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# Parish Piety and Public Pragmatism

Michael Challen

TO THE GLORY OF GOD AND IN COMMEMORATION OF  
THE FOUNDATION OF  
THE BROTHERHOOD OF ST LAURENCE  
ON THIS SITE 8 DEC 1930  
CO-FOUNDER FATHER G K TUCKER

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**PARISH PIETY  
AND  
PUBLIC PRAGMATISM**

The Sixth G.T. Sambell Memorial Oration  
delivered by

*The Right Reverend M.B. Challen*

on

7th December, 1986 at the

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## FOREWORD

In honour of Geoffrey Tremayne Sambell

Geoffrey Tremayne Sambell was born in Broadford, Victoria in 1914 and later attended Melbourne Boys High School. His leadership qualities were recognised when he was selected for the Lord Somers Camp, after which he played rugby with Powerhouse. This fostered his interest in young people and led him into a leadership role in the Church of England Boys Society.

During a short but promising business career he was involved with St Mark's Social Settlement during the 1930s. He was then called to the ministry and he entered Ridley College and was ordained in 1940. After serving a curacy at St John's East Malvern he served with great distinction as a Chaplain with the Australian Military Forces, both in the 57/60 and 2/11 battalions in New Guinea where he was mentioned in despatches. After the war he completed his B.A. at Melbourne University.

In 1947 he was appointed Director of the Melbourne Diocesan Centre, a co-ordinated multi-parish and chaplaincy venture based in the inner city. While in that position he was appointed as Archdeacon of Melbourne in 1961 when he became for a time the Director of Home Missions. In the midst of his Diocesan responsibilities, and his leadership of the Brotherhood of St Laurence he was also Warden of the Mission to Streets and Lanes, and involved in other welfare activities including the Victorian Council of Social Service. He was consecrated Bishop in St Paul's Cathedral Melbourne on 24th February 1962 and subsequently enthroned Archbishop of Perth in 1969. He died in December 1980 after an outstanding Episcopate in Western Australia and throughout the national church.

The G. T. Sambell Memorial Oration has been established by the Brotherhood of St Laurence to commemorate his work. His connection with the Brotherhood was longstanding and arose out of his deep social concern which had been the chief among the several forces which led him into full-time service of the church. He had great organising ability, recognised by Fr Tucker who invited him to join the Brotherhood in 1949. He was firstly involved as a member of the Board of Directors, then as Bursar, Director of Social Services and in 1956 Director and Deputy Chairman of the Board. Later in the 1960s he became Chairman of the Board, a post he retained until he moved to Perth.

Geoffrey Sambell was a big man, in body, mind and spirit. Long before he died (at the age of 66) his influence had been felt far and wide in the Anglican Communion and in the ecumenical movement beyond. He twice represented the Australian Church at the East Asia Christian Conference, and was the representative of South-East Asia on the Executive Officer's Advisory Committee of the Lambeth

Consultative Body. In Australia he was the dynamic Chairman of the General Synod Social Responsibilities Commission, which under his leadership spoke out for the national church on social question. He was respected and listened to by Government at both State and Federal levels, and in 1978 he was appointed Chairman of the Federal Government's Social Welfare Advisory Committee.

He was a forceful character who could, and sometimes did, ride roughshod over opposition, backing his judgment and knowing that he was right. But behind the bluff exterior he had the heart of a pastor who never spared himself for anyone, clergyman or layman, who needed his help. He had vision, but it was a very "down to earth" vision; he was a loyal Anglican but at the same time a wholehearted ecumenist; he was a missionary and a missionary, but spurned paternalism or ecclesiastical triumphalism; he was an ordained priest, but no one welcomed the rediscovered "priesthood" of the laity more than he did or had more friends amongst them.

Leader, pastor, organiser, financier - he was all these, but much more, a man of God.

December, 1981.

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#### **G.T. Sambell Orations:**

- 1981: Why Care? The basis for Christian social action; Archbishop Sir Frank Woods.
- 1982: God, People and Resources. A Christian comment on the values of Australian society; Oliver Heyward.
- 1983: Educating for Justice. A Conversation with the Church about its life and Gospel; Denham Grierson.
- 1984: Giving and Receiving. The framework of social support for individuals and families; Jean McCaughey.
- 1985: Ancient Laws and Modern Dilemmas; David Scott

# PARISH PIETY AND PUBLIC PRAGMATISM

## 1. Introduction

The focus of any oration to honour the life and ministry of Geoffrey Sambell surely must be on the theme the Gospel and Society. In this talk I wish to explore with you how the local Church within certain limits can assist individual Christians to participate meaningfully and hopefully within the frustrations and compromises of public involvement. The assumption behind this presentation is that the local Church attracts and conditions people more on the basis of the images and experiences it promotes through its structures and activities rather than by its explicit teaching.

