

OSL Healing Ministries Triennial Conference

Walking in Faith into the Future

Pearce Memorial Lecture 2017

Dealing with Trauma? – a pastoral and personal exploration

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Abstract

Tragedy strikes and trauma follows. Although the effects of the violence (emotional, physical, intellectual and spiritual) may lag the tragic event by years, trauma does come! How do people of Faith make sense of the sense-less, the random violations that permeate life? What resources does faith in the God of Life, Light and Love bring to our walk or limp? Does a reading of Scripture provide hope or despair when its own pages tell of violence, betrayal, corruption and murder? Is limping in faith into the future an acceptable 'walking in faith' for a disciple of the glorified Christ? Amidst the vandalism of shalom, we will explore the possibilities of meaning-making, the character and work of God and of hope, as resources for living with trauma.

Bio

John Harrower, his wife and sons were missionaries in Argentina, 1979-88, during the 'Dirty War' 1976-1983 and the Falkland Islands War of 1982. Returning to Melbourne he pastored two churches alongside interest in youth and Islam. As Bishop of Tasmania, 2000-2015, he was a leader in the Anglican Church's response to child sexual abuse giving an apology to survivors on his first day of office and calling for a Royal Commission eleven years prior to its establishment. During the latter part of these years John's vicarious traumatisation manifested itself evolving from his time in Argentina, and his work with survivors of child sexual abuse in Tasmania. Now in Melbourne, he continues in ministry as Bishop Assisting the Primate (National Leader) of the Anglican Church of Australia.

Preamble

My thanks to the Order of St Luke for their invitation to present the *Pearce Memorial Lecture 2017*. It is an honour to be with you and I am not unaware of the accompanying responsibility.

Your invitation has presented me with the opportunity to engage in a pastoral and personal exploration of this serious issue: *Dealing with Trauma?*

Dealing with trauma is serious business on a number of accounts and not least because trauma results from profound suffering, is debilitating and its consequences are long lived.

Dealing with trauma is difficult for me as some of the matters I will be sharing are personally sensitive.

Dealing with trauma is difficult for members of the audience because there may be people here tonight who have experienced trauma or know people who have experienced or are experiencing trauma.

This lecture is not an academic exercise but an exploration of ways of walking in faith, even when the consequences of trauma cause people to walk with a limp. This lecture may prompt emotional responses. We never know when the outworking of deep traumas can erupt and express themselves.

We therefore have some people here tonight who are available to assist you should you so desire it. I would ask them to please stand now, in order to identify them. Thank you.

Introduction

When discussing a person who is suffering from trauma, how many of you have you heard someone comment,

“Get over it!”

“Deal with it!”

“Pray believing!”

“Toughen up!”

“Go for a walk, get some fresh air, smell the roses.”

But, No! – A flippant dismissal of trauma is a gross misunderstanding of trauma. These reactions show ignorance or even deep fears held by the speakers themselves.

Tragedy strikes and trauma follows. Although the effects of the violence (emotional, physical, intellectual and spiritual) may lag the tragic event by years, trauma does come.

When a person is suffering from trauma, they feel down, down, down! Crying, weeping, hopeless and alone, despairing, a failure, embarrassed, humiliated.

But neither is wallowing in trauma with the tears, sadness, brokenness and hopelessness an option.

Is it possible to deal with trauma at all? And if so, how?

Let me say at the outset that I make no claims to professional expertise in the area of trauma or dealing with its consequences. My aim this evening is to learn from the experience of some people who have suffered traumatic events in order that we might better walk with sufferers of trauma. This is a pastoral and personal exploration of a complex and pain laden issue.

Some things I have learnt along the way:

How do we know when a person is just 'down' and what they need is a good 'kick in the pants' or the person is suffering from trauma and they need professional help? This question is not easy to answer. But one thing that I have learnt along the way is that when in doubt, see a GP and a professional counsellor. Make an appointment!

As some of you may know, I suffer from trauma, vicarious trauma. So this is a dangerous place for me right now. But I have taken some precautions, some strategies this evening to cope. I will come to them later. I trust they will work. As I am sure, you do!

