



HURON
UNIVERSITY COLLEGE THEOLOGY

Huron-Cronyn Lecture on Faith and Reason

April 14, 2010

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There shall be Showers of Blessing, This is the Promise of Love

I am incredibly honoured by your invitation – Canada is no stranger to me even though I am a first timer in Ottawa and in London, Ontario!

My first contacts in Canada were First Nations peoples who hosted me with profound generosity and kindness. The friendships formed way back in 1985 and along the continuum of my sojourning in Canada, have endured to this day.

I first worked very closely with my Cree sister, Verna Kirkness, who would be known to some of you as a consummate activist and advocate for excellence for First Nations peoples in all levels of education, particularly at tertiary level. Verna has been so deservedly honoured on numerous occasions including being awarded the Order of Canada.

It was through her tireless, relentless and savvy leadership that the fabulous First Nations House of Learning was established at the University of British Columbia.

It is to Verna that I attribute my own educational philosophy especially with respect to the teaching and learning needs and interests of indigenous¹ peoples.

We have both been involved over many years with the development and delivery of culturally specific educational programs with and for our respective indigenous communities.

These culturally specific programs have all been necessitated by deeply embedded historically established institutionalized racism. It is this complex and elusive psychological and socio-political evil which has ensured spectacularly consistent outcomes of either low level achievement or high level

¹ When I use the word *indigenous*, I am referring to those who share an ethnic identity different to the ruling nation or dominant majority holding power, usually a politically underprivileged group who has the longest historical attachment to the lands with which they identify spiritually, emotionally and economically. I always tell my students that the best way to know who indigenous peoples are is to listen to the ways in which we ourselves self-describe rather than become fractious over intellectualized definitions

failure (*depending upon whether or not the racism² was benevolent or malevolent*) for indigenous students for too many years in virtually every post-colonial nation in the world.

Here of course in Canada not only do you have the shameful legacy of disproportionately high indigenous educational failure you also have the reasons why, writ large on your national conscience.

It is not for me at this time to relitigate any of this. This nation, its peoples and its churches are responding.

The redemptive solution to all of this we know demands a whole list of other 'r' words – *remorse, regret, repentance, reparation, restoration, reconciliation* and in so many ways various expressions of all of these things are reasonably readily publicly evident.

From what I have borne witness to over the past 20 years I want in this moment, to salute the churches, especially the Anglican Church of Canada for its magnanimous and humbling efforts especially in more recent years to put right, indeed to redeem, that which now appears to us in our time (*with respect to the rights and interests of indigenous peoples*) as nothing less than the tragic legacy of unspeakably cruel, unconscionably abusive attitudes and behaviours on the part of some of our ecclesial forefathers.

While the residential schools scandal is not perfectly, nor completely resolved, the fact that deeply sincere, deeply regret filled apologies have been made and that significant reparative and restorative justice options are being pursued, is indeed indicative of a sacred *mutually* responsible *intentionality* to heal the visible and the invisible scars inevitably affecting of both victims and perpetrators.

All are in need of God's saving grace. All are in need of God's healing touch. All are eligible for God's boundless and unconditional love. It will take time, patience, wisdom and kindness . . .

In order for an enduring future peace with justice to be achieved for First Nations peoples in this their only homeland, then mutually agreeable, mutually respectful and mutually just ways of co-existing need now to be imagined anew; negotiated for; waited upon and prayed about constantly.

Here in 2010, your General Synod is now set to consider alternative legislation in an attempt to reposition First Nations peoples as meaningful '*partners*' within the mainstream church. The promulgation of Canon XXII: The National Indigenous Ministry is the one for you all to consider with an eye to God's justice.

I have no doubt that in the cautious anticipation, or the anxious dread, or I pray, *the deep excitement of possible change* among Canadian Anglicans, (*in respect of indigenous ministry*), many in your Church will react in ways similar to those which were readily evident during the almost 8 year process it took for the New Zealand Church to fully revise its Constitution.

The revised Constitution in my homeland immediately and irrevocably repositioned indigenous Anglicans like me to finally know genuine ecclesial freedom, to finally know all pathways to ministry and leadership were genuinely wide open to all.

² Wilson offers a particularly cogent specification when he argues that racism is "an ideology of racial domination or exploitation that (1) incorporates beliefs in a particular race's cultural and/or inherent biological inferiority and (2) uses such beliefs to justify and prescribe inferior or unequal treatment for that group" (Wilson 1973, p. 32).

