ‘On Not Being Ashamed of the Gospel: Particularity, Pluralism, and Validation’ *Faith and Philosophy: Journal of the Society of Christian Philosophers* 9/3 July 1992, 285-300.

A recovery of the conception of truth – or of the conditions of truthfulness – implicit in a Christian vision of the triune God, is the basis for interpreting academic practice Christianly. The vision of truth which I have briefly outlined in this paper is neither ‘fundamentalist’ or dogmatically closed, nor is it a merely secular vision with a religious gloss. Indeed, I believe that it provides a framework for a ‘committed openness’ in which the love and worship of God finds expression in the ongoing search for ‘significant truth’ about the created order and the outworking of its eschatological purpose in human history.

In this final section I shall mention a number of practical ways in which we as Christian academics might be enabled to practice this distinctive vision of divine truth.

Firstly, there needs to be a clearer recognition that the professional work of Christian academics (and indeed the work of all lay Christians engaged in secular employment) is an expression of the worshipping and witnessing life of the Christian community, and that academics need to be both supported by and held accountable to the church for what they do in their professional activities. Now I assume that most academics who are active Christians are regular worshippers within some form or other of denominationally based congregations. Indeed, they are often active lay leaders in the life of their churches. However, my guess is that there are very, very few church communities that take an active pastoral interest in what Christian academics get up to or recognise the strategic importance of Christian scholarship and teaching. On the one hand Christian congregations assume that what academics do in their secular employment is of no concern to the church, and on the other hand, Christian academics assume that how they interpret academic practice is their own personal business.

This failure of Christian clergy and congregations to effectively support lay people in the context of their secular employment needs to be addressed if the church is to more effectively fulfill its work of mission in the wider world. There needs to be a stronger sense of Christian academic work as an expression of the common vocation of the church. This means on the one hand that Christian academics should not regard their work as autonomous with respect to the congregation but as an expression of the specific ministry of that congregations in the wider society and on the other hand that congregations should work hard to understand and support Christian academics, not only in general ways, but more specifically in terms of becoming familiar with the kinds of courses they teach and the research projects they pursue. With a stronger sense that their work is rooted and grounded in the common life of the worshipping community, Christian academics would be encouraged to become more creatively Christian in academic life. They would also be better able to help congregations work through the questions of education, career development, social issues, and the challenges of science and technology.

Second, and closely related to this, Christian academics need to develop the skills of sustained theological reflection and to develop collectively an alternative

theological framework which provides the rationale for distinctive approaches to teaching, research and so on. I believe that the strategy of talking generally about ‘human values’ without opening up the metaphysical grounding of such values is inadequate, both because it blurs the deep differences and tensions between traditions which may share some ‘values’ in common, and also because it does not address the unfolding nihilism of modernity. As mentioned above, the theological framework of a distinctively Christian practice of the academic life should not simply be one of formal propositional statements, but a hopeful, relational and dialogical truthfulness that expresses the narrative of the gospel and its trinitarian vision of reality.

As lay Christian academics we need the theological resources to critique the frameworks of our present disciplinary and professional practices. As I have suggested above it is not enough for us to simply be good, conscientious and caring academics and to otherwise accept the hegemony of the secular. Within our various disciplinary and professional contexts, be it business studies, biochemistry or law, we need to develop the capacity to scrutinise the pre-suppositions of our disciplinary practices. This is particularly important for Christians involved in the sciences, where it has been possible to focus on the technical and the mathematical and to assume a neutrality with respect to ethics, culture, and metaphysics. The ever expanding explanatory power of the natural and mathematical sciences, plus their technological exploitation and commercialisation makes the questions of meaning and purpose even more pressing.

Thirdly, we need to generate more visible forms of creative collective Christian academic activity. At the present time there is a quite extraordinary degree of pragmatic open-ness with respect to how academics go about their work. There is an active encouragement of innovation in the more flexible delivery of courses and in forms of collaboration with agencies outside the university. University administrators are more and more pragmatic about what courses can be offered. Almost everything seems to go, as long as there is a niche market for students. All this of course reflects the pressures of decreased funding and the push towards breaking down the critical distance between university and commerce.

In my experience, most Christian academics, at least of my generation, are constrained by what Stanley Hauerwas has called ‘the democratic policing of Christianity’²⁹: a self-censoring of any expression of public Christian commitment in research projects and teaching which submits to the principles of neutrality and objectivity supposedly regulating a modern liberal university.³⁰ We are quite scrupulous about not imposing our values on others. Christian academic creativity is also inhibited by a very weak sense of Christian solidarity amongst Christian

²⁹ Stanley Hauerwas, ‘The Democratic Policing of Christianity’ in *Dispatches from the Front: Theological Engagements with the Secular*, Durham, Duke University Press, 1994, 91-106.

³⁰ See Alisdair MacIntyre, ‘Reconceiving the University as an Institution and the Lecture as a Genre’ in *Three Rival Versions of Moral Inquiry*, London, Duckworth, 1990, 216-236.

academics. I have found that, as far as their professional or academic identities are concerned, most Christian academics are more closely identified with their disciplinary and professional communities than they are with their Christian colleagues. Yet without a sense of Christian solidarity it is difficult for Christian academics to work together in responding to the opportunities to develop forms of teaching and research which open up the questions of god and truth.

In conclusion I want to say that in this context, tertiary chaplains are very significant people. In addition to the important pastoral role that they have always played, they can also be catalysts in enabling Christian academics to make stronger connections with their church communities, to reflect theologically on the frameworks of their teaching and research and to work together with other Christian academics in responding more faithfully to our rapidly changing environment.

Social Responsibility: Chaplains and the University

Veronica Brady

University of Western Australia

To be a chaplain is uncomfortable. Perhaps it has always been so, since originally the chaplain was, in the words of the *Macquarrie Dictionary*, “an ecclesiastic attached to the chapel of a royal court or . . . noble family” or in our time, “to a college, school etc., or to a military unit.” The chaplain, in effect, is, or can be, caught between the conflicting claims of Christ and Caesar. This is not necessarily a bad place to be, or course. To a greater or lesser extent, every Christian lives there since the God we worship is not an absent God, but one who works in, through and with human beings immersed in history. But the chaplain is particularly exposed, partly because historically Australian Universities, especially the older ones, have been suspicious of religion in general – unless it is safely “dead” and distant enough to be an object of “impartial” study – and of the Churches in particular since they insist on practicing it. The chaplain is also exposed because the Churches have also tended, for this and a variety of other reasons, to suspect the University.

To say this, however, is to say how important you are. Let us explore why this is so, beginning with the large perspective and then moving to specifics.

Our society and culture, most people would agree, is at a point of crisis, faced with the tensions between nations states and the global economy and within nations, with growing tensions between different groups with the growth of racism, suspicion between men and women, homophobia, a decline if not collapse of the tolerance and mutual respect essential for civil society and the emergence of fundamentalisms of all kinds, all claiming absolute truth. With this we see also a growing gap between rich and poor within nations and internationally, the environmental crisis, the population explosion. It is, I would argue, essentially a crisis of understanding.

The ways in which we people in the West have envisaged ourselves and the world no longer seem to have explanatory power. Our lives lack the narrative unity which enables us to make sense of ourselves and of the world. Above all, facts and values seem to have parted company.

Things fall apart, the centre cannot hold . . .
 . . . the best lack all conviction, while the worst
 are full of passionate intensity.
 (W.B.Yeats, “The Second Coming”)

What prevails is the system, as the imperatives of the economy, success, efficiency, technological skill impose themselves on almost every facet of life. Understanding and meaning give way to productivity and the cult of power and pleasure. In the mist of all this an increasing number of Christians and, indeed, members of other religions, retreat from the challenge, invoking old certainties instead of trying to find where God may be at work in this crisis.

Intelligence, of course, is not synonymous with virtue – working in a University makes one very aware of that. But to search for truth, courageously and perseveringly, is part of our vocation as human beings, especially if we have had the privilege of a good education. Indeed, if it is true, as I have argued that the essential crisis of our time is one of understanding, then love for our fellow human beings caught up in this turmoil and faced not only with physical sufferings of all kinds, but also often with despair – consider the growing phenomenon of suicide amongst young people – surely obliges us to this search.

The retreat of many Christians from it, their absorption in what they see as the “timeless truth” of tradition or of the Bible, is understandable but it is perhaps closer to Pilate than to Christ. As I see it, God also calls us to serve him, “wittily in the tangle of our minds” and find where he is working in our history. If we are not to despair of the world in which we live – and God never does – and cut ourselves off, sitting in judgement on it, assured of righteousness which may come from serving a God made to our own image, then those of us with the ability to do so must try to read the “signs of the times”, to work out what the Spirit may be saying to us in the new understanding opened out to us by contemporary science, mathematics, the arts and social sciences. At the same time, knowledge of the contemporary intellectual scene will enable us to identify destructive tendencies within it and make a critique of them which has some intellectual credibility – mere ecclesiastical denunciation carries little weight these days, and indeed can often be counter productive.

This task of participating in what may be the crucial task of our time, constructing a new paradigm, a way of relating self, others and the world as we now understand it in all its complexity is, in my view, the great opportunity for the Church. To come to your specific situation as chaplains, it should be the task of Universities.

By and large, however, as you know only too well, it is more honoured in the breach than in its observance. As someone has put it in slogan form: *once Universities were dedicated to the search for wisdom, then to the service of the intellect and today to producing information*. Increasingly, instead of interrogating it, Universities are at the service of the status quo, training obedient members of the managerial elite who keep the system going, doing research which contributes to economic development, governmental efficiency, military strength and managerial efficiency. The ability to generate income is valued far more than the ability to ask new and difficult questions and open up new areas of understanding, pursuing

knowledge for its own sake rather than for profit. Teaching and caring for students, by and large, is a minor matter; what counts is serving the system.

That, of course, is the reason why you are often regarded as irrelevant, with no part to play in the on-going intellectual life of the University. At best you are seen, more or less as military chaplains are, as keeping up the morale of troops, enabling them for battle and looking after the wounded. Counseling, of course, is an essential part of your work, and extension of the work of Jesus as healer. But the crucial role of the Chaplain in the University, I believe, is intellectual, to alert students and staff to the questions of value, the critique of what is manifestly false and destructive in current understanding and practice, and to engage with them in the work of forming a world-view which is less destructive to people and the world we inhabit and more in tune with what is actually the case.

This means, of course, that the Chaplain must do his/her homework, keep up with current developments and listen as well as talk to staff and students in their own terms, eschewing, if needs be – and it usually needs be – “religious” talk, especially given the widespread suspicion of religion as anti-intellectual. As Karl Barth reminds us, God’s Spirit can be compared to a river flowing through history. Any words we use to describe this mystery or institutions we devise to present it are like the banks the river throws up. But rivers have a habit of flowing elsewhere. So, many Christians may in fact be sitting on the banks of a dried up riverbed, and the business of the prophet is to remind them of this fact. However exaggerated that may seem, the University Chaplain may have that role to play not only in the intellectual community but also in the Church.

That might account for the fact that, by and large, the Churches do not seem to see your work as very important. All too often the work of the administrator is to keep the show on the road, so to speak, rather than to seek out new directions. The suspicion of the intellect may have something to do with it also. If so, you may also be important in reminding the Church, the community of faith, hope and love, that while, as Pascal put it, the heart may have reasons that reason knows not of, intelligence can empower and guide the heart.

Sacred Space - Common Ground

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Pitt Street Uniting Church, Sydney

When I first became the minister of the Pitt Street Church, I spent a brief time doing some industrial chaplaincy at Fairfax. I might say that my time as an industrial chaplain was the hardest ministry I ever did. In that experience, I faced that most Christians, and certainly ministers and priests, are not really well prepared for life on common ground, just on church ground.

We often presume that space outside religious space (or that occupied by religious people) is not very sacred space. Because we have long had a reputation for being like this, we have an equally long road to travel before others see us as being on common ground within their sacred space.