## 2. The Gospel and Public Life

It is hardly necessary to justify to this audience the responsibility of Christ's Church to join Him in His world as He acts creatively and redemptively to bring that world to its fulfilment. But it is necessary to share this perspective with those Christians, and there are a growing number at this time, who limit God's activity to the salvation of the soul of the individual with respect to what lies ahead after the critical experience of death and judgement.

Geoffrey Sambell taught and practised the dual ministries of evangelism and service. He made a point of conducting missions every year or so. He was forever promoting the work of the overseas responsibilities of the Church especially within Asia and the Pacific. His development of creative social services and prophetic concern for social issues is well known. The most inspiring and effective structural expression of his comprehensive understanding of the Gospel during his ministry of forty years was the programme he launched as Archbishop in the Diocese of Perth, to which he gave the catchy slogan "Celebration '75". In his Charge to the 1973 session of the Perth Synod, he outlined his understanding of salvation. Then in characteristic style he asked the Diocesan family to act. To quote that charge -

"I talked Salvation in my Synod Sermon. I want us to do something about it, and I charge this Diocese to do something

about it in two directions - one in Upreach (i.e. spirituality) and the other in Outreach (i.e. social services)".

That released a process which led to 17,000 Anglicans gathering for a most joyful and memorable Eucharist and the establishment of the Anglican Health and Welfare Services. The conclusion of that Charge is worth hearing for its Sambellian style and perception.

"If you are disturbed by the above programme, I don't mind. If you are scared by its implications, I am also. If you plead for the Church to move into action, you have the opportunity."

"If I finish this Charge where I started my Synod sermon, I remind you that it is God alone who acts in this world, who enables, who liberates, who saves. I am asking you to join with me in participating with God in His task of Salvation".

One common way of expressing the relationship of the two ministries is -

"if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another" (1 John 4:11).

Here St John insists that integrity before god who is love and who loves, requires us to love others. This is not unlike the old Jewish laws -

"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might (Deuteronomy 6:5)" and "You shall love your neighbour as yourself" (Leviticus 18:18).

Significantly Jesus brought these separate injunctions to love God and to love your neighbour together (Matthew 22:37-40) when asked by an inquisitorial lawyer to adjudicate which was "the great commandment in the law". The two responsibilities are intertwined since they are both elements of the love response to the source of Love.

Other key Christian doctrines have been explored in an attempt to understand the relationship God has with His Creation and His creatures and hence what is to constitute faithful Christian obedience and witness. The Catholic tradition in theology and spirituality has focussed particularly on the belief that in Jesus Christ, who is the Creative Word, God not only revealed Himself in time and space but

identified with both the natural order and also the lot of frail and sinful humans - such an exciting and encompassing revelation is summed up in St John's words -

"The Word became flesh and dwelt amongst us" (John 1:14),

or, alternatively, those of St Paul, -

"For in Him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross" (Colossians 1:20).

It is from such a conviction of God being united with His spoiled creation that the nineteenth century heroic missions to the slums of the burgeoning cities and the Christian Socialist Union arose in England. Their witness, works and writings had influence even into the twentieth century and in as distant places as Australia.

Another key doctrine that is very prominent in contemporary Church life is that of "the Kingdom of God". The "Inter-Anglican Theological and Doctrinal Commission" has just released a discussion booklet, **For the Sake of the Kingdom**. This short study identifies some of the critical theological questions before the Church at the moment and which the bishops need to be seriously considering as they prepare for their 1988 Lambeth Conference.

"The Kingdom of God" is a dominant and positive theme of the first three Gospels. It is also to be found within, but to a lesser extent, the writings of St John and St Paul. While the imagery is somewhat remote from modern political systems, it nevertheless speaks to the human's deep longing for interior harmony and social cohesion. The phrase does not refer to a territory, i.e. a kingdom. Rather it refers to a regime, a dynamic, a relationship that the God who is love has already established and is ever seeking to incorporate his people into.