Even almost eighteen years later, the legal, educational, structural, emotional and attitudinal implications of revising our Constitution, are still being argued over, regretted, defended, analyzed to death, ignored, celebrated, misunderstood, misinterpreted.

That truly laudable globally recognized Mark of Mission concerning the transformation of unjust structures was clearly never intended to be the easy one! But transform our essentially unjust Constitutional arrangements we New Zealand Anglicans most definitely did and now we live still, into the mystery, the mess and the marvel of it all!

In my home context it was in a very real sense the indigenous Maori understanding of *'mutually agreed rights to exercise and to express Treaty based sovereignty for the partners (to the Treaty of Waitangi), together with protecting and ensuring the right to full and unconditional inclusion and flourishing for all'*, which sat behind our collective drive for a revised Anglican Church Constitution.

We reasoned after all, that in 1840 it was Anglican missionaries who were at the forefront of drafting, translating and promoting the Treaty of Waitangi. Throughout the late 20th and into the 21st century in spite of the known historical facts of grave dishonouring of the Treaty by the colonial partner, it had nonetheless once again become popularly regarded as providing a potentially Gospel like sacred, credible mutually honouring partnership based constitutional model for the fledgling nation Aotearoa New Zealand.

And so it was that just over 150 years later that the Anglican Church asked of itself that if the original Treaty was truly Gospel based, then why wouldn't the Church in seeking to redeem its historic legacy of injustice with respect to indigenous Anglicans commit to adopting a similarly framed partnership based constitutional model. It was an intentional attempt at restoring sacred, credible and mutually honouring relationships among and between contemporary Aotearoa New Zealand and latterly, Polynesia Anglicans.

In my homeland however I must mention that as was the case for Martin Luther, the Church itself did not necessarily begin, nor necessarily initially welcome the wider societal challenge for transformative action around race relations.

As it happened in my homeland, after almost 150 years of faithful Christian witness during which time self-determining indigenous Anglican leadership was variously thwarted, undermined, contained or denied, there came a time in the late 1970's when the persistent but ultimately ineffective activism on the part of well meaning but politically vulnerable/naive Maori Anglican leaders was to be profoundly *'disturbed'* and to an extent deservedly shamed by the assertively insistent and ultimately highly effective radical activism of mostly younger, urbanized and well educated Maori, most of whom were nevertheless raised in Christian homes.

It was the courageous and unremitting cries of these young minority urban Maori hungry for all that they felt had been denied them as a direct result of the myriad structural injustices experienced by the generations before them which finally mobilized national Anglican activism.

Structural injustices such as; (1) monoculturally imperialist policies in education (*which meant loss of language, cultural identity and cultural pride*); (2) countless unjust legislative practices which inevitably militated against Maori interests (*which meant loss of land, cultural identity and cultural pride*); (3) so called universally beneficial economic systems but which actually benefit only a few (*these are the*

systems which condemn those without educational leverage and social capital to permanent relatively unskilled underclass status).

It was therefore these young well educated, secularized radical indigenous activists who fully and finally made clear to the government and the people that enough was enough and that 20th and 21st century indigenous people were no longer prepared to tolerate institutional racism in all its myriad seen and unseen forms!

And so eventually in the early 1970's a newly conscientized and reactionary political environment secular institutions including virtually all government departments, began their arduous and ultimately patronizing processes of merely *accommodating* minority Maori interests (*this is the enclave model where the dominant structure merely creates a token space within an essentially unchanged institution and then expects those being newly 'accommodated', to visibly appreciate the token largesse being extended or 'given' to them!*).

The Anglican Church however taking very seriously its moral obligation to redeem its own complicity in the dishonouring of the original Treaty establishing just relationality between indigenous Maori and original colonial settlers, opted instead for an unprecedented response.

The Anglican Church proposed and then implemented an unconditionally inclusive model of Treaty partnership, a relationship based on mutuality and interdependence (*this is the partnership model where the balance and exercise of power is shared equally between the sovereign partners, regardless of the numerical imbalance and where decision making by mutual consensus is required, otherwise no decision is deemed to have been made*).

As can be seen, this was not a case of the majority continuing to dominate by sheer force of numbers rather it was a case of strategic politico-ecclesial realignment along Treaty and thus *partnership* lines (*and here I know Maori are so lucky to have only one Treaty to contend with but nevertheless one ought be able to assume that the moral principles of 'treating' regardless of cultural context do have the sentiment of justice as part of the initial motivation to engage in the process*). Otherwise, why go to the bother of 'treating' when it is much swifter and deadlier to just overwhelm by force.