As chaplains we will also, I am sure, be at risk because people assume that we are occupying various sorts of ground which belongs to them or is alien to them. The risk is that you end up on a little patch of ground all by yourself! Even the church often refers to chaplains as “having left the ministry”.

DISCOVERING MY OWN SACRED SPACE AND COMMON GROUND

After a time I realised that if I was to understand how to survive and to engage in my ministry, I first needed to enter honestly my own sacred space.

When Jesus was born in Bethlehem, he established, forever, human life as sacred space. God was to be found among us and within us and that is true in my experience. So we begin the relationship with ourselves by metaphorically taking off our shoes because we are about to approach holy ground. God is already to be discovered there before us.

As I entered the sacred space of my own life, I found fear, anxiety, confusion and aloneness as well as many good things. As I stayed with those things and saw them as parts of myself which could be respected and not denied, I began to see the task of ministry differently.

As I shared the truth about what lay in my life around the issue of my chaplaincy with vulnerability, I found, or course that I was on common ground with colleagues. We each had our own way of working with our issues, but we all affirmed that the task was too great and too complex for any of us. Or even all of us together.

My way of working with it was to reinstate my eschatological theology. I was not Jesus Christ. Jesus had already won the victory. I was just a unique speck in the great task of revealing the reign of God.

I was unique in that I had my special gifts which I could affirm and offer into this ministry. I might develop others as I went, but at each moment all that was required of me was to offer who I was and what I had.

The task would never be done, so I need not compete with anyone else but simply celebrate that each of us offered our best and could be affirmed in that and together celebrate anything which we achieved together.

DEFINING THE FOCUS

At Fairfax, I had about 3000 people to relate to and only 4 hours a week to do it. Impossible! So, I could either do a superficial sweep around the place and look busy and friendly, or find a better focus, while keeping a bit of an eye on the rest.

I decided to concentrate on the workers who seemed most pressured in their work and the ones with whom I had a sporting chance of building some relationships. For example, it was largely a waste of time trying to talk with the rather elderly and industrially deaf men who worked the huge noisy presses in the basement. If I appeared, they said “Who? You a priest or something love? (laugh) Can’t hear a thing you are saying!”

I knew that, if I could establish some relationships with those most under pressure, I would end up with some sense of the nature of my relationship with the system under which they worked and those who ran it. As industrial chaplains, we were told that we were on neutral ground, but I knew that would prove to be impossible. No Christian or other religious person is ever on neutral ground. It is all the sacred ground of God and that requires it to be the ground of justice, love and peace.

If I look at universities from the outside, I would say that there are layers and layers of people struggling to survive in a tough and ever tougher system. While my impulse would be to focus on the students as the most vulnerable in it all, I would say that if you, like me, take your own gifts seriously, you will know to whom you are called, or will develop that knowledge. I have certainly found that colleagues and friends can often tell us where our real strengths lie, even if we don’t recognise them ourselves.

HOW IS MINISTRY SUSTAINED IN US?

One of the key themes particularly in the Hebrew Scriptures, the Old Testament, seems to me to be a constant remembering of the salvation history of the people. Instead of always describing how tough it all was, they remembered and ritually celebrated the way they had survived with the help of God.

You might say that all great religions do that in their ritual life, but sometimes I wonder whether we do that with awareness and clarity?

Our focus in the Christian Churches on Eucharistic life is of course part of that remembering, but sometimes I think we could more specifically remember our own history in relation to that. How often do we remember with ourselves and each other our own salvation history - our faith journey? And yet it is from that which we live and witness.

I find in my connections with the church that this sharing is not very common in the life of the church itself.

How often do we use our ritual and liturgical skills to heal, comfort and encourage ourselves? Do you ever anoint each other for healing or as a commissioning to the grave and difficult task which you carry out? Do you see each other as wounded in ways which others cannot see but which you might understand and respect in each other? Do you share with each other those small celebrations of a job well done in order to affirm your gifts for this ministry?

How clearly do you really see your lives as sacred space and common ground? What would make each of you feel recognised as that?

SHARING THE HOPE AROUND US

Often we convince ourselves that we are in a hostile environment, and sometimes we are, but sometimes it is because we have not seen the sacred space which is there and which can be pointed to by others.

For example, I observe that we habitually refer to the Australian society in general as “secular” - as though it has no soul, no spiritual life, as though there is nothing there which we recognise as God. In fact I believe that this society is alienated from religious institutions but that its longing soul waits for recognition. On the sacred ground of people’s lives, there are so often trembling, inarticulate understandings of encounters with the Divine. It may not be in our religious language or imagery, but it is there, waiting to be recognised and affirmed.

If we truly regard ourselves as being on sacred ground, we may be surprised by God, surprised by grace and surprised by other wonders and delights.

Perhaps the hardest culture to step past in order to enter the sacred space is church culture itself. As James Fowler says in his *book Stages of Faith and the Public Church* most congregations of the Christian Church are in fact private, not public and I imagine that the would apply equally to other gathered expressions of religion, except perhaps the Buddhist gathering places.

I believe that we are a deeply grieving culture and that universities are not exempt from that factor within our culture. They probably carry the same woundedness and lack of hope which lies in the rest of society and waits for us to be bold enough to offer rituals of telling the stories of pain and grief and enacting healing and hope. I am surprised at how well received thoughts like this are when I have given graduation addresses at various universities.

People stand before us in their unrecognised and unhonoured sorrow and fear and pain. Of course, if we are to tread safely among the pain of others, we will need to tread just as faithfully and bravely into our own pain and fear. We will have to stop being so hearty!

Whenever we dare to try to carry the faith beyond the doors of religious institutions, we will be hit with the hard questions:

How do we understand innocent human suffering?
 What is the activity of god in relation to the world?
 What does it mean to pray?
 How do we explain the institutional religion and its styles and activities?
 What is the real nature of the Bible?
 How do we love God with our bodies, hearts, souls and minds?
 What does ethical behaviour look like in this day and age?

Are we afraid of these questions within ourselves?
 Do we need to share more about them with each other?
 If we could, I am sure that we would travel with more confidence in our journey.

COMMON GROUND

I believe that, if we have genuinely entered one another's life space as though it is sacred, we will rapidly find the common ground. We could try to do that with each other as a beginning.

One of the greatest barriers to finding this common ground for relationship and dialogue is our tendency to put people into boxes of our own making – stereotyping, labeling people as though we already know them before we begin any form of respectful relationship.

I always imagined that universities by their nature would be resisting of that. Never having attended one as a student, I have this illusion that in this great environment of learning and fascination for the search for truth, people would be more resistant to pre-judging anything or anyone, that they would be fascinated by difference and newness, even strangeness. I have a terrible suspicion that my ideals in this respect may be ill-founded.

I would have to say that, as I thought that about universities, I have not really assumed this to be so about the church! What a worry. I have come to take for granted that we will label and prejudge each other. Common ground of humanness and hope breaks through predetermined views of each other.

Wherever we go, we will probably also find a common ground of powerlessness. All the witnesses to faith are called upon today to share how that might be transmitted into power to transform the world and its systems, not just the lives of individuals. We could perhaps argue that across different faiths.

WALKING ON COMMON GROUND IN SACRED SPACE

Who are we as we walk? We are the witnesses, whatever our religious orientation – we are simply sharing our won story, our own faith journey alongside that of others.

We are unselfconsciously ourselves – we don't have to come disguised or with bells and whistles. We are the honest brokers of faith. We are self-respecting.

We are the vulnerable and need to know our own sources of healing, comforting, debriefing and cherishing – it is a rough world. We do not 'do each other in' on the way – this is not a competition and the task of being the witnesses is so large that there is room for millions of us.

We are people who play in the creation as well as working. We try not to be boring. On the other hand we refrain from telling pathetic jokes and trying to be "funny" unless we are good at it!

We are those who dare to hope that we can be used as agents for revealing to others the fact that their own lives are sacred ground, worthy of the love of God, worthy of justice, grace and peace.

We are those who dare to believe that as each person recognises the sanctity of their own lives they will not only claim their place on the common ground of our life, but they will be restored to seeing the universe and all within it as sacred ground. They will see us daring to witness of life lived like that in humble, human, fragile ways and be encouraged.

To believe that we tread in sacred space and on common ground is to understand our ministry as one which constantly renews community, restoring ourselves and others to a deeper human community of reconciliation, justice and love. That is our sacred task.

Sobriquet or Nomenclature: Who gets to be called 'chaplain,' and how?

John Bodycomb
University of Melbourne

It was a Sunday night around 10:30. The voice at the other end of the line was familiar: a Catholic sister I had met at these conferences. She was unhappy, and unsure where to turn. I was thought appropriate because she knew we had a mechanism in Melbourne for accrediting chaplains. What was the story? The previous Monday she had gone into their rooms at her campus to find a vacant office had filled on the week-end with crates of literature, portable sound system and a collection of instruments: keyboard, drums and guitars. At the desk was a total stranger looking very pleased. "I'm the AOG chaplain," he declared, "and I'm going to use this room." They had been keeping it for someone else.

On another campus, arrangements were made among the members of chaplaincy to ensure that one of the rooms could be shared with an Orthodox appointee. He came in and a suitable day was agreed upon. Thereafter he appeared twice more over a period of five years, while retaining the title of Orthodox chaplain to that university. A little sidelight on the matter. An incident involving some Greek men and some women from the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia ("FYROM") resulted in formal complaints, and gave stimulus for putting out a call to the Orthodox chaplain. He did not return the message, nor did he take the opportunity to come in.

At a third campus, the complement is two priests: a parish based Anglican and a parish based Catholic. Each comes in two half-days to a room allocated by the counselling service. It is unoccupied the rest of the week. Following on a model developed elsewhere, both priests are looking to recruit members of their parishes who would come in for at least half a day. This would give chaplaincy a friendlier face, guarantee that someone was always available, and show the campus that the church was taking it seriously. What should these lay persons be called?

On a short study leave in the U.S., I visited twenty campuses in and around Boston, and in the adjoining New England states. On some I found the terms were 'campus minister' and 'campus ministry'; on others 'chaplain' and 'chaplaincy'. At one university, half a dozen offices were shared by fifteen 'chaplains', most of whom were less than full time. They had Buddhist, Hindu, Jewish and Muslim, as well as Christian - and, rather to my surprise, a Humanist chaplain! Tongue in cheek, I suggested this may be a contradiction in terms, but the point was missed. In fact, it may be incongruous for all but the Christians - for it is a Christian term (as is 'minister').

These stories – and there are heaps of them – highlight some questions far from clearly resolved for many of us. What exactly is a ‘chaplain’? What are the qualifications for chaplaincy? What should a university expect of chaplaincy? What do churches expect of chaplaincy? Who accredits and/or appoints chaplains – and how? To whom are they accountable?

The title for this paper arises out of such questions, and the rag-bag of anecdotes with which I began. ‘Sobriquet’ is the French for ‘nickname’: a strictly non-technical and informal tag, hung on anyone if their friends so decide. ‘Nomenclature’ comes from the Latin for ‘name’ and ‘call’. It means a designation, or a set of technical terms as in a science. A nomenclature is a technical and formal word. Is ‘chaplain’ something we use in a non-technical and informal way, without any strict criteria, or is it a formal and technical term? Is it a sobriquet or a nomenclature?

It is that question we should consider first. Many of you will not need the etymology, but for those unfamiliar with it, I ask your indulgence while I recount a short story. It begins in the fourth century with the young Martin – one day to be patron saint of France. Over five hundred villages are named ‘Saint Martin’, and more than four thousand churches!

At fifteen Martin was in the military. Garrisoned at Amiens, he was confronted one wintry night by a shivering beggar. Story has it that he cut his cavalry cloak in two and gave half to the man. In a dream he saw Jesus wearing that half, and heard him say to the angels, “Do you know who arrayed me like this? Though still a catechumen, my servant Martin.” Martin went at once to be baptised, vowed never again to bear a sword, left the army, put himself under the guidance of Hilary of Poitiers and became a monk.

