

The urgency of evangelism



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Evangelistic Fire

Mark Thompson / Principal

THE CHRISTIAN GOSPEL IS THE MOST SIGNIFICANT MESSAGE EVER ENTRUSTED TO HUMAN BEINGS. IT IS THE MESSAGE OF A LOVE SO STRONG IT OVERCOMES EVERY OBSTACLE IN ORDER TO RESCUE SINFUL PEOPLE FROM JUDGMENT. JESUS IS GOD COME TO SAVE US, BY BEARING HIMSELF ALL THE CONSEQUENCES OF OUR SIN AND OPENING UP A NEW LIFE OF HOPE AND JOY AND PEACE.

This is breathtakingly good news, all the more so because our situation without it is so dire. The gospel of the crucified and risen Messiah changes everything. It is the powerful way God saves people (Rom 1:16).

The extraordinary privilege of being entrusted with the gospel, especially when seen against the stark reality of judgment as its only alternative, ought to make us urgent about evangelism. There is such great need in our world, and we have the one true answer to it. How could we possibly withhold it from those lost and blindly careering towards disaster? How could we possibly stay silent when the empty lies of the evil one are peddled as truth and those we love are settling for far less than God has always intended for them? We don't need a command to get out there and evangelise, it's just obvious. It flows naturally out of the gospel. Everybody needs to hear about Jesus.

A friend of mine asked not that long ago where all our evangelistic fire had gone. Where's that sense of urgency, that passion for the lost, that clarity of focus on Jesus and the salvation available only through him, which used to characterise Christians in this part of the world? It made me think. Have we become too comfortable or perhaps too fearful? Do we still believe it?

When I studied at Moore College in the 1980s, it seemed that everyone wanted to be an evangelist. It

helped that we had a champion of evangelism in Sydney, the larger-than-life John Chapman. Chappo challenged us to take every opportunity. I remember him saying, "If you don't have an evangelistic tract in your pocket you won't be looking for anyone to give it to, will you?" He spoke at large meetings and small, offering people the opportunity for a "fresh start". He taught us how to evangelise as we taught the Bible. He firmly believed that the gospel lies at the very centre of the Bible and so every part of the Bible is related in some way or other to Jesus, his death and resurrection. The Anglican Diocese of Sydney was richly blessed by the ministry of John Chapman—and many other places were too!

But it wasn't only Chappo. I remember a series of lunches at the top table in the College dining room (yes, we used to have one of those!), at which Peter Jensen asked each of us in our final year how we would turn a conversation in this situation or that, with this person or that, to the gospel of the Lord Jesus. I remember coming across, hidden on one of the shelves in the stack in the old Moore College Library, an evangelistic tract that Broughton Knox had written for use by the College mission teams. I remember the impact on many



First year student Jonny giving a talk at College mission earlier this year.



Photo by Grant Whitty on Unsplash

of student minister positions with the Department of Evangelism. In one parish I served, I just kept falling over people who had come to Christ because they had heard the gospel from the senior minister. Quietly and unobtrusively, he was—and remains—one of the most indefatigable evangelists I know, taking every opportunity.

So what has happened to make my friend doubt that the fire is still burning within us? There have been huge cultural changes since the 1980s. Anti-Christian propaganda has been pumped through our education system and popular entertainment boldly and insistently for almost all that period, and certainly more vigorously in the last ten years. In the 1980s, to be a Christian might have caused others to label you as somewhat quaint but out of touch. Yet today, some voices can be heard arguing that Christians are dangerous and should be silenced in public. Back then we certainly spoke about persecution, but only heard about it from a distance. But in recent years, in a number of traditionally Christian countries, the prosecutions have begun, and vehement denunciations can be heard in many forms of media. We all seem to be much less resilient than the generation before us, let alone those who grew up through the gritty war years of the mid twentieth century. We seem to be perennially on the back foot.

I suspect we've also bought into technique, programs and strategy more than we thought we should 40 years ago. Perhaps that's made us a little more inward looking. Of course, increasing levels of compliance and administration, and more people talking about leadership than about gospeling and global mission, have pushed us further down that direction.

So how do we get the fire back? Not, I suspect, by trying to work ourselves up into a frenzy. Not by browbeating each other either. To be honest, I don't even think it will be the result of a brilliant ministry strategy centring on evangelism. We are far better off turning our attention again to the gospel itself. It is the wonder of the gospel that stirs the imagination, warms and captures the heart, and puts fire in our bellies.