Thanks be to God there was at the time of the lead up to our own Constitutional revisioning, a critical mass of both Maori and Pakeha *lay* Anglican intellectuals, judges, lawyers, political figures, key professionals all of whom were readily persuaded to assist the clerical leaders of the Church to envision, to develop, to implement, to model new forms of church governance and decision making.

It did not take long at all for Maori Anglican activists to compare and contrast the structural injustice claims of secular indigenous activists and to find their parallel expression in ecclesial structures.

Structural injustices such as, (1) monoculturally imperialist policies in *theological* education (*which meant rejection of native language and theological perspective which meant loss of cultural identity and led inevitably to the crushing of indigenous Anglican cultural pride*). This is the insidious phenomenon of intellectual cultural imperialism – tragically so long untheorized, and thus too long unchallenged. *The end result was blatant injustice. The end result was marginalization, devaluing, the exclusion of already powerless minorities.* .

(2) Structural injustices arising as a result of countless unjust legislative practices within the church itself and which inevitably militated against Maori Anglican interests (*which meant loss of land, cultural identity and cultural pride*). Here are issues to do with very questionable land acquisitions by early missionaries, through to legislation which delimited Maori ability to matriculate and thus to even attend theological college, through to legislation which precluded Maori eligibility for election to the episcopate, to General Synod and all other major decision making forums of the Church. *The end result was blatant injustice. The end result was marginalization, devaluing, the exclusion of already powerless minorities.* .

(3) *Structural injustices arising* as a result of so-called universally beneficial ecclesially based economic systems. This was to do with the ways in which Maori Anglican interests remained essentially under the benevolent control of the mission society with which they were primarily associated while the majority portion of wealth and resource was controlled by those with prior dominant interests. This was to do with stipend levels being historically differentiated according to race. This was to do with resourcing for ministry among the poorest being required to be paid for by Maori communities themselves, while ministry to the wealthy was the business of the whole church! *The end result was blatant injustice. The end result was marginalization, devaluing, the exclusion of already powerless minorities.* .

1992 was then the year when indigenous Maori Anglicans in my homeland made ostensibly unprecedented constitutionally framed gains.

1992 was the year when those previously accustomed to dominance in all institutional sites of power and authority were sufficiently touched by the Holy Spirit to do God's redemptive work of justice.

In that year our Church Constitution was revised, theoretically along redemptive justice lines, pragmatically, institutionally, along obvious racial lines and theologically – well, in my opinion and because of my experience of working at the leadership level of my Province for many years now, I would have to say that I consider the theology is still in so many critically important ways, a work in progress!

Again I am reminded though that just as in the case of the residential schools and those who would decry the rate of progress, so too there are many in the midst of the Aotearoa New Zealand Church who would complain similarly.

And I am one such ardent critic but in preparing for this lecture I was moved to consider one of the less well noticed and celebrated features of my churches constitutional revision. It occurs to me that my observation might just be salutary for you also.

At the heart of the New Zealand Church's Constitution there were and remain indisputably pervasive and enduring aspects of what is now so often uncritically asserted, as either race, culture, ethnic, identity politics. As with all such politics the human relationship implications are complex and significantly nuanced and all need and deserve to be acknowledged especially those not so readily promulgated by those with an agenda for a more populist version of history telling.

For example there are so many virtually unnoticed, unexplored stories resulting from the educative processes around the Constitutional revisions.

These are to do with the deeply spiritually based transformations which occurred as a result of many dominant Pakeha New Zealand Anglicans understanding often for the first time, just what had happened

historically to so marginalize, to so diminish their Maori sisters and brothers within the same Church to which all professed baptismal commitment. Their faith filled response was to act afresh with such extraordinarily open magnanimity toward those they now understood anew. It was these less well noticed acts of loving Christian witness which in turn also led many Maori Anglicans to act not with triumphalist arrogance, but rather to act with utmost grace and charity toward those whose historic actions both witting and not, had served to gravely disadvantage indigenous interests very considerably over the longest period of time.

What makes the New Zealand Church revision so unique is that from the dominant partner point of view there was no obvious self interested *'incentive'* at stake as is usually required by those ostensibly making the greater *'sacrifice'*. Neither was there any thought of inserting a trial period with an opt-out clause. This was not a pre-nuptial agreement; this was in a sense an authentic *'covenanting'* relationship entered into freely and without reservation.

