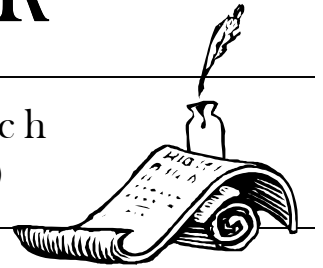


THE RECORDER



Newsletter of The Uniting Church
Historical Society (NSW/ACT)



ALAN WALKER AMONG THE SHARKS - The Linder Lecture

A group of about 40 people gathered at the Centre of Ministry on November 20 to hear Professor Robert Linder, University Distinguished Professor of History from Kansas State University. This was the second UCHS lecture for 2010. Professor Linder spoke on "Alan Walker among the sharks" and why Rev Walker was not a beloved national figure.

As Professor Linder summarised, "Alan Walker (1911-2003) was arguably the most important Australian Christian in the last half of the twentieth century. If so, why has he been largely neglected not only by the secular historians but also by the historians of religion in this country? More profoundly, as a man of enormous accomplishment, why was he not a beloved religious figure?

There is, of course, more than one reason that Walker has not been the recipient of the affections of Christians, especially evangelical Christians, in Australia. Among them is the fact that he championed numerous unpopular causes, each carefully selected by Walker because of their importance to the spiritual health of the Australian Christian community and often related to issues of social and



Professor Linder in lecture mode

economic justice. Walker not only believed that the Christian gospel was the answer to peoples' personal spiritual needs but also of the social and economic questions of the day. Therefore, he consistently opposed war and championed peace.

Other issues that made him being viewed as a beloved figure problematical, included his relentless drive to reach people for Christ, his criticism of capitalism, his persistence in championing traditional Methodist social issues like alcohol abuse, gambling and prostitution. Also, the fact that he was a Methodist who had to live among Anglicans in New Wales and that he was a New South Welshman who had to exist in the larger context of a nation that contained other regions which were jealous of or hostile to Sydney was another

consideration in the acceptance of his national leadership.

Add to this, the fact that he was an ecumenically minded Christian when most of his fellow evangelical believers were not, and that he was a theological Arminian operating among mostly theological Calvinists and modified Calvinists, made it difficult for him to be accepted as the leader of evangelicals nationwide

Walker was also obviously a "tall poppy," not only in the Australian Christian community but also in society at large. This invited a great deal of resentment and criticism from others, especially in the larger community. In other words, as a national figure and crusading evangelist, Walker was caught between the need to be well-known and the consequences of being too well-known. In the Australian context, this translated into strife.

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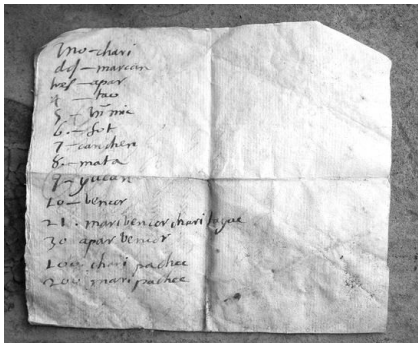
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"LOST" LANGUAGE FOUND IN CHURCH

Notes on the back of a 400-year-old letter have revealed a previously unknown language once spoken by indigenous peoples of northern Peru, an archaeologist says.

Penned by an unknown Spanish author and lost for four centuries, the battered piece of paper was pulled from the ruins of an ancient Spanish colonial church in 2008. But a team of scientists and linguists has only recently revealed the importance of the words written on the flip side of the letter. The early 17th-century author had translated Spanish numbers: uno, dos, tres, and Arabic numerals into a mysterious language never seen by modern scholars.



"Even though the letter doesn't tell us a whole lot, it does tell us about a language that is very different from anything we've ever known, and it suggests that there may be a lot more out there," said project leader Jeffrey Quilter, an archaeologist at Harvard's Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology.

"Lost" Language One of Two Already Known?

The newfound native language may have borrowed from Quechua, a language still spoken by indigenous peoples of Peru, Quilter said.

But it was clearly a unique

tongue, and likely one of two known only by the mention of their names in contemporary texts: Quingnam and Pescadora, "language of the fishers." Some scholars suggest the two are in fact the same tongue that had been misidentified as distinct languages by early Spanish scribes. Also, the writings include translated numbers, which means that the lost language's numerical system was a ten-based, or decimal system, like English.

While the Inca used a ten-based system, many other cultures did not: the Maya, for example, used a base of 20, according to Quilter.