This doctrine of the kingdom means that the Christian is to be open to the signs of love, creativity and hope that arise from the everyday scene. Also he is to be the bearer of those same signs as he, both as an individual-in-society and also as co-worker with the Author of the kingdom, engages actively and positively within the everyday. He does so happily since the everyday is full of divine disclosures and requests for faithful service, i.e. the everyday is the matrix within

which the life of love comes to be known and is to be responded to. He does so realistically knowing that natural, human and societal relationships are very faulty and need transformation. He does so hopefully knowing that the very experience of the kingdom in the now is the foretaste of the kingdom yet to be established in all its fulness.

However, notwithstanding a centuries' teaching on Christ's commitment to the world, Christians find a great gulf between Sunday and Monday the Church and the office or factory, Christian dreaming and weekday living, parish piety and public pragmatism.

### 3. Causes of the Gulf

Various people have written about this dichotomy from different perspectives. Simon Phipps, recently the Bishop of Lincoln, but when the Industrial Chaplain for the Diocese of Coventry, wrote on this theme under the title **God on Monday**. He believed that its origins are essentially theological -

"... it lies in the realm of ideas" (page 11),

but begins, perhaps inconsistently but pertinently to reveal there could be structural, non-theological factors when he writes later the following -

"But the world of personal affairs, and therefore the largely female world, the "religious" world, is seen as separate from the other world, where men are at work - the world of public affairs, the secular world, which remains outside the "religion", "religiously inexplicable" (page 40)."

I say, inconsistently, because he introduces the sociological factors of the roles of men and women in society as an explanation in part of this gulf.

Of course our preparation for community life and its tasks commences in the family where we learn the art of communal life through one-to-one relationships. Here we come to expect to act according to love, reason, principles and as expressed in historically received roles. But as we enter larger social settings such as a school, or a business corporation or the wider society, we discover corporate relationships are defined by and operate according to the dynamics of

power, whether within or without a particular context. In the last analysis, power centres act according to their own interests and their relative power. The most obvious illustration of this "law" is to be found in the behaviour of our Governments (Federal or State) at this time. These governments have been drawn from parties each with their distinctive and long-standing ideology. But once in power, they have acted on some occasions clearly against their ideology and stated policies. Their decisions have caused surprise to the electorate generally and disillusionment to many of their members in particular. Many hurt citizens would accuse our members of parliament of self-protecting dishonesty, and cynical behaviour. Certainly those Christians who habitually understand and evaluate human actions in terms of one-to-one relationships are prone to come to terms with such unprincipled conduct in terms of the doctrine of sin.

It was the American theologian Reinhold Niebuhr (1892-1971) who virtually spent his whole life exploring this unpalatable observation about corporate life. He showed of what little use was the thinking of either religious or moral rationalists in their dream that society would become more harmonious as its members became more rational or adopted moral ideals. In his **Moral Man and Immoral Society** (1932) he wrote -

"What is lacking among all those moralists, whether religious or rational, is an understanding of the brutal character of the behaviour of all human collectives, and the power of self-interest and collective egoism in all intergroup relations. Failure to recognise the stubborn resistance of group egoism to all moral and inclusive social objectives inevitably involves them in unrealistic and confused political thought. They regard social conflict either as an impossible method of achieving morally approved ends or as a momentary expedient which a more perfect education or a purer religion will make unnecessary. They do not see that the limitations of the human imagination, the easy subservience of reason to prejudice and passion, and the consequent persistence of irrational egoism, particularly in group behaviour, make social conflict an inevitability in human history, probably to its very end."

"Our contemporary culture fails to realise the power, extent

and persistence of group egotism in human relations. It may be possible, though it is never easy, to establish just relations between individuals within a group purely by moral and rational persuasion and accommodation. In inter-group relations this is practically an impossibility. The relations between groups must therefore always be predominantly political rather than ethical, that is, they will be determined by the proportion of power which each group possesses at least as much as by any rational and moral appraisal of the comparative needs and claims of each group." (page XX)

Before such assertions we can passively acquiesce, commenting to ourself, "Well, that's the way it is", or we can take a positive stand with Bishop David Jenkins who comments in Elliott's **Christian Faith and Political Hopes**,

"The increasing politicization of our lives . . . is not simply a sign of secularized and degenerate times. It is a true "sign of the times" which has to be critically, sympathetically and severely discerned to learn what is of God in it, what invifes a deepening of our understanding of the human condition and what is part of the continuing effects of sin." (page 148)

It is my contention that most Christians need to be helped to perceive the nature of how public or corporate life functions, how they are caught up in it whether as citizens, tax payers, consumers or as social activists and how the Christian faith may speak to this impersonal, unprincipled, pervasive, powerful but elusive dynamic of power.