There was no conditionality attached for either partner, rather there was the wise recognition that in order for mutuality in our diversity to eventually be fully realized, there may first have to be a time of single identity strengthening and so we have this marvelous clause in our Constitution which allows each of the partners time, space, resources and autonomy to be culturally specific and culturally strengthened but which also commits them to *'keeping open always the pathways to the common ground'*.

And so it was in a heart stopping, profoundly humbling moment during our General Synod of 1992, that for Maori Anglicans all those years of being marginalized, excluded, devalued, ignored, oppressed, disregarded, legislated against, culturally, emotionally, and spiritually abused were powerfully relativized by the spiritually overwhelming experience of Constitutional change. That awful past which inevitably diminishes us all in the Church was thus authentically, poignantly, remorsefully redeemed by the spirit filled determination and the faith filled hope we now all shared for God's justice to finally, finally be realized for all Anglicans within the beloved Aotearoa New Zealand and Polynesia community and not just for some!

The only way I can describe the *spirituality* of the entire revision process is as an unstoppable movement of deeply held grace filled desire *shared by all within the Anglican fold*, for undifferentiated full inclusion for all. I have often said that I experienced the lengthy revision processes as culminating in an exemplary mutually agreed grace filled moment of recognition that never again should any be denied access to the councils and courts of the church; to its offices and orders; to the leadership roles; the decision making tables; to the elite Provincial theological college; to serving and receiving at the altar whether as server or as served; whether as native or not, whether as gay or not, whether as male or female (*even as the battle for women's ordination had long been won with the NZ Church having been among the first to ordain freely and without restriction to any order*).

It occurs to me that it is a global *'pandemic'* of what many of us were so blessed to experience in 1992 (at least!). I remember describing the General Synod moment of Revision as a truly magnificent expression of spiritually selfless sacrificial grace. This is the *'pandemic'* I believe our entire beloved Anglican Communion is in such desperate need of right now!

Now in case you are wondering whether or not my by now less confidently idealized ecclesiastical bubble in New Zealand has burst! Well of course it has! After all we are merely global south Anglicans not yet angels! But is our three tikanga Constitution working still? Well, yes and no and I am happy to

Speak more of this at length during questions but for now and for good reason I simply want to tell you something of how and why our revisions happened. I want then to draw a direct link between why I claim that being blessed in oneself is such a necessary prerequisite to being able to be a blessing to others.

And in case you are further wondering how on earth my somewhat off the wall title of mine fits in, I want to share with you that there are two reasons. The first is deeply personal.

It was about the time of the new Constitution that many of my dear elder aunts (including one who was the first Maori woman to be ordained Priest in my homeland), began also to more enthusiastically revive a number of the hymns I was raised with since my childhood. Among them was one which became and still is my favorite (in my language) – *tera nga manaakitanga, tera te arohanui, tera te tomairangi, e heke iho nei . . . manaakitanga, me te aroha nui, manaakitia mai ra matou e te Ariki Pai . . .*

Very loosely and generously translated . . . *“Such are the blessings, such is the abundance of love, such is the sprinkling of sacred dewdrops with which we are all touched when we live lives of faithfulness – O Lord of justice, of goodness, of compassion continue to bless us in our service in your name . . .”*

It has only been in relatively recent times that I have realized the radical symbolism implicit in the revived singing by my elders of this and other beautiful old hymns. It was indeed a spiritually significant sign from within my own community – a sign of unfathomable gratitude for new found freedom to belong unconditionally; freedom to contribute authentically and generously; freedom to retain our God given identity, our cultural gifts; freedom to serve with even greater devotion and humility.

Here was my own community recognizing that their faithfulness in spite of the struggle, their faithfulness in spite of injustice; their faithfulness in spite of the torturously long experience of unjust exclusion, their faithfulness had finally, finally resulted in a change of heart, a change of spirit, a change in relationality with those who for so long had exercised the power to dominate and to exclude. Here in 1992, that *shower of blessing*, that promise of love, *‘sent from the Saviour above’*, was enticingly nearby. Who would not want to sing out loud with thanksgiving and praise?

Now I know the words in English of the old song appear as quaint. I have no doubt also that given the context of the writer’s time and his known theological conservatism, that the original lyrics are likely now theologically questionable. But here in our time, in a very specific cultural context where a very significant aspect of the historically cruel and unjust experience of political and ecclesial colonization had finally been redeemed, none of this mattered as my people sang in sheer gratitude and with unconstrained joy for our long awaited experience of being so richly blessed by God’s redemptive love.

My second reason is deeply political and is of course to do with the outrageous contemporary endeavour by some misguided Anglican Communion leaders and people of great influence within our beloved church to withhold, thwart, deny access to God’s infinitely generous and undeniably unconditional promise of love for all . . .