Yes, there are strategies in dealing with trauma. Note that I have used 'in dealing with' – the present continuous tense. 'Dealing with' is in the present continuous tense. 'Dealing with' is ongoing, a continuing walk with trauma: walking with a limp.

Let me explain. Trauma has left its marks on my life. An important book, *The Body Keeps the Score, Brain, Mind and Body in the healing of trauma*¹, presents case study after case study of the ways in which tragic events and their traumatic aftermath are stored in our bodies.² There is, if you like, a cumulative effect emotionally, intellectually, physically/medically of these traumatic events. As the years go by we are less able to contain them: the body keeps score.

And I can assure you, the body does keep score. Just recently, I viewed the movie *Hacksaw Ridge*. It tells of the courage of a conscientious objector in the US Army who was bullied during military training and yet rescued under enemy fire seventy-five of his wounded comrades. Crawling among the dead and wounded while dodging Japanese soldiers, he lowered by rope and one-by-one, seventy-five wounded soldiers down a steep cliff, Hacksaw Ridge, to safety.

It was a movie with plenty of body parts and yet I found watching it was okay until the end of the movie when the courageous soldier, now an elderly man, was interviewed. The interview was a surprise and he was diffident about the attention being given him. I found his gracious manner and the warm acknowledgement of him overwhelming. My body began to shake. I struggled to stay upright in my seat. My beautiful bride of forty-seven years stayed and comforted me as the movie ended and people filed out of the theatre.

My reaction was unexpected, embarrassing, upsetting. I realised once again that I can no longer guarantee that I have control over myself. It all seemed so wrong! The film had a 'happy ending'! The man's courage in persisting as a conscientious objector and his bravery and sacrifice as a medic under enemy fire were being celebrated. Yet for me, it was too much. I unravelled emotionally and physically. I may be dealing with trauma but it is also true that trauma continues to deal with me.

¹ *The Body Keeps the Score, Brain, Mind and Body in the healing of trauma*, Dr Bessel van der Kolk, Penguin New York (reprint 2015)

² See Appendix A, *Resources on trauma pathways and support in dealing with trauma in Church Leaders* by Dr Barry Rogers MPS

Events of the past continue to weaken my walk. I no longer stride, I walk with a limp.

I first broke down publically in front of a hundred clergy and lay workers. It was 2013 and I was saying how delighted I was that Prime Minister Julia Gillard had established a Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. As Bishop of Tasmania, I had been calling for such a royal commission for eleven years. And now it had happened! What a wonderful moment! But then my body began to shake, I gripped the lectern to stay upright. I could not speak. Fighting back tears, my chest heaving, "No, Lord, not here!" was my inner cry. My colleagues were kind, generous. They sat me down, comforted me. With the encouragement of my leadership team, I commenced counselling.

Regarding counselling, it is helpful to clarify options³:

(1) Psychological counselling, with a Psychologist who has had some trauma training would be one pathway. This pathway, under a GP mental health care plan allows for a Medicare rebate - which will assist some people who otherwise might not seek counselling support.

(2) Similarly as for (1) but under their Health Fund benefits, if they have a private Health Fund.

(3) Support via a Counsellor who is registered with the CCAA/Christian Counsellors Association of Australia. This is likely not Medicare rebated unless the Counsellor is a Psychologist/Mental Health professional. Some people in church contexts would prefer a person of Christian background.

When I commenced counselling, I well recall the psychologist saying,

"It's alright to cry."

"But I don't want to cry. I don't want to cry in public." (Me)

"What's the problem with crying?"

"It's embarrassing."

"Ok, tell me about that."

And so we did. I am profoundly grateful for these sessions with a psychologist in Hobart, Tasmania.

My trauma had been cumulative including a troubled childhood, our years living in Argentina under a military dictatorship including war with Great Britain, recent deaths of two dear friends, and leading a response to survivors of child sexual abuse by Tasmanian Anglican Church workers. I had met, cried, apologized, prayed and sought to walk with survivors of child sexual abuse. Their suffering affected me deeply: I struggle with vicarious traumatisation. These traumatic events have taken their toll on me.

With the counsellor's assistance, my wife's love and forbearance, the understanding and sacrifice of work colleagues, and the deep confidence that I was God's son, I was able to continue my ministry. I was walking in faith but I was not what I had been. I was walking with a limp.