For me, the main difficulty we Christians have in seeing the public world Christologically lies in the inadequate contribution our parishes make to our own social development. Most parish programmes are related to the personal and familial aspects of human involvement. Little reference, let alone appraisal, is made to the public sector.

Now it is our social setting which has a large effect on the boundaries of our life experiences, our perception of life and the development of a way of thinking or belief that will give coherence and meaning to that perception. For a person who is dealing in one-to-one relationships predominantly, then his experience of life will be highly personal and he will probably conclude that reality is personal.

Furthermore if he finds that in those relationships, individuals are making decisions with awareness of others, according to a relatively clear set of values and logical thought, then he may further declare that reality is moral and rational. Finally, if within such relationships, the individual finds freedom, dignity and the possibility to contribute creatively, then his evolving "world view" will probably include the notions of human worth.

In contrast, we can think of an individual with only little power employed within a complex bureaucracy constrained by economics, by restricted information where he is primarily expected to be obedient rather than creative and where the organization's values are threatened by vigorous competitors. Such a person's experience of life will be so different to that of the first example and his framework of meaning will probably be radically different.

Again we can contrast both of these examples with the desperate person who from birth has been threatened by disease, illiteracy, poverty, ostracization, powerlessness and hostile bureaucracies because he has been born with a black skin.

The effect of our location in a society is well illustrated by the response parishioners give to Mary's song, "The Magnificat". The words "He has filled the hungry with good things and the rich He has sent empty away" are quite happily interpreted literally by congregations in materially poor situations, whereas they are heard as allegory only by those in affluent areas.

For those who want to examine the effect of social setting on personal outlook, I suggest that they read **The Social Construction of Reality** by Berger & Luckmann.

Decisions that are made in the context of such public areas as government, industry, commerce and finance are primarily the result of the interaction of various groups and their power. The power of an organization may lay in one or more forms, namely physical or political power, whereby control is effected over people's bodies; economic power whereby control is exercised over another's purse or daily bread and cultural power through which influence is directed towards people's minds and hearts. These powers are so pervasive and interlocking that they are not usually identified with any one person or organization - and just as well we might be prompted to say. However because of their systemic nature, they cannot be appealed to on the grounds of principle or reason. Nor can they be held accountable. They can only be checked by manipulating their grounds of self-interest which

are usually either political or economic.

World views such as Christianity which express values in personal terms have little direct relevance to these amorphous, elusive dynamics. Is it any wonder then that the goals and values enshrined in normal parish life seem to be so irrelevant to the public domain? Yet the Church claims to know the Christ who is the Author, Redeemer and End of all life and is constrained to preach Him as Good News for all of humanity.

#### 4. Bridging the Gap

The usual parish shapes a parishioner mainly through three "agents of socialization", the priest, the programme and the liturgy or Eucharist. Let us briefly consider each in turn.

##### 4.1 The Priest

As is indicated by the impact of the departure and arrival of successive parish priests upon the life of a parish, he still has a great influence notwithstanding the increasing involvement of the laity in actual ministry. This influence arises from his calling being recognized by the Church, his actual role as rector/vicar, his specialized training and from the fact that he is usually deployed full-time. The priest of course comes to both his training and appointment with experience of the world. This certainly includes that of family and friends. Prior to training he may have a taste of corporate powers either passively or actively while in secular employment. But this latter aspect of human life is quickly displaced by the routine of both college training and ecclesiastically oriented parish duties. Religion traditionally, including Christianity has been strongly linked with birth, adolescence, marriage and death. The parish priest is bound then to be caught up with a highly personalized world and in so doing draws on the insights of both psychology and theology in order to minister more effectively to people. But this round of pastoral duties, and the undergirding academic conditions will condition the priest to see a particular parishioner or family primarily in the context of their own immediate setting. There is a pre-disposition not to allow for the impact (say) economic and social changes, are having on that highly personalized setting. There is little pressure upon the priest to grapple with the theological issues emerging from the social

circumstances of those parishioners. Consequently, the priest himself remains within a privatized perception of the Gospel - and it is from this understanding that he in turn instructs, exhorts and supports the people.