Years later, when seeking a new bishop, the people of Tours settled on Martin. Expecting he would refuse, they ambushed him and carried him bodily to the cathedral. Martin continued to live very simply, first in a cell near the cathedral and later in a cabin on the banks of the Loire. For twenty-six years he was a most unconventional bishop, riding on a donkey to the far outposts of his diocese.

On his death, Martin’s capella (cloak) was kept by the Frankish kings as a remembrance of him, and the shrine in which it was placed took on the name of the garment. The French took the word into their language as ‘chapèle’, which comes to us as ‘chapel’. The guardian of St. Martin’s cloak was called ‘capellanus’. This turned to ‘chapelain’ in Old French, and duly gave us the English ‘chaplain’. Etymologically speaking, a chaplain is one who maintains reminders of the sublime amid the secular. I prefer to use that word, at least for any discussion we may have, rather than ‘holy,’ ‘sacred’ or ‘transcendent’.

‘Sublime’ originates in the Latin ‘sublimis’ from ‘sub’ meaning ‘up to’ and ‘limen’, meaning ‘lintel’. Sublime came to mean raised up, held aloft, soaring,

lofty, exalted. We think of it as denoting things of high moral, intellectual or spiritual degree, and things which inspire awe, wonder, reverence – the ‘sublime’ sentiments. I invite you to ponder the implication of being designated ‘chaplain’, in light of the word’s origin, but also in light of the kind of world in which a chaplain ministers. I have five main points.

WORLD HISTORY

First, world history at a glance. (I hope that you will see in a moment the reason why!) Nobody can say precisely when the world began. However, 4.5 billion years ago is a time on which there is general agreement. That sort of age, or length of time, is hard to grasp. But if we were to shrink it to one year, what we now call a ‘year’ would be less than one-tenth of a second. That may or may not help – but I want to use this device of ‘contracted’ time to make a point.

The earliest ‘homo erectus’ can be identified about half a million years ago. Or, in terms of this artificially ‘contracted’ time: if the earth were one year old, then homo erectus appeared about ten hours ago. It took a very long time from Genesis 1:1 to 1:27, or from Genesis 2:4 to 2:7! So-called ‘modern’ humanity came along about 30,000 years ago. Still playing with contracted time, we would be talking about the last half-hour. This is the human being developing tools and weapons, and painting in caves. If the world were a year old, people began domesticating animals, cultivating plants and working with metals only ten minutes ago!

It took until the 14th century to find earth was not the centre of the universe. Printing came in the fifteenth, steam power in the eighteenth, discovering the role of microbes in disease in the nineteenth, cars and planes around the start of this one; TV in the late twenties and computers in the forties. If the earth were a year old, we could say all these things happened in the last few seconds. What of the world’s great religions? They would have appeared in the last two minutes!

What this kind of computation illustrates, at a sort of ‘macro’ level, is the exponential speed of discovery, invention and change – and that includes change in our ways of thinking and believing, acting and behaving. One can hardly expect the rate of change to decelerate; rather, the opposite. This, of course, generates all kinds of new anxieties. Zygmunt Bauman (Emeritus Professor of Sociology at Leeds) says, “No jobs are guaranteed, no positions are foolproof, no skills are of lasting utility.” David Shenk, in *Data Smog: Surviving the Information Glut* says infoglut no longer adds to our quality of life, “but instead begins to cultivate stress, confusion, and even ignorance.”

CHRISTIAN HISTORY

Second, I want to say something about Christian history at a glance, and advance a theory. When one looks at the ‘big picture,’ it is apparent that there are major developments about every five hundred years. The first was the birth of Monasticism. Around 520, Benedict founded the monastery at Monte Cassino, and duly wrote the rule which would regulate monastic life for centuries. Monasticism gave opportunity for those who wanted to embark on a pilgrimage of spiritual discipline and honest toil. It symbolised for the larger society aspirations to cherish even if they did not exemplify them. As the spire pointing heavenward is a reminder to passers-by of things sublime, so it was with monasticism.

The second great leap in Christian history was Imperialism. When Jerusalem was captured in 1071 by Muslim Turks, the Byzantine emperor called on the pope for aid against these ‘infidels’ now threatening Constantinople. Urban II excited recruits with a bizarre mix of promises: remission of sins, protection of their land until they returned – and the hope of plunder! Four and a half thousand cavalry and thirty thousand infantry proceeded to reassert the sovereignty of the pope and of Christianity, and prefigured the Christian imperialism which continued into the nineteenth century.

The third great development was Reformism. This took the form of breakaway churches repudiating the papacy (Protestant Reformation) and Rome’s response (The Catholic Reformation). Protestantism took a variety of forms, but shared emphases on the primacy of scripture, democratic church order, and separation of church and state. It seems now, that every time a group of Protestants think their church has it wrong, they start a new one. So much for ‘Reformism’!

The fourth great development is now on us: Eclecticism, from the Greek ‘eklego’, to choose from a range of sources. My dictionary says, “not following any one system, as of philosophy, medicine etc, but selecting and using whatever is considered best in all systems,” This is the stage in Western Christianity now well and truly upon us. In many mainstream churches people are literally ‘reinventing’ Christianity. This is one ‘stream’. The other stream presents what exponents regard as ‘orthodoxy’ – based on the assumption that somewhere, back there, was a correct and definitive, timeless and unchanging faith (or truth); an absolute “benchmark’. Neo-orthodox, evangelical and pentecostal are all ‘benchmark’ theologies.

Ewert Cousins, in *Christ in the 21st Century* (1993) says we are at a turning point in world history; a transformation in consciousness such as humanity has experienced only once before. He draws on Karl Jaspers’ notion of an axial age between 800 and 200 BCE, where the great world religions and metaphysical philosophies emerged from more primal forms of religious consciousness. Cousins says we are now on the edge of the second axial period. I should add that his credentials are impeccable. He is Director of the Center for Contemporary Spirituality at Fordham University, and a distinguished translator/interpreter of mediaeval Franciscan spirituality. His career has involved him in dialogue with other world religions.

AUSTRALIAN SOCIETY

Third, Australian society at a glance. The pace of change was steady and relatively manageable until post World War II. I remember when cars were much fewer and slower, pubs closed at six and the whole city effectively shut down on Sunday. When making “On the Beach” with Gregory Peck, Ava Gardner said Melbourne on Sunday was a good place to make a movie about the end of the world! But it was not to remain like that. In *Reinventing Australia*, Hugh Mackay identified seven major changes over the last thirty to forty years. The big one was the change in women’s roles. Women have come to a radically different way of thinking about their status, rights and potential. Men must not only come to terms with this, but also with a different way of thinking about themselves. We are in process of reinventing maleness.

The second change has been in marriage etc: ex nuptial coupling, single parent families, divorce and remarriage. There has been one divorce this year for every two marriages. I am often at odds with those who say this reflects a low view of marriage. It could mean people have higher expectations, and set themselves up!

The third great change is unemployment. Mackay says the overtime of those working full-time equals half a million more jobs. Meanwhile, we have something like double that number with no jobs at all – and a strong probability that we will never again see full employment.

Fourth is the gap between rich and poor. Currently (September 1997) of Australia’s five million families, the richest 1% own 12% of the wealth; the poorest 50% own 5% of the wealth. Both rich and poor are becoming more numerous; the middle group is shrinking. Along with this, Mackay notes how facilities for credit have altered the way people manage (or mismanage!) their finances. We owe \$13 billion on credit cards and personal overdrafts, up 25% on last year, with ‘reward points’ luring people to live more and more on credit.

The other two areas where Mackay identified massive change were, of course, ethno-cultural diversity, and the political scene. These arouse a range of feelings; suspicion, fear and hostility are attracted by both, and have been exploited by Pauline Hanson. As Bob Dylan put it, “the times, they are a’changing.”

CHARACTERIZING AUSTRALIA’S SOUL

Fourth: How does one characterize the soul of Australia? To judge whether people are more ‘religious’, or less, than thirty or fifty years ago requires that we state measurable criteria and compare hard empirical data from then and now.

Church going has changed. In 1966 Hans Mol found 27% saying they went almost every Sunday, and another 39% about every other. Those who went rarely or

never were few. That group has exploded, and the regulars (most Sundays) may not be much above 15%. We are similar to Hungary and the Netherlands, higher than New Zealand, Britain and West Germany – and much higher than Scandinavia. 45% of our regulars are Catholics.

What about religious knowledge? With many of my children's generation giving up on organised religion, there is another generation coming along with little Christian memory. At Camberwell Primary School, the RE teacher asked her third graders how many went to church. Out of 27, four put up their hands – and Camberwell is one of the more 'churchy' of Melbourne suburbs. To see who knew what "Christian" meant, she inquired if anyone could see another word inside it. "Yes, miss," one little boy said at once, "Ian!". Religious knowledge is minimal, and decreasing. Catholic and other religious schools are making an effort to stem the tide, as are 'bible-based' schools, with their particular brand of fundamentalism, creationism and anti-intellectualism!

'Brand loyalties' have changed. In 1966 one third of the adult population said they were Anglican; now 22%. In 1966, 16-17% would have called themselves 'Uniting' (had the Uniting church existed); now about 7.5% - largely because it is an old group, dying off faster than it is reproducing! Catholics were about 25% of the population in 1966; now 27%. The big increase has been in Pentecostals; they are not as numerous as Anglicans, but more are in church every week. Thirty years ago most marriages were conducted by clergy; today about 58% – but back then we did not have the civil celebrants!

What of belief in God, though? Today about 80% say they believe to some extent, in some thing, force or being they can associate with the idea of God. In 1966 it was about 85%, but many would not have thought as carefully before answering as they do today. The National Social Science Survey in 1993 found that among those who describe themselves as having 'no religion' 45% nonetheless said they believed in some god or higher power! The same survey found 13% agnostic and 9% atheist.

Paradoxically, it also found over half the population saying they felt close to God, at least some of the time. Not being in church does not equate with atheism. Canada is a curious example. In 1957, 53% of Canadians said they were weekly worshippers. By 1990, that was down to 23%. Yet alongside this fall-off, most believe in God and there is a fascination with mystical experience.

We have yet to address religious experience seriously, as did the Religious Research Unit at Oxford founded by Sir Alister Hardy. It concluded that over half of the British people have had such experiences, commonly in solitude. Many have been reluctant to tell others, and are surprised to find how common they are. Leading the list is an experience called 'patterning', in which people feel a series of events is linked together as though somehow influenced. This is followed by awareness of God's presence and receiving answers to prayer. Eighteen percent

report a sense of the nearness of someone who has died. Is that what happened with the Resurrection? Hardy developed the hypothesis, of course, that religious experience involved a kind of awareness which had evolved through natural selection because of its survival value to the individual. In other words, that it was natural to be religious in this sense.

Last week I visited the Theosophical Society in Russell Street. The second floor has been given over to a book shop, with a great variety of esoteric and new age material; predominantly alternative religions and beliefs. You can find Alchemy, Aromatherapy, Astrology, Hinduism, Native Indian beliefs, Palmistry, Rolfing, Rosicrucianism, plus a range of meditation and new age CDs, videos and so on. By what criterion is religion dead?

If what I have said seems to add up to a very ambiguous picture, I think that is the way it is. Conventional religiosity and the institutions associated with it, seem to have shrinking appeal – that is, with the major exception of the new conservatism. However, this does not equate with rampant secularism. Interest in what is variously called ‘spirituality’ or ‘journey inward’ is certainly more widespread than is regular churchgoing; so much so that one wonders if the keenest inquiry could be happening outside churches and in spite of them. You have the supreme irony of the Templeton Prize being awarded in 1995 not to a religious leader, but to a professor of mathematical physics, whose books have made him de rigueur with religious seekers!