My 'limp', the accumulated trauma from tragedy and threatening events, had weakened my emotional resilience. My health was not what it had been. I learnt to avoid some things. I rarely watch the evening news. This was a loss, as it had been a staple part of my life. In my time as Bishop of Tasmania, I had been regularly called upon to respond to current issues.

³ I am grateful to Dr Barry Rogers MPS for setting out these options.

I shared my struggles with a friend who recalled his farewell gift from missionary service in Tanzania: a walking stick! In reply to my obvious puzzlement, for he did not use a walking stick, he explained the symbolism of the walking stick. In the tribe where he was working, a walking stick is a symbol of respect, of honour and status. It recognises leadership. The tribe recognises that a life of service is marked by suffering and suffering takes its toll on a person's health, hence the walking stick!

I mentioned this just last week and to another friend who exclaimed, "I was given a walking stick in Tanzania!" – We live in a small world!

My friend had been coaching Tanzanians in a school project to assist abandoned children. The project was led by a converted Masai pastor whose farewell gift to him was this walking stick. Yes, this walking stick that I am holding now.

Moreover, upon my friend's return to his hotel, he became conscious that the room staff took notice of the walking stick and were treating him with great deference. The walking stick is a badge of honour. Walking with a limp is not to be disparaged It recognises struggle and pain. In other words, "It's alright to cry."

Trauma from tragic events accumulates through life and can grow to become a toll too heavy to bear. Trauma takes a toll: a toll on our health, our wellbeing.

Summarizing some strategies for dealing with trauma:

To this point in the lecture, the following strategies have been mentioned in dealing with trauma: accept that trauma is real, is serious business and it needs to be addressed; the importance of supportive friends and family and the need for counselling, "Make an appointment!" The body keeps score, we live with trauma. While walking in faith, we walk with a limp. Moreover, it is wise to avoid some places, places of vulnerability, of danger

Something else that I and others have learnt concerns the beliefs that we hold.

What are the beliefs that sustain us? Or put another way, What songs do we sing when the going gets tough?

Imagine you are in a plane when it plunges, lifts, plunges, steadies, and then begins to gently "wobble". Imagine yourself hearing the concerned, calming voice of the captain over the gasps and cries of passengers.

I recall such a frightening event. My distressed fellow passenger grasped the arm rests and gasped repeatedly, "No! Ah! Oh, no!" This contrasted sharply with the man a few rows back vainly trying to calm his mate who had burst into hysterical laughter! We humans are a mixed bunch!

Prior to "The Plunge", I had been revising my sermon for the installation of the Dean of Hobart. My text? – a Hymn of the early Church: the 'Song of Christ' in Paul's Letter to the Colossians (1:15-20).

¹⁵ *He (Christ) is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; ¹⁶ for in him all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or powers—all things have been created through him and for him. ¹⁷ He himself is before all things, and in him all things hold together. ¹⁸ He is the head of the body, the church; he is the*

beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that he might come to have first place in everything. ¹⁹ For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, ²⁰ and through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross.

My sermon challenge was to be: “Will YOU, the Dean and Cathedral congregation, sing this Song of Christ?” However, God has this habit of turning a preacher’s words back on himself and I heard, “John, will you, yes, you yourself, sing this Song of Christ, even as the plane plunges?”

When the plane plunges; when my world comes crashing down; when loss and grief are unbearable, where are the strong beliefs that sustain my walking in faith, what songs am I singing? The following ‘songs’ or truths are fundamental to my walking in faith as I continue dealing with tragedy and trauma,

- Christ’s promise of his presence, “Lo, I am with you always to the end of the age” (Mt 28:20)
- In Jesus Christ, I see the character and purposes of God. (John 14:9)
- the “love one another” of the brothers and sisters is both supportive and a living reminder of the love that suffers; of the Lover who knows of suffering and human anguish, who died that we might live. (John 13:34)
- the resurrection of Christ is my trust and hope. (John 20:28))
- the promise of my eternal dwelling with Christ where there will be no more tears and sorrow give me hope, comfort and resilience to continue walking in faith. (Rev 21:4)

Let me ask you a question. What are the songs that you sing?