If this analysis is valid, then it is imperative that our priests are exposed once again to the dynamics of impersonal, corporate forces, and be required to reflect upon their experiences and possible responses in terms of the Gospel. Of course, the life of the parish as an ecclesiastical organization is one opportunity for such reflection. In addition, he would do well to be involved in some pertinent social issue and resulting social action in which he learns to identify interest groups, centres of power, forms of power, the application of power, the necessity to work with people committed to the same goal but for different reasons, to make responsible compromises, to experience both success and failure.

In addition to such experientially based learning, the priest can gain much from his numerous parishioners, many of whom are located in such power settings by virtue of their daily work. Ideally, every parish should have action - reflection groups consisting of people drawn from different sectors and levels of society, who feel they can entrust themselves to one another confidently, sharing the issues their daily work in the public world present and supporting one another as they endeavour to make responsible decisions. The priest will need to be a patient student and an attentive listener within such a group. He will need to tax his imagination and stretch his intellect as he endeavours to relate the great Christian doctrines concerning creation, human nature, sin, the Kingdom of God, the Incarnation, the Body of Christ and "the Last Things" to specific issues confronting his parishioners here and now.

The members of such action-reflection groups will need to be able to detach themselves from lesser loyalties such as the peer group, the political party, the union, the firm, and progressively be committed to and be in Christ. Indeed it is through such discussions that, perhaps, we begin to learn to what or whom we are really bound and how far we are from being truly "in Christ". In other words, such groups are involved in a powerful process of "sanctification" even if when it is concerned seemingly about unholy matters.

## 4.2 The Parish Programme

The parish programme consists of both its formal activities such as services, Christian education (for all ages), counselling of those seeking baptism, marriage or are bereaved. It also includes the activities of its various groups and committees. The programme inescapably has its informal aspects too, which subtly indicate what is the actual if not desired purpose, acceptable style and limits of commitment for that parish. Examples are items for prayer, acceptable topics for conversation over morning tea, community issues which are highlighted or which are ignored. I have come to the conclusion that neither the formal nor the informal parish programme intentionally helps people to bridge the gulf between parish piety and public pragmatism. In fact the contrary would be the case. Frequently the discussion of public issues and predicaments are taboo. Apparently a parishioner's public loyalty must be consistent with the interests of the dominating groups or persons within the congregation. Our Christian education programmes are predominantly focused on the received Faith with little reference to what God might be doing in or asking of our society at this time. Excepting for those of us who are actively engaged in corporate affairs or politics, few would know how the public world "works". If we are to break through these constraints of custom, conformity, irrelevancy and ignorance, parishioners need to be introduced to simple tools whereby they can begin to work out for themselves how their neighbourhood, State, corporation, Church or nation "works"... Our parish "Christian Formation" programmes should then include an elementary course in **Social Analysis** (Holland and Henriott) or structural analysis. (Action for World Development conduct courses in the latter.) The purpose of such analysis is to learn "who decides who shall gain what at whose expense". No doubt such programmes will be seen by some Christians as being irreligious and political. Of course they are political since they are to help us to understand how the "polis" is ordered. But they are also religious, in the Christian sense, since they help us to see how we should act so that our society may be more consistent with the Kingdom of God.

To participate in a process of social analysis can be enlightening, threatening and transforming for the participant. It can be enlightening not only in the sense of discovering the realities of the interaction of powers, but also in helping a person to appreciate why personal ideals seem to be displaced by corporate forces. It can be

threatening for such analysis can expose one's own allegiances and interests and the gap between personal beliefs and actual behaviour. But it can be transforming as the participant begins to see that Christ is at the centre of all, is inviting all to be co-workers with Him and that he, the individual, does have a place in the unfolding Divine drama.

### 4.3 Liturgy

This thought naturally leads us to the third and essential element of the socialization of the parishioner by the local parish, namely the Holy Communion, the Eucharist or the Liturgy. Centuries of experience has confirmed for a countless number of diverse Christians that when the Church meets to break bread with its Lord, then it truly is the Church and the Kingdom of God is most evident.