What, after all, does it mean to be ‘religious’? This question was highlighted again for me last month with the death in Vienna of Viktor Frankl, whose ‘logotherapy’ grew out of his experience in Auschwitz and other camps. Survival, he came to believe, depended not merely on the daily struggle to stay alive, but on a sense of purpose, which in immediate terms meant a belief in the future. “The prisoner who had lost faith in the future – his future – was doomed.” Frankl said. “With his loss of belief in the future, he also lost his spiritual hold; he let himself decline and became subject to mental and physical decay,” Frankl wrote *Man’s Search for Meaning* in nine days; it has sold over two million copies. And he claimed to be not a religious person! Kevin Hart, professor of English at Monash University, and one of this country’s leading poets, says “Some of the most passionately religious people I know are atheists!”

THE UNIVERSITY

Fifth: we turn now to the culture of the university. In the first place, one can expect to find that all the changes identified by Mackay and others will be reflected in a university, and in some cases more than in the larger society. Not all the young women are knife-wielding feminists, but they know about feminism, and they are present on campuses in far greater strength than thirty years ago. Normally at least half of the students will be female. The anxiety about jobs and joblessness can be palpable among some groups; hence the double-degree package,

and increasing numbers sticking around longer if they can. We cannot neglect faculty and administrative staff at this point, many of whom live under constant threat of retrenchments.

The second thing to say about the culture of the university is its bold secularism. This is nothing new. Mol observed thirty years ago that “Australian universities have always been profoundly secular (the percentage of non-believers among university personnel is far greater than in the population at large) and their relations with religious institutions have often been precarious to say the least.” The act of parliament setting up the University of Melbourne stipulated that it would not teach divinity or theology. Scott Paradise, who was chaplain at MIT when I visited in 1991, had a terse answer when I inquired how he would characterise his role. “That’s easy,” he said, “I’m the priest of one religion in the temple of another!” If that sounds a mite cynical one needs to know the MIT chapel is a windowless circular structure, surrounded by a moat.

Despite this, American universities have not been as inhospitable to religion as their Australian counterparts. However, things have been changing there. George Marsden’s *The Soul of the American University* (1994) has been causing liberal and conservative Christians alike to sit up. It is essentially a history of the way Christianity has been displaced in American universities; a process not replicated here, simply because Christianity never has enjoyed the same status in Australia. But Marsden’s major question is one with which many here would resonate; that is, “how it came to pass that so many academics believe that (the exclusion of religious perspectives) is a part of the definition of their task.”

Some have gone so far as to ask if universities are in danger of losing their ancient vision. Professor Bruce Wiltshire, from Rutgers, who gave one of the memorial lectures at Melbourne University a few years ago, said that the basic tasks of education are at risk. “Left unconsidered is the common good, especially the educational task to prepare our young to assume responsibility for civilisation,” Not long before that, Melbourne’s Vice Chancellor, David Penington, had said, “Through the debates of the past two years (the Dawkins reforms), there has been remarkably little said about the purpose and values of Australian universities”.

CHAPLAINCY

What has been sketched under these five main headings is, I suggest, the context within which we seek to define “chaplaincy” and to find suitable men and women. Finally then, to this matter of criteria for selection. In Victoria’s Council for Chaplaincies in Tertiary Institutions (CCTI) there has been much discussion of this. Achieving unanimity is not easy; nor is applying the criteria even when more or less agreed.

For the purpose of this exercise, I prefer to make the assumption that all members of a chaplaincy are seeking to ensure a ministry is available to the whole university

community. In practice, this is probably something which is only achieved collectively, with none doing it individually. And in practice, the limited time and scope of some will mean that they have no option but to focus on specific 'clienteles'. But the ideal is that somehow all the great resources of religious tradition and insight will be combined to enrich the life of this place. I like the 'mission statement' of the Chaplains at Brown University in Providence, Rhode Island,

The mission of the Chaplaincy at Brown University is to promote the religious, spiritual and ethical life of the university community and represent the Biblical and religious faith traditions in the quest for knowledge, justice and truth. The chaplains advocate religious faith as a way to a viable world view and as a basis for personal and community well-being. This mission includes enabling the formation of mature and healthy individual and institutional consciences for supporting those social forces which further the prophetic vision of a better society, and challenging those social forces which conflict with this vision.

So, with this kind of background, what are the characteristics or qualities of one who might be deemed suitable for chaplaincy? I propose a starting list of five, and invite you to modify it if you will

1) *An understanding of, and respect for, a peculiar culture.* A university is a human collectivity which operates according to its own rules – some written, many unwritten. It is unlike any other kind of human institution. To the uninitiated, it can be a mystery, full of traps for the unwary. Furthermore, each university has its own history, tradition and ethics.

2) *Skillful communication of a religious worldview.* Whilst the more aggressive 'missionary' activity on campus probably rests with certain groups outside the chaplaincy, chaplains are in a position that presents them with a unique opportunity to stand alongside and share perspectives on the meaning of existence with men and women who may take a radically contrary position. This can be good for the chaplain, but he/she needs to bring sensitivity, imagination, versatility and flair in communicating to this buzzing marketplace of ideas.

3) *Commitment to the ecumenical vision.* All chaplains, even if working strictly limited hours with a strictly limited constituency, are doing so in a religiously plural community, starting with their colleagues. It is highly desirable that they be at least familiar with other religious traditions and styles, ready to respect these, and eager to build bridges of understanding wherever possible. Chaplaincy should not be a monument to the divisiveness of religion, but a symbol of the versatility of God!

4) *Preparedness to explore possibilities of collegial work.* The degree to which collaboration is possible in actual projects or programs will depend on a number of variables, some of which will be outside the chaplain's control. However, it is desirable that appointees are personally compatible and willing to affirm one another's gifts, share tasks and trust one another. The notion of building a team operation should be one which collectively they find attractive.

5) *A high frustration tolerance.* A university is not like a local parish or congregation (or synagogue). It is much more like a railway station – with constant arrivals and departures, peak periods, and at least the student population using it as a means to get somewhere else. Chaplains whose ego needs are likely to be best satisfied where there are continuity and measurable signs of success may experience high frustration in campus work, especially if the appointment is full-time.

It seems to me that criteria such as these are not 'faith specific' neither are they 'style specific'. That is to say, I doubt it makes much difference whether you are Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jewish or Muslim. Nor does it make much difference whether you are full-time on campus or part-time, spread across two or more campuses, or based in an adjoining university parish. One will not count for much as a university chaplain if he/she does not qualify in terms of the foregoing. You may be a staff worker with a particular group, club or organisation, attached to chaplaincy, but with respect I would suggest that may be a more appropriate term.

My former colleague, Michael Elligate, who combines the competencies of parish priest with those I look for in a campus chaplain, gives me the statement with which I should like to close this. Michael was consulted when my impending retirement necessitated the choice of a new full-time campus-based Protestant chaplain. He wrote,

The position requires a self-starter, someone who is constantly prepared to utilize every possible opportunity for making sensitive connections between the diverse lives of the university community, and the presence of the Church in mission. Above all, avoid people who want either to pursue studies, or feel the job has some particular kudos without demanding much in terms of one's workload.

He was offering these observations in relation to a particular appointment, but what he says bears broader application.

Chaplaincy in the Secular University

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ABSTRACT:

Campus chaplaincy is integrated into Australian universities in various ways. However, there are many common questions and challenges. Many chaplains are paid by and hence responsible to their church or ecumenical body. However, in a highly competitive environment, universities increasingly see themselves as having a stake in the effectiveness and outcomes of services such as chaplaincy. Universities though tend to ask somewhat different questions to the ones the churches ask; such as: Who exactly is chaplaincy for? What does chaplaincy seek to contribute to campus life? Why can this contribution not be made by other services? Chaplains need to hear the questions universities ask, and think about various ways of responding to them. In this process it is important to share experiences of effective responses.

INTRODUCTION

Australian universities are – with a couple of notable exceptions – distinctly secular institutions. They exemplify (or at least seek to exemplify) the separation of “Church and state”. Yet, it is common for there to be highly active and diverse chaplaincy services located on the various campuses around the country. Attitudes and opinions about campus chaplaincy vary greatly, as does the extent to which these services are effectively incorporated into the structures of the University. As our universities increase in size and diversity, so chaplaincy is increasingly called on as a valuable support service. However, questions about chaplaincy are also increasingly raised. Predominantly, questions asked by chaplains focus around the issue: how does one go about integrating a chaplaincy effectively into the structures and life of a contemporary secular university?

Most Christian Churches (and some other faiths) view university campuses as important places to be represented. Often this is because of some notion of the (direct or indirect) evangelical opportunities this is expected to provide. Campus chaplains, on the other hand, generally view their work as service to the university population often without (or at least with a much lesser emphasis on) the evangelistic aims.

In the current climate, where use of resources (money, space, office support etc) is being carefully scrutinised, there will on at least some campuses be those who perceive chaplaincy to be a soft target and who wish to capitalise from a potential

saving in resources. The actual savings are generally not significant, but the politics can be.

In this kind of environment it is important to have a clear means of justifying (both from the chaplain's perspective and from the university's) a chaplaincy service within the University context. It is not sufficient for this kind of justification merely to offer evidence of the 'good works' done by an individual chaplain, although these may assist in the process. Chaplaincy, like any other campus service, needs to face the questions that are increasingly being asked such as: "Do we actually need this service? And if so, why, and what for?" In the end, the only effective way of responding to such questions is to engage in a discussion of the role of the chaplaincy. The outcome of such discussions should seek to provide a role description and strategic links which the university (and religious body if it employs the chaplain) can endorse at the highest levels of management.

The problem with the questions, however, is that all too often (as I shall discuss below) we ask and respond to the wrong kinds of questions.

As University Chaplain to Curtin University I am perhaps in a unique position regarding this kind of process. Much of this is due to the fact that as a university employee I am directly accountable to the university and only to the university for planning, performance, and other chaplaincy issues. Not being accountable to any church or religious body will no doubt colour at least some of what I have to say.

Curtin University established the University Chaplain's position to function within the framework of the university. The role has the following features: it is a full time academic staff position, is located within the University Counselling Service, and it has a broad inter-faith focus (see Appendix 1 for the initial role statement). The recent review of the position proposed a number of possible future options (see Appendix 2). In what follows I will seek to use some of the questions raised in the context of the review and some of the outcomes of that review as a springboard from which to generate some helpful discussion.

WHY DO WE NEED A CHAPLAIN?

What are the kinds of questions a secular university poses of chaplaincy? It generally begins with "Why do we actually need a chaplain?". This is then followed closely by "What do we need a chaplain for?" These are however two very different *kinds* of question. The first questions the *need* for such a role within the institution in the first place. It is perhaps the most difficult of all questions to respond to. In the end, the question "do we really need?" can almost always receive a negative answer. Do we really need a chaplain, a counselling service, a Faculty of Education, or even a Vice Chancellor? No, we do not – it is possible for us to be a university without any one of these, but we will be a lesser university, a less diverse and dynamic place, and less able to respond to the needs of our students without these important elements to university life.

The second question “What do we need a chaplain for?” usually assumes the existence of a chaplain and seeks to clarify the role and its place within the institution. It is not an easy question either because the kinds of responses different people give are so heavily guided and coloured by their own personal beliefs, commitments and presuppositions about chaplaincy. It is however at this point that real discussion commences – “What do we need a chaplain for?” inevitably requires us to ask what kind of chaplain we need, what that chaplain will do and how that chaplain can best be integrated into campus community life.

Responding endlessly to the first question becomes, in my view, a fruitless exercise. However, a clear response to the second question is vital to the health and well-being not only of the chaplaincy itself, but for the ways in which the chaplaincy is able to serve the campus population. It is not only a fruitful question for us all to ask, but the responses we give should help us to continually refine the focus of the service we provide within the university. So then – What *do* we need a chaplain for?