In the following pages, showcasing some of what is going on at Moore, I hope you will notice Jesus and his gospel at the very centre of everything. It is hard not to be overwhelmed by the scale of Jesus' goodness, his extraordinary mercy and compassion, which are matched by his constant faithfulness to the will of his Father. He is truly the most impressive man ever to have walked on earth. He always did what was right. He always acted out of love. His unimaginable strength and power are matched by gentleness, compassion and grace. And he has done everything—absolutely everything—necessary to save us from sin and secure our future. He gathers *us* up into *his* relationship with his Father.

What a Saviour we come to know in the gospel! What a salvation is ours in the gospel! Let's not let anything quench that evangelistic fire.

Mark D. Thompson

Dr Mark D Thompson,
Principal



The word evangelism

Archie Poulos / Head of Ministry & Director, Centre for Ministry Development



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MANY PEOPLE RESPOND TO THE WORD EVANGELISM LIKE THEY RESPOND TO 'BEGIN FITNESS REGIME'. IT IS IMPORTANT, DOES GOOD, AND WE WANT IT, BUT GETTING GOING HAS SO MANY HURDLES.

Conversion is God's great work, and He continues to be active in it. Look around church – where every week we are blessed by being surrounded by those He has saved. Every church in our Diocese desires to see people saved. At Moore College, our students voluntarily gather in groups to explore how to reach different pockets of society, and students, faculty, and staff regularly request prayer for people they are evangelising. Yet evangelism still seems so fraught with difficulties.

To think through how we might

enhance our evangelistic efforts Phil Wheeler, director of Evangelism & New Churches (ENC), Elliot Temple, mission director at Christ Church St. Ives for the last nine years, and I discussed lessons we have learnt on evangelism.

Phil reminded us that Dave Jensen, the new Assistant Director of ENC speaks of three conversions that grow evangelism:

1. The individual's conversion from darkness to light
2. The Christian's empowerment and encouragement that they can reach people, and that God uses them in this
3. The local church's conversion to develop a program and provide resources that declare mission matters.

Here are some of the insights that flow from this conversion.

The gospel

Elliot reminds us that 'it is the gospel that is the power of God for salvation. You don't need to be smart or funny or winsome. When you constantly open the Bible with people who don't have faith, that's when God turns the lights on in people's hearts'.

Our circumstances

But Elliot continues 'many distrust organised religion, so Christians can't picture our friends being interested in Jesus or imagine God using us'. We urge you not to believe the secular lie that no one is interested in Christ. Phil speaks of two pastors who walk the streets chatting with people in their front yards and many want to talk about Jesus. 'Fili walks the streets of Redfern housing with both its wealthy professionals and people in difficult circumstances,

asking ‘can I pray for you’. He never receives a ‘no’.

Us

Prayer, humility and persecution is what we are called to. Begin praying for yourself, others and the church to clearly proclaim the truth. But do it not with superiority but as slaves of Christ and servants of those we speak to. And expect persecution so that you don’t shy away from confessing Christ at the first sign of difficulty. Phil reminds us of Psalm 126 ‘you sow with tears and you reap with joy’. Success always comes with persecution. He goes further – ‘maybe God is answering our prayers for others by giving us persecution because everywhere in church history when persecution has come, the church has grown. So, ask “what is the cost to me of sharing Jesus”’.

All three concurred that our congregation members know way more than they think they do and are more able to evangelise than they imagine.

Partnering

Evidence from around the western world agrees that about 15% of Christians actively look for opportunities to share their faith.

This is not to fill the remaining 85% with guilt, but to ask them to partner in prayer. Look for those who push the evangelism envelope and ask them who to pray for, and then pray! Too easily we can leave evangelism to the 15%, or even wish they weren’t so ‘out there’. It is common to speak of personal evangelism, but why must it be one to one? Pack or group evangelism is no less valid. Are there things we can do together that aid in evangelism of both an individual and a group?

Tell the stories to each other and from the front at church about your evangelism, especially the failures. It says we are all trying, and it normalises both success and failure in evangelism.

Have you thought of partnering with other churches and organisations in your evangelism? There is excellent support from Anglicare in establishing ESL classes, and a constant list of people who have come to know Jesus through this church-based ministry. Phil spoke of a church that thought they had too few contacts to conduct an Investigating Jesus course, so they teamed up for the first time with another nearby church. Both churches prayed, and 80 people attended!

