December 2010

Southern CROSS

Sydney Anglicans Connecting

SEEING RED

Does Christmas commercialism make your blood boil?

› Is gambling reform dead?

Exclusive interview with the Coalition's George Souris

› "Partnership": Moore's new era for women in ministry

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Grumpy grinches

Don't stay angry at the commercialisation of Christmas. You can do something about it.

News

Community

Features

What's on

World view

Southern Cross
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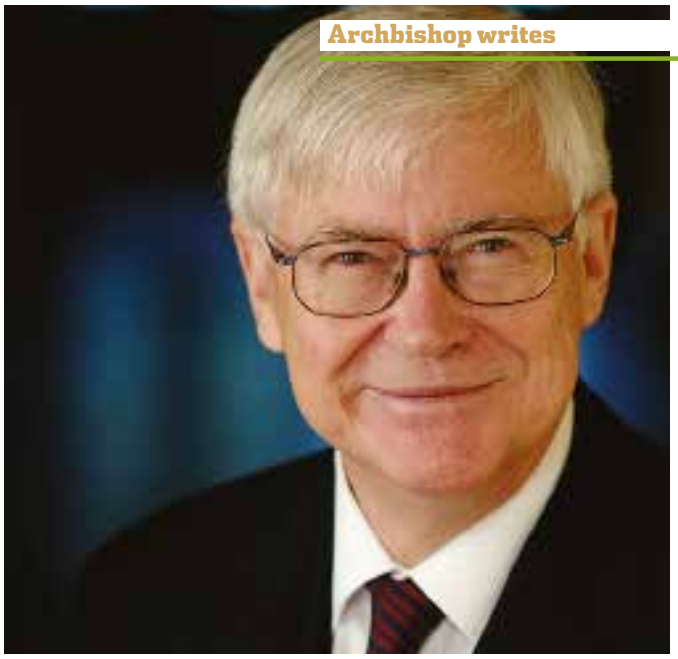

God's call: our vocation

Dr Peter Jensen

ONE of the most striking things about the first chapter in the Bible is the way in which God creates all things though speech. His word does it all. We are thereby left in no doubt both that he is separate from his creation and that he is all-powerful. He is the one who 'calls into existence the things that do not exist' (Rom 4:17). Who else could create all things from nothing, merely at a word?

As the biblical story develops, we discover many further things about God's word, most wonderfully that his Son is also called his word and is seen as the one through whom all things were created. As a result, when the message about Jesus was preached in the world, this gospel was also specifically called 'the word of God'. As such it has the potency of any word of God, the capacity to create from nothing, to transform situations, to bring the dead to life, to save us from our sins, or even to be the ground for condemnation when it is rejected.

In one way, God's call is directed to all human beings, in that 'he commands all people everywhere to repent' (Acts 17:30). But there is also a way in which, when God summons a person to faith and the person responds, this is especially regarded as the call of God, as we see in Romans 8:28: 'for those who are called according to his purpose'. Every saved person has been effectively called by God.

Just as the Son is known as the word of God, so the Spirit is intimately linked with God's word. The Spirit inspires the word of God; the prophet speaks in the power of the Spirit. But, so too, the Holy Spirit brings light to our hearts through the word so that we can understand it and believe it. As far as we are concerned, our focus must be on the word itself. The Spirit speaks in and through the word, not independent of it. 'The sword of the Spirit is the word of God', as Paul says in Ephesians 6:17. Thus sometimes our rebirth is attributed to the Spirit of God (eg John 3:5), sometimes to the word of God (1Peter 1:21-23). Spirit and word are inseparable.

For example, the Apostle Peter attributes our new birth to God's word: "you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God… and this word is the good news that was preached to you" (1 Peter 1:23-25).

The word is not merely a set of human words spoken or written without power. This word is dynamic; it is breathed out by the Spirit of God using human speakers and authors; it is taken by the Spirit and brought home to human hearts. In order to emphasise its power, it is known as God's 'call'. He turns his choice into his call, his summons to new life, his voice which wakens the dead. He speaks and we are born again.

During the course of Christian history this call of God came to be referred to by its Latin name: 'vocation'. At one stage it was exclusively applied to the 'call' to ordained ministry, or perhaps to life as a monk or nun. Then it was applied more broadly to our daily labours in order to emphasise that all of life is Christian and not just life in ministry. Thus our work became our 'vocation' or our 'calling'. But in making these adjustments the original significance was lost. Our fundamental 'vocation' is to become a follower of the Lord Jesus Christ. Into this we have been summoned by the authoritative word of God.

God's usual method of bringing new birth is through his Spirit-blessed word. But this raises the issue of whether it is possible for those who cannot hear the gospel to be saved, as in the case of infants. Infants, like the rest of us need to be born again to be saved. In God's providence they may receive new birth by God's word and Spirit, but not through God's word and Spirit in the usual way. Resting on God's promises to us and to our families, we may certainly commit our little ones to God for salvation, as we rightly do in infant baptism. In God's saving mercy he can bring them to new birth as infants as his wisdom dictates. God deals with individuals in different ways and our chief business is to make sure our children hear the word of God with our prayer that they will receive it with faith.

Has God a calling for you? Yes, it is the word of his gospel, the word that Jesus Christ is Lord with the summons to turn away from sin, to trust and obey him. When you trust God's word, it is because the Lord has called you to himself and given you the gift of new birth and salvation. Your salvation depends on him — and he is utterly dependable. SC

Mission Prayer

Almighty God,
We call upon you for such an outpouring of your Holy Spirit upon us that we as your people may be assured of your love through your word, seek to please the Saviour in all things, manifest the godly life and be filled with prayerful and sacrificial compassion for the lost in all the world.
In the name of our Saviour Jesus Christ,
Amen.

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GOODBYE BISHOP YONG

Chinese churches farewell their "father"

BISHOP Yong Chen Fah didn't really know what to expect when he came to Sydney from Malaysia three years ago to be 'bishop to the Chinese community' at the invitation of Archbishop Peter Jensen.

However, he says that after three months of visiting all the Chinese churches in the Diocese, "I began to realise what I was supposed to do — to strengthen them for more effective evangelism and discipleship".

He set about doing this in a number of ways: taking pastors to Korea for specialised training, encouraging them to train up lay leaders in their congregations and helping them see the tremendous benefit of mutual support and fellowship.

"I have issued the challenge to them but it is the Lord himself who is changing them," he says.

Initially Bishop Yong and his wife Mida were meant to spend two years in Sydney, but the local churches realised the couple's input was so valuable they happily put up half the money to pay for an extra year. The parish of Marrickville also extended the time the couple could spend in the church's rectory for a further 12 months.

The Rev David Zhang from St Thomas', Auburn says Bishop Yong "has united us and given us a focus".

"We are scattered — we belong to different parishes, regions and mission areas. We didn't have much to do with each other in terms of strategising, sharing resources, combined training or church planting and recruiting for the future. Since he has come he's been able to get us listening to each other, talking and doing things together.

"And we love him... he has been to us Chinese clergy like a father figure in God, and Mrs Yong has been like a mother to a lot of the clergy wives — and especially female clergy who are not married because sometimes they have no-one to talk with to share their struggles.

"He will be sorely missed."

A farewell for the Yongs will be held at St John's, Parramatta on December 11 from 3.30pm.

COALITION BACKS STAUS QUO

Opposition mounts to 'political' ethics move

PHOTO: Robert Bidgee

THE NSW Coalition has confirmed it would stop ethics classes competing directly with school Scripture if it wins office at the upcoming March election.

Shadow Education Minister Adrian Piccoli said the NSW Liberals and Nationals did not believe ethics classes "should be positioned as an alternative" to Special Religious Education.

The Coalition is also sceptical of Labor's motives in rushing through its new policy.

"Like a range of social issues brought on at the end of the four-year parliamentary term, it appears to be driven by political considerations and not the best interest of children," he said.

Archbishop Peter Jensen congratulated the Opposition for its "commitment to take seriously the other solutions the Premier and the Minister declined to consider".

Earlier, Premier Kristina Keneally announced that ethics classes would begin in Term 1 next year for years 5 and 6 and then would be progressively rolled out for years K-4. She claimed the vast majority of feedback after a review by Dr Sue Knight was favourable.

However, *The Sydney Morning Herald* reported that many of the submissions in support came via a form letter organised by the lobby group parents4ethics.

There is also some suspicion the Government conducted creative counting based on a very loose definition of 'support' for ethics.

The St James Ethics Centre will continue to provide the course and will be responsible for all aspects of its delivery, including providing trained volunteer teachers and resources.

Church leaders questioned Labor's move, with Archbishop Peter Jensen calling it "a bad decision, made under political pressure, which will impoverish the education of many NSW public schoolchildren".

Dr Jensen observed that, "philosophical ethics is not a real alternative to the study of religion and it is unfair to confront parents with the dilemma of having them both taught at the same time".

"The 'examined life' starts with a well-rounded education," he said, adding that, "even though the ethics lesson plans were not publicly released, it is apparent that they did not include clear guidance on right and wrong".

> **"We don't think that students should have to choose between Special Religious Education and ethics classes."**
>
> **Adrian Piccoli, NSW Shadow Education Minister**

The President of the NSW Council of Churches, the Rev Richard Quadrio, called the State Government's plan unworkable. "How is the St James Ethics Centre going to recruit the hundreds if not thousands of volunteers needed to teach these classes?" he asked.

The Federation of Parents and Citizens Association NSW told SBS it was "extremely disappointed" by the Coalition's support for the "status quo".

Said president Helen Walton: "Scripture classes as they are run in public schools are not engaging".

MARK PAYNE TO HEAD DIOCESE'S CENTRAL ADMIN

Reforms begun but work ahead, says new CEO

PHOTO: Russell Powell

QUICK FACTS

- Aged 46
- Acting CEO from Feb
- M. Law (Syd); B. Econ. (Syd) and Grad. Dip. Applied Finance and Investment (SIA)
- 19 years working for the Sydney Diocese
- Diocesan Secretary 1997-2004
- Gen. Manager, Parish Services 2005-2008
- Gen. Manager, Parish and Property Services 2008-2010
- Member, Cherrybrook Anglican

A LONG-time senior manager within the Sydney Diocese's central administration was officially announced as CEO of the Sydney Diocesan Secretariat (SDS) and the Glebe Administration Board (GAB) at a special staff meeting on Thursday, November 18.

After the sudden illness and resignation of previous CEO Steve McKerihan, a recruitment firm was asked to conduct a competitive search for a replacement. They recommended Mark Payne be appointed.

Canon Bruce Ballantine-Jones, the chairman of both entities, paid tribute to Mr Payne's work as acting CEO during the board and organisational restructure.

"At conceivably the worst possible time Mark was thrown into the acting chief executive officer's role and I have to say that he took up the challenge in a selfless and brilliant way," he said. "For these 10 months he has initiated and steered our organisations through many major changes, some involving pain and sorrow."

Analysis by Jeremy Halcrow

The desire for a high-flying corporate messiah is misplaced. The restructure of the Diocese's central administration is so significant that it demands a leader most skilled at service delivery to parishes. For good reason Archbishop Jensen said at the announcement of Mr Payne's appointment that, "Mark is the right man for the job, the right man for this moment in time and that is God's blessing on us".

It was long Mr Payne's conviction that the Sydney Diocesan Secretariat (SDS) had to focus on serving parishes. It was this conviction that saw him establish the parish services division, which he led from 2005 until it merged with property in the initial 2008 shake-up.

"There is further work to be done but we have changed the culture within our organisation," he told *SC*. "Staff now have a better understanding that we exist for parishes, not that the parishes exist for us."

The financial crisis has only clarified the wisdom of Mr Payne's vision.

"I am energised by the opportunity to give renewed focus to parish services," he said, calling this the core business of SDS.

Mr Payne lists investment accounting and property project management as areas where SDS and its sister entity the Glebe Administration Board (GAB) will outsource, or in his words seek to "build strategic relationships" rather than "take on the responsibility ourselves".

"Investment accounting is a specialist skill. We can not afford to maintain specialised skills in those areas that are not our core competencies. It is just too expensive and not cost-effective."

The core focus of his businesses will now be on investment policy settings, as well as serving parishes in governance, administration and general accounting.

As part of the tighter policy settings, Mr Payne has "completely ruled out leveraging on his watch".

Making the business simpler, he said, will also reduce the financial risks to the Diocese.

"The GAB business is substantially simpler than it was. We are now managers of managers rather than doing investments in-house… [This] is a significant mitigant of risk."

PARISH CHARGE

Levy vote set for December

THE introduction of a one-year levy to fund the shortfall in the Archbishop and bishops' budget will be considered by Standing Committee in December.

In October, Synod was told of a shortfall in the budget of the Endowment the See (EOS) because of lower returns from one of its main investments — the St Andrew's House office block.

Rather than approving the sale of Bishopscourt, the Archbishop's residence, to provide an ongoing fund, Synod agreed to a 1.14 per cent levy to be paid by parishes in 2011.

In December, Standing Committee will consider an ordinance to put the levy in place. However, as agreed by Synod, the levy would only come into force if the EOS Committee and the Archbishop's Commission were unable to find alternative funding to make up the shortfall.

Parish councils will be asked to report on the impact, if any, of the 1.14 per cent assessment levy on their 2011 budgets following their next annual general meetings.

MORE CUTBACKS

SDS jobs go

THERE has been a new round of cost-cutting at the Sydney Diocesan Secretariat (SDS).

Last month there were five retrenchments. Three positions were cut from Finance and one each from Parish Property Services and Technology.

Five other jobs have gone through natural attrition, meaning full-time staff at St Andrew's House will drop from 57 this year to 47 in 2011.

SDS CEO Mark Payne says the cuts came after a careful budget review. Those affected are being assisted with employment counselling.

MISSION AREAS KICK OFF

Bishop Lee 'astounded' by new ideas

JUDY ADAMSON

JUST six months since their leadership was announced, the new diocesan mission areas are already taking off with enthusiastic planning, research and strategies for the future.

Bishop Ivan Lee, who is leading the mission area initiative, held a two-day conference with the 19 mission area leaders in mid-November. Part of the program at the conference was a progress report from each leader, and Bishop Lee says he was astounded at how much had already been accomplished.

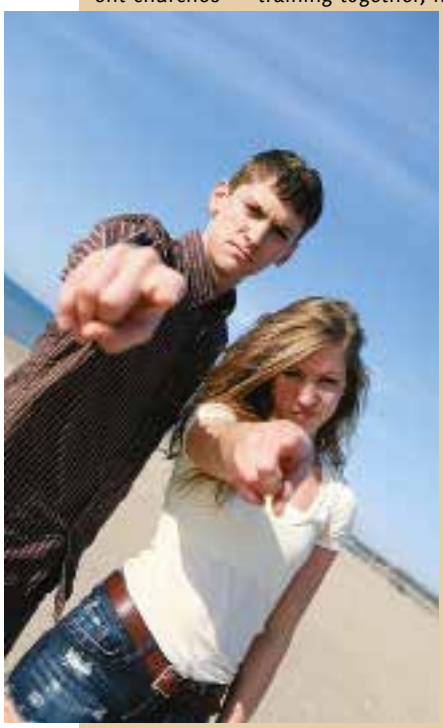
"They came up with sheets and sheets of what they were doing or planning," he says. "What they do in each mission area is different because it's about local programs and strategy, but it is definitely gaining momentum and some areas are doing so much it's unbelievable."