I’ll let you into a secret! For over 15 years, Elvis Presley was my travelling companion in Tasmania. Yes, Elvis Presley! His Gospel songs filled my car and my heart and mind (and passengers!) with Gospel truth. And ‘Elvis’ even made a surprise appearance at the conclusion of my Farewell Service at St David’s Cathedral, Hobart. He led us all in singing *Amazing Grace*! Well, that’s some of my singing! What songs nurture your life?

Christian songs nurture our walking in faith. They speak of God’s character, life’s meaning and hope. These beliefs are founded in the Biblical record. An Australian theologian wrote recently,

“Matthew’s Gospel . . . (offers) the possibility of meaningful living, hope and reversal despite the presence of horror in the world.”

“Matthew’s Gospel makes the reader aware of the means by which this hope may be sustained in the midst of, and after, horror and trauma. These include a life of prayer, imitating the character of God, belonging to the community of faith, and the ritual of the Lord’s Supper. . . . This hope and the life recommended by Matthew’s Gospel may enable those who appropriate its message by faith to (be on) the journey of partial recovery from horror’s traumas.”⁴

⁴ *Coping with the horror and trauma of life today* by Dr Scott D Harrower, The Melbourne Anglican, September 2016. Online, <http://tma.melbourneanglican.org.au/opinion/coping-horror-trauma-life-today-260816>

Hope

Hope plays a vital role in the survival of a woman who suffered terrible burns in the 1983 Victorian bushfires. Hit by a massive fireball, Ann Fogarty was literally on fire and only saved by being lifted into a pool where her skin peeled off her. Serious burns to 85% of her body required surgical treatment which extended over years. She showed extraordinary courage in living with the traumatic physical, emotional, social and spiritual consequences of such horrendous injuries.

And what of the unanswered, “Where are you God? Where were you God when my body, mind and soul were being destroyed, ripped apart?” In her autobiography, *Forged with Flames*⁵, Ann Fogarty recounts her struggle to live, her wrestling with God, family life, physical health and her post traumatic stress.

It is what gains her autobiography, the award of Australian Christian Book of the Year in 2013. The award judges described *Forged with Flames* as a “distinctively Australian saga”.

*“Ann brings to her writing the same humour, honesty and courage with which she suffered the pain, doubt and despair . . . The hope forged by this extreme experience is shared with simplicity and an open heart. It is profoundly comforting to follow her growing assurance of God’s presence and loving care. Ann’s story is compelling, unforgettable and inspiring.”*⁶

Prayer and the Bible

In another Australian autobiography *Child, Arise!*⁷, Jane Dowling, a survivor of child sexual abuse, shares in vulnerability and hope spiritual resources discovered in her own journey through suffering.

There are no words to describe the betrayal and trauma of child sexual abuse, and Jane Dowling does not detail her sexual abuse except to say that it occurred from early childhood to her mid-teens by a family relation and then during her teenage years by a Catholic priest. This brief statement sets a record of her abuse. But her actual abuse is not the focus of her handbook.

Child, Arise! seeks to tell the story of the destructive consequences of the author’s abuse, suffering and survival, from God’s perspective. In her trauma, the author sought God and God’s resources to raise her life from its deathbed of betrayal by years of child sexual abuse. Significantly, Jane Dowling chose *Child, arise!* as the title for her book. “Child, arise!” are the words of Jesus that restored Jairus’s dead daughter to life (Luke 8:54). God’s words are powerful and bring life from death.

At 21 years of age Jane Dowling entered an international Catholic missionary community of prayer and ministry of the Bible. In her mid-twenties the trauma of her abuse erupted in pain and anguish. Then followed a two decade long quest for healing.

Also of relevance, *When grief is overwhelming, how do we cope?* by Nils Von Kalm, TMA, September 18 2017. Online, <http://tma.melbourneanglican.org.au/inner-life/how-to-cope-with-grief-180917>

⁵ *Forged with Flames*, Ann Fogarty & Anne Crawford, Wild Dingo Press, Melbourne Australia, 2013.