Church Misfortune is Archaeologist's Gain

The letter was found during excavations of the Magdalena de Cao Viejo church at the El Brujo Archaeological Complex in northern Peru. The National Geographic Society has sponsored fieldwork at the site in the past. The church served a nearby town once inhabited by indigenous people forcibly relocated to the site by Spaniards, probably for purposes of conversion to Christianity, Quilter said.

The tantalizing fragment is just one of hundreds of historic papers recovered at the site, which has been well preserved by the extremely arid climate, and also by the church's collapse, Quilter added.

"Archaeologists live on other people's misfortunes," Quilter said.

The Spanish colonialists "had the misfortune of having the church collapse, we think

probably in the mid-to-late 17th century, which trapped the library or office where they kept their papers."

Language Hints at Diversity of Cultures

Quilter said, finding the new language at Magdalena de Cao Viejo helps to reinforce the rich diversity of cultures found in early colonial Americas. "That was an extremely interesting time," he said. "We often think of a confrontation of Spanish and Native Americans, but in almost every location, from Massachusetts to Peru, it was a confrontation of a much more diverse group of people."

For instance, colonialists from many parts of Europe were grouped into "the Spanish," and in the Americas there were many people who spoke different languages and had different customs, he noted, "it really shows how rich and diverse that world was."

(National Geographic News)

ARCHIVE FINDINGS



A beautifully illustrated Certificate of Appreciation to Thomas Muston of Parramatta, dated 1912, for his work as Sunday School superintendent.

THE ROLE OF WOMEN

I was singing the praises of our local UC minister - a woman - to Rev Bob MacArthur some months ago. I recounted that an ancestor of mine, Dr Edith Pechey, was one of the first women doctors in the UK. She started Medicine at the University of Edinburgh in 1869 and went on to a Doctorate in Medicine at the University of Berne in 1877, at a time when no English university would grant a degree to women.

All this discussion on the fine contribution of women to the church and society, motivated Bob MacArthur to write the following article, and to uncover a relevant newspaper clipping from earlier times! *Ed.*

Ministers' Wives

Those of us of the Presbyterian ministry of the 1950's saw the beginning of the surge of ministers' wives joining the work force. A shock wave went through many manses, as the older wives were stunned at this desertion.

It all seemed so cold-blooded. How too, could their spouse and the parish cope? Not only so. but there was the assumption linked to hope that the minister's wife would pursue a leadership role in the church. Many lovingly did so.

For instance, the emissary of a north west selection committee quizzed the candidate for the Call: "They want to know what your wife is like, Alan?" That was often cynically described as, "two for the price of one".

Women Elders

Within a decade women became Elders as members of the Session. This struck alarm to a headquarter's minister. Now we'll have kitchen cabinets and a few husband and wife couples forming power blocks. By the 1960's women became ministers in both the Methodist and Presbyterian Churches, with the Congregationalists already leading the way.

These recollections were stirred by this newspaper report of 1873. Throwing fuel on the fire of male chauvinism, Dr Zeriff said,

Art, the female occupation

SATURDAY, 30 AUGUST Women concerned with the equality of their sex would be better suited to the professions of art and architecture than medicine, a senior lecturer told the Victorian Discussion Society this month. Dr Zeriff told to the large gathering at the Cavendish Rooms in Melbourne that women had 'begun to feel their neglected status'. He said instead of devoting themselves with so much zeal to the medical profession, there were other branches of art—especially architecture, sculpture and painting—which might be cultivated by women with the greatest advantage to humanity in general and to themselves in particular.

Dr Zeriff said that activity was the province of man, passivity the sphere of woman; man was dynamic, woman static. He said from earliest childhood, the two sexes were different. Girls were 'neat, full of intelligence; boys, boisterous, fighting, playing at soldiers or sailors'. Girls, he said, sat for hours nursing, patting, and fondling a little wooden doll without nose or ears; they appeared to prepare themselves for the time when the wooden doll would be a little human being—'God's finest creation'.

He told the discussion group that architecture was a more congenial occupation for a lady than the dissecting of the human body. He said an architect ought to have taste and urged the women present to agitate to be articed to some of our architects, many of whom, unfortunately had neither taste nor ideas.

'We must acknowledge that women who had become real artists were the very best daughters, wives, and the most tender mothers. They never forgot the broom, the frying pans, the blankets and sheets—those indispensable adjuncts of a comfortable household—over their paint brushes, colours and canvas.'

Whether the women present were passive, was not reported!