Thanks to research about how churches grow, Bishop Lee says some priorities for the mission areas are already becoming clear.

"There are some big priorities — youth and children for sure… and another is continuing Connect [For Life]. We believe that had a big impact and we really want to continue on with contacting people."

Strategies include working out how to make effective contact with people after they move into an area, as well as helping Anglican churchgoers who move from one area to another link up with an Anglican church near their new home.

Bishop Lee says most rectors have had a meeting with their area leader and all are being asked how they can be better supported in mission.



SHOALHAVEN YOUTH MINISTRY

In the Shoalhaven, mission area leader the Rev Matthew Pickering from All Saints', Nowra says two ideas have already borne fruit.

The first is a link between youth ministries at different churches — training together, holding combined events and, importantly, getting churches with larger youth ministries to help out those with fewer resources.

Group members will also support the youth ministry specialist being sent to lead the provisional parish of Culburra Beach. The parish had asked the bishop for a younger clergyman — and Youthworks' Wollongong-based youth advisor, the Rev Paul McPhail (a deacon) will start there in January under the authority of the Rev Sean Heslehurst, rector of Bomaderry.

"In the past the parish has received older clergy who were close to retirement… now there'll be a younger fellow and he's going to concentrate on young families," Mr Pickering says. "If any other matters arise, then rather than be distracted he's to contact us [the mission area group] about that and we'll see what we can do. It's a very different way of doing things."

INNER WEST ADVERTS

The Inner West mission area (MA) is working to get events noticed in the broader community.

Mission area leader, the Rev Antony Barraclough from All Saints', Petersham, says the churches are paying for a full-page Christmas ad in the local paper — with an eye-catching graphic created at the Village Church in Annandale.

The ad will list Christmas events at the churches taking part plus website, phone and suburb information. Mr Barraclough says a few churches outside the MA have also been invited to contribute as their parishes fall into the newspaper's circulation area.

"It's unaffordable if it's just one church but for all of us together it will cost something like $100 each," he says. "And we get a full page rather than a small ad, so it makes a lot of sense. If it works well we can roll it out again at Easter, or for kids' clubs."

UPPERNORTHSHOREJOINTFOODDRIVE

The Upper North mission area is full of plans. Area leader the Rev Bruce Stanley from Waitara says a website (www.uppernorth.anglican.asn.au) has been set up to facilitate communication between local churches, while training for SRE and child protection will be a combined effort — as will Christmas advertising in a local paper. A support and training database is also being set up for paid and unpaid church workers.

A major plan in the wind for next year is to invite all 22 churches in the MA to join the community food collection for Anglicare run each winter by St James', Turramurra and six other churches.

"I think the main thing for us is increasing communication," Mr Stanley says. "There are church plant possibilities developing at the moment that will happen a lot more easily if we communicate and let each other know about things. This gets people thinking about mission on a larger scale."

CORNHILL SYDNEY LAUNCHED

Bid to lift local preaching

A training course for preachers pioneered in England is being launched locally in a bid to lift the standard of preaching in Sydney.

Those behind the initiative, called Cornhill Sydney, believe it will help "fill a gap" in the precollege training programs of MTS apprentices.

One of the driving forces behind Cornhill Sydney, the Rev Dr David Peterson, says he realised the Cornhill approach was needed here during his time as principal of Oak Hill College in London.

'What I found was that the standard of preaching of the average college student in England was far higher than in Sydney," he said.

The Cornhill Training Course is an initiative of the Proclamation Trust — an influential UK organisation begun in 1986 by a former rector of St Helen's, Bishopsgate, Dick Lucas, to promote excellence in expository Bible preaching throughout the UK. The Cornhill course was launched in London in 1991 under the leadership of David Jackman. In 2000 it was replicated by Hugh Palmer in Sheffield and more recently the Cornhill model has spread to Scotland, Ireland, South Africa and New Zealand.

Dr Peterson and the Rev Simon Manchester will provide the initial leadership of Cornhill Sydney until a full-time director is appointed.

The course will be held at St Thomas', North Sydney on Monday and Tuesday mornings and is open to MTS trainees from all denominations.

"Our plan is to encourage good preaching among young people who are exploring full-time ministry and encourage good handling of God's word by those doing MTS," said Mr Manchester.

NEW TENDERS CONFIRMED

Farewell to Kingsdene

KINGSDENE Special School will cease operations this month at the end of the 2010 school year.

The Anglicare-run school for children with disabilities recently marked 35 years of service at a special celebration that brought together staff, families and students from the last four decades.

"We thank God for the amazing work of Kingsdene over the last 35 years and know that despite the closure its legacy will live on in lives changed and families strengthened by this special ministry", said Anglicare CEO Peter Kell.

The operational transfer of the school and adjacent residence to the NSW Government will occur during the summer school holidays.

The Sylvanvale Foundation successfully tendered for the contract to operate the residence, while the school will become an annex of the Karonga School, Epping.

Thank you.

This year, with your help, we've been able to make a profound difference.

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And please continue to support them this Christmas by contributing to HammondCare's Stewart Cottage, home now for around fifteen young people, all with dementia.

Thank you everyone, on their behalf, for so generously supporting our campaign this year to take care of Ben, Cameron, Lisa and their friends.

[illegible]

I would like to help Ben, Cameron, Lisa and their friends – younger people with dementia.

I enclose my gift of/charge my ☐ $50 ☐ $100 ☐ $250 ☐ Other $_____ (Donations over $2 are tax deductible)
I would like to pay by: ☐ Cheque/Money order made out to HammondCare ☐ Credit Card

Cardholder name _____

☐ Visa ☐ MasterCard _____ / _____ / _____ / _____ Exp date _____

Title _____ Name _____

Address _____

Suburb _____ State _____ Postcode _____

☐ Please send receipt to address above ☐ Please send receipt to address below

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77 YEARS OF CARE

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CLEMTON PARK CHURCH SOLD

Funds freed for Sth-West

ST MARK'S, Clemton Park was recently sold for nearly $1 million after being on the market for more than two years.

Prior to 2007 it was home to a small congregation. The decision was made to move that congregation to St Alban's, Belmore and put the church building up for sale.

A portion of the proceeds will go to the parish of Belmore to maintain its current buildings, while 45 per cent will fund church property purchases and developments in the Georges River region.

MISSION IDEA OF THE MONTH:

Op Shop partnership

Keen shoppers will certainly get the opportunity to bag a bargain with the opening of a new Anglicare store in Maroubra.

However the bigger plan is to use the new shop to kickstart a local community hub for the five Anglican churches in the area. Working in partnership with St John's, Maroubra, Wild St, St Mark's, Malabar, Holy Trinity, Kingsford and St Paul's, South Coogee, the new store will provide a new and valuable link for members of the church to care for their local community.

Located in the middle of Maroubra Junction, a community care office will also be part of the shop in the near future.

Forming links with local churches is a high priority for Anglicare, according to parish partnership team leader, Darren Farrell.

"We are immensely encouraged by our links with churches around Maroubra... We look forward to working with more parishes to extend their reach into their local communities."

PHOTO: Scott Webster

McKERLIES' STORY

God never forgot Diane and John

JUDY ADAMSON

FOR decades, John and Diane McKerlie lived only few blocks away from their local Anglican church at Hurstville Grove — but while Diane might have "wondered what it was like" inside she admits, "I never really thought I'd go in".

Diane had been very involved at church during her youth, when she would have confidently called herself a Christian. She had even taught Sunday school and been active in her high school ISCF group.

However when she went to university, she decided there was no longer the time to keep teaching Sunday school. "I made friends with people, including my husband, who were not Christian and I fell away because I knew how Jesus wanted me to live... and I wasn't prepared to devote any time to Jesus," she says.

John went to church as a young boy but, aged 10, was horrified when his new Bible slipped into the backyard toilet. He couldn't face those at church who had given it to him and never went back.

But God had not forgotten him. After John and Diane married, their first daughter Lisa was born with Down syndrome; at 3½ she needed emergency open heart surgery. As Lisa struggled for life, John clearly recalls a desperate plea to God: "I remember running down the corridor of the hospital praying that if he would let her live I would do whatever he wanted," he says.

Then a specialist surgeon heard of their plight and suggested an extra drain be inserted into Lisa's tiny chest.

"Very soon after that she woke up and never looked back — but I never went on with my promise I made to God," he says. "I was what I'd call one of those last-minute Christians. I thought I'd live my life and when my time on earth was coming to an end I'd say 'Fix me now God, I've been a good guy'."

The couple got the shock of their lives at Easter in 2004, when their second daughter Karen invited them to church at St Aidan's, Hurstville Grove and then stood up to give her testimony. They had known she was attending church after being invited by school friends but had no idea she had become a Christian.

Says John: "I just thought, 'Where did that come from?'."

The couple was followed up by the parish's assistant minister and Diane began attending services on a regular basis, took part in a Christianity Explained course and joined a Bible study group. About the same time, Lisa also started going to church and the following year she made a commitment to Christ.

But John was not convinced — and Diane was still on the fence.

One night at church they took communion and were challenged by the assistant minister.

Says Diane: "He said, 'You really shouldn't do that unless you've made a commitment', and I was taken aback by that because I thought I did it to remember what Jesus had done — yet what he had done hadn't made any impact on my life."

On October 30, 2005 a sermon from John chapter 9 about the faith of the man born blind broke through and John decided to go up afterwards for communion. Diane knew this meant he had made his decision for Christ and suddenly felt free to do the same.

"I realised I'd been waiting for John — I hadn't wanted anything to get in the way of our marriage," she says. "And straight away I just felt terrific. I felt this great weight had been lifted off me because I knew what God wanted me to do and I had been turning my back on him."

Since then the couple's faith has "gone ahead in leaps and bounds", Diane says.

She is doing the Moore College PTC, they attend Bible study together and are deeply involved in the life of the parish: John is involved with the men's ministry, while Diane helps in the seniors ministry and is on parish council.

She describes herself as "being much more at peace", while John feels he has become "more compassionate and willing to give people a chance".

"I'm mightily challenged by the need to get out in the community and talk to non-Christian people," he adds. "I think more about relationship and where people might be in their lives... and I'm challenged by how to raise God in a conversation."

OUR NEWEST PARISH

Shoalhaven Heads takes a big step forward

ST PETER'S, Shoalhaven Heads has been ministering on the NSW South Coast for nearly 50 years as a branch church of Berry and then Gerringong. Last month the congregation took a big step forward by becoming Sydney's newest parish.

The Rev Anthony Douglas, who has been at St Peter's since 2009, was also made presbyter and inducted as senior minister on the same day. He believes becoming a provisional parish was a natural step.

"We have a conviction that God had been growing the church and wanted us to continue with it," he says.

Mr Douglas recognises the great partnership Shoalhaven Heads has had with Gerringong — "They've been really generous" — but says St Peter's now has some flexibility in what it can do. "Now it's focused on us: here's the town, here are the people," he says. "Now it's our responsibility."

Mr Douglas has the daunting task of taking on his first position as senior minister in a parish which is breaking new ground.

It will be a steep learning curve but he says the members of St Peter's are all "unbelievably excited".

"I'm humbled with the responsibility to care for this church and to lead us in reaching out to the community," he says. "I'm confident in our great God who will continue to do great things in the Heads."

BUILDING WORK BEGINS

Berowra set to expand

PHOTO: Mike Hodgson

ST MARK'S, Berowra is currently in the process of constructing a new hall that will provide much-needed meeting and office space, giving the church the opportunity to expand.

Construction work, which included the demolition of the old hall and rectory, commenced at the end of September and is due to be completed in July or August next year at a cost of $2.5 million.

"We received a brownfields grant of $900,000 [from the Diocese]," rector Ian Millican said. "The congregation has been extremely generous and has contributed $1.2 million towards the construction work. The rest of the money has been borrowed."

The new hall will include five meeting rooms, two offices, an administration area, a new kitchen and car parking facilities.

Mr Millican says one of the big advantages of the new building will be its capacity to host children's and youth programs.

"The children's ministries were limited by the size of the old building," he said. "Hopefully the number of children and youth will increase. We also want to open up the building for other meetings and we hope to use it to run evangelistic courses."

Currently the youth and children's programs are being run from a disused bowling club around the corner from the church.

NEW CMS AUSTRALIA HEAD

Peter Rodgers to lead missionary agency

THE Church Missionary Society (CMS) has announced that the Rev Peter Rodgers, currently rector of St Stephen's, Newtown, will be its next federal secretary.

A statement from CMS has confirmed Mr Rodgers has accepted the unanimous invitation of the Federal Council to fill the position and will start his new role in December 2011.

"With a passion for mission and God's people, Peter brings to the role over 20 years of ministry and teaching experience in a variety of settings, including various parishes in Sydney's west," said the official announcement from CMS.

"We look forward immensely to Peter maintaining the vision of seeing God's church growing in all the world as lives and communities are transformed by Christ."

Mr Rodgers and his wife Marcelle served with CMS in Indonesia from 1991 to 2002. He has served on the CMS NSW general committee since 2004, has been a CMS federal council member since 2006 and has held the post of CMS NSW vice chairman since 2008.

As federal secretary Mr Rodgers will lead the international ministry of CMS Australia and facilitate the work of its six state-based branches.

Mr Rodgers will not replace Canon John Thew as federal secretary until December next year, when Mr Thew retires.

Mr Thew will, by then, have served in the top job at CMS Australia for 10 years.

EDUCATION ON DISABILITY ISSUES

Could your church really look like this?

THERESE Rein, wife of former Prime Minister and current Foreign Minister Kevin Rudd, helped to officially launch Christian Blind Mission's (CBM) Luke14 local church initiative late last month at St Anne's, Ryde.

Luke14 is designed to educate churches on welcoming people with disabilities.

In her keynote speech Ms Rein (right) made clear her passion for the initiative, sharing what was described as a "very moving personal story". Her father became a paraplegic during World War II and she saw him struggle to be accepted as someone who could contribute to society.

Luke14 resource co-ordinator Lindsay Gale said a lot of churches did not know how to welcome people who struggled to access their church buildings and programs.

"It stems from the fact that most people don't know anyone with a disability, so when they do connect with a disabled person they don't know how to act, they feel embarrassed and they don't know what to say," she said.

In order to help churches be more welcoming to disabled people Luke14 aims to educate and provide resource to churches to ensure that the disabled can be recognised as people who have something to contribute.

"There are four key points that we use," Mrs Gale said. "First of all we need to raise awareness, we need to talk about the issue.

"The second thing we offer is a focused Sunday event and a series of Bible studies around the core issues.

"The third thing that we do is to teach churches in a logical and practical way how they can adopt the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act.

"Finally, we help churches in reaching out to the local community and forming relationships with service providers."

BRAIN FOOD

Aussie Harvest back in air

AUSSIE Harvest has resumed its fly-in outback pub evangelism circuit with Sydney Anglican scientist Dr Mac Cusiter, a brain expert. Regular meetings are held in such towns as Lightning Ridge, Wee Waa and Narromine.