Structures and ‘trellises’

We are familiar with the concept of trellis and vine. Vines grow best when there is a good and supportive trellis. So it is with evangelism. The structures our churches develop can enhance individual and group evangelism.

Every church should have a plan for its evangelism, that is obvious in time commitments and church budget. We agreed that even a bad plan was preferable to no plan. Any plan, no matter how good or bad should be regularly re-assessed, modified and sharpened. It is important that our congregations have some good tools at their disposal that assist with confidence in evangelism, but also to expect God to surprise us in how he draws people to Himself through unexpected means.

Elliot says ‘daily habits can be changed through weekly programs. A lady who had been at church for 70 years excitedly said, “I’ve never invited anyone to church, but this year I did and they said yes”. She did this because of what happened in church and in her small group’.

Beware of limiting our activities to ‘in-drag’, where we think our task is to invite people to our gatherings expecting the preacher to do all the work of evangelism. The aversion to organised religion is best overcome by a person knowing and trusting a believer who cares for them. Research has shown that those who have experienced care from Christians are very likely to listen to the truth of the gospel. And so, make sure you tell the gospel story and invite people to surrender to Christ.

Commencing a fitness regime depends on you. Evangelism is God’s glorious work that He continues to do, in the company of and partnership with other believers. What an honour to partner with God and His people in evangelism.



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Firing up your church for evangelism

Phil Colgan / Senior Minister, St George North Anglican Church

I HAVE SERVED AT ST GEORGE NORTH ANGLICAN CHURCH NOW FOR NEARLY 20 YEARS (SINCE I LEFT MOORE COLLEGE IN 2003!). OVER THAT TIME, WE HAVE SEEN PERIODS WHERE THE CHURCH SEEMS TO BE ON FIRE FOR EVANGELISM AND MANY PEOPLE ARE HEARING THE GOSPEL, BEING SAVED AND JOINING OUR CHURCH.

At other times, that has not been the case and we have gone extended periods where not many people seem to be being saved. Sometimes (frustratingly for someone like me who likes to think that gospel growth always should follow my neat plans) these growth periods are hard to predict and don't always connect with our plans and strategies. This always serves as a reminder to me that whatever else we do in evangelism, fervent prayer for the lost must always be our key strategy. In the end it is the Lord who gives life to the spiritually dead. Whatever else I say below, the priority of prayer should never be assumed.

However, in addition to prayer, I've been asked to share what I've learned at St George North about how to encourage the members of our church to be fired

up for evangelism. I thought I would start with some practical steps but then finish with the more important theological underpinnings.

Practical steps

We would all hope that every member of our church is always thinking about who they can share the gospel with and intentionally praying and working towards that goal. Oh, that that were true! The reality is that it isn't true for me and so why should I expect it to be true of the members of my church? That is why it is so important to keep evangelism on the agenda in multiple ways. I have a little rule of thumb that if someone doesn't complain once in a while that we focus too much on evangelism then we mustn't be focussing on it enough.

That focus really shows itself in four ways:

1. **Teaching and training.** We have found that running training in evangelism as a separate course has a limited impact, as only those already committed come. We want every person to see that all Christians are involved in God's mission. So we have moved this focus to our Gospel Teams (our





name for our mid-week small groups). At least once every two or three years we devote a term to studies on evangelism. Sometimes we write the materials ourselves, at other times we use prepared materials. A recent highlight was to have every member of our church reading and discussing Rico Tice's book *Honest Evangelism* alongside some studies we wrote to accompany the book.

2. **Giving a focus.** We want to make sure that our training and teaching encourages people to share Jesus in all settings—in the home, at work, at school, in the playground. However, we find that it helps people to have a focal point to be praying towards and aiming to invite people to. In recent years we have made that focus our “Life” course that runs every term without fail. That way, every member of the church has at least four dates in the year that they are working towards as a focus for their evangelism.
3. **Encouraging specific prayer.** Perhaps our most effective ‘strategy’ has been encouraging people to pray specifically for people by name. One way we do that is by producing bookmarks ahead of each Life Course that people can write three names on of people they are praying for. Besides the power of prayer itself, in my experience the act of praying for a person by name focuses us to actually make the effort of sharing the gospel or inviting someone.
4. **Showcasing models of evangelism.** Many of us find it hard to evangelise. We need models of normal people who are seeking to share Jesus. One of the things we are seeking to do better is to showcase interviews with people at church—new Christians sharing how they have been saved; a Christian sharing how they have shared the gospel with

someone; a Christian sharing how they invited someone to Life but they didn't come. It is amazing how even the stories of ‘failure’ inspire others that they could take the same step.