⁶ See article, including the Judge’s comments, on *Forged with Flames* at, <http://www.melbourneanglican.org.au/NewsAndViews/NewsArchive/%E2%80%98Compelling,-unforgettable-and-inspiring%E2%80%99-story-wins-Australian-Christian-Book-of-the-Year.aspx>

⁷ *Child arise!* is an outstanding and multifaceted book. Little wonder it was awarded the Australian Christian Book of the Year 2016. *Child, Arise! The Courage to Stand: a spiritual handbook for survivors of sexual abuse* by Jane N. Dowling, David Lovell Publishing Melbourne Australia 2015.

The vulnerability in the telling of her story, the prayerful listening to God's voice and her decision to trust God in the living of what is heard, usher the reader into spaces that inspire and challenge our faith.

The first part of the handbook is a compilation of truths about God and about humankind's identity, dignity, purposes and strengthening. Listening to our personal story from the perspective of a loving God brings comfort and healing. Jane Dowling recaptures the power of the Word of God to change lives. This is meaning-making of the highest order.

In the second part of the handbook Jane Dowling shares her personal engagement with aspects of trauma such as hopelessness, lack of self-esteem, being harsh with herself, and ways of gaining strength to stand to face them, such as channeling anger for good and being set free from paralysis and panic attacks.

An illustration from the handbook. Jane's struggle and pain on the day of her private hearing with the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse were immense. The fear the abusing priest had instilled in her was overpowering. The anticipated re-traumatization in retelling her childhood abuse was overwhelming.

Struggling to prepare herself to attend, Jane turned to her Scripture reading, Isaiah 43:1-3 and spent time praying the scripture reading. The Scripture entered into her head and heart and Jane saw her story from God's perspective, *"You will not be burned, the flames will not consume you."* Jane's experience is too tender to share here this evening. Suffice to say, she was strengthened to attend.

Jane testifies to the power of God's transforming grace through the prayerful reading of the Bible while in deep pain and suffering.

Importantly, the author affirms the role of counselors, family, friends and community in her struggle for survival. All of these resources are to be marshalled for the survivor to stand again, scarred but not broken: 'Child, arise!'

A further reflection from this personal experience of trauma is that my relationship with God prior to abuse is a rich resource in dealing with the trauma of abuse. Jane Dowling alerts us to deepen our walking in faith, our discipleship, with the prayerful reading and living of God's Word, the Bible.

The role of community

Jason Russell's story is the tragic story of a decorated fire fighter whose life disintegrates under a combination of factors: mental health, vicarious trauma suffered in years of firefighting and counselling his fellow fire fighters: struggling, he started to medicate with illicit drugs; his career fell apart, family breakup, drug addiction and homelessness result.

Jason Russell told his story recently in conversation with the Anglican Archbishop of Melbourne.⁸ When commenting on his recovery, Jason highlights the importance of affordable housing and community. He found community at St Mark's Fitzroy and the Lazarus Centre at St Peter's Eastern Hill. Jason commented,

"I went to St Mark's Community Centre. I went and washed the dishes. This gave me respect, dignity. They asked if I would help at the reception. I had something to do, somewhere to be."

⁸ See, Conversations with the Archbishop: *The Homelessness Crisis*, <https://youtu.be/1byS5uctsul> 20.9 2017

Summary

Up to this point in exploring dealing with trauma, we have explored some pastoral learnings from four Australian stories: Jane Dowling, Ann Fogarty, Jason Russell and my own story. We have heard of the importance of personal disciplines, prayer, the Bible, family, friends, Christian community, counsellors, courage, and belief in God's character, meaning and hope.

Two novels

I enjoy reading and I want to share some learning from two superb novels: *Les Miserables* by Victor Hugo and *Cry the Beloved Country* by Alan Paton.

Firstly, *Les Miserables* by Victor Hugo - Symbols of redemption

Do you recall the candlesticks given to the convict Jean Valjean by the Bishop? The candlesticks become an enduring symbol of rescue and meaning.

Imagine being brutalised over 19 years for stealing a loaf of bread to feed your sister and her children, and upon release being mercilessly pursued by an unbending police officer.