SHORT CASE

Canadian churches to be evicted

FOUR Vancouver parishes that withdrew from the Anglican Church of Canada over the issue of same-sex blessings have lost an appeal to keep their property.

The churches include St John's, Shaughnessy, led by Canon David Short, formerly of the Sydney Diocese.

Lesley Bentley, a member of St John's Shaughnessy, said that, "while it is sad to have to contemplate leaving our church home for a diocese that has no need for the building, we consider it an honour to stand for orthodoxy".

The parishes have two months to consider an appeal to the Supreme Court of Canada.

SYDNEY BISHOP'S VERDICT ON CAPE TOWN 2010

Lausanne a world mission landmark: Davies

BISHOP Glenn Davies represented the Diocese of Sydney at the third Lausanne congress in Cape Town and while he had a few small concerns, overall he described it as a "landmark" in world mission and a worthwhile personal experience.

"While one can always quibble over some elements of the congress my assessment is that it will be seen as another landmark in world missions for reigniting, re-energising and recommitting evangelicals to the Great Commission in the power of God's Holy Spirit," he said.

The Lausanne congress brought together evangelical leaders from around the world in a collaboration for world evangelism. The congress gave leaders an opportunity to see how others are undertaking evangelism and reaching people with the gospel.

"The top thing [from the congress] was seeing what's happening around the world with evangelism in tough places and the exciting things that God is doing," Bishop Davies said.

"There was an interesting story about a church that was mosque-like; it was Islamic in culture but Christian in faith. Muslims came to it thinking it was a mosque but when they realised it wasn't they stayed and they were converted. They've had 37 baptisms over the past seven years."

The main lesson Bishop Davies took away from the congress was that "[we] should not feel the need to plant the Anglican flag on every square inch of Australian soil" and that Sydney Anglicans should embrace partnerships with other evangelicals of whatever denomination.

PHOTO: Courtesy Lausanne Movement

"We need to be doing Christian mission, not Anglican mission," he said.

The challenge now is to apply ideas from the congress to ensure the evangelisation of Sydney, Bishop Davies said.

"We have to think of [evangelism] as a partnership — the Anglicans aren't doing it by themselves. We ought to engage in meaningful partnerships with like-minded evangelicals," Bishop Davies said.

"I think Lausanne is a great leveller of denominational loyalties," he added. "I'm not opposed to denominational loyalty but it's got to be secondary... gospel loyalty should be paramount and we should think in terms of partnerships at that level."

Letters

School board proposal "misguided"

IT is encouraging to note the opposition expressed by the Rev Martin Robinson to the move at Synod to place significant restrictions on Anglican school appointments within the Diocese. ("Anglican school boards may face health check", *SC*, November).

The proposal requires schools to have members of council, head and staff provide a written declaration of personal faith. This notion, which emerged similarly during the 1990s is as misguided today as it was then.

Some decades ago, the Diocese of Sydney sensibly resolved to ensure the proclamation of the gospel would again be central to the purpose of Anglican schools — as was so often declared in their founding rationale. It had become rather too easy to give nominal support to the Christian foundations on which such schools were created.

By encouraging Christian appointments to council and staff posts, and through the Archbishop's active oversight of key appointments, the Diocese and schools together laid the foundations for the positive accomplishments which are today readily identifiable. Not that the Anglican Church has been alone. The Christian schools movement and the post-1975 Presbyterian Church have been similarly disposed.

Those who resolved to introduce this policy themselves fully understood the nature of such schools, with their history, clientele and status. They appreciated the fragile balance between faithfully upholding the high educational expectations of the successive generations of families which attended such schools, while ensuring that the central Christian purpose would be honoured in more than token form.

In contrast, one wonders whether those who would now seek to impose tighter controls on our schools have any comprehension of what is presently being achieved, or of the broader educational commitments which many schools so effectively meet.

What is proposed is misguided and counterproductive. It fails, for example, to recognise what has been achieved through outstanding chaplaincy appointments and the strong Christian influences which have been brought to bear through judicious council, principal and staff appointments. All this has been accomplished over about three decades of solid commitment, without the heavy-handed, naïve and impractical constraints which some now seek.

Further, such proposals ignore the advice of a large body of present (and past) chairmen and principals, many with strong evangelical views and fully committed to the Christian leadership of their schools. Surely their views as practitioners should be heeded! Not to do so will cause unwarranted damage to many of our schools and impede the education of our youth, specifically including their Christian teaching.

Robert A I Grant AM
Former Headmaster,
Shore School

Christ's tears

GORDON Cheng's "Grief and resurrections" impressed me as a fine contribution in an outstanding November edition of *Southern Cross*. He rightly attributes the tears of Jesus at Lazarus' tomb to his feelings for the family. This is congruous with our Lord's humanity as revealed in Hebrews 4:15f. But he was also "deeply moved and troubled" (John 11:33, cf.v.38).

BB Warfield in *The Person and Work of Christ* (The Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing, 1970), describes Jesus as being "in a state, not of uncontrollable grief, but of irrepressible anger"; his tears being "one of the manifestations of his inwardly restrained fury"; "Tears of sympathy may fill his eyes, but this is incidental. His soul is held by rage" as he advances to the tomb, in Calvin's words, "as a champion who prepares for the conflict". Warfield sees the whole incident as "a decisive instance and open symbol of Jesus' conquest of death and hell".

In the words of Calvin, he advances "as a champion who prepares for conflict". He fearlessly faces the conflict and wins, pointing to his own victory over death in his resurrection. Because of this, he now delivers believers themselves from the fear of death and of the wrath to come. He also guarantees that in grieving for loved ones who have died, we do not do so as those without hope.

Donald Howard
Elderslie, NSW

Confused by "ex-Christians"

In recent months a number of articles in *SC* on the topic of assurance and God's election implied that true Christians, the elect, cannot lose their salvation since salvation is entirely God's initiative. If this is the case there cannot be such a thing as an "ex-Christian". So I was confused by Michael Jensen's use of this phrase in his feature on false teachers in the November *SC*. Would you please explain what an ex-Christian is?

Vaughan Brown
North Epping, NSW

MICHAEL JENSEN REPLIES:

Thanks, Vaughan, for the opportunity to clarify. The Reformers in the 16th century picked up the New Testament teaching about the eternal security of God's chosen people and talked about 'the perseverance of the saints'. When Paul talks about the believers' life being 'hid with Christ in God' (Col 3) for example, he is assuring them that nothing can compromise their salvation if they are truly in Christ. In that sense, the category of 'ex-Christian' makes no sense.

From a temporal point of view, however, it is possible and appropriate to speak of ex-Christians. This isn't the exact terminology used in the passage 2 Peter 2:1ff that I was quoting from but I think it is a fair description. In that passage, Peter speaks about false teachers who will be found *denying the sovereign Lord who bought them.* It seems that these are people who start off professing Christ but that is not where they end up, just as Jesus will talk about those for whom the seed takes root but then quickly withers. Jesus also talks about people who will say to him, "Lord, Lord" but to whom he will say, "I never knew you".

Search for memorials

I am a doctoral student of the University of Queensland researching the commemoration of nurses in stained glass windows, including in churches. My challenge is locating them in a country as large as Australia so I am asking for the assistance of the Anglican community. If you know of any window that contains an image of a nurse (including Florence Nightingale, etc) or memorialises nurses please contact me with the name of the church in which the window is located by one of the following means — email: susan.kellett@uqconnect.edu.au; phone: 07 3346 5269 (please leave a message if no answer). I appreciate any assistance that can be offered.

Susan Kellett,
School of Nursing and Midwifery,
The University of Queensland

Letters should be less than 200 words: Email **newspaper@anglicanmedia.com.au**

Editorial

A Christmas gift

AT Christmas we celebrate the central truth of Christianity: that God so loves us that he was willing to humble himself - born a child in a sheep shed - so we could have the chance to follow his path to life, rather than be doomed to perish. Quite literally, Jesus is our Heavenly Father's Christmas gift to us.

And so the theme of 'Christmas gifts' has shaped this edition.

In the main section of *Southern Cross* we explore what it means to follow a generous God, not only in our own Christmas celebrations but applied to a big political issues such as teh current refugee debate.

But we have taken the idea of generosity one step further.

The *Southern Cross* team decided we could help local churches by providing free-of-charge a high-spec evangelistic magazine for Christmas. The result is the mini-mag called *Connect*, written especially for visitors at church-run Christmas carols.

Apart from the copies inserted into *Southern Cross*, around 40 churches took up our offer publicised in our last edition and ordered 20,000 additional copies to hand out as a gift to their local communities.

So why not follow their example and pass your copy on to your neighbour this Christmas?

Stop Christmas being a gift binge

READER'S ESSAY OF THE MONTH
by Michael Baines

YOU may know that Christmas Day was originally a pagan holiday, until Christians 'rebranded' it in honour of Jesus in Roman times.

Sadly, it is now a pagan holiday again. The things we once celebrated Jesus *with* at Christmas — family, food and presents — are now *themselves* the things we celebrate. Just ask any child (or adult) what excites them about Christmas: I'd be surprised if they said anything about Christian worship and fellowship.

Indeed, on Christmas Day, most people —including Christians — think of Christian worship and fellowship as a necessary inconvenience; something to get 'over and done with' so we can get back to our *private* celebrations of family, food and presents. Some Christians justify this on the grounds that 'we know Christmas is no more special than any other day'. Even if we were prepared to concede that (and I'm not), wouldn't it be better to ditch altogether the pretence that we're celebrating Jesus' birth, instead of claiming that Christmas is about Jesus but then ignoring him on the day?

One of the ways way we ignore Jesus at Christmas is by embracing consumerism, as we buy each other (and ourselves!) more and more things we don't need — often things we don't even want! There are several problems with this:

1. Getting more things can be a form of idolatry (because we seek contentment in those things, rather than in God and what he's given us).
2. Many families struggle to 'keep up with the Joneses' at Christmas. Some succeed, some succeed only by going into debt, and some fail. Our gift bonanzas put a lot of pressure on other people to have gift bonanzas, which has negative consequences for everyone.
3. One reason gifts are often cheap is that overseas workers are often exploited to produce them. Our gift bonanzas support such exploitation.
4. A second reason gifts are often cheap is that the environment is often exploited to produce them. Our gift bonanzas support this exploitation, too. And it is the poor who will suffer most from environmental degradation — and they will start suffering long before we do.

However, the biggest problem is that consumerism strikes at the very heart of what Christmas — and Christianity — should be all about. Christmas is about how Jesus, though he was rich, became poor, so that through his poverty we might become rich (2 Corinthians 8:9). Consumerism is about rich people enjoying their riches and ignoring the poor. Now, don't get me wrong here, I'm not trying to 'go all social gospel on you'. But I think we should care whether or not the way we celebrate Christmas is consistent with the spirit of the first Christmas — and celebrating Christmas with consumerism isn't.

So, how should we celebrate Christmas?

Maybe I've sounded like a spoilsport so far but I believe we will enjoy Christmas more, not less, if we start celebrating it in a way consistent with the spirit of the first Christmas.

What will this involve? For a start:

1. **Acts of generosity** for people who need it, not people who don't. After all, the first Christmas wouldn't be anything to celebrate if the Father, Son and Spirit exchanged presents with each other and forgot about the needy (i.e. us). A great way to be generous at Christmas is to ask people to buy presents 'for us' from the TEAR gift catalogue. A goat, for instance, can be sent to an African family on someone's behalf for $50. If you're worried that your friends and family would rather have a 'real present', you could throw in a bag of homemade Christmas cookies or something. Another suggestion: instead of having our families 'swap' presents, what if our families teamed up and gave — as a family — presents to people in need?
2. **Joyful Christian fellowship.** Jesus came to unite Christians with himself and each other, such that the church (and not our network of blood relatives) is now our primary family. We should celebrate Christmas with *that* family — not by having a brief seeker-sensitive service but by having the kind of party we would otherwise have with our relatives. As in, a community meal at the local church building on December 25 with games and singalongs and stories. We can still have parties with our relatives as well but wouldn't it be better to bring them to great church parties? Which brings me to a third point…
3. **Focusing on the lost.** The spiritually lost, definitely, with an awareness that this may include the socially lost — people for whom Christmas is painful because it reminds them of things they don't have such as family, food and presents. Jesus came to help lost people at the first Christmas, so perhaps our Christmases should have the same goal. We could, for example, invite them to that great church party we're going to have. Or we could go one better and invite them into our homes and blood-family celebrations as well. I know Christians who already do this, and love it.

I recently saw a book about Christmas titled *Whose birthday is it, anyway?* While I haven't read it, the title says it all. And I think that if we work harder at treating Christmas as a celebration of Jesus' birthday, instead of as a celebration of family, food and presents, then our light will 'shine before men' and they will see our good deeds and praise our Father in heaven (cf. Matthew 5:16).

READERS ESSAYS

We would like to encourage readers to submit well-considered essays in response to issues raised by **Southern Cross**.

Please email your (700-word maximum) submission to: **newspaper@anglicanmedia.com.au**

MOVES

Boys 2 Manly

THE **Rev Max Boys** has begun a new part-time role as the 8am and pastoral care minister at St Matthew's, Manly.

Mr Boys says following his retirement last year, he and wife Rose wanted to sell their house in the Blue Mountains, move back to Sydney "and then ask the Lord, 'What do you want us to do now?'".

However, God had quite different timing: the couple was still living in the house — with no potential buyers in sight — when a friend mentioned the job at St Matt's. Mr Boys dismissed the idea until he received a call a few weeks later from Manly rector Bruce Clarke.

"After speaking with Bruce about the job… we couldn't just let it go," he recalls. "We came to believe this was the best way we could serve God and his people in this phase of our lives."

Mr Clarke said the parish would wait for them to sell their home, but then the couple saw a DVD talk by Mike Raiter and were challenged anew by Jesus' words, that "the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head".

"We just had that sense that we ought to step out and make a date with Manly, and leave the house to the Lord," Mr Boys says. So he began the job in mid-October — and the house had sold before the end of the month.

McKay to hospital

AFTER seven years as head of chaplaincy for Anglicare in NSW, the **Rev Graham McKay** is moving back to a role in the front line, taking up the position of full-time chaplain to Liverpool Hospital at the beginning of 2011.

"I think it's where my heart has always been — to be involved in pastoral ministry," he says. "I guess my present role has been more of a facilitator of others to do that ministry, and that has been important and valuable, but I felt that it was time for me to go back to doing it myself."

Liverpool Hospital is set to become the largest hospital in the state over the next few years, and the first stage in its building redevelopment will open before Christmas.

Mr McKay says he is "just looking forward to bringing Christian caring to people at the hospital, many of whom may not really have any other opportunity to hear or think about God, Jesus, faith and life and death".

The present Anglicare chaplain at Liverpool, Paul Hueston, will finish up in the role prior to Christmas before starting as full-time chaplain to Royal Hobart Hospital next year.

From Tassie to city

THE **Rev James Collins** was first contacted by nominators at St Paul's, Burwood more than two years ago. They had a lovely chat, but having just begun new ministries in his northern Hobart parish of Moonah "the timing for a move was completely wrong".

Then, around Easter this year, he had another call. "They said, 'We've waited for you — now we really want you to come'," he says.