The more important matter of people's hearts

All of those practical steps are important, but they will have very little effect if people's hearts are not being gripped by Jesus. I sometimes call all of those practical steps the ground war, but the air war is the gripping of people's hearts with the gospel.

Ironically, it is not teaching on evangelism that leads to growth in evangelistic fervour, it is people having a bigger picture of Jesus—his glory, his wonder and his grace. People fired up for evangelism flows out of people who are fired up for Jesus.

In that light, how do we lead our people in evangelism (or for that matter godliness, generosity, commitment or any other facet of the Christian life)? It is by giving them a gospel-shaped picture of the world and themselves and their place in it. That is what leads to radical change in people. More than anything, people need to be transformed by the gospel vision. They need to be amazed and captivated by a vision of Christ and the gospel. That is my task as a pastor and teacher of God's people—to so present the Christ of the Scriptures to people that, by His Spirit, they are gripped to want to live for him. That's what makes a person who loves Jesus want to evangelise.



Evangelism in a post-Christian world

David Jensen



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How do we see Australia won for Christ? After all, the spiritual state of Australia is referred to as ‘post-Christian’—a term meaning that the glory days of Christianity are well in the past.

A nationwide survey was conducted to gauge Australians’ attitudes towards Christianity several years ago. It discovered:

- » Only 7-8% of people attend Bible-believing churches at some rate of regularity.
- » Millions of Australians don’t even know a Christian.
- » 38% of people are either hostile or entirely apathetic to Christianity.

In the face of such discouragement, *what can we do?*

Jesus

Any conversation about reaching people for Jesus must begin with Jesus, the master evangelist. Matthew 9:35-38 offers us a snapshot of the ministry Jesus had been engaging in across Galilee. So how did he approach the world around him?

The perspective of Jesus

The first thing I want you to notice is the perspective with which Jesus viewed the world around him.

Matthew 9:36 tells us that as Jesus travelled, he engaged with crowds of people who came to him with mixed motives. There would’ve been people who were desperate for physical healing, others seeking respite from political oppression. Therefore it comes as no surprise to read that when Jesus engaged with crowds of people he had *‘compassion on them.’*

Yet what’s critical to note is what drove his compassion:

‘...because they were harassed and helpless like sheep without a Shepherd.’ (v.36)

But what does this description mean? It references the lack of spiritual leadership among God’s people, a theme running throughout the Old Testament.¹

In other words: this is not a description of the physical condition of the crowds, but their *spiritual* condition. The people were distant from God.

So, in the face of this darkness, what did Jesus spend his time doing?

¹ See 1 Kings 22:17; Ezekiel 34:5; Zechariah 10:2.

Matthew 9:35 tells us he:

- » taught in the synagogues, explaining the Bible.
- » proclaimed the gospel.
- » performed many miracles.

He spoke and acted so that people would see that he is the Messiah, come to earth to gather God's people into his kingdom.

Only a short time later Jesus would stride to his own death so that those who would repent and believe would be saved.

Why? Because he knew it was only through who he is, and what he had come to do, that anyone could be saved from the spiritual darkness we all find ourselves in.

But not only that.

*Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is **plentiful**" (v.37a)*

Jesus was saying that despite what might appear dark, many people were ready to believe in him. Jesus surveyed the world around him, hostile and disinterested, not with exasperation, but with *expectancy* for what God's gospel could do.

So, through what perspective do we see Jesus viewing the world?

Jesus views the world with *eternity* in mind. He sees the reality of heaven and hell, of life and death. He also knows that there is no one outside the saving power of the gospel.

The diagnosis is spiritual darkness.

The gospel is spiritual light.

The prescription of Jesus

All of this leads to the second thing I want to point out from the passage: the prescription that Jesus offers. However, not the prescription for the lost.

The prescription for us as his followers.
Observe how v37 concludes.

Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few." (v.37)

We might be tempted to think the biggest evangelistic blockage in society is external. A hostile world. Opposition. Persecution. Disinterest.