The matters to do with human sexuality, which are vexing the hearts and minds of too many who ought to know far better, must in my view be repositioned. The hearts and minds of all in church leadership would do so much better by being vexed instead by the heart-rending, truly horrific experiences of minimal life and needless death affecting countless of the world’s innocents. The matters to do with human sexuality and all the similarly extraneous matters, which are so shamefully displacing the critical

concerns of mission with and for the least in our societies, must not be allowed to dominate ecclesial discourse any longer.

The counter narratives to those of the bullies and the bigots must now also be publicly told and forums such as this are so very precious, so very timely!

One technique, in which I find such a delicious irony, is using the strategy of satire and thus in employing the precious gift of laughter!

So it was that as I pondered the English lyrics to the hymn, *Showers of Blessing*, the mischievous part of my soul began to reflect upon the outrageous and so often cruelly judgmental burden of self-righteous and often hate filled angst so readily articulated, by those church leaders who are opposed to the full inclusion of gay and lesbian Anglicans, indeed to the full inclusion of gay and lesbian people for any reason.

And so to help '*lighten their load*' I thought well why not proclaim ever more fearlessly that my faith understanding assures me that our God of justice already embraces full inclusion for all in God's perfect creation.

Our same wonderfully inclusive Creator God has therefore already blessed into being those whom the church through its human agency is now perversely denying access to God's blessings.

I do not understand this very dubious '*theology*' of denial, of exclusion, of human judgment against certain of God's created human beings? I do not understand why invoking God's blessing upon deeply loving relationships could ever be problematic?

Now this is not an entirely naïve assertion because of course I understand the politics of exclusion and I especially understand how churches have historically chosen to enshrine certain either doctrinally or theologically, selective exclusions with respect to women, to young people, to native peoples.

I am profoundly grateful to be an academic theologian at a time when invoking respectful critique of previously uncontested theological 'truths' is not a life threatening intellectual activity! I am profoundly grateful to be an academic theologian who also happens to be a layperson and an indigenous woman, whose particular life experience includes first hand experience of institutional marginalization and of exclusion. It is entirely unsurprising to me therefore that my sense of vocational call as a *pioneering* indigenous lay woman theological educator has always been to expose and to endeavour to transform those church based structural injustices which work to exclude women like me.

I am determined to stand against those unjust ecclesiastical structures sustained by behaviour and attitudes which have for so long militated against women as a result of conflating the socially constructed bases of sexism, of racism, and of clericalism with an ill-formed and fear filled theological understanding of divinely created human differences.

Now as I see gay and lesbian human beings becoming the focused targets for structural exclusion within the Anglican Communion, I consider it a Gospel obligation for me to stand alongside these of my sisters and brothers in Christ who now face a similarly shrill condemnatory chorus of objection to their full inclusion as members of the Body.

In moments of exasperated impatience I do often imagine that if only it were possible to hush the noisy gongs for just a moment and to require all to listen instead with hushed humility then surely we might just hear instead our God of unending love singing out loud, not of judgment or of exclusion but of blessing, unconditionally inclusive, celebratory blessing such as that indicated in the simple words of the hymn *“there shall be showers of blessing, sent from the Saviour above, there shall be seasons refreshing, if we let God have His way . . . showers of blessing . . . !”*

For example I now know that satire and humour are not the tools of choice being employed by many of those embroiled in the current Communion wide struggles. Neither, sadly, are grace and favour. Instead, there is too often intemperate language, intellectual browbeating, emotional abuse, scriptural weaponry, episcopal arrogance, ecclesiological tribalism.

We are as Jim Wallis recently claimed, obsessively focused on the political and ideological divisions inherent in our contemporary culture rather than upon the relational ideal described so unambiguously by the Psalmist, *‘how good and pleasant it is when the people of God live together in unity.’*³

I want now to remind you of some earlier claims I have made and to ask if you sense any resonance between those claims and the current determinations of some leaders to exclude those born to be blessedly gay.

In order to give you some big clues I will just slightly rephrase my earlier narrative.