A Richard Fenn (see Leech) says of this ancient Christ given worship,

"To take part in Christian liturgy is to take on one's role in a new Kingdom: one that "shall have no end". It is the political act of all time and is therefore potentially seditious within the secular politics of a specific time and space. Caesar understood the political nature of the liturgy all too well". (page 294)

Presumably, you like me, have had those experiences at the Holy Communion when, so to speak, everything and everyone comes together. You are at peace with yourself, you are content; you are at peace with others. As you marvel at the stream of devout communicants drawn from such a great variety of circumstances, allegiances and positions of power or powerlessness and who are all sharing in the common food of the Divine Life, a vision of the unity and fulfilment of humanity floods your heart and expands your mind - human beings at one with another because they have been drawn to the one God; transcending all differences and deficiencies; individuals gladly offering their skills, their opportunities and love back to their Creator. The Kingdom has come - you know it; and the Kingdom therefore is. When we see our own life and all life within this Cosmic Action of Christ, then are we freed of limited perception, loyalties and interests. The Liturgy undermines parochialism of any sort. It is creatively seditious.

But if experience is a guide, the liturgy as we have it is not

evidently politically seditious, Leech (page 297) himself has identified two contrasting theologies of the Eucharist in its relation to the world. He distinguishes between "a theology of withdrawal and spiritualization" and a "theology of transformation". Australian Anglicans did not have a new prayer-book until 1978. This means those of us who are of 30 years or more were influenced in our formative years by the Book of Common Prayer of 1662 or its derivative, the Alternative Prayer Book of 1928. The so-called Consecration Prayer in both books focuses very much on the suffering and death of Christ and virtually makes no reference to the Divine acts of Creation, Incarnation, Resurrection, Ascension or the Eschaton. In effect, this prayer focuses on the individual and his need for repentance leading to salvation.

"Almighty God, our heavenly Father, who of thy tender mercy didst give thine only Son Jesus Christ to suffer death upon the Cross for our redemption; who made there (by his one oblation of himself once offered) a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction, for the sins of the whole world; and did institute, and in his holy Gospel command us to continue, a perpetual memory of that his precious death, until his coming again."

It develops in the mind of the worshipper a highly individualistic appreciation of Christ's work of salvation, the benefits of which seem to be primarily related to the Final Judgement. They do not seem to apply either to those outside the covenant or to the corporate and cosmic elements of the Creation as affirmed by St Paul in his letters to both Ephesus and Colossae.

The Australian Liturgical Commission was necessarily under some constraint when evolving **An Australian Prayer Book** since the Church's constitution declares that while this Church "has plenary authority at its own discretion . . . to order its forms of worship", nevertheless such forms are to be "consistent with the Fundamental Declarations of its Constitution". The Commission did draw heavily on the fresh understandings the Church now has of the Eucharist arising from the phenomenal amount of research in recent decades into the Church's liturgies and life as early as the third century. Each of the thanksgiving prayers provided in our AAPB are far more inclusive, and thereby more affirming, of the natural order and man's place in it.

"All thanks and praise, glory and honour, be yours at all time, in every place, creator Lord, holy Father, true and living God. We praise you that through your eternal Word you brought the universe into being and made man in your image. You have given us this earth to care for and delight in, and with its bounty you preserve our life. We thank you that you bound yourself to mankind with the promises of a gracious covenant and called us to serve you in love and peace." (page 159)

However, the Commission did not feel free to be as explicit about man's place in the natural order and therefore the obligations of everyday living as did the Episcopal Church of USA in 1977.

"At your command all things came to be: the vast expanse of interstellar space, galaxies, suns, the planets in their courses, and this fragile earth, our island home.

**By your will they were created and have their being.**

From the primal elements you brought forth the human race, and blessed us with memory, reason, and skill. You made us the rulers of creation. But we turned against you, and betrayed your trust; and we turned against one another.

**Have mercy, Lord, for we are sinners in your sight." (page 370)**

The Second Order implies an earthiness which is in splendid contrast to the assuring, if not seductive, post-Communion prayers when it requires the congregation to say:-

"Father, we offer ourselves to you as a living sacrifice through Jesus Christ our Lord. Send us out in the power of your Spirit to live and work to your praise and glory. Amen."

