

The LANTERN SERIES

EVANGELISATION



Witnessing Christ in the World

No. 2

“Dialogue with Australian Culture”

“Mission is one and undivided, having one origin and final purpose... Looking at today’s world... we can distinguish three situations... First, peoples, groups and social-cultural contexts in which Christ and his Gospel is not known... Secondly, Christian communities (where) the Church carries out her activity and pastoral care... Thirdly... where entire groups of the baptised have lost a living sense of faith... in this case what is needed is a ‘new evangelisation’ or ‘re-evangelisation’

Redemptoris Missio, Pope John Paul II, 1990 # 31-33
www.vatican.va/edocs

“ To love God... and to love your neighbour as yourself... is more important than all burnt offerings and sacrifices.”

Mark 12:33

“ The joys and hopes, the grief and anguish of the people of our time, especially of those who are poor or afflicted, are the joys and hopes, the grief and anguish of the followers of Christ as well. Nothing that is genuinely human fails to find an echo in their hearts. ”

Gaudium et Spes #1

As Christians who seek to live the Good News of Jesus, we cross boundaries of culture, language or faith whether our experience is overseas like many Columbans, or here in Australia. We do this through dialogue!

I can hear what you’re doing!

Teresa Georges, Australian Catholic University, Sydney.
I used to work in Public Relations. I am now studying to be a High School teacher. I am a Maronite Catholic of Lebanese background. Catholic thinking influences the need I see for congruence in my professional and personal life. My guiding principle is based on St Francis of Assisi “Preach the Gospel every day, and if needs be, use words.” I believe there is more to life than making money and having an illustrious career.
In our English class, we have online discussions. One particular time there was a debate about the right of the Church to “impinge” on people’s personal choices. In my own live journal space, I made a few personal comments about Catholic thinking on the topic of

abortion. The responses queried, “What does the Church have to do with it?” I found it interesting that people pick and choose what they want to apply, and discard the rest of the teachings. I think on a fundamental level people like the Church’s ideas, but tend to view the institution with suspicion. I believe the Church needs to build bridges with young people.

I also believe that schools play an important role giving students a deeper and more accurate picture of our rich faith tradition, and teaching students about community... One of my main concerns is about popular culture because it is so focussed on the individual. Having said that though, I do think that many Australians, including young people want to contribute to their community. It’s just a matter of deciding the “how”.



Teresa Georges

Fr Colin McLean, Salvador, Brazil

The people with whom I work in Salvador, are Afro-Brazilian. There are no role models for black children. In some areas children can’t even hope for a better future, most drop out of primary school. Dance and drama has become a vehicle through which I have been able to engage some young people who can read, memorise scripts and have some acting and dancing talent. There are a lot of groups who present Afro-Brazilian dances for tourists. I wanted to do more than that, to take those dances and use them to tell the story of black Brazilians. Many of the young dancers had no idea of their own history. Through music, dance and drama we are educating young actors and their audiences. It is giving them a sense of self-esteem.



Afro-Brazilian Dance

Over the last forty years pope after pope has reminded us that the Reign of God is larger than the Church. It is being established by God in Australia today. The technical name for this work is the *missio Dei* (the mission of God). This is key to our understanding of ourselves as Christians in Australia today.

As the Spirit of God continues to inspire Australians to "recreate the face of the earth", we as Christians are also moved by that same Spirit. Our mission is to discern the movements of the Spirit not only within ourselves but also in the society around us.

Our attitude to the surrounding culture can never be one of outright condemnation nor of total embrace. We can find God's gifts throughout Australian society but there are also elements of our culture that need to be challenged.

Genuine dialogue is a two way process that leads to mutual learning and enrichment. Strengthened by our tradition, which emphasises the love of neighbour, we Christians can challenge our culture to be more community-aware. However in listening to modern western culture's respect for the individual the Church has learnt a greater respect for religious freedom and human rights. The learning is a two-way street.

To engage in dialogue is to set out on a journey without knowing where we will be led. While we as Christians believe that the Reign of God will come, we do not know all the twists and turns of the road that we will take to get there. It is only through dialogue that we can proceed on that journey and come to the truth which we know to be Jesus Christ.



The Mitre and the Punk by Graham English

For the past thirty years, we've been living through a cultural revolution that has radically redefined the kind of society we are becoming and now, right on cue, the fundamentalists are here to tell us how to make sense of it all.

Hugh Mackay, Manning Clark Lecture "Social Disengagement: A Breeding Ground for Fundamentalism" 3 March 2005

Learn More @

Religion in Australian Culture

Course run by Australian Catholic University

<http://dlibrary.acu.edu.au/research/theology/theo107/contents.html>

"Exploring What Australians Value"

Philip Hughes, Sharon Bond, John Bellamy, Alan Black May 2006, Open Book/Christian Research Association <http://www.cra.org.au/>

Principles of Dialogue National Pastoral Life Centre, New York [www.nplc.org/commonground/PrinciplesOfDialogue\(print\).htm](http://www.nplc.org/commonground/PrinciplesOfDialogue(print).htm)

Edge of the Sacred, David J. Tacey 1995, Harper Collins, Melbourne

Campbelltown Animation Project:

Residents of Campbelltown public housing estates together plan positive community action: redirecting a bus route, a kids' community park at Minto, a Community Laundromat and coffee shop. Contact Teresa Hahn, Vincentian Social Action Centre, 24 Iolanthe St, Campbelltown, 02 4627 9233

The Church has a deep respect for every human culture. At the same time, the Gospel makes unique challenges on human culture...

Instrumentum Laboris: Synod of Bishops Special Assembly for Oceania #10

“ Chat Points: ”

- ☉ In "Exploring What Australians Value," the researchers have grouped values into the following areas:
Order eg. politeness, cleanliness, security,
Society eg. equality, freedom, social justice, outreach
Self eg. excitement, wealth, success, career and
Spiritual eg. religious.
- ☉ What forms our values?
 How do we choose the values by which we live?
"Around the turn of the century, ...we sought refuge in a kind of social disengagement... we have turned the focus inward, and concentrated on things that seemed to be within our control: backyards, home renovations..."
 Hugh Mackay. Discuss.
- ☉ People are often searching for their identity within the culture. Discuss.
- + What are the consequences and impact of religious indifference?
- + In what ways do we express our religious values?"
- + Is dialogue about what we can teach each other or is it more about what we can learn?

If you see in any given situation only what everybody else can see, you can be said to be not so much a representative of your culture than you are a victim of it.

S. I. Hayakawa

What Can I Do?

Practise these simple tools of dialogue:
Respect, Engage, Be Humble
 (about your own position)

Identify a person or a group whom you do not understand.

Look for ways to reach out to them.



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