There are several elements to this question, beginning with “who *exactly* is chaplaincy for?” This is a question which takes some wrestling with before one can provide a clear response. Is it the case that chaplaincy is here to serve people who already have a (more or less) well defined religious belief system? Given that many of these individuals will be well connected with their church / mosque / temple, what is it that they need in addition? Or, perhaps chaplaincy is here to serve (or even convert) those who have little or no connection with their particular religious group. Why are they not connected? Surely if they wanted to, these people could find their way to the appropriate facilities in the wider community. Then, what about those who desire no contact with any religion?

If chaplaincy is to be well integrated into the life of the university, it needs at some point to serve the needs of each of these groups. Primarily, the chaplain is part of the bridge between the institution and the wider community, with a focus on faith or spirituality. The chaplain understands the constraints and opportunities of both the institution and the religious bodies and is thus in a unique position to offer professional service. Individuals who make contact with a chaplain may be looking for information, connections or referral, direction or counsel. They may come with issues which cannot be revealed in their own religious context, issues which relate specifically to university life, or they may simply be seeking an articulate response to their questions.

A common myth is that on the whole people in the university context are relatively complacent about the presence of chaplaincy. At Curtin a recent community survey found that there is a very high (over 90%) recognition rate of the chaplaincy service on campus. While many of those surveyed may never need the services of a campus chaplain, nevertheless they at least know that the service is available to them.

On any campus there will be a small number of people who are opposed on principle to any overt religious presence. I have often found these people to be very interesting and challenging discussion partners. Some of these people will nevertheless support the notion of chaplaincy because of their broader values, such as valuing the freedom of belief. Then of course there will be those who are committed to campus chaplaincy by virtue of their membership of a church or religious organisation. While these people are arguably already well catered for and supported in or by their own church or religious group in the wider community, they nevertheless seek out a chaplain when they encounter issues which their religious group cannot address. Such issues may include instances where they are in conflict with the beliefs or teachings of their tradition, or where they are seeking advice about the connection between their beliefs and a specific university situation or event.

No matter how interesting the engagement around these questions, no matter who we perceive them to be primary recipients of a chaplaincy service, campus management needs to be assured that chaplaincy offers a valuable and well integrated service to the university community.

While the question being asked is an important one, it is critical to address it well and carefully. It is only too easy to generate unhelpful discussion and misinformed debate. Responding requires the chaplain to give several related questions serious attention: What does chaplaincy (seek to) contribute to campus life? Why can this contribution not be made by other services? How can chaplaincy operate successfully within the university context? While I do not profess to have answers to all of these questions, nevertheless let me endeavour to begin to address them.

What does chaplaincy contribute to campus life? Chaplaincy makes a combination of pastoral and intellectual contributions within an academic setting. Why can this contribution not be made by other services? Because the chaplain brings particular expertise and combinations of expertise in spiritual, religious, values and ethical areas. Also because by virtue of the role, the chaplain is able to offer a specifically focussed service in a manner which no other role on campus can. How can chaplaincy operate successfully within the university context? Essentially by being well integrated into the university's structures and into campus life more generally. There are, it seems to me, a number of factors which can be helpful in this process.

ROLE CLARITY

No matter how the chaplain has been appointed, it is vital to have a clearly defined and well accepted role – to the point where senior management formally endorse the role. This can be difficult to achieve, but is worth the effort and recognition in the long run. The role statement should clearly indicate areas of responsibility (and thus implicitly also areas the chaplain is not responsible for). It should articulate to

whom the chaplain reports within the university and where the reporting lines are (if any) beyond the university. Regular reviews and opportunities for responding to changing circumstances also need to be built into the process. In other words chaplaincy should be treated no differently to any other role on a campus.

CLEAR LINKS INTO THE STRUCTURES OF THE UNIVERSITY.

Chaplaincy must establish itself as part of campus life in terms of the Vision, Mission, Goals and Strategic Plans of the University. It is important to note that chaplaincy need not seek to “be all things to all people” and address all aspects of the University’s planning, rather it needs to have a clear focus within the university’s structures. This is more than just having an accepted role, it is about having a well recognised place within the life of the university as institution.

One aspect of being linked into the structures of the University is to contribute to the committees and other organisational structures. Formal representation on ethics committees, community committees, planning committees, academic boards, reference committees and the like give an important voice into the system. Chaplaincy becomes known, connected and heard. Participation in welcoming and graduation ceremonies, in cultural celebration days and other key events is another important element.

Strong incorporation into the university also means that the chaplaincy will have vibrant links with the student body on campus. At minimum it is important to get to know the executive of that body. It may be possible for the chaplaincy to act as a ‘sounding board’ or source of advice for the student body’s executive. Chaplaincy is after all one of the few independent sources of advice on campus. Furthermore, there may arise opportunities to participate in student activities and to support diverse student groups. Aside from the regular support given to student religious groups at Curtin, there are individual instances of interaction with a much wider variety of groups. One instance arose during the recent political crisis in Indonesia. As the crisis loomed large, a group of Indonesian students on campus organised a demonstration in support of their compatriots. They approached the Student Guild for support in this. There was some real fear that this demonstration might have become a very heated event. In order to preempt this the Guild sent the organisers to the chaplaincy for advice on avoiding overreaction. The end result was a peaceful event which expressed regret and solidarity over the situation and honoured those who had died and been injured. On the occasion the university was able to make a formal statement in support of the students. It thus benefited all concerned – the students, the university and the chaplaincy.

RESPONDING TO MORE THAN THE NEEDS OF THE INDIVIDUAL.

Typically chaplaincy has been seen as a pastoral service catering for the needs of the individual student (or staff member) and also providing some other services such as worship opportunities. I believe that this focus is too narrow. If

chaplainship is principally about the needs of the individual, then why is it not totally subsumed by a counselling service? Granted, there are some chaplains whose expertise and work is primarily some form of counselling, but this is not the whole of the work of a chaplain. Chaplainship can also involve campus events and life, group work, participation in university structures, advocacy and more. One example, which brings together a number of these strategies is my involvement with the halal food issue on campus. This had been a matter of debate for some time prior to my appointment to Curtin. I undertook some research into the exact needs of the Muslim student population, presented a report to the university, and succeeded in assisting the process of convincing the relevant catering body to establish a halal food outlet. The outlet now operates as a successful commercial enterprise. Campus chaplainship needs to have a community focus, it is a service to the campus as a whole not only to individuals.

Chaplainship should collaborate effectively with the various other campus services – counselling, health and others. At least some students will seek out the chaplain as a first option if they are unsure of where to turn. Amongst others I have referred students to counsellors, health professionals and other campus services, to a marriage therapist, to charities for food or financial assistance, to op-shops and other services in the wider community.

Chaplains around the country endeavour to draw attention to social justice issues on campus. At Curtin we have a series of forums organised by the chaplainship during each semester. Speakers are invited to address social, political, cultural, religious and other current issues. Speakers include politicians, church and community leaders, and others who offer interesting angles on current issues. On other campuses chaplains are involved with groups such as Amnesty International and other peace and justice movements. The importance of this kind of public involvement with issues cannot be understated. You have to pick your issues carefully, for the message travels – it is a means of being known and of making statements about your values and beliefs in action. People generally respond well to this on campus.

AN ACADEMIC ROLE WITHIN AN ACADEMIC SETTING.

John Bodycomb (former chaplain at Melbourne University) refers to this aspect of the chaplain's work as "intelligent God-talk". It is important that the chaplain be seen as having a significant contribution to make to the 'core business' of the university, namely its academic endeavours. Opportunities to utilise one's own teaching interests or research aspirations can include: co-authoring papers and presentations, offering lectures within a range of existing courses (I have given lectures in Nursing, Social Science, social Work, Computing, Education, Psychology and others), speaking at forums, and others. The premise here is that the faith perspective on life does not necessitate a person to leave their brains behind, but rather it has something to add to the intellectual debate within a variety of fields.

JUSTIFICATION

Periodically we are all called upon to justify our role and contribution to the organisation. Record keeping is an important aspect of such justification. What is the evidence that the cost of chaplaincy is an effective implementation of resources? How many people, and from what areas sought you out, consulted you, or attended the events you organised? Which students or student groups are you working in collaboration with? Of course, it always helps if someone is sufficiently impressed with your service to want to put their thoughts down on paper and send a copy to the VC or other person in authority.

Record keeping has many aspects to it: a well organised diary, which reflects not only one's intentions for the day but also keeps record of how the time has actually been spent. Professionally appropriate notes on people seen, for future reference and stored confidentially. Record keeping should also ideally enable a chaplain to give a breakdown of time use and what kinds of activities have been undertaken.

Another area of justification is that of continually working with one's supporters on the campus. There are a number of individuals on any campus who will feel that they have a stake in the chaplaincy. Their support can be of inestimable value.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Chaplaincy has a clear role to play in the context of campus life:

- It needs to be well linked into the structures of the university.
- It serves the university community as a whole as well as the individuals within it.
- It has a role as part of the core business of the university.
- It needs to find clear ways of justifying the value of the contributions which chaplains make to university life.

APPENDIX 1

Initial role statement for the University Chaplain

The current chaplaincy service commenced at Curtin in early 1995. The position of University Chaplain was created by the University Council following a period of deliberation and a consideration of various options. The role has the following features and functions:

Features:

- Full time academic appointment.
- Located within the University Counselling Services.
- Inter-faith and Ecumenical Outlook.

Functions:

- Responsibility for all denominations and religious groups at Curtin
- Liaising between campus and local groups
- Co-ordinating inter-group activities
- Maintaining good relations with leaders of various religious groups
- Attracting voluntary / externally sponsored chaplains
- Organising regular forums on campus
- Contributing to teaching where appropriate

APPENDIX 2

Extract from current role statement for the University Chaplain

The primary role of the University Chaplain is to contribute to the development of students and staff as citizens of the world, and to contribute to the university's cultivation of responsive and responsible links with the wider community.

University education endeavours to address the whole person: physical, social and spiritual. Chaplaincy exists to address the spiritual dimension of university life. Within this context chaplaincy encompasses three related foci:

- **Faith** - The outward expression of beliefs in the context of society and culture.
- **Spirituality** - The inward human journey.
- **Values and ethics** - The interaction with issues that affect human values & life.

The role of the University Chaplain is an inter-faith role. This role operates as an integral part of the University Counselling Service.

The strategic objectives of the Division of Teaching and Learning, within which the chaplaincy is located, form the focus for the strategic directions of the chaplaincy.

Teaching & Learning Objective 1 - “To produce graduates who embody the University's values and are equipped for careers in their chosen fields”.

The contribution of the University Chaplain to the policies, procedures, systems and performance indicators for this objective will be framed in terms of:

- *teaching responsibilities, available to Schools across the university.*
- *providing regular forums on campus.*
- *making contributions to university life via the committee system.*

Teaching & Learning Objective 2 - “To satisfy the diverse learning needs within the student body”.

The contribution of the University Chaplain to the policies, procedures, systems and performance indicators for this objective will be framed in terms of:

- *availability for support of individuals and groups including advocacy for the reasonable needs of students and staff.*
- *organising, co-ordinating and managing the various Visiting Chaplains and associated facilities.*
- *professional development and maintaining a quality service.*

Professionals in a professional institution

Jeff M FitzGerald

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Let me begin by confessing a good attack of humility because I cannot pretend to know very much at all about the modern ministry – certainly not enough to give me sufficient expertise to live up to the honour you have bestowed on me by inviting me to reflect on the very core of your work.

My excuse for getting myself into this challenging situation is two fold – I feel a profound sense of gratitude and debt to one of the chaplains of Melbourne University in the 1960's, Father Gerry Golden, and this offered me the chance to both reflect on what it was he managed to give to so many of us and, in a sense, to celebrate his life and being. In the second place, we are developing a quite different approach to chaplaincy at UTS, which is at once promising and perplexing. I hoped this paper would help me to explore its potentialities and paradoxes and obtain from the benefit of discussion ideas as to how its future development might best be shaped, directed and assisted.