But that's not what Jesus says.

The perspective Jesus offers is that the biggest problem in evangelism is not a lack of people ready to become Christians, but a lack of disciples ready to do the work of evangelism.

The plan of Jesus

So, he gathered the disciples and outlined his plan in two practical steps.

First,

"Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field." (v38)

The disciples were called to pray, not for the lost, but to pray that God would send out workers.

Secondly, in 10:1-7 he immediately sent them out to proclaim the gospel!

They became the very workers they had been told to pray for.

When you pray for workers to reach people who don't know Jesus, something becomes very clear. God has sent us to the people that we know.

For us today?

So, what do we need to do to see Australia won for Christ?

I think that's the wrong question. Before we do anything, what we need to do is *see*.

We need to shape our lives around the reality of life that Jesus offers.

Firstly, we need to see and then remind each other that the biggest problem facing the people we know is that they are spiritually lost. What that means is that no matter how they may present themselves to us, we must treat them with the greatest compassion possible—by telling them the gospel.

Secondly, we need to view the harvest field in front of us the same way as Jesus does. Not with exasperation, but with expectation.

Whilst many of the statistics about Christianity in Australia are alarming, the survey mentioned above also presented others which offer a different picture.

Whilst yes, 8% of people don't know a single Christian, 79% of Aussies know at least two people who say they're Christian. This group were asked which words describe the Christians they know. The top 3 answers were caring, loving and kind. The media might dislike us, but our mates? They like us!

But here's what I really want you to notice: the answers to the question "*how open would you be to changing your current religious view?*"

Non-Christians open to change—from 'Extremely open' to 'Slightly open'—numbered 26%.

To put that in real terms: that's 6.8 million people. 1 out of 4 Aussies! Of course, the issue is that we don't know who these people are! 3 out of 4 people are not interested.

The question is: *are you willing to go through the rejection of the 3 to find the 1?*

There's no shortage of rejection that awaits. But also, no shortage of opportunity!

Let us partner together in praying that the Lord of the Harvest would raise up more workers to toil in the harvest field; and in so doing remember our own part to play in the harvest that we live amongst.



Reaching female uni students with the gospel

Marlee Knight / AFES staffworker at the University of Wollongong

INSTANT GRATIFICATION IS ATTRACTIVE. ESPECIALLY TO OUR GEN Z FRIENDS, WITH THEIR SUPPOSED ATTENTION SPAN OF A MERE 8 SECONDS.

Add to that the widely prevalent social anxiety—experienced by 90% of Gen Z according to one workplace study—and many of the ways that we come to Christ or grow in him are looking quite difficult. Anything that takes a long time, or involves other people. Concentrating for a 30min Bible talk. Explaining your understanding of God or his world or Word to others. Hearing those people question or comment on what you think. Sharing your feelings as you consider or continue following Jesus. Understanding your feelings in the first place. Meeting new people. Reading parts of the Bible set in far-away, long-ago cultures. Maintaining relationships through conflict, disagreement or discomfort. Recognised or not, most conversion stories will include every one of these elements. Each one, and the many not listed, presents some difficulty, and therefore invites both the evangelist and the evangelised to save their effort and just give up.

What are the implications of this for our evangelism, particularly to young people, and especially given the urgency of the task? Perhaps there are two broad approaches.

One is to work within those norms, preaching the gospel with your best effort and faithfulness, constrained by the limitations. Daily verses or thought-provoking questions posted on social media, online resources for people to browse in anonymity, Scripture-emblazoned clothing. These all have their place. For many of our Christian students, these are their first steps in publicly declaring their faith. And many unbelieving students have grabbed the non-threatening opportunity to begin investigating Christ with their friend wearing the 'Jesus hoodie'.

The other approach is to challenge the norms in pursuit of more effective and expansive

evangelism. The regular obstacles to sharing Christ will be accompanied by extra difficulty, as you invite people to change not only what they think, but how. Reading the Bible will be hindered by challenges both spiritual and earthly. Sharing vulnerably with Christians might be extra daunting for those unpractised at sharing vulnerably with anyone. The evangelist who offers to meet and discuss Christ is persuading on two fronts: first the meeting itself, before even getting to the conversation topic.