Mr Collins and his wife Helen decided his name should go forward in the nomination process in order to "test the calling to see whether it is from God". By the time he received the offer in August to become rector the couple was confident the move was right.

"I've developed a lovely rapport with the nominators," he says. "I've been very impressed by their Christ-like and compassionate nature."

Once he arrives in February, Mr Collins will seek ways for St Paul's to foster strong links with the multicultural community and be "salt and light in Burwood and the surrounding area".

Southern shift

ST Paul's, Shellharbour will have a new rector this month when the **Rev Nigel Parker** and his family move to the parish from nearby Kiama.

Mr Parker has spent four years as assistant minister in Kiama and believes his experience there will help at Shellharbour because of its demographic similarities: a large proportion of retirees and young families.

The Shellharbour area has also "exploded in population" in recent years, and Mr Parker says having a young family of his own will help as "the parish does a lot of Scripture — there are three or four public schools that we support — so there will be opportunities to make a lot of contacts… we really do need to grow that under-40 demographic in the parish".

"We're just excited by the opportunity to share the gospel in that area," he says.

IN BRIEF

THE **Rev Nathan Killick** from Merrylands is moving to the Diocese of Newcastle in 2011 to take up the position of rector at Camden Haven.

YOUTHWORKS' youth advisor, the **Rev Paul McPhail**, will become assistant minister of Culburra Beach in January, under the oversight of acting curate-in-charge, the Rev Sean Heslehurst at Bomaderry (see page 6).

THE **Rev Glenn Farrell** has been issued with an Authority to Officiate by the Archbishop.

VALE

THE **Rev Maureen Cripps** died on September 4, after a long illness.

She began her training at Deaconess House nearly 50 year ago. Her first eight years as a deaconess at Yagoona, Penrith, Lurnea and Lithgow followed by three years as deaconess-in-charge of a parish in the Armidale Diocese. On her return to Sydney in 1974 Miss Cripps became assistant principal of Deaconess House, before serving for another 13 years as a deaconess — first at St John's, Penshurst then in the parish of Sadlier.

In 1989, while at Sadlier, Miss Cripps became one of the first 14 women in Sydney to be ordained as deacons by Archbishop Robinson. She then became the assistant minister at Sadlier, as well as president of the Diaconal Fellowship. In the same year, Archbishop Robinson appointed Miss Cripps as an examining chaplain, involved in the selection of people for ordination in the Sydney Diocese — the first woman selected for such a role. After her retirement in 1993, Miss Cripps spent many years as honorary chaplain to the Mothers' Union.

THE **Rev Stan Richardson** was called home to the Lord on September 25.

Born in 1932, Mr Richardson began studies at Moore College in 1957. Upon graduation he was curate at Parramatta then St Marys before serving as curate-in-charge of St Luke's, Northmead and then St James', Berala.

In 1974 he began a 24-year connection with the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital in Camperdown when he took up the role of chaplain.

The Rev Syd Clay, Mr Richardson's pastor, described him as "a real character, who was always very studious — he was a thinker and loved to talk about theology.

"His Parkinson's frustrated him, obviously… but one of the endearing things about him was that whenever you saw him he'd never complain. [He] faced his lot in life with resolve and great faith."

Vacant Parishes

AS AT 19 NOVEMBER 2010:

- Auburn (St Philip's)
- Berrima cum Moss Vale
- Cooks River
- Earlwood
- Hoxton Park
- Keiraville
- Malabar
- Merrylands
- Moorebank
- Sutherland
- Ulladulla

* DENOTES PROVISIONAL PARISHES OR ARCHBISHOP'S APPOINTMENTS.

Get back your Christmas spirit

With the packed shopping malls and cheesy commercialisation ANDREW CAMERON admits he can become a bit of a Grinch about Christmas. But there is an antidote.

I ROLL my eyes a bit when I hear the term 'Christmas spirit.'

Wanting to roll my eyes some more, I turned to the source of all knowledge, the internet, to discover how to get it. Sure enough, I was eye-rolling within seconds:

'Wish people that you meet in stores a happy holiday. Say it with a smile. Play Christmas music. Do something nice for someone. Offer to babysit so a friend can do her Christmas shopping. Take cookies to your neighbors [sic], or shovel an elderly neighbor's walk.'

I got some extra eye-rolling in at the twee Americanisms. After all, they seem to be such a happy people and this Australian knows that is ridiculous.

Suitably inoculated against 'Christmas spirit', I can see through it now. People still suffer on Christmas Day. It's no different from any other day. If people really knew Jesus, they would worship him all year round, not just give themselves a warm fuzzy once a year. There: I'm ready now to maudlin my way through this Christmas.

I hope you realise I am sending myself up. I used to think these kinds of bleak thoughts each Christmas but I've now decided not to. My critique of 'Christmas spirit' may have a kernel of truth but ultimately, it is useless posturing. For surely of all people Christians have the most reason to rejoice in the very essence of generosity — right now, and again at Easter.

'For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace' (Isa. 9:6).

It doesn't get any more generous than that. Jesus is God's way of saying: here is all that I have. He is for you. The dim echoes of 'Christmas spirit' around me are people

continued next page »

« from previous page

trying to remember, through a kind of fog, why it is good to be nice to each other at this time. Let's lead others in explaining, and joyfully living, the core of it.

Christmas and money

This realisation has me thinking about money in general. We'll spend money on presents and parties and so on; but that does not total very much compared to the money we spend throughout the year. Maybe Christmas is a useful time for us to review our uses of money.

Christians are often a bit simplistic when we talk about money. But money is complex. I've heard money described as 'liquid power'. That may be true, but does not say very much. For the question remains, as with any power we may have — how are you using it?

The best way to see how we use this power is in our budget. Not the budget we aim for, but in our actual spending.

According to American Christian author Jim Wallis, 'every budget is a moral document.'

That is, our use of money simply discloses our (real) moral framework. Your money uses are intricately entangled with your view of what matters. Discussions about money are too simplistic because, obviously, lots of things matter. We're usually right about some of those things; we have underrated or overrated others; and we use our money to match.

Christians are often a bit simplistic when we talk about money.

I reckon we should spend money to order, reorder and enjoy creation. At its best, money (and markets) organise proper sharing between people; so we use money to uphold relationships and build communities. We also use it to honour the coming kingship of Jesus. We express the character of God as we use it, by being graceful and generous.

Within all this, some biblical commands about money will guide us. But they won't tell us everything, because there is also a large amount of freedom here. I think all these things about money because I think this is how the Bible orients us to reality itself. And the way we think we should use money will always reflect our moral system.

In his book *The Life You Can Save*, atheist philosopher Peter Singer argues that no-one would hesitate to dive into a pond to save a drowning child. We may be dressed in our best business suit. We may be wearing our favourite designer shoes. Yet we would ruin the suit and shoes, and miss our meeting, to save a single life.

Now, Singer argues, 24,000 children under five die every day from starvation-related illnesses or preventable diseases. That is nearly nine million every year. How then, argues Singer, could we sit on our hands or turn a blind eye, to 24,000 children dying daily?

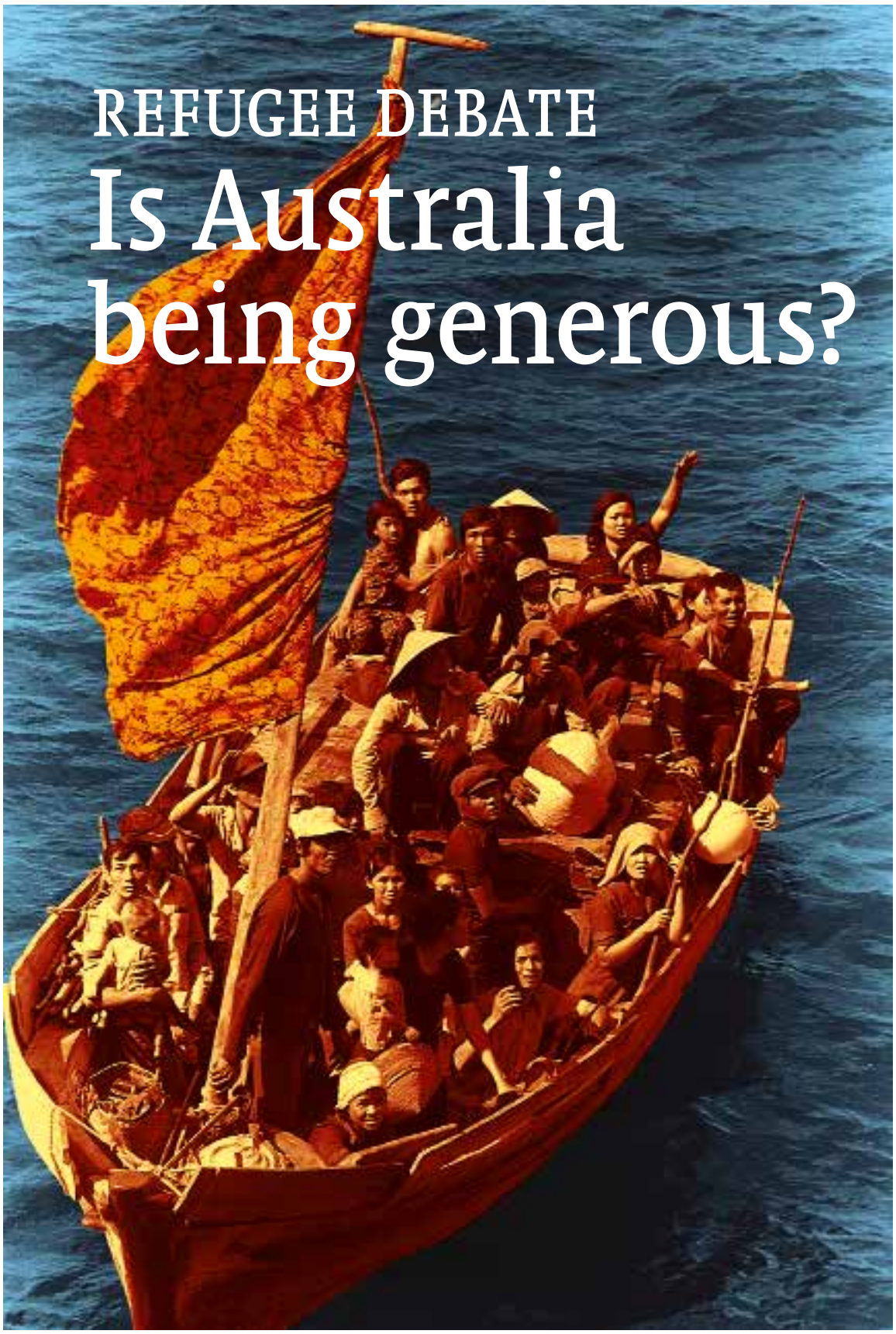
If Singer intends for you to feel guilty, I don't. Perhaps we do have a special responsibility to the child next to us. But Singer argues that moderate expressions of generosity by the wealthiest billion could lift the poorest billion out of extreme poverty. He cites work done by Jeffrey Sachs who claims that $189 billion a year will achieve the UN's Millennium Development Goals — a figure that could be reached if everyone with an income gave a few per cent a year.

The point is not to dwarf you with these numbers. Indeed, Singer argues that one of the disincentives for giving is a fear that others aren't pulling their weight. He cleverly adds that if two children were drowning and you pull one out, you would go back for the second even if bystanders were doing nothing.

It seems to me, then, that Christians should be awestruck by the goodness of God each year and determine how to stretch next year's giving budget a little more. A great way to start might be to contribute just a little bit each month to the three funds at Anglican Aid (www.anglicanaid.org.au), and then push it up half a per cent or more each new Christmas. Anglican Aid's three funds elegantly cover several different aspects of what really matters. It is a great use for some of my money.

This year, I am going to put on some Christmas music, feel happy and join up with Anglican Aid. SC

The Rev Andrew Cameron's writings for the Moore College Centre of Christian Life can be found at www.moore.edu.au and www.sie.org.au;
With thanks to the Rev David Mansfield of Anglican Aid for the research into Peter Singer's book.



REFUGEE DEBATE

Is Australia being generous?

ANDREW ROBINSON argues that generosity should be the bottom line in a Christian response to policies on asylum seekers.

THE increase of asylum seekers arriving on Australia's shores this year has reignited one of our most fiercely contested political debates. Ever since the Australian government turned away the Tampa in 2001, the question that shaped election results and filled newspapers is this: what should we do about asylum seekers coming to Australia in unauthorised and dangerous boats?

This is an issue that Christians need to think carefully about but it's often clouded by the intensity of the debate. There are a lot of questions to consider: are asylum seekers really 'illegal immigrants', 'queue-jumpers' and/or 'terrorists'? And do the asylum-seeker policies of our government really have an impact on whether or not they come to Australia?

The issues are complex and the terminology emotionally charged but with Christmas, that powerful reminder of God's generosity to us, right around the corner, one question is quite straightforward: are we willing to be generous and welcoming to people in desperate need?

In 2009, Australia received 6170 asylum applications — 0.5 per cent of the world total. We don't get many compared to places like South Africa (more than 220,000), the USA (49,020), Canada (33,250) or even small countries like Norway (17,230). Australia is in 21st place out of 44 industrialised nations on a per capita basis.

"Afghans were four times more likely to lodge an application in Norway than Australia," says Paul Power, CEO of the Refugee Council of Australia.

Most of Australia's asylum seekers

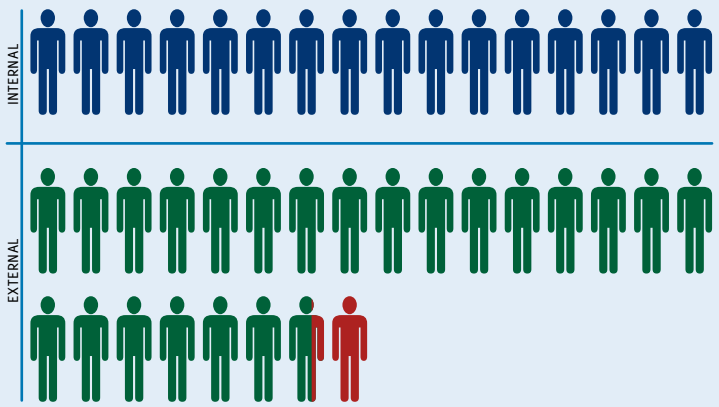
continued next page »

DEFINITIONS

Refugee has a very specific definition based on the 1951 UN Refugee Convention. It's someone who has fled their country of origin because of a well-founded fear of persecution due to their race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion. A genuine refugee is someone who is simply not safe in their home country and Australia has promised to protect any genuine refugee who seeks asylum here.

An asylum seeker is someone who enters a country and asks for protection as a refugee. There's nothing illegal about doing that, even if you have no passport or visa documents at all — Australian law permits this kind of entry into Australia for the purpose of seeking asylum.

New Australians 2009-2010



FIGURES:
- **Natural increase:** (births minus deaths) **161,700**.
- **Overseas migration:** (total immigrants staying for 12 months or more minus total emigrants leaving for 12 months or more — includes humanitarian) **241,000**.
- **Total humanitarian program: 13,770**. Comprising: 2156 irregular maritime arrivals (boat asylum seekers) granted visas and settled on mainland. 11,614 other humanitarian including offshore refugees (6003), offshore special humanitarian visas (3233), onshore protection and humanitarian visas for 'plane' asylum seekers (2378).