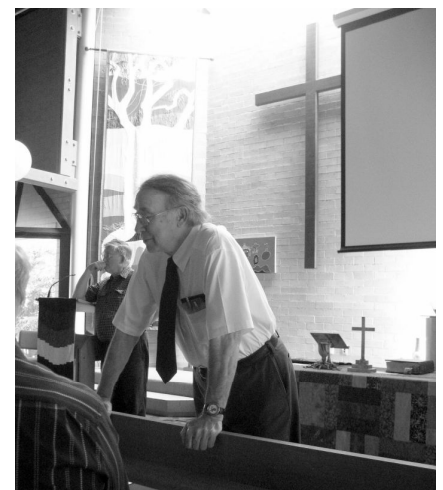
Bob MacArthur

Linder Lecture *from p1*

Nevertheless, Walker was a human dynamo. The fact that he inaugurated many commendable and consequential projects that benefited not only the religious community but also the general population is undisputable. Especially important was his Life Line ministry that saved many a human being and many families during his ministry at Sydney Central Methodist Mission. There were many others.

His enormous expenditure of energy for cause of Christ and his church and his many accomplishments earned him a special place in the religious and secular life of the nation. For all of the foregoing reasons, Alan Walker is deserving of being both a Uniting Church and a national icon".

The Q & A session after the lecture was very stimulating, because many of those present told of personal experiences of Rev Alan Walker, of his character, his energy and his vision. Professor Linder is keen to collect anecdotes and other material relating to Rev Walker.



Professor Linder at Q & A time

BOOK REVIEW

A CONCISE COMPANION TO ABORIGINAL HISTORY

by Malcolm Prentis

This book provides an overview of Australian Aboriginal history from creation stories involving the Dreaming through to Aboriginal cultural and political activity in the 21st century. Its alphabetically arranged entries include biographies, historical events, pioneering work by anthropologists, historical controversies, literature and sport, and a number of social issues. Malcolm Prentis has paid a particular attention to covering all regions of Australia and the Torres Strait Islands, and all periods of recorded history. As well, the book includes photographs, maps, population tables, a dateline and a bibliography. This is a revised & updated paperback version of the 2008 hardback.

Malcolm Prentis is Professor of History at Australian Catholic University where he taught Aboriginal history for many years. He is a graduate of Sydney and Macquarie Universities and a Fellow of the Royal Historical Society and has published many works on various aspects of Australian history, including *A Study in Black and White: The Aborigines in Australian History* (3rd edition, Rosenberg, 2009) and *The Scots in Australia* (2008).

THE EVANGELISATION SOCIETY OF AUSTRALASIA - THE FIRST 35 YEARS

by Evans and Paproth

The Evangelisation Society of Victoria commenced its operations in Melbourne in 1883, led by several outstanding laymen and ministers, including several wealthy supporters. Later, the Society's name was changed to the Evangelisation Society of Australasia because the Society was receiving invitations to send its preachers to other Australian colonies and states, and to New Zealand. The story of the Society through until 1918 is told here, mainly in terms of the lives and activities of the evangelists who worked for the Society through this period. It tells a remarkable story of an important aspect of the soul-saving work of the Australian Protestant Churches.

Rev Robert Evans is a Uniting Church minister and is President of that church's Historical Society in NSW. He has written a number of other books on the history of evangelism in Australia in the nineteenth Century.

Rev Dr Darrell Paproth was ordained in the Anglican Church. He has lectured in church history, culture and worship at the Bible College of Victoria, and has published a great range of historical articles and books.

SPIRIT MATTERS

by Kaldor, Hughes and Black

Spirit Matters presents the results of unique research into how Australians make sense of life. Written in an accessible style for a wide audience, this book counts and compares those making use of religious frameworks, alternative spiritualities, and largely secular approaches. How we make sense of life is both diverse and changing. The book then goes deeper, pinpointing ways in which these different approaches can effect personal wellbeing and the common good. This study shows that some approaches are more helpful than others. How we make sense of life does matter.

Peter Kaldor was the founding director of NCLS Research, and for 25 years has been involved in research and writing in the areas of spirituality, religion, social policy, wellbeing and effective leadership.

Phillip Hughes has been a researcher with the Christian Research Association since 1985. He is the author of many books relating to spirituality and religion in Australia, as well as various publications on community life.

Alan Black was Foundation Professor of Sociology at Edith Cowan University. His fields of research and publication include religion, spirituality, wellbeing, social capital and community life.

The three authors actively maintain their contact with Edith Cowan University.

*WISHING YOU ALL
PEACE AND JOY IN THIS CHRISTMAS SEASON
AND
HEALTH AND HAPPINESS - AND SOME FUN
IN THE YEAR AHEAD*