But we are far from the Orthodox Church's dual concept of "the Sacrament of the Altar" and "the Sacrament of the Brother" (and Sister), which are a consequence of the unity of humanity which has been restored by the omnipotent Christ and which is made present again in every Eucharist. As Olivier Clement (Signs of Hope and Justice) states -

"the Eucharistic bread does more than establish a bond between the Risen Christ and each one of us . . . it introduces us to the real unity of all humanity . . ." (page 24).

It is left to our imagination as to what "live and work" within the AAPB rite might entail. However the second order for Confirmation (p.539) concludes with a most comprehensive and explicit statement on Christian discipleship. In addition to belonging to the Church, understanding the Faith, worshipping and praying to God and witnessing to the Gospel, confirmed Christians are called to love their neighbour as themselves, to honour all men, and to pray and work for peace and justice". This is the most explicit statement within AAPB about the Christian being acting responsibly not only in familial but also in public life including the realities of power.

The Eucharist is a dramatization of Christ's acts of creation, redemption and fulfilment. Christ so acted that the cosmos might be, that it may be restored and that it may be fulfilled. But as Fern has observed (see above), in the devising of Anglican liturgies (unlike the Orthodox) beneficiaries of Christ's sancticity seem to be the collective Church and the individual, faithful worshipper. This displacement in presenting the focus of Christ's actions is a reflection of a long-standing theological conundrum; namely, what is the relation of the church to human-kind? The Holy Communion, as instituted by Christ, who was about to be crucified, marks the establishment of a new Covenant or agreement between God and humans through which the New Israel, the Church came into being. But Christ's call to the Church was not a call to a position of privilege but a vocation to service. The Old Israel wanted to avoid responsibility by clinging to privilege. The New Israel was not to and is not to repeat that error. The Apostles had to be servants like their Master and Lord. The Church is to be a blessing for all, and that meant the Gentiles as well. Christ's comprehensive act of salvation for all is to be made known to and applied to all. Our liturgists need to make sure that their handwork not only emphasizes that doctrine but evokes a compatible response within the worshipper.

We must not underestimate the influence our liturgies have on our people. Within the Anglican Church, for example, the Christian Faith is not presented through a system of dogma nor through an official confession but rather developed within the individual through the devotional use of two books, the Bible and Prayer Book. The Prayer

Book is directed to the affective and intuitive as well as the rational dimension of a person thereby becoming a most potent tool of Christian formation or "socialization". Therefore it is all the more important that our orders of service clearly express God's love for the whole universe and all human-kind.

## 5. Conclusion

This address is an attempt to probe further the reasons for the apparent gap that exists between the Church and Society. I suggest that that gap has arisen not only because of a theology which has limited our appreciation of God's love to the so-called spiritual dimension of life and the individual. It has arisen also because the main agents of Christian formation within a parish - the priest, the programme and the liturgy - neither alert parishioners to nor prepare them for public involvement. There is a gulf between parish piety and public pragmatism. In particular, a Christian outlook which is based upon simple and personal relationships are inadequate when seeking to find direction and take responsibility within the interaction of power centres that control public life.

Parishioners who engage with the public sector need to be trained to reflect critically upon their experiences, predicaments and options as collectively they endeavour to be "in Christ" and act creatively with Him in His beloved world. The Church's worship, ideally, gives a foretaste of Christ's purposes for this world being accomplished. The worshipper then has the freedom, the optimism but realism to risk himself in love and joy in that same world with its ambiguities, complexities and compromises.

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Michael B. Challen was born in Melbourne in 1932 where he spent both his childhood and first years of ministry. He obtained his Bachelor of Science at the Melbourne University and studied theology at Ridley College, Parkville.

Ordained in 1957, he served the Melbourne Diocese for 14 years having parochial appointments in North Essendon and Melbourne's inner city. He was Director of the Anglican Inner City Ministry from 1963 - 1971.

Archbishop Sambell, then Archbishop of Perth, invited Michael Challen to be the founding Director of the Diocese's Department of Home Mission.

In his 15 years within that Diocese he has served as well as the Country Archdeacon and Executive Director of the Anglican Health and Welfare Services. He was consecrated Bishop in 1978.

He has been a member of several national committees, notably that of the General Synod Social Responsibilities Commission since 1969. From 1983 - 1984 he chaired the Welfare Community Services Review for the West Australian Government and then its resulting Community Services Board in 1985.

He is married to a fellow parishioner from St Augustine's, Mentone, namely Judy, and they have two daughters, Fleur and Ruth.