Seeking to be freed of this dire predicament, the released prisoner steals the bishop's silver cutlery but is captured and brought before the bishop. However, the bishop pretends that the cutlery was a gift to the released prisoner, and to emphasise that all is well between the former prisoner and himself, the bishop gives a set of silver candlesticks to the captured, and now very startled Jean Valjean. The Bishop sends Jean Valjean off with, "*Go you are a free man. I have bought your soul for God.*"

Through many adventures the candlesticks remain Jean Valjean's companion. They are not sold to finance his new life. They are kept to finance his memory: memory of grace received. The candlesticks were with him when he died: "*He lay back with his head turned to the sky, and the light from the two candlesticks fell upon his face.*"

The candlesticks were a reminder of rescue, of grace, of his life bought for God.

What symbols do we have? Do you have? Do I have? I have a copy of the novel! I refer to it often. – Just last month, I wrote of its significance in my life.⁹ I also have a holding cross with me this evening: a symbol, a reminder of God's grace and presence. What symbols do you treasure?

The second novel: *Cry, The Beloved Country: a story of comfort in desolation* by Alan Paton - The Lord's Supper strengthens us in dealing with trauma.

And finally, the Lord Jesus gave a meal with which to remember his great love for us and by which through the Holy Spirit we are also nurtured and strengthened.

⁹ *A book that changed me*, The Melbourne Anglican, September 2017, page 27, and online at, <http://tma.melbourneanglican.org.au/inner-life/harrower-on-les-mis-290917>

As I was praying recently a certain heaviness descended upon me, maybe because of continuing events: the persecuted Church around the world, the pain of women and children suffering domestic violence, my own country's indifference to asylum seekers – it was all so sad. Yet, I look to God for deliverance, freedom from the suffering of this earthly life and in the ultimate dawn of the coming of the Son of God.

This hope amidst grief is poignantly captured in the closing scene of the majestic South African novel, *Cry, the Beloved Country* by Alan Paton.

We see the tragic figure of the stricken father awaiting the dawn which would herald the execution of his son in faraway Johannesburg. The father's heartbreaking lament over his son and country is yet fused with the comfort of the coming of another dawn, for he is the impoverished Anglican priest of a rural African village.

The final paragraphs of the book read¹⁰,

He (the father) looked out of his clouded eyes at the faint steady lightening in the east. He calmed himself, and took out the heavy maize cakes and the tea, and put them upon a stone. And he gave thanks, broke the cakes and ate them, and drank of the tea.

Let's just pause the reading for a moment. The priest is partaking of Holy Communion, the Lord's Supper, this sacred ritual which feeds and strengthens us. In the words of the Anglican Prayer Book for Australia 1995, p.142, *Come let us take this holy sacrament of the body and blood of Christ in remembrance that he died for us, and feed on him in our hearts by faith with thanksgiving.*

Returning to the reading from *Cry, the Beloved Country*,

Then he (the father whose son is to be executed at dawn, this father and priest) gave himself over to deep and earnest prayer, and after each petition he raised his eyes and looked to the east. And the east lightened, till he knew that the time was not far off. And when he expected it, he rose to his feet and took off his hat and laid it down on the earth, and clasped his hands before him. And while he stood there the sun rose in the east.

Yes, it is the dawn that has come. The titihoya (bird) wakes from sleep, and goes about its work of forlorn crying. The sun tips with lights the mountains of Angeli and East Griqualand. The great valley of the Umzimkulu is still in darkness, but the light will come there. Ndotsheni (the village) is still in darkness, but the light will come there also. For it is the dawn that has come, as it has come for a thousand centuries, never failing. But when the dawn will come, of our emancipation, (of our deliverance), from the fear of bondage and the bondage of fear, why, that is a secret.

The Anglican priest awaiting his son's execution took meaning and hope from the character of God revealed in Jesus Christ, in the breaking of the maize cakes and drinking of the tea – "do this in remembrance of me", as we await the coming of the Son, the new dawn.

¹⁰ *Cry, The Beloved Country: a story of comfort in desolation*, Alan Paton, (1944) Penguin Books, Ringwood Australia, 1958 p.236

Discomfort: Our current state. Comfort: New Dawn. The Comforter: The Holy Spirit who abides with us and indwells Christ's people, comforting us, even in our discomfort.