SOURCES:
http://www.immi.gov.au/media/statistics/pdf/report-on-migration-program-2009-10.pdf
http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Products/957A807C34629816CA25776E00176C72?opendocument
http://www.immi.gov.au/about/reports/annual/2009-10/

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generally arrive by plane, not by boat but 'boat' asylum seekers are far more likely to be genuine refugees than people who come by plane. Only a third of all asylum seekers' claims are granted but 70 per cent of the boat asylum seekers who were detained and processed under the former government's Pacific Solution, and 95 per cent of boat asylum seekers processed on Christmas Island during 2008-09, were found to be genuine refugees.

The number of asylum seekers arriving by boat has climbed rapidly over the past two years. Just under 5650 people arrived by boat in 2009-10 (1043 in 2008-9), and the detention centres housed 3732 people in October 2010 (up from 782 in June 2009).

The big political question is what has caused the increase: 'push' or 'pull' factors?

The Opposition says pull factors. It says that changes since 2007 — the closure of the Nauru processing centre and the abolition of temporary protection visas — have made Australia a soft target for people smugglers.

The Government says 'push' factors. It says the increase in boats arriving is mostly about increased instability and violence around the world. It says there are more asylum seekers everywhere at the moment.

The statistics seem to suggest that some Australian government policies do have a small effect on boat numbers, but when we compare the total numbers of asylum seekers arriving in Australia and New Zealand since 1994 (two countries with very different asylum seeker policies), the trends match. When New Zealand had high levels of asylum seekers, so did we; and the correlation continues when the data for 42 other developed countries is included. The pull factors are there, but they are dwarfed by push factors. Ultimately, Australia's greatest pull factor is simply that it is a place where refugees have a decent chance of being safe and getting a new chance at their lives.

So, what about queue jumping?

Many Australians are angered that boat asylum seekers are apparently flaunting official channels and 'jumping the queue' to get into Australia.

Since the number of people seeking asylum in Australia is relatively low because of our geographical isolation, we actually go looking to help refugees elsewhere in the world through our offshore refugee and humanitarian program. Working with UNHCR, the UN refugee agency, Australia granted 6003 offshore refugee visas in 2009-10 — far more than came as boat arrivals.

There are more asylum seekers everywhere at the moment.

The whole notion of a queue is misleading. Our offshore refugee settlement program is more like an emergency room than a queue. It's the refugees who would most benefit from being resettled here who are granted visas but the reality is that there are still thousands and thousands of genuine refugees struggling to survive in refugee camps who will never be resettled. According to Kate Gauthier, spokesperson for the Refugee Council of Australia, the projected waiting time at a UNHCR centre in Indonesia is 85 years.

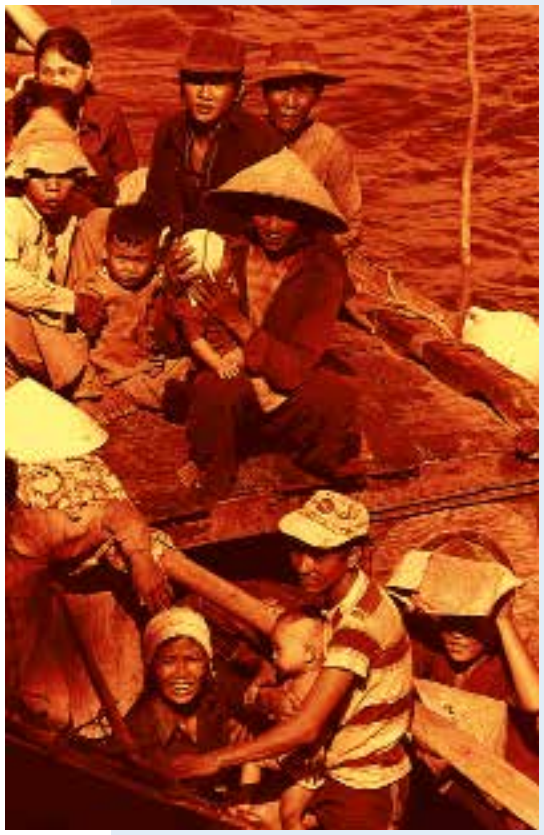
The notion of queue jumping only arises from the fact that Australia's refugee quota — currently 13,750 per year — links offshore and onshore numbers, so if more arrive onshore, then we resettle fewer from overseas camps.

One of the biggest problems with our current system, according to bodies like the Refugee Council of Australia and highlighted by the recent High Court decision, is that we deal differently with people who arrive by boat. An asylum seeker who arrives by plane has recourse to courts and is not detained while their claim is processed. But since boat asylum seekers arrive in places like Christmas Island that have been excised from Australia's migration zone, they have not been subject to a non-statutory analysis of their claims. Their fate is at the discretion of the Minister for Immigration and they are detained on Christmas Island for the duration of the process (November 11's High Court decision will definitely impact how 'boat' asylum seekers' refugee applications are treated, because of a range of legal problems with this system).

What is the best way for Christians to think about these deeply complex issues?

There are good reasons to discourage unauthorised boat arrivals. These journeys are dangerous, refugees are exploited by unscrupulous people smugglers who profit from their desperation and Australia does have a responsibility to maintain the integrity of its borders. The Refugee Council argues that a regional approach to the problem is essential, but not one which shirks Australia's obligations by processing claims in a third country.

Generosity once they're here



There's another side to the refugee issue. How can we be generous to the people who have been granted refugee status and are trying to rebuild their lives in Australia?

Cheryl Webster does community development work and capacity building among the southern Sudanese refugee community in Sydney. She says that the biggest issue for refugees is working out their identity and working out how to belong.

"People coming here are generally coming from a totally different background and world view," she says.

Whether it's finding good rental accommodation for a family of five, six or seven children for a family accustomed to building their own house, trying to get a job with minimal English, learning to drive, or even living in a large city for the first time, adjusting to life in Australia can be isolating and difficult.

Generosity to refugees is as simple as befriending people, Cheryl says. There may be Sudanese children at your local school who have no other interaction with other Australians. Genuine friendships can help refugees navigate even the most basic aspects of Australian life. She tells the story of one Sudanese woman who attended, with some trepidation, a Bible Study event at a coffee shop.

"She'd never been out for coffee before and had no idea what to do," she says. "But the following week, after her Bible study friends showed her how it worked, she took her own children out for coffee."

David Pasipanodya, a manager with Anglicare's Migrant and Refugee Services, says that since learning English is such an important issue for newly settled refugees, the 70 parishes across Sydney offering English lessons for migrants are making a great contribution. South-western Sydney is the only area where more help is needed.

Ultimately, empathy is essential for serving refugees settling in Australia.

"A refugee would want you to know that they are simply a person like anybody else," he says. "But they're coming from a background where they have had traumatic experiences. You look and see a normal person on the outside. On the inside a lot is happening."

But if policies like mandatory detention and processing claims on excised territories like Christmas Island only have a minimal impact on whether asylum seekers attempt the dangerous sea journey to Australia, why punish vulnerable people based on their mode of arrival?

And if so-called queue jumping is tied to our refugee quota, shouldn't the real question focus on whether we think welcoming 13,750 refugees a year (only 7.3 per cent of our total yearly immigration) is generous or not?

Robert Martin, staff worker with the City Bible Forum in Melbourne, spent two months pastoring the Christian fellowship on Christmas Island.

"I believe Jesus would adopt a stance which loves our neighbour," he says. "A stance which welcomes refugees and the vulnerable and a stance where we are willing to bear the cost." SC

Andrew Robinson is a former journalist and CMS short-term missionary in South Africa. He is currently studying at Moore Theological College.

ONLINE:

There is a range of briefing papers on this issue at the Diocese's Social Issues Executive website: **http://www.sie.org.au/tag/refugees/**

MALE & FEMALE HE CREATED US

JANE TOOHER looks at the remarkable Priscilla and Aquila, writing that their example has inspired her vision for male-female partnership in ministry.

OFTEN when Priscilla is mentioned in some Christian circles, it is limited to the passage in Acts 18 when she and her husband Aquila teach Apollos.

This reference is significant. We are told that Apollos was a learned man with a thorough knowledge of the Scriptures, that he had been instructed in the way of the Lord, that he spoke with great fervour and that he taught about Jesus accurately. Yet Acts 18:25 tells us that something important is missing. Apollos only knew the baptism of John, and so when he began to speak boldly in the synagogue, Priscilla and Aquila invited him into their home and explained to him the way of God more accurately. This is certainly an instructive passage, showing that there is good, right and appropriate teaching women can give to men.

However, as helpful, appropriate and fruitful as this teaching ministry was then, unfortunately today – perhaps because they don't serve the contemporary political issues as well – other references to Priscilla and Aquila are largely ignored.

People tend to focus on the passage where Priscilla taught a man. Yet the other passages help us recognise at a deeper level what a remarkable Jewish couple Priscilla and Aquila were. Their labours for Christ left their mark, not only on the lives of many in the first century but on the New Testament record from which we benefit today.

Priscilla and Aquila were Jewish tentmakers living in Rome yet were expelled, along with all other Jews, by the Emperor Claudius (Acts 18:2). On being expelled they travelled to Corinth where Paul went to see them; presumably to get some paid employment, because he was also a tentmaker. This resulted in Priscilla and Aquila working with Paul as tentmakers and their showing hospitality by providing Paul with a place to stay (Acts 18:3). After a year

and a half, they then travelled with Paul as far as Ephesus, where they taught Apollos (Acts 18:19).

In the years that followed, Priscilla and Aquila travelled and together became widely known and deeply loved for their gospel work (Rom. 16:3-4). Paul considered them his "fellow workers in Christ Jesus". We are told that they risked their lives for Paul, and that all the Gentile churches were grateful to them. We do not know the details of how they risked their lives but we do know other details about them and the ministries they were involved in together.

They opened their home in Ephesus so that believers could meet (1 Cor 16:19), and when they returned to Rome, they again hosted a church in their house (Rom. 16:3-5).

FOCUS QUESTION:

What should a ministry partnership between men and women look like in practice?

Later they returned to Ephesus and, when Paul wrote his last letter, he mentions them. Unlike some, they had not abandoned the faith (2 Tim 4:19). Rather, they had remained faithful to Jesus.

As we reflect on the New Testament references to Priscilla and Aquila, we see that they faithfully served the cause of Jesus Christ together in a variety of capacities. And although a married couple, their example has broad application to women and men working together in ministry in a number of ways.

Thinking seriously and creatively about how men and women can work better together in ministry is an issue that is very dear to me.

When I joined the faculty of Moore College just over a year ago, one of my tasks was to begin a women's ministry centre. The centre was to have several aims: it would look at how college could better train and equip women for ministry; encourage women in post-graduate theological study; and encourage women in writing projects both at a popular and academic level.

The more I thought about this centre and the shape it should take, the more I was convinced that, although the focus would be on women's ministries, it needed to be clear in the name and in all the workings of the centre that it was in partnership with men. I wanted men to have ownership of the centre as well. I did not want a women's ministry centre that was off doing its own thing with only women involved. I believed, and still do, that clear male-female partnership would be the best thing for women, men, college and – ultimately – for the work of the gospel.

Therefore, when thinking of a name, I wanted something that made it obvious that men and women were working together in ministry.

A few of us were brainstorming various names and among those names we were mentioning different people in the Bible. A friend then mentioned Priscilla and Aquila and I immediately had a sense that it was a good fit. When I looked over the New Testament references to them, I thought they were the perfect fit.

Priscilla and Aquila taught God's word together; they risked their lives for the sake of the gospel; they showed hospitality; they hosted churches in their home; they were loved by their fellow Christians; and they remained faithful when others had deserted the faith. They are in so many ways an excellent model for Christian men and women and they did ministry together.

The Priscilla and Aquila Centre at Moore College is a centre for the encouragement of the ministries of women in partnership with men, and although Priscilla and Aquila were a married couple, their example has application more broadly and so it is a fitting name.

One of the official values of Moore College is that it is a "complementarian" college; this means that we affirm the fundamental equality and mutual dependence of men and women as image-bearers of God, while recognising proper differences in roles and responsibilities in life and Christian ministry.

The centre is not seeking to fight the fights that we have had in Sydney over the past 20 years or so around the ministry of women. Rather it is seeking to think much more seriously and creatively about the application end of complementarianism in a very positive way.

One example of this is that over the past year we have been experimenting with male-female team teaching at college. Some efforts have worked much better than others, and that is ok.

It is early days. It takes a lot more effort to think seriously and creatively about how men and women can minister together in an appropriate way and it potentially takes a lot more preparation. It is much easier in many ways to just prepare and give a lecture yourself.

But if God has made and redeemed us to work and minister together, then isn't it worth the effort to see whether the lecture (or for that matter the conference talk or different parts of the Sunday service, etc) might be improved if there was more obvious partnership between men and women?

Besides the centre having activities within the everyday life of Moore College, it will also have conferences and seminars open to the public to encourage women in ministry and to think and explore how men and women can minister together.

The first of these, and the official launch of the Priscilla and Aquila Centre, is on Monday February 7, 2011 at Moore.

The launch conference is open to all men and women wanting to consider further how they can better work together in ministry. Our main speaker will be Archbishop Peter Jensen and he will give talks on Genesis 1-3. John Woodhouse and I will give talks about the centre. There will be electives with a variety of male and female speakers.

I am really excited about this new initiative. I hope it encourages many women in a variety of ministries and that it does this, in part, by encouraging men and women to work better together in ministry for the sake of God's glory and for the spread of his gospel. Please keep the Priscilla and Aquila Centre in your prayers. SC

Jane Tooher has been advising the college on teaching the male-female ministry partnership model. She is a member of the Continuing Education for Ministers Council in the Sydney Diocese and is on the ministry committee of the national church's General Synod.

BETS ARE OFF

Labor's gambling policies in NSW have been a disaster for many local communities, but would a Coalition government do any better? JEREMY HALCROW investigates.

Problem gambling and frontline ministry

Local Anglican churches and Anglicare programs bear the brunt of the Government's failure to ensure the safety of electronic gaming machines.

Anglicare's 2010 State of Sydney report shows that just under 1 per cent of households approaching the Church's emergency relief services do so *primarily* because of gambling addictions. This rate is the same ballpark as other addictions, such as alcohol and drugs.

A number of local Sydney Anglican churches are establishing small, grassroots support groups for addicts under the banner of Overcomers Outreach. Described as a "two-way bridge" between traditional 12-step programs and a local church, the ministry began in the United States as a Bible study in 1977.

After a worldwide search for an appropriate model, Penny Wilkinson introduced Overcomers Outreach at St Andrew's Cathedral a few years ago. The success of the cathedral ministry has seen Overcomers Outreach groups spring up around Sydney: Claymore, Kingsford-Maroubra, Rooty Hill and Engadine, with plans for two more next year in the northern suburbs. There are also groups in the regional NSW towns of Lightning Ridge and Tamworth.

"I have seen so many people over the years with all kinds of addiction," Penny Wilkinson says. "But one particular chap rang just this week to remind me of how Overcomers had helped his son overcome gambling addiction last year" (his story appears in the box titled 'Healed by God's grace').