Let me start with a few thoughts about the words set for my title – 'Professionals in a Professional Institution' in the context of chaplains and universities. In doing so I want to set two questions:

1. What can the profession of chaplains contribute to universities and their members that other professions may not or cannot?
2. What is special or unique to universities that will require chaplains to work or contribute in ways they might not need to, or be able to, in institutions other than universities?

When we look at dictionaries to discover what chaplains are supposed to be, we get a few hints: they are ecclesiastics attached to the chapel of a royal court, a noble family, or to a college, school or military unit, and they are the people who say prayers, invocations etc. for an organisation or at an assembly or gathering. What is the big deal about being attached to royal courts, or even universities? Even in this secular age, some prayers and invocations are required in universities. These pointers did not satisfy my curiosity.

So I left the 'C's' and moved on to the 'M's' for minister. Here I got another clue – someone who is authorised to give service, care, aid, to attend to wants, necessities etc., to contribute as to comfort, happiness etc.

This made me a little happier – there is more obvious, indeed ample, scope for all these - inside and outside a university. But lots of people other than ministers / chaplains

can, and do, provide succour, care and other support. What, if anything, might be distinctive about chaplains doing these?

Being a thoroughly modern father who has been inducted into the mysterious art of web-searching by a 12 year old son, I turned to technology to see what light it could throw on my topic - although I'd have to confess that the annoying, seemingly endless and apparently random fruits of most of my searches made me regard the web search as the 21st century equivalent of an oracle consulting the Gods by delving into a pot of entrails. In this case, when cyber space spoke to me, it produced the following description of military chaplains:

Military chaplains are...

- * Clergy in uniform who go where churches and civilians cannot (or will not) go to serve the spiritual needs of Americans in the military.
- * Visible reminders of the Holy in the midst of combat and chaos.
- * Fully credentialled and trained professionals serving God and country while blending the dual roles of clergy and staff officer.
- * Representatives of their specific faith communities, not part of a military faith. They ensure the constitutional free exercise of religion.
- * Accountable to both their commanders and their faith communities for service to their fellow military members and to God.¹

When my first impulse to 'surf' on to a more obviously relevant type of chaplaincy had slightly receded, I started to think about this. With a few substitutions, it has become, in my mind at least, a very useful set of signposts for our topic today.

- an outgoing, proactive, and potentially less than comfortably established orientation which reaches people in need, where they are, not waiting for them to come to the chaplain – it is not 'church-house bound'. There is an implication that the mission is to everyone in the institution (not just the chaplain's own faith group), and also an implication that this could involve quite unconventional, unpopular, or even unpleasant situations to be sought out by the chaplain (others will not go there!).
- doing what at first sight seems to be the impossible, or at least contradictory things – making the sacred obvious to all, even in the heat of what seems to be the obverse of it ('combat and chaos' in the case of the military, 'campus and chaos' in our case).
- the importance of being credentialled and trained is stressed, and it would need to be good to enable chaplains to manage the joint responsibilities and accountabilities to both the secular and the sacred - raising the obvious questions of how two masters can truly be served at once, and, especially, whether the values of each can be reconciled, blended, or otherwise respected with true integrity.

¹ Taken from the NCMAF document dated July 1995, "Enabling the Free Exercise of Religion".

- and, somewhat paradoxically, the chaplain represents his or her specific faith community, and not the 'institution's' faith. I'm not sure I know just what this is getting at – especially in the light of the previous point.

This modest research journey into the meaning of chaplaincy led me to think again about my experience with chaplains, and in particular to ask myself what was so special about what Father Golden did for me, and, indeed, many hundreds or thousands of Melbourne University students in the 50's and 60's? The first thing he did was both to support and reassure us, while challenging us, about ourselves, our studies, our futures and our religion. He knew us all, oh so well, and in a very Irish and Jesuitical way. He knew when we required to be pushed, and when we could do with a little 'hosing down', too. But always with such a smile and a non-judgmental approach. Always expecting the very best, always accepting of whatever we produced or did, and whenever he could he offered counsel, or advice, or warnings, or support, or whatever was needed. Often we barely realised what he had done for us. For example, only later did I learn that, unbeknownst to me, he had persuaded my parents to let me leave home and live at Newman College for the last 2 years of my course, at more cost than they could really afford, so that I would be better able to develop more fully outside the home, and in the college community.

So far so good – a positive and supportive person. But there are, thank God, still plenty of them left in the world. What might be distinctive in how a chaplain could do these things? What he did, in conjunction with a group of staff and senior students, was to reach into our minds and souls and demand that we struggle with what was at once an exciting, threatening, and almost impossibly elusive vision of the transcendental dimension of academic and professional work when fully and honestly pursued. This was a very difficult, but strangely compelling path for many of us to follow in a way that remained real and non pompous.

The core idea was engagingly simple and summed up in the title of a book by the poet and scholar of literature Vincent Buckley *The Incarnation in the University*. By doing the very core work of a university as a community of scholars, researchers and students, we would be truly doing God's work, and in so doing we would add the divine or transcendental dimension to that work and thus to the people in it. A deceptively simple concept. I'd have to confess that while I was compelled or fascinated by it, I really couldn't see how it fitted the law cases I read, the boring law statutes I pored through, the essays I wrote, or the exams I sat. What all this actually had to do with God, or Christ, or transcending anything eluded me when I was brutally honest with myself or anyone else, including Father Golden. He actually supported this self honesty: urging us all to strive to be the very best dedicated sceptics possible, and engendering confidence and support that the quest to find and feel actual meaning in the concepts / ideas was a worthy and worthwhile challenge. In my case, I never did feel that I gained the type of real grasp of these while I was actually at the University of Melbourne.

It was when, a few years later, I studied law and then sociology in the United States, that the 'penny dropped', so to speak. What had until then been an abstract ideal, suddenly gelled. In essence this happened because in US Law Schools a much broader social, economic and political context was provided for those black-letter legal mental gymnastics which Australian law schools, and many lawyers, defined as the limits of legitimate legal thought and education. The title of one particular journal article shocked and moved me: How to sharpen law students' minds by making them narrow. The vision began to take some shape once one started to ask questions like:

- What factors should mould and shape laws?
- What factors make law more or less effective in shaping behaviour?
- What gives law its legitimacy in the minds and hearts of people?
- Are there demonstrable functional prerequisites for a system of control to be truly legal, as distinct from a despotism?

A model was provided of law as vital, evolving, complex system which required scholars, judges, practitioners, students etc. to work throughout the ages to constantly refine, develop, ratify, evolve and adapt the threads of the law by the most scrupulous processes, with the goal of providing the most just system of regulation, control, protection and enablement. In essence, this is a vision that strikes the impossibly perfect balances between consistency and flexibility, proper processes and just outcomes and high principle and public acceptance. I should add that this vision of the law was best embodied for me in two Jewish scholars in the US. One was the great Benjamin J Cardozo, a professor at Yale and a Justice of the US Supreme Court, whose three little books outline it all so simply, so elegantly, and so challengingly – that only the most unimaginative and ingenious could fail to heed his vision and fail to feel both elated and overwhelmed. This is a sample – his conclusion of one of his lectures to the law students of Yale in the 1920's

We can only cling for the most part to the accumulated experience of the past, and to the maxims and principles and rules and standards in which that experience is embodied. Little is the positive contribution that any one of us can hope to make, the impetus that any one of us can give, to the movement forward through the ages. That little will call for the straining of every faculty, the bending of every energy, the appeal to every available resource, within us or without. ... Perhaps our little glimpse into the ultimate, our peep together into the empyrean whence philosophy and law derive their eternal essence, will fill you as it fills me with something of a kindred faith. We shall be spared, at least, the blunder of thinking meanly of our calling. We shall see that our little parish has its vistas that lie open to the infinite.

The second Jewish scholar who meant so much to me was my PhD supervisor who was a Professor of Sociology who had specialised in the sociology of law. He, too, in less poetic but more disciplined and practical ways enabled me to flesh out my own comprehension of how the proper study, practice and scholarship of the law are, or can

be, as much religious, transcendental activities as going to church, or doing works of charity.

If I return to my designated topic, I'd need now to ask in what sense was Father Golden, and what he did for me, a professional in a professional institution? He certainly was not an academic, and, clearly enough, not a professional in my discipline of law. Yet he, and the community he worked with and through, supported me through a number of practical issues, problems and worries. In the end, he and they challenged me to find the most profound, uplifting, but very difficult appreciation for the transforming and transcendent potential for the study, scholarship and practice of the law. (As he/they did for all other disciplines including Maths and Engineering! I am using the example of the law here, because that is my area. But there are analogous and perhaps even more exciting visions of all the other areas of scholarship and professional practice).

While there were many acclaimed legal scholars on the faculty which taught us at Melbourne, not one of them engendered anything like this insight or possibility. Many of them were good teachers in the sense that they explained legal doctrines, and gave us great insights into the crafts of reading and interpreting statutes. They made good technical sense of long, dreary and often confusing judgments, and had a very accurate eye for fine distinctions in the meaning of words, the weight or otherwise of evidence, and all manner of legal logical processes and tricks. But, without the vision for the transcending and enabling potential of law, the truly great challenges of university and professional studies were not offered to us.

Let me put this in a somewhat more disciplined structure – by looking at what a university is essentially all about – so we might isolate what could, and should, be expected of the particular form of professional institution it is. Fundamentally, there are three functions

1. teaching and learning (imparting knowledge and mental skills across generations)
2. nurturing and promoting scholarship, both in research – and the extension of knowledge and skills
3. exercising special responsibility for social, ethical and cultural values

Effective teaching and learning does not take place in a vacuum, as I am sure you already appreciate. The university needs a whole range of resources and help to provide an environment, or environments, in which different types of students with an awesome range of needs, pressures, problems, backgrounds, capacities, etc. can have the maximum chance to learn and grow intellectually and professionally. As I have already tried to convey, with my account of Father Golden's works, there is no doubt in my mind that pastoral care, provided by chaplains who understand and respect the idea of a university, can play a major positive and enduring role for students and staff. I will leave it to others to tackle some more modern examples of the forms this can take. All I'd like to acknowledge here is that it is probably many more degrees difficult

to do this now, at least for chaplains from some faith groups and traditions, than it was in my student days.

For a start, the very mass nature of tertiary education means that it is much harder to convey a sense of the 'special', the ennobling etc. In my days, we would still imagine that we had special vocations, with special concomitant responsibilities. And in many groups, the 'hold' of the churches or faiths on the young is much weaker than it was: when I was at university, we all thought of ourselves as Catholics or Protestants and largely as practicing ones, too. So we looked out for chaplains, church services and groups. Now, this is much less obvious or common as far as I can see – at least as far as many Christian denominations are concerned. Looking on from something if a distance now, it seems very hard, if not impossible, for Christian Ministers to get even a 'toehold' with students to provide the type of proactive, positive pastoral care that can do so much good. I'd be very interested to hear of current chaplains' experiences in this regard, and to learn which faiths or faith traditions have experienced this difficulty in being recognised by what once would have been willing flocks, so to speak.

Of course, chaplains are not the only ones who can or should provide campus pastoral care. Universities employ other types of professionals to do this too – counsellors, social workers, doctors etc. Is there any reason at all to have ministers of religion continue to do this work, apart from the fact that they and their Churches and faiths are prepared, by and large, to provide their pastoral services free - which in these days of shrinking budgets seems a very good reason indeed. My own experience with Father Golden prejudices me towards another reason for wanting to see ministers actively providing pastoral care on campus: and of course that reason is to provide the type of vision, or need for a vision, that Father Golden gave us. Not, of course, the exact same theological exposition that he put to us then: rather the implanting and nurturing of the worth of the quest for a real, profound appreciation of the transcending, ennobling dimensions of study, scholarship, and of professional practice. True, it is, that Ministers do not have a monopoly on such visions or on the capacity to generate enthusiasm for them. But I'm all for playing the odds – which ought to be better amongst persons professionally trained to provide pastoral care and help people find and keep in touch with their own spirits and the transcendent. And much better still – dare I say, infinitely better, where these professional understand and care about the core functions and noble missions of the University in which they operate.