(1) Structural injustices such as monoculturally imperialist church teaching on doctrine and scriptural interpretation to do with human sexuality; to do with eligibility for ordination; to do with same sex blessing; to do with unconditional inclusion for all in the entire life and times of the church (*which means silencing of voice and closing of minds, which means loss of cultural identity and cultural pride*). These are the insidious ‘educational distortions’ of homophobia and of sexism. Still too little critically interrogated, still too little systemically and theologically challenged. *The end result is blatantly unjust. The end result is division, marginalization, devaluing, the ready exclusion of already powerless minorities*

(2) *Structural injustices* such as those which stand enshrined as legislative provisions which militate against both the human rights and ecclesial interests of women and of gay Anglicans (*which means the enforced absence of God given gifts of ministry presence; which means the loss of cultural identity and cultural pride, which excludes some from rightful participation and diminishes the humanity of ‘the so called different other’.*). *The end result is a cruel denial of human identity, division, marginalization, devaluing, the ready exclusion of already powerless minorities.*

(3) *Structural injustices to do with so called universally beneficial economic systems.* Now do I really need to go on about the ways in which conservative politically influential Foundations are using their considerable economic power in the cause of attacking the so called liberal social agenda! The end result is the evil of invective filled rhetoric about the lesser human worth of women, of gay and lesbian people, of those who espouse anything of the ill-defined liberal social agenda. *The end result is divisive, devaluing, destabilizing – a clear and ready danger for us all.*

Whether those to be excluded are wrong colour, wrong gender, wrong sexuality, the same tired and ugly techniques are employed to forestall inclusion, participation, aspiration, belonging.

³ Psalm 133.1

I am sure you are like me and we lay awake at night wondering why is it that we the people of God, those with all the language, the luxury and liturgy of love, the spirit for forgiveness, mercy and grace, treat each other in such callous and cruel ways? Whoever said the *'promise of love'* was for some and not others??

And why are we all being so tentative in resisting this latest exclusionary onslaught against full inclusion for gay and lesbian people of God?

Even Ezekiel, dear old, eccentric, exasperated Ezekiel from whom we get the words to the old hymn writes, that Israel was (*even if was only just one time*) visionary enough to recognize the prophetic promise of Yahweh to make the world one in which all could live free of anxiety.

This example was in the middle of a warning to stop oppressing the *"lean sheep"*, the downtrodden, because those are the ones that God would protect and give good land to.

I will make a covenant of peace with them, and cause wild beasts to cease from the land; and they will dwell safely in the wilderness and sleep in the woods. I will make them and the places all around my hill a blessing; and I will cause showers to come down in their season; there shall be showers of blessing. They shall be safe in their land; and they shall know that I am the LORD, when I have broken the bands of their yoke and delivered them from the hand of those who enslaved them. And they shall no longer be a prey for the nations, nor shall beasts of the land devour them; but they shall dwell safely, and no one shall make them afraid. . . . Thus they shall know that I, the LORD their God, am with them, and they are My people."

Here in the Ezekiel portrayal is where I see we as God's people are at once again. We collectively are being called by God to stand against those oppressing the *'lean sheep'*, the marginalized, the devalued, those deemed less worthy. We must find within ourselves the strategies to move incrementally throughout the entire body of our beloved Church toward that redemptive moment of realization that exclusion on the basis of one's God given, God perfectly created human being, is reflective of nothing less than cruel, unconscionable, abusive behaviour and attitude.

My friends we have struggled against the exclusion of women, we have struggled against the exclusion of people of colour and of indigenous people, we must now do similarly for gay and lesbian people of God. This is surely in God's name not any longer to be *'their'* struggle; it is to be *'ours'*.

Let us not be deterred by the high level scriptural and doctrinal claims that full inclusion is a step too far. Remember those were the same tired old claims proffered in the past and sustained by structurally unjust educational, legislative and economic institutional practices.

Let us also not wait any longer for our secular activist friends to spur us into action. Let us be the body of Christ, risen anew, bold and theologically confident in our cries that enough is enough.

Let us be the generation courageous enough to dismantle the old oppressive educational, legislative and economic structures and to imagine afresh ways of being contemporary Anglican communities of faith with newly designed infrastructure where all may belong and be free to flourish without any ever seeking to dominate.

Let us be the generation respectful enough to give true honour to those aspects of our extraordinarily beautiful and enduring ecclesial traditions which are life-giving and life sustaining for all.

Let us be the people of God who recognize that the spirit of inclusivity instinctively inspires in turn an outpouring of the spirit of generosity, the willingness to contribute to the building up of the body of Christ.

Let us be the generation of global sisters and brothers who begin not just to realize but indeed to live into the extraordinary, unimaginably lovely promise of the old song that there shall indeed be showers, showers of blessing when we fully and finally let go and instead let God have His and Her way.

Amen.

Dr Jenny Plane Te Paa
April 2010.