Christ could return at any moment, and we want to be found having invested wisely all he has given us, especially his life-saving gospel. Perhaps, under the name of 'evangelism', you have gone out for an unbelieving workmate's birthday, tried to sustain a conversation or relationship while the other person seems to have lost interest, or grown a genuine interest in 'their thing' (whatever it might be) in the hope that they might in turn ask about 'your thing' (Jesus). Each of these can be valuable in themselves as acts of Christian love and generosity. But considering them as evangelism—will they be seen by our Lord as ineffective attempts to go against the grain of current culture, or as wise long-term investments? Here are two stories of women on campus sharing the gospel with their friends in this slow way, illustrating how the slow way might be the wise way.





Students on campus at Wollongong Uni

Photo credit: Marlee Knight



Image: lightstock.com

Jess

Jess and her husband live next door to a university residential college. Over 200 students from far-flung places eat meals together just behind their back fence. Unmissable opportunity for a Bible study! Opening their home was central: “We play board games (late!) after every Bible study. We host dinners on birthdays and occasionally feel like pseudo-parents to these students who aren’t much younger than us but are heaps further away from home.” Gemma* started coming for games, but now comes to Bible study too. She’s started reading Romans with Kristy, a Christian resident whom God provided as the group’s first student member. She’s sharing about how she was raised and her struggles with relationships, and asking questions like, “Why is Jesus so harsh with the religious leaders?” James, who identifies as male, was invited by Gemma but has since been comfortable to come alone. Just last week James was wrestling with grace, saying, “This is different to how people have explained Christianity in my past”. Join Jess in praying for Gemma and James: “As we grow in trust to share life and questions, I’m praying they’d turn away from what they currently worship and trust, and instead turn to God to receive adoption in Jesus Christ.”

Heather

Heather, Eliza & Millie have forged a robust friendship through many hours of throwing balls at each other, teaching swim techniques and critiquing each other’s running style (aka, studying physical education). Heather says, “Over the long term, I’m hoping they can see the difference that Jesus makes in my life and priorities.” One current decision is whether to pursue a teaching job in a Christian or public school. She’s seen their curiosity grow on topics like this, which is wonderful, but also tempting to laze into. Since they’ve rejected a few invites to hear a talk or read the Bible together, Heather is wary of “making them feel like I’m ignoring their ‘no’ by just asking again.” Heather recognises she needs discernment and faithfulness to patiently but also persistently urge her friends to consider Christ. Please pray for Heather to love her friends genuinely, remembering that the time until Jesus’ return is short. With Heather, pray that Eliza and Millie would “consider following Jesus themselves instead of just observing me.”

“Then Agrippa said to Paul, ‘Do you think that in such a short time you can persuade me to be a Christian?’ Paul replied, ‘Short time or long—I pray to God that not only you but all who are listening to me today may become what I am, except for these chains.’”
Acts 26:28-29

Whether we take the slow or fast way, may the urgency of our desire for the lost to know Christ never abate, nor our patient trust in the God who saves as the news of Christ crucified is proclaimed through his servants to the world.

*Names changed for privacy

Interview with Dave Jensen, ENC's newest evangelist

1. You're coming to ENC next year. Tell us a bit about your background and experiences, and what you will be doing at ENC.

Over the past decade or so I've had the opportunity to work in a variety of church and ministry contexts. I worked in school chaplaincy at the Kings' School, as the mission pastor of MBM Rooty Hill, and as the assistant minister of an inner city/student church in Northern Ireland, before taking up the position as mission pastor at EV Church on the Central Coast of NSW.

From January I'm really excited to be taking up the position of Assistant Director at ENC, building on the excellent foundation laid by John Lavender. My role is focused on the 'E' of ENC—Evangelism—with an aim to assist churches within the Diocese in their endeavours to see lost people find life and hope in Jesus.

2. What do you see are the challenges facing evangelism in Sydney, and how will your work help?

I think one of the major challenges we are facing are two distinct facets of culture.

Firstly, we are in the midst of a cultural revolution which has created a rising cynicism and hostility towards evangelical Christianity from certain corners of our society. This can present all kinds of difficulties and discouragements for our people in living their lives as public Christians, let alone evangelistically.

However, I think the second facet presents an ever bigger challenge: the internal culture

of our churches. For many of us, evangelism is often a terrifying prospect, filled with memories of discouraging or failed attempts in the past. The results of all of this are clear: when surveyed, most evangelicals believe that whilst evangelism is something they should do, for the overwhelming majority of people it's something that they don't do. This is obviously a problem as the majority of people who become Christians as adults do so as the result of the evangelistic efforts of someone that they know.