FOR the past three years there has been hope among anti-gambling voices that the State Opposition would help NSW shake off its co-dependency on a most dangerous of suitors.

NSW Labor's track record on addressing problem gambling is woeful. Under Bob Carr the trajectory was towards the liberalisation and expansion of the industry. Any minor modifications since have been cancelled out by growth in other gambling sectors.

In its first year in office Labor opened NSW's first casino, Star City. The next year, multi-terminal gaming machines were permitted to operate in clubs and the casino. At the same time the Carr Government agreed to let pubs in on the pokie caper with up to 15 machines, later increased to 30. From 1995 to 1998 the number of pokies in NSW increased by about 20,000 to more than 93,000 machines. The current cap is 99,000 machines.

Overall, the news gets worse each year. In the most recent development late last month, the NSW Government allowed Star City Casino to install 'high-limit' pokies, one of the most dangerous forms of legal gambling.

"I'm bitterly disappointed", said the Rev Fred Nile who opposed the move in parliament. "We have a very serious problem with gambling in our society and here we have casinos and the NSW Government benefiting at the expense of those who can least afford it. It is just predatory. The Government needs to be true to its own anti-gambling rhetoric and prohibit such machines."

As the recent Productivity Commission report makes clear, NSW Labor's gambling policies from the mid-1990s proved a disaster for working-class communities. Most significantly, the commission found "no justification" for the NSW Government's tax breaks on poker machines for clubs.

'Despite international evidence about the risks of highly accessible gaming, governments did not apply a precautionary evidence-based approach to justify the extensive and rapid liberalisation of gambling in Australia,' the report states.

As the report explains, what was clearly missing was any attempt to prove the 'safety' of high-intensity poker machines.

The Productivity Commission estimates there are nearly 100,000 'problem gamblers' addicted to pokies alone. Each one of them is losing about $45,000 a year. Most live in poorer communities. This is a shocking statistic given the annual median household income in NSW is just over $66,000. In effect, families are being impoverished to give the rest of us tax cuts and government benefits.

In the past few months, Canon Sandy Grant from St Michael's, Wollongong, has moved successful motions on gambling at both the local Sydney Synod and the national General Synod held in Melbourne.

Both resolutions were similarly worded and called on governments 'to reduce their reliance on taxation on gambling', asking all political parties 'to refuse donations from organisations which profit from gambling'.

However, hopes the Coalition will be any sort of white knight are fading fast.

In early 2008 Mike Baird, the NSW Shadow Treasurer, was interviewed by *SC* about the Coalition's plans for gambling reform. He claimed the Coalition's first priority as it sought election in 2011 was to ensure transparency was restored to State Government decisions around gambling.

"Currently vested interests are influencing policy outcomes," Mr Baird then told *SC*.

Last month, the NSW Greens and the Labor Government struck a deal to ban political donations from the tobacco, alcohol and gambling industries. Unfortunately – but not surprisingly – this deal excluded not-for-profit clubs represented by their influential and cashed-up lobby group ClubsNSW.

Fred Nile's CDP also sought to add the sex industry to the list. In contrast the Coalition was cold on the issue.

The political cunning of Labor is clear when you look at the movement in donations from Labor to the Coalition in the past year. There was an extraordinary increase in grants to the National Party from hotels, clubs and casino operators in the past 12 months in anticipation that the National's George Souris will become the relevant minister after the State election in March.

The hotels, clubs and gambling industry gave the Nationals $105,300 in just the first six months of this year, up from just over $40,000 for the whole of last year, according to returns from the Election Funding Authority. Last year Star City Casino donated nothing to the Nationals yet has already donated $13,200 this year. Meanwhile these groups are deserting Labor. Star City's contribution to the ALP was down from $110,000 last year to just $2000.

There is little doubt the gambling industry is betting on the right horse. Last month's Newspoll has Labor sitting at an all-time historically low primary vote of 23 per cent, with the Coalition on 46 per cent and the Greens on 17 per cent. There is no realistic hope of a Labor victory this March.

For problem gamblers there are "devastating costs" which "affect a whole network of family and friends".

CANON Sandy Grant, who has been pushing the issue at the highest levels of the Anglican Church, says his fire for gambling reform has been stoked by seeing first hand the impact of gambling addiction on Christian families during his time in various parishes.

He explained that for problem gamblers there are "devastating costs" which "affect a whole network of family and friends".

"As well as trying to provide personal pastoral support, I have also referred people to appropriate counselling and recovery groups," he says. "It is very hard to get someone to own up to a problem. I've talked to a friend in AA and he says gambling is oftentimes seen as a tougher addiction."

It is in this light that Canon Grant finds "the NSW Coalition's responses superficial and deeply disappointing" (see interview with George Souris over the page).

The Coalition has so far declined to specify any policies to reduce the huge levels of problem gambling specifically related to electronic gaming machines (EGMs).

They speak of possible areas for attention but, Canon Grant says, "focus on areas over which they do not seem to have the main jurisdiction such as internet gambling and advertising standards".

Most disappointing of all to Sandy Grant is that he believes the Shadow Minister, George Souris, is quoting facts "selectively in order to minimise the problem".

"I find it disturbing that Mr Souris' claims do not accurately reflect the findings of the Productivity Commission," he says. "The '99 per cent of people are OK' claim is misleading, because it ignores the approximately 1.7 per cent of adult Australians who are at moderate risk of problems from gambling, which governments should also worry about. This gives a total of 2.4 per cent of adults… hundreds of thousands of families impacted."

Canon Grant says Mr Souris is also ignoring the fact that individual addicts affect a whole network of people.

"Each problem gambler impacts terribly on his or her family and other close relationships. This is where many Anglican ministers see the damage. I can say, from first-hand observation, it is heart-rending."

Small prevalence does not mean small impact, he explains.

"By way of comparison, the Productivity Commission says only 0.15 per cent of the population is admitted to hospital via traffic accidents. But we know the flow-on impact of such accidents is enormous. We agree measures should be taken to reduce the dangers on the roads. How much more in this area of poker machine and other electronic gaming use, which is the form of gambling most prone to abuse."

Canon Grant believes the Coalition must focus on the real issue: problem gambling via pokies in clubs and pubs.

"I do agree with the Coalition that the level of advertising for gambling, especially at sports venues and broadcasts, should be addressed but definitely not at the expense of addressing problem gambling via EGMs in pubs and clubs. Why will the NSW Coalition not accept the recommendations of the Productivity Commission and focus on this problematic area, as well as addressing other areas of concern?" SC

Healed by God's grace

I am a farmer from Central Western NSW* and I have a wonderful story to share.

It was a great shock when one of my sons, who works in Sydney told me he had a serious gambling problem. We tried all sorts of things to find a remedy to his problems to no avail.

By the grace of God I was able to take a week off to spend with my son and after some very long hours of time together he agreed to come to the [St Andrew's Cathedral] healing service and on to the Overcomers group meeting following the service.

A very special moment occurred during that healing service which profoundly affected us both as we were prayed for together. I believe it was the healing power of the Lord.

Further evidence was apparent at the Overcomers group meeting when my son was able to share his story – which was unimaginable before. He also was able to receive from others who gave testimony that night.

That all happened in August last year and I can only praise the Lord with all my heart that we have a renewed son back. He has been tested over this time but other than one small faltering has grown wonderfully in mind and spirit and has the zest for life well and truly back.

Having been through this experience I now have some insight into the gravity of the problem of addiction in all its forms and the feeling of hopelessness many would have for themselves and for those whom they love.

God promises to provide for our every situation and I for one pray that our churches would boldly proclaim and confidently minister to those in need of his help.

* name withheld on request

PRODUCTIVITYCOMMISSIONJUNEREPORT: Key points

THE BAD NEWS

- Nationwide $4 billion of the State's revenue comes from gambling and $1.6 billion of this comes straight from gambling addicts.
- Surveys suggest the number of problem gamblers is about 115,000 (or 0.7 per cent) of the adult Australian population, with a further 280,000 (1.4 per cent) at 'moderate risk'.
- About 15 per cent of the 95,000 people who regularly play pokies are problem gamblers, making pokies the most harmful form of gambling by far.

THE GOOD NEWS

- Given the social cost of problem gambling is so massive – an estimated $4.7 billion a year – means that even modest policy measures will be worthwhile in reducing harm.
- The data suggests problem gambling in Australia peaked in the period 1997-99.

PRODUCTIVITYCOMMISSIONJUNEREPORT: Recommendations

LIMIT LOSSES

The amount of cash that players can feed into machines at any one time should be limited further (currently up to $10 000) with the bet limit per 'button push' lowered to $1 (currently up to $10).

BETTER SHUTDOWN PERIODS

Shutdown periods for gaming machines in all pubs and clubs should begin no later than 2am and be of at least six hours' duration.

RELOCATE ATMs

ATMs/EFTPOS facilities in gaming venues should be moved away from gaming areas with clearly visible warnings and with a maximum cash withdrawal limit of $250 a day.

NO SCHOOL EDUCATION

Better warnings and other information in venues may help. But school-based information programs may be having perverse effects by encouraging gambling and should not be extended without review.

TACKLE ONLINE GAMBLING

Australian gamblers are exposed to additional harms from offshore sites that could be avoided under carefully regulated domestic provision. Liberalising the domestic supply of online poker card games, accompanied by appropriate harm minimisation measures, would test whether managed liberalisation should be extended to all online gambling.

Church v State
Head to head on gambling reform

The Coalition says the Anglican Church's recent resolutions on gambling are based on a 'misconception'. JEREMY HALCROW interviews George Souris, currently NSW Shadow Minister for Hospitality, Gambling and Racing, and highly likely to be the responsible minister after the March election.

JEREMY HALCROW: *The Daily Telegraph* and *The Sydney Morning Herald* have been reporting the Coalition "has done a deal" with NSW clubs which will cut the tax they pay on their poker machine profits while also increasing the number of "casino-style" poker machines in NSW. Are these reports accurate?

GEORGE SOURIS: It is a ridiculous notion and is plainly wrong and untrue. The story emanates because of one deliberately missing ingredient: the installation of a multi-terminal gaming machine (MTGM) [for] five players would proceed only by the sacrifice of five poker machines… it is also obviously untrue that the Coalition in any case would want suburban casinos. What nonsense. In fact the Coalition, whilst ever I have been the Shadow Minister, has included a one-casino policy at every election, publicly called on the Government to maintain a one-casino policy at the time of Star City's licence renewal when the Government was canvassing two additional casinos and indeed the Coalition has submitted in the two statutory reviews of the casino licence that a one-casino policy be maintained.

The whole notion is the creation of Premier Keneally and her spin doctors…

I should point out also it is the Government's spin to call a multi-terminal gaming machine 'casino-like'. Casinos are characterised by card games such as blackjack and chance platforms such as roulette. Clubs have had MTGMs since 1997 and have [them] installed to the extent of about 2 per cent of all machines in clubs. For some people sitting communally, having a social drink and chatting whilst playing a MTGM is their style of entertainment but for the vast majority it will remain a one person/one machine pastime.

Actually, right now the Keneally Government by legislation has allowed PubTABs, ClubTABs and TAB agencies to install a MTGM [called] Trackside without the sacrifice of poker machines, the proceeds of which are to fund the racing industry.

The Church should ask Premier Keneally about the hypocrisy of falsely accusing the Coalition of doing something that in fact the Government is actually doing.

JH: Can you give any reassurances that the Coalition will implement new policies to address problem gambling to counter your MTGM policy?

GS: The Coalition has supported and voted unanimously in favour of every piece of reform that has been proposed by the Government, notably as a result of two independent inquiries conducted by IPART [Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal].

Whilst the Anglican Church may see victims of gambling addiction the fact is — according to two independent studies by the Federal Productivity Commission — that [the number of] problem gamblers has fallen from 2 per cent to below 1 per cent. Indeed, registered clubs record a 0.4 per cent problem gambling rate. In NSW there are extensive responsible gaming laws that are upheld by the Coalition. These will be enhanced on an evidence-based approach into the future.

> **"I would suggest the Anglican Church has a mis-conception if it believes… the State is *dependent* on gambling."**

JH: In the past few months, both the Anglican Church's national Synod and its Sydney Diocesan Synod passed resolutions noting the Productivity Commission's recent report into gambling and calling on the State Government 'to reduce its reliance on taxation on gambling', asking 'all political parties to refuse donations from organisations which profit from gambling'. Do you agree the level of problem gambling is too high and share some sympathy for what is driving the Church's concern?

GS: Any level of problem gambling, even though it has more than halved over the decade, still requires vigilance and measures to identify and treat such people who are caught by an addiction.

It will never be possible to eliminate all problem gambling because there are many illegal underground venues — that also harbour illicit alcohol and drugs — and the proliferation of internet gambling accessing corporate bookmakers in the Northern Territory and betting exchanges is drawing both underage and problem gambling patrons. The dollar turnover via the internet has been astonishing and is in the order of $4 billion Australia-wide.

This area will be a strong focus for the Liberal and National Coalition.

The level of advertising, in-run commentary, signage at grounds and on players' jumpers as well as advertising in the ad break has reached a point where action should be considered.

The forthcoming Ashes series will be characterised by all of these visible lures to gambling. To focus only on licensed venues [pubs and clubs] ignores the fastest area of gambling growth in Australia.

On taxation it should be pointed out that the level of taxation bears no relationship to the level of gambling. Taxation affects a clubs ability to employ staff, provide amenities for members and provide support for community organisations.

Poker machines and all outlets including lotteries, lotto, racing, etc have prescribed pay-out ratios which are not related to taxation.

JH: So you think that the Anglican Church is being naïve in making this call regarding State Government revenue?

GS: The NSW Government's budget comprises $1.4 billion in gambling taxes — including horse racing etc — in a $46 billion budget. I would suggest the Anglican Church has a misconception if it believes this amount, though significant, means the State is *dependent* on gambling.

