



## Month of Stewardship Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost Sunday, August 19th, 2018

### Christianity in a Challenging World: Pinned Between Fundamentalisms



**Guernica: Pablo Picasso, 1937:  
A Reflection upon the Power of Political Fundamentalisms**

During this month of August as we reflect together upon stewardship, we will be looking at what sort of world we are to be stewards for. Last week, we reflected upon a modern world characterized by change, rapid change, focused upon today's massive flows of people across the world, upon mass immigration. One of the impacts of this has been not just deep effects upon societies but also Christianity. In Australia, Christianity is changing rapidly as demographics change. On Sunday last, Sonia Yoo helped us locate and understand this movement through the lens of Korean Christianity and its roots. We learnt that Korean Christianity – only 250 years old – has been built upon a range of other traditions that are much older – Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism. Korean Christianity while being deeply Christian, is Christian slightly differently to the western product with which we are familiar. What is exciting is this variance which speaks to us of Christianity as much broader than we have been accustomed to think

Today, we look at another dimension of our modern world: the rising influence of secular and religious fundamentalisms. Not without reason, commentators fear that we are returning in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, to the years of political fundamentalism of the early to mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, depicted in Picasso's most famous of work of "Guernica", when Spain became the victim of conflict under the sway of fascism supported by the Spanish Catholic bishops, communism and occasionally liberalism. In times when the traditional rational frames of reference erode in societies, dogmatic and often fundamentalist ideas grip us: religious and otherwise. It is as if we are driven to one idea or another, one explanation or another, no matter how inadequate or dangerous. Today, we will discover the need to be intelligent in our Christian thinking, to think and to re-think our faith in new ways, while still affirming the Christian tradition so dear to us. It is in order to build loving, generous societies that we give of ourselves and our resources.

## GATHERING

### Announcements

#### Welcome

In the name of God,  
the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit

The Lord be with you  
**And with you**

**Hymn: Sing praise and thanksgiving (TiS 107, Kremser, Paul Gerhardt)**

### Introduction to the Theme

#### Community Prayer: Recipe for the Bread of Life

In this prayer, motivated by the Gospel reading about “Jesus the bread of life”, I use the metaphor as a recipe, akin to our contemporary cooking shows.

Start with the Word made flesh –  
full of grace and truth.

Add living water  
drawn from the spring  
that gushes to eternal life.

Mix with the Spirit  
that blows where it will.

Flavour with fruit  
of the true and living vine.

And most importantly of all:

Give Jesus’ flesh for the life of the world.

## Our Confession and Reconciliation

Let us be still and listen to the voice of God

*Silence*

Leader: Let us confess

That our culinary skills have not been as good as they could be

That we have lacked imagination – cooking the easy things again and again – while leaving the challenges, the real challenges to one side

That integrating new foods, new thinking, new cultures, is something we are called to by the Spirit

***O God, forgive us and create in us a new heart to build communities founded, grounded in love***

### **The Peace**

Peace be with you;  
***and also with you***

## Children leave for SMG

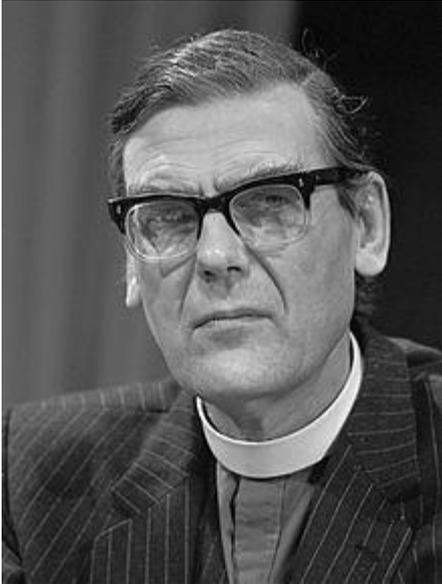
### LET'S HEAR THE WORD

#### Some Thoughts About Christianity, the Church and Culture



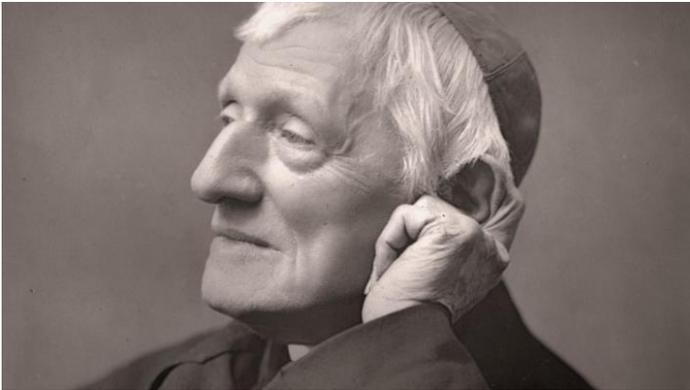
Some people seem to gravitate from one fundamentalism to another, from some kind of secular fundamentalism into a religious fundamentalism, or the other way around, which is not very helpful

**Peter. L Berger, Sociologist of Religion**



The essence of conservatism, as I see it, is to treasure what is given by tradition, what is best from the past, and what has proved itself by its durability. It is to display a certain humility towards the things we have received and may not fully understand, and so conserve them as potentially fruitful for the future.