To counter this, I'm persuaded that churches need to develop a culture of evangelism which starts from the pulpit, and then permeates into every facet of

church life. Developing cultural change is always challenging, and never quick. A culture of evangelism happens through a combination of deepening conviction, building confidence, and increasing competence, then pressing repeat.

My work will focus on encouraging and equipping church leaders and members in thinking through cultural change, in order to continue to grow in our ability to be effective tools in God's great mission of salvation.

3. What are you looking forward to in your new role?

Everything! I love Sydney and love the diocese. The opportunities we have to reach non-Christians





Image: lightstock.com

with the gospel within our family of churches are enormous; and it's my hope to be of assistance in encouraging churches to labour on in what can feel like very hard soil. I'm looking forward to partnering together with churches across Sydney in thinking through and planning what it may look like to be more evangelistic and effective in our endeavours.

4. How might churches in Sydney take advantage of the support you and ENC offer?

My role will develop and grow as the year continues, however the support that I will be hoping to provide will be focused on three areas:

- » Consulting and coaching ministry teams and leaders about evangelistic strategy;
- » Evangelism training for churches; and
- » Evangelistic preaching.

To take advantage of this, the best first step would be to get in touch and we can organise a chance to meet and chat. Anyone can do this by going to encministries.org.au/contact/ and filling in a contact form.

5. Many pastors are discouraged by the evangelism not taking place in their churches. What encouragement can you offer them?

The first thing I'd say is that discouragement is par for the course! In my experience working as a pastor in several contexts and cultures, both in Australia and overseas, it's always hard going. There's no silver bullet or cut and paste strategy that always works, all the time.

Yet despite that, let me encourage you by saying that God is still saving people in Sydney Anglican churches. Actually, he's doing so all the time! I've also had the opportunity to see churches turn around years of evangelistic fruitlessness very effectively. Whilst there is no 'one size fits all' model, there are several principles at play which are common throughout most of the reformed evangelical churches witnessing evangelistic fruit which are easily replicable and sustainable. It's not complex, but requires prayer, patience, humility, and being willing to sacrifice quick results for long term gain.

6. ENC is right next to Moore College. Any plans on how you might wish to engage the next generation of gospel workers while they're at Moore?

Healthy Evangelistic culture is usually not a 'bottom up' but a 'top down' experience for churches. In other words, it's led from the front by leaders who are captured by evangelistic imperatives in what they do. I'm really looking forward to being close by the men and women who, under God, will shape the direction of the diocese and beyond for decades to come.

I'll be looking for any and every opportunity to 'beat the evangelism drum' that I can—whether that be through catching up with students for a chat, or any other way I'm allowed! It will be great to try and help shape people evangelistically in this time of learning so that they and the people they lead will be able to be effectively used by God, no matter where they end up.



Moore College helps further God's mission

Soo Sing Goh / Chief Operating Officer



IN THE EARLY 1990'S, I BECAME A CHRISTIAN WHILE STUDYING AT UNIVERSITY HERE IN SYDNEY. WHILE MY CHRISTIAN FRIENDS WERE VERY ENCOURAGING, MY NON-CHRISTIAN FRIENDS AND FAMILY MERELY SHRUGGED THEIR SHOULDERS WITH INDIFFERENCE.

Any negative peer pressure was limited to a postmodern 'it's great for you, but don't push your views onto me'. Our broader Australian culture was either indifferent or at best neutral toward Christianity in those days.

In the following decades, our secular culture moved from being indifferent to Christianity to now seeing many of its teachings as harmful and bigoted, especially in the areas of sexuality and gender.

This cultural change has led to increased pressure on Christians living out their faith. We feel the pressure to keep silent about our faith (or at least the aspects of our faith that touch on sexuality and gender). If we are too vocal about what we believe, we might experience all sorts of pushback: from raised eyebrows, scorn from colleagues and friends, or even a memo from the HR

department about how such beliefs are not welcome in our 'inclusive' work environment.

Such pressure may cause us to question the truth and goodness of God's word. Is the Bible trustworthy and true in its views on sexuality and gender? Are its views harmful to vulnerable sexual minorities? The narrative of harm is a powerful one permeating our culture, and Christians are not immune from its impact.