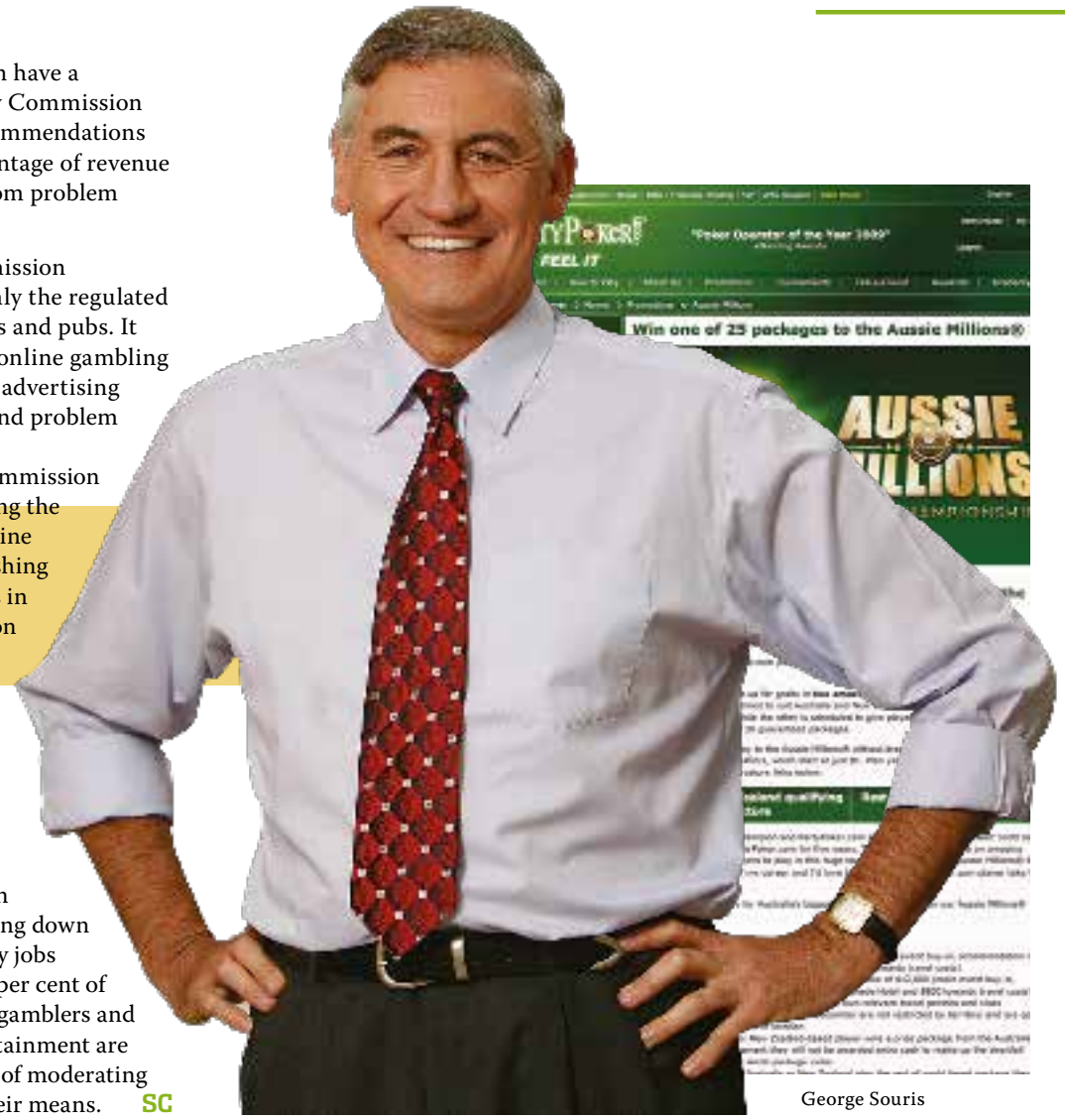
In fact the recently signed Memorandum of Understanding between the Coalition and the state's registered clubs provided for a reduction in taxation, a lower dependence.

JH: Does the NSW Coalition have a response to the Productivity Commission report, especially those recommendations aimed at reducing the percentage of revenue the Government receives from problem gamblers?

GS: The Productivity Commission unfortunately considered only the regulated market within licensed clubs and pubs. It ignored the proliferation of online gambling and the easy access it has to advertising and to accessing underage and problem gamblers.

In fact the Productivity Commission discredited itself by suggesting the complete deregulation of online gambling as a way of diminishing gambling on poker machines in licensed venues. The Coalition believes it is better to keep gambling in licensed venues where the state's responsible gaming laws apply and where underage gambling is prohibited and problem gamblers are identified.

The measures proposed by the Productivity Commission would have the effect of closing down many clubs and costing many jobs for virtually no gain. The 99 per cent of people who are not problem gamblers and who enjoy this form of entertainment are adults who are quite capable of moderating their participation within their means. **SC**



George Souris

Macarthur Anglican School

Macarthur is an independent Anglican co-educational Transition to Year 12 School with a strong academic focus. It is located in picturesque Cobbitty on over 120 magnificent acres 50 minutes from the CBDs of Sydney and Wollongong. The School is highly regarded and provides a supportive workplace that pursues excellence and innovation. Applications are invited from suitably qualified persons for the following positions.

School Chaplain

The School Chaplain reports directly to the Headmaster and has the delegated oversight and responsibility for the breadth of Christian Ministry that takes place throughout the School. The Christian Ministry of the School is diverse focusing on students and their families, staff, and importantly the Macarthur Family Chapel Congregation which meets at the School each Sunday morning and its associated programmes. The Chaplain is part of the teaching staff within the Biblical Studies Faculty.

Assistant/Community Chaplain (Part-Time – 0.5FTE)

The Assistant/Community Chaplain is a part-time position reporting directly to the School Chaplain. Depending on the strengths of the candidate the breadth of this role may include a focus on students and their families, staff, and/or the Macarthur Family Chapel Congregation, which meets at the School each Sunday morning and its associated programmes. This role includes a small teaching load in the Biblical Studies Faculty.

Applications for both positions will only be accepted on the official application form and appropriate Working with Children forms, which may be obtained by telephoning the School or downloading from the School's website. By way of information for candidates, booklets regarding these positions are available from the School or by download.

Applications should be directed to:
The Headmaster
Dr David Nockles
PO Box 555 CAMDEN NSW 2570
Telephone: (02) 4647 5333
employment@macarthur.nsw.edu.au
www.macarthur.nsw.edu.au

Applications close Friday 28 January 2011

Child protection legislation requires preferred applicants to be subject to employment screening.

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TWO NEW STAFF POSITIONS

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The person we are seeking for our **Assistant Minister** (part-time) position will be passionate about proclaiming Christ and growing disciples and be able to build effective ministry relationships. Ministry opportunities include preaching, establishing a ministry to youth and young adults and helping establish a new evening service.

We are also seeking an **Administration Assistant** (part-time) who is able to relate well to people of all ages, has proven computer skills (MS Office including Publisher) and is a good all-rounder in the office. The ability to work in a team is essential.

For more information and applications, please contact:
John Hooton - Minister
Emmanuel Anglican Church, Glenhaven, PO Box 8144, Baulkham Hills BC NSW 2153
Phone: 8850 1311 E-mail: john@emmanuelchurch.org.au

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The role offers scope and diversity and an opportunity to make a difference to the business deliverables of their member clients. If you have at least 3-4 years in a similar capacity within an accounting firm or from a multi-faceted business with a 'business and client focus', we welcome your enquiries to:

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St John's is seeking applicants for the following roles in 2011:

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Youth worker (part-time or full-time): With a number of vibrant youth groups in existence and two state high schools in our area there is plenty to get your teeth into.
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Please send expressions of interest along with a CV to *office@stjohnsasquith.org.au.*

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Miscellaneous

GRADUATION CLASS MOORE COLLEGE 1900. My grandfather Rev W.E. Pugh was a graduate. I would like a copy of the photograph of that class named if possible for our famlly history. Please contact Rev Bill Pugh, 03 9598 5841.

HOUSEMATE WANTED. Sunny & sweet 3 bed house in Gladesville near buses; $160/week rent + utilities. Ring Fiona or Nadia 9802 1730

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Notice to all intended job applicants
It is an offence under the NSW Child Protection (prohibited Employment) Act 1998 for a person convicted of a serious sexual offence to apply for a position which involves contact with children or young adult people. Relevant checks of criminal history, apprehended violence orders and previous disciplinary proceedings will be conducted on recommended applicants to such positions.

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DIARY

SATURDAY, December 11
Cathedral Christmas Concert
LOCATION | St Andrew's Cathedral, George St, Sydney | 7pm

MONDAY, December 20
Christmas Concert with Colin Buchanan
LOCATION | St Andrew's Cathedral, George St, Sydney | 10am & 1pm

WEDNESDAY, December 22
Seniors Christmas
LOCATION | St Andrew's Cathedral, George St, Sydney | 2pm

FRIDAY, December 24
Christmas Celebration
LOCATION | St Andrew's Cathedral, George St, Sydney | 6pm, 8pm & 11pm

SATURDAY, December 25
Christmas Celebration
LOCATION | St Andrew's Cathedral, George St, Sydney | 8am & 10am

MONDAY, Dec 27 – Sunday, Jan 2
Youthworks Family Camp
FOR more information and to register see outdoors.youthworks.net or call (02) 8268 3346.
LOCATION | Shoalhaven Conference Centre, Nowra

SUNDAY, Jan 2 – Saturday, Jan 8
Jam
A Youthworks holiday camp for guys and girls in years 4-6 in 2011. For more information call (02) 8268 3346.
LOCATION | Shoalhaven Conference Centre, Nowra

SUNDAY, Jan 9 – Saturday, Jan 15
Surfside
A Youthworks holiday camp for guys and girls in years 4-6 in 2011.
FOR more information please call (02) 8268 3346.
LOCATION | Chittick Lodge, Gerringong

SUNDAY, Jan 9 – Saturday, Jan 15
Performing Arts Camp
A Youthworks holiday camp for guys and girls in years 7-12 in 2011.
CALL (02) 8268 3346.
LOCATION | Port Hacking Conference Centre

continued next page »

MONDAY, Jan 17 – Friday, Jan 21

Leaders in Training Conference (LiT)

LIT is a practical training ground, equipping young people (in years 10-12) for servant leadership in church and school, for now and into the future. Early bird discount applies until December 3.
FOR more details visit www.youthworks.net/lit
LOCATION | Port Hacking Conference Centre

SUNDAY, January 23 – Saturday, January 29

TWIST Emerge

A camp for guys and girls in years 7-12 in 2011.
FOR more information and to register visit outdoors.youthworks.net or call (02) 8268 3346.
LOCATION | Blue Mountains Conference Centre, Springwood

WEDNESDAY, January 26

Australia Day Convention And Fair

PHILLIP Jensen is speaking on the topic "Work and the Christian Life". A new initiative this year is a fair. See box below on our featured Event of the Month for further more details.
LOCATION | St Andrew's Cathedral, George St, Sydney

MONDAY, January 31 – Wednesday, February 2 & Monday, February 7 – Wednesday, February 9

Children's And Youth Ministry Intensives

YOUTHWORKS College offers intensive-mode diploma units over six days in February for anyone in paid or volunteer youth or children's ministry. FOR more details visit www.youthworkscollege.edu.au/intensives.
LOCATION | 11 Fifth Avenue, Loftus

VARIOUS dates in February

Schools Ministry Conference

THESE conferences are a great opportunity for primary SRE teachers to be equipped and encouraged in their ministry before the start of the school year. Early bird (before Dec 17) $20, Student/pensioner $20, standard $25. FOR more details call (02) 8268 3355 or visit www.youthworks.net/events
LOCATION | Western Sydney on Thursday, February 3; Wollongong on Tuesday, February 8; City on Saturday, February 12

Bill Dumbrell honoured

BIBLICAL scholar William (Bill) Dumbrell was honoured at a dinner held to acknowledge his achievements. Bill was presented with a volume of essays written in appreciation of his ministry titled *An Everlasting Covenant*, edited by John Davies and Allan Harman and published by the Reformed Theological Review.

EVENT OF THE MONTH

Nathan Tasker is coming back to Sydney to headline the Australia Day Fair at St Andrew's Cathedral on January 26, 2011.

The cathedral has hosted the popular Australia Day Convention for the past five years and will debut an Australia Day Fair after the convention, from 5pm.

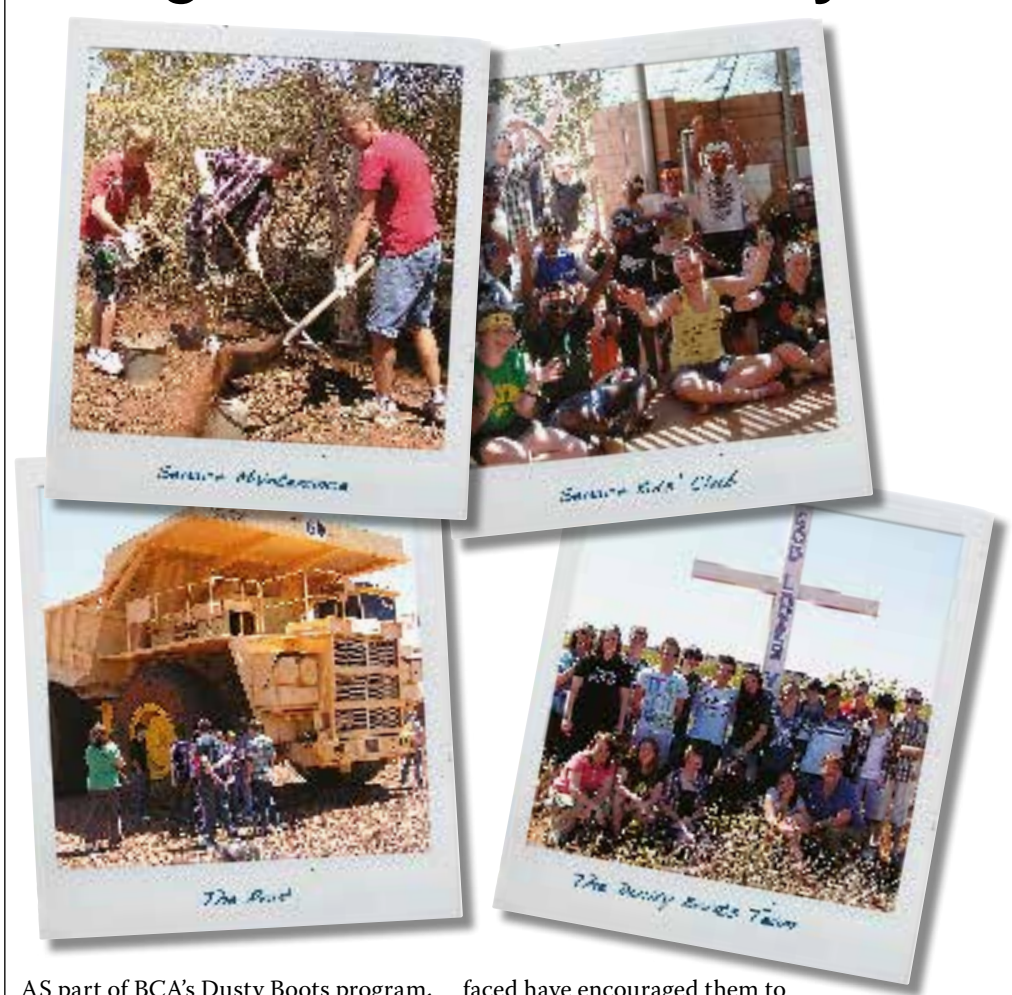
The fair will feature jumping castles, face painting, food and drink and an open-air stage for the music performances.

Nathan Tasker grew an enormous Sydney fanbase in the first half of the past decade before heading to the US in 2006 to pursue his musical dreams, finding wide acclaim among Christian audiences across North America.

In January, Nathan returns to his roots to headline the Australia Day Fair, which will feature a line-up of great Sydney bands and solo artists. The music program will run from 5pm–8.45pm, when the audience will be encouraged to find a good vantage point for the Darling Harbour Fireworks at 9pm, concluding the fair with a big, colourful bang!

The Australia Day Fair is sponsored by the new national Bible Society Australia and Compassion Australia.

PAC gets down and dusty



AS part of BCA's Dusty Boots program, 14 students from Penrith Anglican College travelled to Wickham in north-western WA to help minister to the remote mining town.