The father's lament led me to write my own lament for **the dawn will come**. A brief exert:

*Oh, we await, with yearning
while working
with deep assurance,
for the dawn does come,

the Sun does rise
the Son did rise
the Son is risen
the Son will come again!¹¹*

Dear Brothers and Sisters, our final emancipation, our deliverance from trauma, is founded in Jesus Christ who promises that those who believe in Him will live, even though they die. Recall Jesus' words to Martha at Lazarus' tomb (John 11:23-27),

²³ *Jesus said to her (Martha of Bethany), 'Your brother will rise again.'*

²⁴ *Martha answered, 'I know he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day.'*

²⁵ *Jesus said to her, 'I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; ²⁶ and whoever lives by believing in me will never die. Do you believe this?'*

²⁷ *'Yes, Lord,' she replied, 'I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, who is to come into the world.'*

Martha knew the character of God was revealed in Jesus Christ, the Messiah, the Son of God, and this enabled her to make meaning of life and gave her hope in the face of trauma.

May God almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit make it so for our own 'walking in faith into the future'. Amen.

The Right Reverend John Harrower OAM
Bishop Assisting the Primate, Bishop of Tasmania 2000-2015.

*Note to self: Take a cross to hold during the lecture.

*Note: Additional Comment¹²

¹¹ *The dawn will come*, Bishop John Harrower, Tasmanian Anglican, August 2015.

Online, <http://www.tasmaniananglican.com.au/ta201508-01/>

¹² *Additional Comment I made during the Lecture's question time:*

I'm a chemical engineer by training and you always make sure that you have a safety valve on a vessel. So when the pressure gets too high, when the pressure gets too much, the safety valve will blow and will let off the pressure and save the vessel and plant from major damage.

Once, one of the safety valves didn't go off and we blew the top off a tank and we covered houses with a petroleum product. Strangely enough it wasn't appreciated!

If we don't have some safety valves, if we don't design well, then pressures can build and tanks and vessels can be damaged and even be destroyed.

'Safety valves', which might be going out with friends to a film or taking time to smell the roses or whatever relaxes us and brings joy: these things help us survive. We must build 'safety valves' into our lives.

APPENDIX A

Resources on trauma pathways and support in dealing with trauma in Church Leaders

Please find following books which relate to information on trauma pathways, and support in dealing with trauma for church leaders. These have been recommended by **Dr Barry Rogers MAPS** who has given his permission for this resource information to be shared with other people who may benefit from it.

(1) Prof. Stephen Joseph (2011). *What doesn't kill us. The new psychology of post traumatic growth*. London: Piatkus. The foreword is by Terry Waite; you'll recall he was Archbishop Robert Runcie's Assistant for Anglican Communion Affairs, and was kidnapped in the late 1980's in Lebanon. Chapter 3 of this very readable book is on 'The biology of trauma' - and those who've experienced trauma directly or vicariously could be really helped by its clear explanation of the brain processes associated with trauma impacts. The book is particularly helpful for those who have had some time distance between their initial trauma and dealing with life's stressors now.

It is also a very insightful, practical resource for church leaders who are providing pastoral support to other leaders. It can be purchased in book and in Kindle form - check Amazon for example.

I have added a helpful link, to a TED video from Charles Hunt*, "What trauma taught me about resilience" (* he alludes also to his faith, in terms of purpose beyond trauma) - 14mins YouTube clip: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3qELiw_1Ddg

(2) Dr. Bessel van der Kolk (reprint 2015). *The Body keeps the Score. Brain, Mind and Body in the healing of trauma*. New York: Penguin. It is also available in book and Kindle format.

A helpful aspect of this book is that in the stories presented, there are insights about the course of trauma and its impacts relationally, cognitively, and physically/medically. In faith contexts, group reading of such case histories can begin to generate - in a safe, supportive, agreed confidential context - opportunities to address personal trauma for those in church-based senior leadership groups.

One of the de-identified client stories ('Marilyn') is provided in the website review, below, of his book and is worth reading in relation to the many-faceted aspects of trauma in its developmental impacts. <https://www.psychotherapy.net/article/body-keeps-score-van-der-kolk>

The New Scientist book review, below is also helpful to pass on to other leaders who may benefit from reading the book: <https://www.newscientist.com/article/mg22429941-200-the-lifelong-cost-of-burying-our-traumatic-experiences/>

Both books may be ordered from most book outlets and online, e.g. from Amazon or Booktopia.