

**AN ADDRESS GIVEN BY BISHOP ANDREW CURNOW
AT THE LAUNCH OF DIVINE DISCONTENT
ST PETER'S EASTERN HILL – 21 NOVEMBER, 2008**

I feel honoured to be here and speak this evening for a number of reasons. I have had an association with the Brotherhood of St Laurence for over forty years, I have been in the past a Board Member and Chairperson of the Brotherhood and I have known Colin Holden for over thirty years.

Divine Discontent is a great book: Very readable, well researched, analytical and insightful and is the culmination of much good work by Colin Holden and Richard Trembath with Judith Brett. I want to thank them for such a rich and evocative contribution about the Brotherhood of St Laurence, its development, history and work up until the present time. It also is a good resource on:

- the development and history of social policy in Victoria since World War II, and
- the evolution of Australian society.

There is also a good flavour of the interaction between Australian political life and social policy over the past fifty years.

The opening lines of *Divine Discontent* say much about the book and its view of the Brotherhood.

“On the surface Gerard Kennedy Tucker was the most unlikely candidate for founding a powerful long-lived organisation. He was rich in contradictions... a gaunt, almost anorexic figure... Yet Tucker organized canny purchases of rural property that developed into major aged care centres.” (p.9)

Tucker's passion is reflected in the 1947 Mission Statement of the Brotherhood:

“The Brotherhood has no concern with Party Politics.
It takes its stand on Justice for All, irrespective of Creed, Colour or Class.
It is a Church of England organization.
But its aim is to help all in need
irrespective of Creed, Colour or Class.”

Tucker embodied the contradictions and the mission in this unique agency:

- It was a Church of England organization but committed to all in need, irrespective of Creed.
- It was committed to Justice for All, but knew how to get alongside Melbourne's ruling elite.
- There was to be no concern for Party Politics, but probably no other agency in Australia has had more influence in the party rooms.
- It was critical of the market economy, but knew when to use the market for its own operations such as with the Salvage decision and, more recently, an eye-ware business.

The contradictions reflected in Tucker's leadership were also to be seen clearly in the leadership of Executive Directors who followed him:

Bishop Sambell
David Scott
Peter Hollingworth
Michael Challen
Nic Francis
John Wilson and
Tony Nicholson.

Incidentally, the book records that Bishop James Grant, who is here this evening, remarked of Sambell and Scott that they were the founders of the modern social welfare organization:

”today’s sophisticated agency is the creation of Sambell and Scott” (p.98)

Well, if the Brotherhood is the founding model of the modern social welfare organization, the book quite rightly begins to probe what this means for the Brotherhood today and for the future. The authors have encapsulated well the challenges ahead, namely, how will the Brotherhood fulfil its mission in the changing context of the 21st century?

Other challenges that I can identify that flow from the book include:

- How will the Brotherhood continue to embody its foundational values?
- How can the Brotherhood particularly become a voice for public theology? Its track record for articulating social policy is second to none, but its voice in public theology is yet to be fulfilled.

I am delighted to launch ***Divine Discontent*** and thank Colin, Richard and Judith for a wonderful book.

Bishop Andrew W Curnow