**John Habgood, Anglican Archbishop of York, 1983-1995**  
*"Confessions of a Conservative Liberal"*



The true test of Christian doctrine is neither its unchangeability, nor its old age, but its life and growth. The great truths of the Christian faith have been shaped in the mind of the Church by a gradual process of development.

**John Cardinal Henry Newman (1801-1890), "The Development of Doctrine"**

## Readings

### 2 Timothy 4:1-5 (Good News Translation)

Pam Tickell

I have replaced the epistle reading for today with one from Paul's communication to Timothy, the young leader of the early Christian church. In this letter, Paul encourages Timothy to persevere in his work of winning people for Christ. In the section we read here, Paul warns Timothy against the increasing lack of willingness on the part of people to listen to sound Christian teaching. Rather, they prefer to "tickle their ears" with 'teachers' who will tell them the easy going and comfortable things they prefer to hear. Paul's time was marked by sham teachers, referred to as "sophists" Plato, years before referred to them as "hunters of young people who had money and position. These sophists had letters after their name to impress and a fee as well." Paul calls upon Timothy to be "*nephein*", meaning "sober, self-contained", like an athlete who is disciplined. He is, to look all facts and all considerations deliberately in the face." The Christian is not to be the victim of crazes; stability is his badge in an unbalanced and often insane world.

**4** In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and because he is coming to rule as King, I solemnly

urge you <sup>2</sup> to preach the message, to insist upon proclaiming it (whether the time is right or not), to convince, reproach, and encourage, as you teach with all patience. <sup>3</sup> The time will come when people will not listen to sound doctrine but will follow their own desires and will collect for themselves more and more teachers who will tell them what they are itching to hear. <sup>4</sup> They will turn away from listening to the truth and give their attention to legends. <sup>5</sup> But you must keep control of yourself in all circumstances; endure suffering, do the work of a preacher of the Good News, and perform your whole duty as a servant of God.

### **John 6:51-58 (Good News Translation)**

Mike Tickell

This reading follows on from last weeks, where we also heard about Jesus as the “bread of life”. Here the focus is however more and more upon Jesus’ death. Clearly the emphasis is sacramental, linked to Holy Communion or what we also refer to as the Eucharist, from the Greek, “I give thanks”. But there is something else here as well: the emphasis is upon Jesus as the “true bread”. This is John’s way of underscoring the complete uniqueness of the Gospel: there are no alternatives. This takes us back to Paul’s theme in his Letter to Timothy, above.

<sup>51</sup> I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If you eat this bread, you will live forever. The bread that I will give you is my flesh, which I give so that the world may live.”

<sup>52</sup> This started an angry argument among them. “How can this man give us his flesh to eat?” they asked.

<sup>53</sup> Jesus said to them, “I am telling you the truth: if you do not eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you will not have life in yourselves. <sup>54</sup> Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood have eternal life, and I will raise them to life on the last day. <sup>55</sup> For my flesh is the real food; my blood is the real drink. <sup>56</sup> Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood live in me, and I live in them. <sup>57</sup> The living Father sent me, and because of him I live also. In the same way whoever eats me will live because of me. <sup>58</sup> This, then, is the bread that came down from heaven; it is not like the bread that your ancestors ate, but then later died. Those who eat this bread will live forever.”

The Gospel of the Lord

***Praise to you Lord Christ***

**Hymn: Lord I come to you (TiS 685, Power of your love, Geoff Bullock)**

**Some Thoughts**

**Let's Give**

**Doxology**

*Praise God, from whom all blessings flow,  
praise him, all creatures here below,  
praise him above, ye heavenly host,  
praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost.*

**Prayer of Dedication**

**Prayers of the People**

Rob Mayrick

The one who prays ends each petition with the words, "*help us to see with honesty and humility*", and the congregational response, "*to live the kingdom*".

**Lord's Prayer**

Let us say the Lord's Prayer

*Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come,  
your will be done,  
on earth as in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread.*

*Forgive us our sins,  
as we forgive those who sin against us.  
Save us from the time of trial  
and deliver us from evil.*

*For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours,  
now and forever. Amen.*

하늘에 계신 우리 아버지여  
 이름이 거룩히 여김을 받으시오며  
 나라이 임하옵시며  
 뜻이 하늘에서 이룬 것 같이  
 땅에서도 이루어지이다.  
 오늘날 우리에게 일용할 양식을 주옵시고  
 우리가 우리에게  
 죄 지은 자를 사하여 준 것 같이  
 우리 죄를 사하여 주옵시고  
 우리를 시험에 들게 하지 마옵시고  
 다만 악에서 구하옵소서  
 대개 나라와 권세와 영광이  
 아버지께 영원히 있사옵나이다. 아멘

**Closing Hymn: Lord, the light of your love is shining (TiS 675, Shine Jesus Shine, Graham Kendrick)**

### **Blessing and Sending Out**

Christ is life!

Through Christ  
 we seek to read the signs of the times  
 with perception and discernment,  
 without fear, with imagination and courage.

Through Christ  
 We seek to give of ourselves and resources for good

Our service has ended

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord

***In the name of Christ***

**Going Out: Father bless us as we go (TiS 781, Kookaburra,  
Robin Mann)**

**Musical Postlude**

**Pianist:**

**Lawrence Peak**

**Guitarist:**

**Jeremy Kim**