What might a university ministry contribute to the second major responsibility of universities: that of supporting and nurturing scholarship and research? The answers are perhaps a bit less obvious – but let me try. Certainly in Melbourne University of the 1960's, the same type of support and underpinning that students felt for their efforts was also provided for a good number of the academic staff – especially for the transcendent potential in the scholastic and research work. In some US campus religious communities I have experienced, something of this was also to be found. Is it possible now, in the highly pressured, somewhat embattled, and from time to time seemingly desperate world of the academic? Surely it would be more needed now than it was in the more halcyon and 'gentle personly' scholarly days of the 1950's and

60's? But how to establish the links, structures and opportunities necessary if that type of Ministry to academics is to develop and flourish?

Perhaps what is needed are more organised links – Faculties or Schools of theology or biblical studies for example. Also, Ministers who also have full or part time academic jobs – and I met some powerful examples of just such people in the US, can play a crucial role, as they are more likely to be taken as colleagues and listened to as having something to actually contribute to the scholarly disciplines.

Finally, the third key responsibility of any university worth its salt, broadly speaking, is to facilitate a society's insights into itself and its values, with special emphasis upon helping it make judgments which improve the nature and quality of people's lives in them, and the dignity and worth accorded to all people by the society and its structures and groups. This is, of course, a broad and difficult challenge – which can easily be left unmet in the struggle to survive and meet the more tangible goals of teaching, research and scholarship. It can also easily be dismissed as elitism, or decried as posturing from the safe, unreal and impractical world of the ivory tower. Academics, men and women of goodwill themselves, strive to live up to these responsibilities in a variety of ways:

- in their approach to teaching students to question all manner of things, be open to new ideas, etc.
- in their scholarly work, and indeed
- in a variety of ways by contributing to the public dialogue on matters of public concern, even setting the agenda for such dialogue and debate from time to time.

A vital, positive chaplaincy to the university can offer much to assist, support and nurture these types of activities and pursuits. Firstly, in ways analogous to the pastoral role I have suggested for the support of the scholarly and research work by staff and postgraduate students. But there is more that can be asked of a campus Ministry in this third area: in lots of ways the Chaplaincy can help set the very agenda for important public dialogue about social values and priorities and shape and channel some of the terms in which academic staff contribute to that dialogue.

Our chaplaincy at UTS has made a few bold efforts to do just this – by publicly confronting us all with questions like 'Is peace possible in the Middle East?', and 'Are we serious in our expressions of commitment and sustainability of our environment and justice for our indigenous people'? Carefully chosen challenges, inviting serious, thoughtful, and analytical contributions and debate and exploration can truly have a catalytic impact. As such, they can help the university further its responsibilities in this quite difficult, and at times elusive, area of social and ethical reflection and development.

I do not want to understate the difficulties which chaplains or ministers currently find in obtaining a sufficient toe hold, much less a beach head, in the universities to enable them to play such a role – certainly at UTS we cannot claim to be much more than

opening up some first small steps in this regard. I'd be very interested in learning of other contemporary experiences in University Ministries attempting what I might loosely describe as 'social and ethical moral entrepreneurship'.

In conclusion, let me sum up. The most important professional contribution which chaplains can make to universities and their members requires a profound appreciation of, respect for and commitment to the core functions of a university. It does indeed include being attached to the university, and it can and should include spiritual practices such as the saying of prayers, and the celebration of services and the like within the university. It is very much about providing service, care, comfort, and attending to the wants and necessities of the members of the university, especially as they go about their university work – teaching and learning, research and scholarship, social and ethical understanding and analysis and comment. And what, I submit, is most important in all of this, is to challenge the university and its members to grasp, appreciate and celebrate the transcendent, if you like, the sacred, in the very core of all these types of university work.

This is no easy challenge, and there is no 'quick fix', no right formula that should be expected to work in every place, in every age.

Indeed, I expect that it has never been particularly easy to meet this challenge. But, in the modern period in Australia – with so much pressure on students to support themselves while they study, and to get into the work force full time while there are still jobs to be had – the challenge must seem almost impossible. And, of course, many of the academic and support staff at universities now report being under extreme pressure just to get through their everyday, mainstream teaching and research responsibilities. Who has the time to seek, follow, or give expression to visions? If I'm honest, this is how I feel most of the time, too.

But, as a society, can we afford not to challenge each other and our youth to rise above the perspective of the short-term - the here and now? The challenge is an ongoing one. Is it one in which those professionals in the university who are chaplains are truly in a unique position to play the catalytic role in having us all respond positively? Let me finish with Justice Cardozo's final words in one of his lectures to the Yale students:

The future ... is yours. We have been called to do our part in an ageless process. Long after I am dead and gone, and my little part in it is forgotten, you will be here to do your share, and to carry the torch forward. I know that the flame will burn bright while the torch is in your keeping.

FACTORS AFFECTING THE SUCCESS AT UNIVERSITY OF STUDENTS FROM RURAL AND ISOLATED AREAS STUDYING IN AUSTRALIAN CITIES¹

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ABSTRACT

Students from isolated and rural areas are recognised as a disadvantaged group by Australian universities. This study sought to identify factors associated with success at university and mental health for commencing students from such areas studying in full-time internal attendance-mode in Adelaide. Measures of success were: subject pass-rate and intention to persist at university. Factors investigated were perceived available social support, domestic support, achievement-motivation, locus of control, home-location, gender and term-time residence. Subjects, aged 17-20 years and numbering 121 (49 from rural and 52 from isolated areas) completed a mailed questionnaire consisting of four parts. Results demonstrated that across all the students, the greater the perceived available social support, the greater the subject pass-rate and mental health.

1. INTRODUCTION.

1.1. STATEMENT OF AIMS

Each year hundreds of students, aged 17-20 years, from rural and isolated areas of Australia relocate to the cities in order to study at university. While many achieve their goal of graduation with a degree, some do not. The number of those who do not is greater than the average for universities. The aim of this study was to identify some of the psychological and demographic factors affecting the success at university and the mental health of these students. In order to achieve this aim, a sample of students from rural and isolated areas was drawn from each of the three universities in Adelaide, South Australia.

¹ The complete methodology and data analysis may be found in the author's master's thesis "An Investigation into Factors Associated with Success at University of Students from

1.2. BACKGROUND

Urban students constitute the majority at Australian universities. Students from rural areas and students from isolated areas are two minority groups which are regarded by the Department of Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs (DEETYA) as disadvantaged when compared with urban students. The disadvantages which distinguish students from rural and isolated areas from urban students and from other equity groups are those related to the distance of their homes from cities. Distance from cities has a major impact on education in a number of ways. For example, secondary-school students in both rural areas and isolated areas may have to take certain subjects required for university entrance by correspondence. Alternatively, they may spend a number of years in boarding-school. Some students with academic ability may not consider tertiary education because the costs, such as financial and emotional, may be considered too high.

Because they have the disadvantages of distance in common, 'Rural Students' and 'Isolated Students' are two groups which have been combined to form one of the national equity groups in tertiary education: 'Rural and Isolated Students'. Universities have treated the group 'Rural and Isolated Students' separately from other equity groups because of its different population characteristics and the different way in which it participates in tertiary education. As an equity group, it has been the only one since 1990 to have shown a declining trend in access and participation (Martin, 1995).

Although combined to form one equity group, nevertheless access, participation, and performance indicators for 'Rural Students' and for 'Isolated Students' are recorded and analysed separately by universities. Rural and isolated areas have been operationally defined by the postcode of students' home location. This study used the classification of postcodes devised by the Department of Primary Industry and Energy. Postcodes were classified as urban, rural or isolated. The division between rural and isolated was based on an index of remoteness which combined population density and distance from the nearest provincial city (population 25,000 or more) (Martin, 1994).

Students from isolated areas have been one of the most disadvantaged groups in terms of access to university education and the most under-represented group in terms of participation. Two points should be noted. First, some of its members are also members of the indigenous equity group. Second, is a strong correlation between isolated areas and low socio-economic status, which has not been so evident for rural areas (Martin, 1995).

Each of the three universities in Adelaide has instituted schemes to provide assistance to students from country schools to gain access to a place within the university. However, Martin (1995) stated that on a national level, both rural and

Rural and isolated Areas Studying in Adelaide", University of South Australia.

isolated students were still under-represented in both the commencing and total student profiles.

1.3. CURRENT SUCCESS OF 'RURAL STUDENTS' AND 'ISOLATED STUDENTS'

At Australian universities, student success has typically been interpreted in two ways:

- 1) Subject pass rate – successful completion of all or a significant proportion of units undertaken within any given year of study.
- 2) Persistence to graduation – successful completion all of the requirements for an award over a period of years (Martin, 1994).

On a national level, students from isolated areas achieved a lower than average subject pass-rate (Martin, 1994). Furthermore, these students showed much poorer persistence in their courses, thus compounding their already low participation rate in tertiary education (Martin, 1994). Statements and/or performance indicators given in the equity plans of each of the three universities in Adelaide, reflected Martin's (1994) statements on the whole, but with some variations.

1.4. FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH TERTIARY EDUCATIONAL SUCCESS AND MENTAL HEALTH

The first year of university can be a highly stressful period for many students. The stress is a result of the multiple and varied demands of a new social (Jay & D'Augelli, 1991), as well as a new academic, environment.

Studies in the United States of America (USA) have found that commencing students experienced more adjustment problems than did other academic classes, including more appetite disturbances, feelings of worthlessness, concentration problems, depression, and suicidal thoughts (Kashani & Priesmeyer, 1983). Commencing students also reported experiencing loneliness (Cutrona, 1982) lower self-esteem, and higher frequencies of life changes than did senior students (Marron & Kayson, 1984).

University attrition rates have been heaviest at the end of the first year of a new student intake (Pascarella & Chapman, 1983). Thus commencing students have been more at risk of withdrawing from university than students in other academic categories.

Martin (1995) stated that analysis of tertiary performance data showed that the best single predictor of persistence across the sector (rural and isolated) was attendance-mode. Internal, full-time students had considerably higher retention rates (eighty-three percent) than either internal part-time (sixty-seven percent) or external students (sixty-five percent).

Since students from isolated areas were more than twice as likely to be studying by external attendance-mode than were urban students, this may go some way towards accounting for their lower persistence (Martin, 1995) and achievement. In the present study, all students were studying full-time and by internal attendance-mode.

Investigated for their possible effects on subject pass-rate, intention to persist with tertiary education, and mental health (anxiety and depression), were the following factors: home-location, gender, term-time residence, social support, domestic support, achievement motivation and locus of control.

1.4.1. Home-location.

In the USA, distance from home has been found to make a significant incremental contribution to the prediction of psychological symptoms as well as to the academic and social adjustment of university students (Brooks & Dubois, 1995).

1.4.2. Term-time Residence.

In the USA, commencing students have typically left home and entered a tertiary college which is both academic and residential. Pascarella and Chapman (1983) found that in primarily residential universities, residing on campus (versus off campus) had reliable, positive direct and indirect effects on persistence.

In Australia, most students commute to university. Many universities have residential buildings on, or adjacent to, their campuses. The majority of these buildings are either colleges or halls of residence. In Adelaide, the University of Adelaide and the University of South Australia have four and five campuses respectively. Only Flinders University, with a hall of residence, and the Roseworthy (agricultural) campus of the University of Adelaide, with a college, have residential buildings on campus for commencing students.