The students worked with the Goscombe family who moved from Penrith to Wickham in 2008. Some of the ministries that the students offered support in were doorknocking, a kids' club and some maintenance work on the Goscombes' house.

The work the students undertook wasn't easy but the challenges they faced have encouraged them to consider their future, with one student contemplating theological study after he finishes school.

The students also have a greater understanding of the spiritual needs of remote communities like Wickham.

"There is still a lot of work to be done," Lauren said.

"It's really inspiring knowing that even in a place as small and isolated as Wickham there are people caring for and supporting the community," Savo said.

Soul Revival for mission in schools

THE Soul Revival Jesus Movement brought together more that 350 young people at St Luke's, Miranda to pray for and commit to God's mission to seek and save the lost in their schools.

The event, held on September 17, was organised by a team from five local churches and designed to encourage students to get involved in ministry at their schools.

"The combined effort from churches and chaplains has breathed into our mission in schools," said Brett Middleton, event organiser and youth minister at St Luke's.

The movement seeks to equip young people to share the gospel at school.

"I didn't realise how important being on mission in my school is," one student said. "I don't want to get to Year 12 and think I've wasted my time at high school."

Churches currently involved in SRJM are Caringbah Anglican, Gymea Anglican, Gymea Baptist, Menai Baptist, Miranda Anglican and Helensburgh Anglican.

Musos stay on track

Andrew Buerger

FOR most of us singing in the shower or playing in the church band is as far as our music talents extend but for others using their God-given gifts may mean taking a much tougher path.

Rather than a worship album Amelia Jae, who attends church in Londonderry, felt God leading her to produce music for a secular audience. The result is her debut album *No Ordinary Day*.

"When I was writing for this album I said to God, 'I know that this is what you want me to do'... At first I wasn't sure which direction to follow but every time I sat down to write more of a secular sound was coming through rather than a worship direction so I went with that."

No Ordinary Day, while not explicitly Christian, encourages listeners to reflect on the purpose of their lives.

"It's not a gospel-based message but it's a life message; that the life that you're living right now is not second rate, it's amazing and you should grab hold of it," she says.

Being a Christian in the secular music industry has its challenges but for Amelia Jae those challenges can be overcome by remembering that she is doing what she's doing because of God.

"I have a different approach to the secular music scene than someone who just wants to be famous — there's a bit more heart to it," she says. "As a Christian, the fame and the craziness... you're the vessel, you're not taking it on yourself, you're giving it back to God. It's a real grounder and it's a humility that I think the industry really needs."

Sal Paradise is an Adelaide based indie-rock band led by Anglican minister, JJ Miller. While the music they produce is explicitly Christian, unlike Amelia Jae, Miller also understands the temptations that Christians face in the secular music industry.

He says that the biggest challenge, for those who are full-time musicians, "is no doubt the struggle of maintaining their integrity".

Yesterday, Today and Forever is the latest offering from Sal Paradise and is designed to encourage people to consider Christ and think for themselves, a bit like Jesus' parables.

"I think Jesus' use of stories is a great example of how art can draw people to engage with the truth because you have to 'enter in' to the story... and in the same way we write songs that we hope will draw people into what the Scriptures are saying," Miller says.

"On the new album we have tried something different, which is to take listeners on a journey through God's story as it unfolds in Scripture, from creation to new creation."

No Ordinary Day *can be purchased at Koorong bookshops or online at ameliajae.com.* Yesterday, Today and Forever *is available to purchase at salparadise.org*

When video games GO WRONG

The research is clear. It's time to get serious about video game violence, writes PHILIP JENKINSON.

NEW research shows that regular game time with violent scenarios is desensitising teenage gamers and leading them to become more aggressive, less caring and more at risk of developing emotional problems.

There are side effects from drugs and there is proven emotional collateral damage from addictive forms of violent entertainment too. This is the conclusion of Iowa State University Professor of Psychology Craig Anderson.

His most recent study 'Violent Video Game Effects' analyses 130 research reports on more than 130,000 young people from around the world and the findings were published in March this year by the American Psychological Association.

"We can now say with the utmost confidence that, regardless of the research method – experimental, correlational or longitudinal – exposure to violent video games increases the likelihood of aggressive thoughts and behaviour in both short-term and long-term contexts," Professor Anderson said. "Such exposure also increases aggressive thinking and aggressive effect and decreases empathetic, pro-social behaviour."

Professor Anderson's research also included new longitudinal data which provided further confirmation that playing violent video games is a causal risk factor for long-term harmful outcomes. "These are not huge effects – not in the order of joining a gang versus not joining a gang," he said. "But these effects are also not trivial in size."

Professor Anderson said his new study may be his last meta-analysis on violent video games because of its definitive findings. "From a public policy standpoint, it's time to get off the question of 'Are there real and serious effects?' – that's been answered and answered repeatedly," he said. "It's now time to move on to a more constructive question like, 'How do we make it easier for parents to provide a healthier childhood for their kids?'."

The Iowa State University research is hot on the heels of a study of 364 'tweenagers' undertaken last year, which showed that heavy users of violent video games (14 hours or more a week) had an increased likelihood of getting into a fight at school.

The American Academy of Pediatrics, which published this report, now recognises media violence as a significant health risk to adolescents and older teenagers and recommends limiting total screen time (including television, computers and video games) to one to two hours a day.

Victoria Police Chief Commissioner Simon Overland expressed concern in 2009 about players becoming desensitised by violence in computer games, something that was being reflected in their behaviour. "They see it [violence] happen in the movies and in video games and the person always gets up. Well, sadly, we know that's not always the case," he said.

A recent *Herald Sun* report quoted the top five violent video games as being 'Left 4 Dead 2', 'Aliens vs Predator', 'MadWorld', 'Grand Theft Auto IV' and 'Call of Duty: Modern Warfare 2'. It seems the big problem with these titles and many others is that there are no negotiable ways or non-lethal responses available to the player to solve problems or win challenges. What's more, young and impressionable gamers don't have a fully formed adult mind yet to understand the irony and humour in many adult video games that grown-ups take for granted.

THE TOP 10 GAMING PROBLEMS and what to do about them.

1 **A closed door = a closed mind.** If gaming is always solo, behind closed doors and ceases to be a recreational activity teens enjoy with friends, stop or limit this pattern of behaviour immediately.

2 **Watch out for signs of addiction.** A Harris Interactive poll released in January 2008 reported 23 per cent of gamers surveyed felt addicted to video games. If worried, divide up their free time between a number of activities or titles and set playtime restrictions.

3 **Playing before chores.** We don't have a fancy dessert before our main meal and nor should gamers spend hours a day focusing their attention on a violent game, only to study, complete their homework or clean their room with only half their brain working.

4 **Increased anger and violent thoughts.** Speak with the teenager about what it is they are angry about, reassure them and encourage other non-screen-based activities.

5 **Anxiousness and restlessness** are often signs of over-concentration and over-indulgence in computer gaming. Young people can de-stress well with exercise, so set specific time periods where they do other more healthy activities like playing football, bike riding, and/or swimming, to get the balance right.

6 **Obsessive behaviour.** This manifests particularly in online role-playing games where the young gamer is desperate to check on the status of their gaming world. Again, the answer is to limit screen time and how many times they can go online to check.

7 **No friends.** Often a dead give-away that peer development is suffering from over-dependence on solo video gaming is a lack of friends in the life of the teenager.

8 **Weight gain or weight loss.** Cut out meal times in their bedroom, no snacking while playing and encourage them to be involved in food preparation in the kitchen.

9 **Showing one game, playing another.** When a teenager is constantly agitated or on edge after playing a sporting or age-appropriate adventure quest video game, it's time to investigate what they are really playing at home and at their friend's place.

10 **Gaming all the time.** This sometimes calls for a cold-turkey approach. That can mean locking the laptop or games console inside the garage when you leave for work in the morning to stop before-school and after-school gaming abuse.

The Interactive Games and Entertainment Association is one of many voices arguing in favour of the Federal Government introducing an adults-only, R18+ rating for games here, similar to the rating that most Western countries already have. They say such a rating would create less confusion, although some anti-violent video game activists argue that this move will expose children to unsavoury material, as more adult content is released over time.

The authors of *Grand Theft Childhood*, Cheryl K Olson and Lawrence Kutner, recommend parents look for the problem signs in young gamers to ward off further trouble.

A parent in a focus group interviewed by Kutner was quoted as saying "I know that my son does not play *Grand Theft Auto* in my house. But he seems to know all the characters and what they say, so he must be playing it someplace."

Another noted, "He may bring a 'Mario' game to his buddy's house and bring back a *Grand Theft Auto* when I'm not aware of it."

One former youth leader who has dealt with the fallout from obsessive teenage gaming first hand is Glyn Henman, CEO of the non-aligned Christian youth mentoring charity Young Life Australia.

"The usual Christian response towards obsessive gaming is to give the boy a serious dressing down – it's usually boys – maybe take away some privileges and that's that," Henman says. "But to break this pattern of behaviour takes a mix of prayer and planned parental strategies to stop what I increasingly believe is a very real addiction to gaming for some young people."

Henman thinks parents need to make a stand, with a combination of observation and action, yet he concedes a medium, not short-term, response is needed. "Parents need to pay close attention to their kids and watch out for signs that video games are taking the place of other healthy activities such as sports, clubs, peer-to-peer relationships, and schoolwork," he says.

He also believes it is absolutely vital for young people to get a life outside school. "In order for teenagers to grow emotionally they need to be involved in genuine communities where relationships are formed over time. Not cooped up in their bedrooms by themselves, relentlessly blowing people away on a computer screen."

As with other teenage activities, parents need to monitor where, when, with whom and how long their kids play. "Young people may not like rules," Henman says. "But they are used to them at school, and our role models in the field have found that in most cases, teenagers are crying out for rules formed around caring for their welfare and being genuinely interested in them, and most respond positively to consistent boundary setting at home and outside school."

See the box above for a list of the major concerns around violent video games and the young people who play them, and what parents, guardians, teachers and youth workers can do to keep an eye out for problem behaviour. SC

Philip V Jenkinson is a freelance writer with a keen interest in youth affairs. He also works part time for Young Life Australia.

Why Australians have become so disconnected

BOOK REVIEW

Disconnected
Andrew Leigh

This book is both interesting and yet a little sad.

Interesting because it's the first serious attempt to analyse social capital, that is, 'the networks of trust and reciprocity that link multiple individuals together' here in Australia. In other words, Andrew Leigh, a new ALP member of Federal Parliament and academic economist, is trying to work out how Australian society has changed in the past 50 years.

His answer is that on the whole social capital has declined. Organisational membership has fallen since the 1960s both in real terms and as a percentage of population: people are joining things less.

Volunteering went up in the late 90s (the Olympics?) but is below the post-war peak. Political life has dropped, as has membership of unions. People substantially prefer to watch sport than play and involvement in cultural activities from movies to art galleries has dropped since the 1990s. There is also evidence that people have fewer close friends and neighbours.

It's not all down: he finds that inter-personal trust has risen slightly.

One of the most significant activities which has suffered most is religious participation. The trend in churchgoing has declined, as we know, since World War II from 35 per cent of adults going weekly to something like 13 per cent now, although Leigh does say the decline appears to have bottomed out.

One of the more alarming aspects is that he shows the decline has occurred not because people have stopped attending church as they get older but because successive generations attend less. This is partly because Australians are themselves becoming less religious but also even those who claim to be religious are attending less often.

On the other side, Andrew Leigh documents the social value of being a churchgoer, or even just having churchgoing friends. Churchgoing people are more connected with others, more trusting, more involved in volunteering. Even their friends say that they can expect more help from them if needed.

Disconnected is also interesting in speculating on why there has been this general decline in social capital. It's not, as some have argued, because of changes in the economy. Our tendency to trust each other slight less is more likely to be related to factors such as some people (but not all) are working longer hours, there is increased female participation in the workforce, the sheer hassle of driving to work in your car for so long, television and the fact that Australia is a more diverse society and less monochrome.

The book is sad in that Leigh, himself an ex-churchgoer turned atheist, finds nothing on offer to effectively change the gentle decline in social capital. The other alarming point is that he argues the city with the highest social capital is Canberra (which makes me wonder whether the whole process was worthwhile in the first place).

It's an interesting book for Christians because it reflects something of the wider social context in which we operate, even if it is poorly written in the sense that he repeats his conclusion a number of times (which does make reading, however, more easy).

Rob Forsyth

King of wounded hearts

Judy Adamson

The King's Speech
M

IN 1925 Prince Albert, the Duke of York, was asked by his father George V to give a speech at the closing ceremony of the British Empire Exhibition in London. We can only speculate about why the king chose his seriously stuttering son to make this very public address (heard across the empire, thanks to a radio broadcast) but it was, from all accounts, a disaster.

This is how, with stiff upper lips and excruciating awkwardness, we are introduced to Albert (Colin Firth) his wife Elizabeth (Helena Bonham Carter) and his problem.

The action then skips to 1934, by which time numerous speech therapists have come and gone with no benefit. Albert (known as Bertie) only feels secure in his immediate family circle with his wife and adoring daughters — Princess Margaret and the future Queen Elizabeth II.

But ever hopeful of a cure the duchess knocks on one last door: that of unconventional Australian Lionel Logue (Geoffrey Rush), who boldly insists on the duke's first visit that, "In here it's better if we're equals".

He bluntly calls the failed speech therapists "idiots" — especially with regard to their encouragement for the duke to continue smoking — to which the duke responds, "They've all been knighted". "Makes it official, then," Logue retorts, asking his shocked patient to address him as Lionel, while he calls him Bertie.

Thus begins a fascinating relationship, an exploration of the value and meaning of old-school royalty, family and friendship, plus the depth of impact that loveless words and attitudes can have on the human heart.

For Bertie is wounded, both psychologically and emotionally. Despite living a life of privilege, he has much in common with returned soldiers from World War I who the real-life Logue coaxed back into the world of speech after their shocking experiences on the front. But what is it that has damaged Bertie so much?

Gradually he opens up to Logue and works on his stutter with everything from tongue twisters to stomach exercises — singing and swearing (quite a bit) just to get the words out.

In the meantime, history is on the march: his father the king dies, while his eldest brother David (an almost unrecognisable Guy Pearce) continues his obsession with twice-divorced Wallis Simpson, for whom he will eventually abdicate the throne — with the unwilling Bertie next in line.

As the layers of his life are gradually peeled away, we can enjoy the tremendously well-made story with its insight, tragedy and great good humour but we can also examine ourselves in light of what is revealed. It's a challenge to consider whether we would choose what is right over what is expedient or popular, whether our words and actions are those that build up or tear down — plus whose model of love we choose to emulate.

Bertie, before he became George VI, knew through bitter experience the effect that harsh or misplaced love can have on a person — which is perhaps, along with his unassuming nature, why he became one of Britain's most beloved monarchs.

The real-life timeline of the therapy and resulting friendship between the future George VI and Lionel Logue has been tinkered with for the film, but there is also authenticity: director Tom Hooper has said some of the best lines are lifted straight from Logue's diaries.

The fun will be guessing which ones. SC

Voyage of the Dawntreader

The next installment of CS Lewis' classic *Narnia* series is in cinemas now. Read Judy Adamson's review at sydneyanglicans.net.