There are four independent colleges for undergraduates within walking distance of the main University of Adelaide campus, and of two of the five campuses of the University of South Australia. The other campuses of these universities, as well as Flinders University, are accessible from these colleges by public transport. In addition, a number of student-hostels have been established particularly in response to the demand placed on the universities by international students.

Commencing students relocating from rural or isolated areas do not necessarily consider entering a communal residence, whether college, hall or hostel. Some students may indeed decide to do so, while others may choose to live in other kinds of dwellings, for example in flats on their own or in share-houses with one or two other persons. Alternatively, they may make arrangements to board with an individual or a family. The individual or family may or may not be known to the student.

Reviewing the literature, the Australian researchers McInnes and James (1995), suggested that the social and academic adjustment of first-year students was facilitated by living in a residential college. The type of accommodation in which a student resides may be one factor which could determine the amount of social support and domestic support that a student receives.

1.4.3.Social Support.

Given prior levels of motivation and commitment to complete a degree, individual decisions relating to persistence at university may also be affected by a student's perception of the supportiveness of his or her social network.

Students from rural and isolated areas have left family, friends and communities: individuals and groups on whom they have relied for social support of many kinds. Some degree of support can still be given and received over distance. However, one of the major disadvantages for these students is that of losing the physical immediacy of their familiar social support network while, at the same time, facing the demands of adjusting to tertiary study, city life, and a new level of personal independence.

In a British study, Rickinson and Rutherford (1995) found that the availability of appropriate academic and personal support had an effect on whether a student felt able to make a commitment to university education and to a particular degree course, resulting in persistence.

There has been an apparent paucity of research conducted with students from rural and isolated areas, particularly using the social support construct. It has not been known whether there are any gender differences.

In the present study the factor of social support consisted of the three categories of Cohen and Hoberman (1983), namely, appraised, belonging, and tangible social support.

1.4.4. Domestic support.

As a form of tangible social support, the actual domestic support available to these students was also investigated, together with any possible effect it may have had on tertiary success and mental health. It was expected that domestic support would be associated with certain kinds of residences in a way that other forms of social support were not. Therefore, this study explored its effects apart from social support. Domestic support was considered particularly relevant to commencing university students aged 17 to 20 years living away from home for the first time.

It should be noted that students from rural and isolated areas, studying at a university in Adelaide, are more likely to reside in a college or hall than are their urban (Adelaide) peers. Some students may have boarded with a family.

However, the most common alternative for all classes of students who have not lived at home, has been to live in a flat as sole occupant or in a share-house.

In the share-house arrangement, two or more students live together in a flat or house, sharing the financial costs, household responsibilities, and domestic chores. Of all living arrangements, the flat and share-house require of a student the highest level of independence.

This study investigated the effect on university success of domestic support as the provision of most meals, vacuum-cleaning of a student's room, and the laundering of bed-linen.

1.4.5. Achievement-motivation

Students from rural and isolated areas, who have left their homes, relocated and commenced tertiary studies, may already have overcome significant social and psychological barriers.

Factors related to the family seem to have an effect on tertiary educational success. The individual's ability also has an effect. However, a number of researchers have suggested that, once ability has been taken into account, other psychological variables become the most influential in determining achievement and persistence. Tinto (1975) cited a number of studies conducted in the sixties and early seventies which indicated an association between motivation, need-achievement, and performance at university.

Achievement motivation is a future-oriented drive (de Charms & Muir, 1978), and an individual's behaviour in the present is determined by future short-term and long-term goals. This study investigated the effects on university success of achievement motivation as the movement towards the fulfilment of university education.

1.4.6. Locus of Control

Individuals who, on the whole, perceive that reinforcement depends upon their own behaviour or attributes are said to have a more internal than external locus of control. Those who, on the whole, perceive their behaviour as controlled by forces outside of themselves, and possibly independent of their own actions, are said to have a more external than internal locus of control. A number of studies have found gender differences in locus of control. For example, in a study of male and female students at the State University of Antwerp, de Brabander and Boone (1990) found that females were more external than males.

Caldwell, Pearson and Chin (1987) concluded that depressive reactions may well be a joint outcome of specific life stress impinging on vulnerable individuals. Thus, it was expected that students who were adjusting emotionally, as measured by the General Health Questionnaire (GHQ), would have a somewhat more internal

than external locus of control. It was also expected that males would have a somewhat more internal locus of control than females.

2. RESEARCH QUESTIONS.

- 2.1. Did any of the independent variables, that is, perceived available social support, domestic support, achievement motivation, locus of control, home-location, gender or residence affect the subject pass rate of students from rural and isolated areas?
- 2.2. Did any of the above independent variables affect the intention to persist with tertiary education of students from rural and isolated areas?
- 2.3. Did any of the above independent variables affect the mental health of students from rural and isolated areas?

3. SUMMARY OF THE METHOD.

The study used a mailed questionnaire survey. Respondents' data was analysed using Pearson 'R' correlation coefficients (one-tailed) and multiple regression. The statistical package for the social sciences (SPSS-PC) was used to conduct the analysis.

4. SUMMARY OF THE MULTIPLE REGRESSION ANALYSIS.

 i) ALL SUBJECTS

Relationships

PREDICTORS

HOME

GENDER

RESIDENCE

SOC.SUPPORT

DOM.SUPPORT

ACH.MOTIVATION

LOCUS OF CONTROL

SUCCESS

SUBJECT PASS-RATE

INTENTION TO PERSIST

MENTAL HEALTH

Figure 1. The emergent model of relationships between predictors and success at university as measured by subject pass-rate and intention to persist with tertiary education; and between predictors and mental health for all subjects.

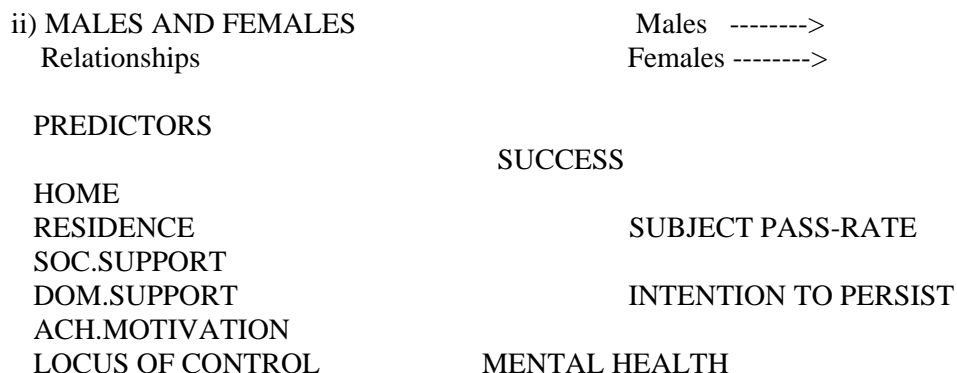


Figure 2. The emergent model of relationships between predictors and success at university as measured by subject pass-rate and intention to persist with tertiary education; and between predictors and mental health for males and females.

5. FINDINGS

This study found the following.

- 1) As perceived available social support increased, subject pass-rate also increased while anxiety and depression decreased.
- 2) There were no significant differences between students from rural areas and students from isolated areas on any of the variables investigated, however,
- 3) there was a tendency for male students from isolated areas towards greater anxiety and depression than male students from rural areas.
- 4) Female students had less domestic support and internal locus of control than male students, and
- 5) as domestic support and internal locus of control increased for female students, anxiety and depression decreased.
- 6) Students in flats/share-houses had less perceived available social support, less domestic support, more anxiety and depression, and a tendency towards less intention to persist with university education than students in communal dwellings.
- 7) There was no effect of achievement motivation on success or mental health.

8) There was a significant inverse correlation between intention to persist with university education and anxiety and depression.

5. CONCLUSION.

Given the same opportunity for full-time, internal attendance-mode, students from isolated areas appeared to be as successful at university, in terms of subject pass-rate and intention to persist with tertiary education, as students from rural areas. On the whole, they also seemed to have adjusted emotionally to their new life-style as well as rural students. However, the apparent tendency for male students from isolated areas to have suffered more anxiety and depression than had their rural confreres could be investigated.

Students need to have the perception that social support is available to them in order to access it. This perception was found to be significant for the subject pass-rate and emotional adjustment of all of these students. Examples of the three categories of social support are as follows:

- (appraised) a student knowing and seeing often someone with whom he or she would feel comfortable discussing personal problems with sexual matters, drugs, relationships with parents or friends, and so on;
- (belonging) a student being in regular contact with his or her family, being a member of social groups (such as church groups, clubs, teams, and so on), having close-by friends with whom to share a variety of activities and with whom to spend time;
- (tangible) a student knowing someone who would lend him or her money if he or she needed it, would help him or her study for an exam, would bring him or her meals and/or hand-in assignments at the university if he or she were sick, provide transport when necessary, and so on.

Students living in communal residences perceived themselves as having more social support available than students living in flats or share-houses. Since the perception of the availability of social support affects subject pass-rate and mental health, it appeared that students living in flats and share-houses could be disadvantaged on these factors compared with students living in communal residences.

No significant difference was found in the subject pass-rate between these two categories of students. However, there did seem to be a difference in mental health such that students living in flats or share-houses reported significantly more anxiety and depression than students living in communal residences.

Female students reported less domestic support and a perception of being less in control of the circumstances of their lives than did male students. These two factors seemed to have an effect on the mental health of female students, such that

as they decreased, the anxiety and depression of female students increased. There also appeared to be a difference in the mental health of female students compared with male students. Female students reported significantly more anxiety and depression than male students.

Female students and students living in flats or share-houses have specific needs. However, the desirability of social support, of domestic support, and of a perception of being in control of the circumstances of their lives is perhaps something which could be explicated and emphasised to all potential university students from rural and isolated areas. This may be as part of some kind of preparation by school or university counsellors, who may also assist students with strategies for achieving the three factors as objectives. Since many of these students could be financially dependent to some extent on their parents, it might also assist the students if their parents participated in any preparation. At the same time, universities may do well to encourage a culture which allows students to feel a sense of belonging.

University chaplains may be in a unique position to provide a range of social support options to students from rural and isolated areas, particularly to those who are not living in communal residences. The role of chaplain is understood by many of these students. Chaplains have become as much a part of many state schools as of Church affiliated schools. In many cases, university chaplains are able to provide an initial link between a student's home parish or school and the university.

Providing such a link may be achieved directly by visiting the parish or school of prospective tertiary students; or indirectly by authorising and assisting in the arrangements for parish or school visits by current tertiary students; or by eliciting letters of commendation from parish priests or school chaplains and following up the students so commended.

It may also be possible for many chaplains to arrange some measure of domestic support, particularly in consultation with female students living on their own or in a share-house with one or two others. Such an arrangement could be made through parishes.

Some university chaplains are also chaplains living in colleges. These chaplains may be able to assist students from rural and isolated areas by drawing attention to the various kinds of social support available within the college. College chaplains may also assist by actively working to develop or maintain a culture in which students feel confident in accessing and giving social support.

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Guidelines for submission of articles

The Journal of the TCMA is the professional journal of the Tertiary Campus Ministry Association. The guiding editorial policy is that articles should be of interest to campus chaplains. They may include comment and debate on current issues, reports of chaplaincy services and activities, policy matters, research projects, reviews of relevant books and the like.

Manuscripts should be submitted on 3.5 inch floppy disk plus one paper copy. The disk must be IBM formatted and the paper should preferably be saved as a Microsoft Word (Windows 95) file. However, other commonly used word processing formats may be readable. Contributors will be contacted if there are difficulties in reading disks submitted. Footnotes should be kept to a minimum, if used at all. Any diagrams and tables included in the text must be no larger than 23 x 16 cms. Authors need to provide a cover sheet to their paper, clearly indicating their name, institutional affiliation, contact address, telephone and fax numbers and email contact.

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