What Christians need in these times is what they have always needed: faithful men and women who can teach the truth of God's word clearly and confidently (c.f. 2 Tim 2:2). They need men and women who do not shrink from declaring the whole counsel of God (Acts 20:27).

Without such shepherds, the people of God are at risk of shipwrecking their faith on the rocks of shifting secular ideologies and teachings: ideologies that in today's world, see the Bible as bigoted and evil. Such ideologies can weaken people's trust in the goodness and truth of God and His Word. Sadly, we see this in the younger generation, as some walk away from the faith after swallowing our culture's narrative about sexuality and identity.

Herein lies the challenge: in a world that is growing ever more suspicious and hostile to Biblical faith, we

need more gospel workers, not less. And we need them to have rock-solid confidence in the truth of the Bible.

This is why Moore College is vital to the continued mission of God's people here in Sydney, Australia and the wider world. Our vision is to see God glorified by men and women living for and proclaiming Jesus Christ, growing healthy churches, and reaching the lost. We do this by providing excellent evangelical theological education, equipping men and women to trust in and teach God's word, in season and especially out of season.

Our faculty are sharp thinkers, who are able to engage with the pressures and challenges of our modern world; and pastoral, helping to shape and form our graduates into gospel workers who can share the Bible's truth clearly and compellingly with people in our churches and the wider community.

Our graduates go out to Sydney, Australia, and all over the world, taking the truth of the Bible with them wherever they go. In the Anglican Church of Australia, many clergy and Bishops are Moore College graduates, as was seen in the 2022 General Synod of the Anglican Church of Australia.

Our graduates are also heavily involved in movements like the Australian Fellowship of Evangelical Students (AFES), the Fellowship of Independent Evangelical Churches (FIEC) and City Bible Forum (CBF), regional churches and organisations like the Church Missionary Society (CMS), taking the gospel to many corners of our society and the world, sowing the seeds in gospel-poor areas, building up churches, pastors and Christians, to see God glorified by men and women living for and proclaiming Jesus.

And so, as the end of this year approaches, please consider giving generously to Moore College, so that we might train many more Bible-believing gospel workers for the harvest. All donations are tax deductible. Without faithful teachers of the Bible, God's people are at risk from all sorts of dangers, while the lost are less likely to hear the gospel.

If you have any questions about our plans here at Moore College, don't hesitate to contact me at soosing.goh@moore.edu.au.

Yours in Christ,

Soo Sing Goh
Chief Operating Officer



My Moore gift

Please support Moore College so that together we can continue this vital gospel work, for God's glory.

Your gift will be a personal investment in future generations of gospel workers.

N.B. All donations over \$2 to Moore College are fully tax deductible.

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Moore Matters

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About Moore College

Moore College exists to train men and women to take the good news of Jesus Christ to the world. Since 1856, more than 5,000 students have graduated from the College and have been sent out by God. Moore College has equipped men and women to serve in over 50 countries across the World. Today over 3,500 students are enrolled in our courses globally.

Cover Image: College student Tash sharing the gospel at College Mission earlier this year



FOLLOWING CHRIST AS MEN AND WOMEN

MAIN SPEAKERS: ANDREW LESLIE & CLARE DEEVES

8:30AM – 5:00PM
5 FEB 2024



paa.moore.edu.au/conference

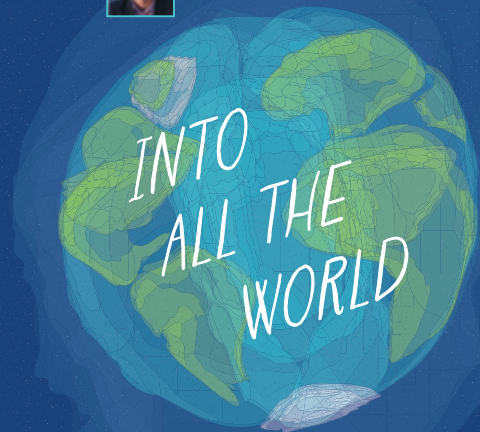
MOORE COLLEGE GRADUATION

26 MARCH 2024

7:30-9:30pm | City Recital Hall



Speaker: Ed Loane



Join us and pray for our graduates as they
go into the world to serve Jesus.

moore.edu.au/graduation

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT OF MOORE COLLEGE THIS YEAR



Hear from some of our students
about their time at College this year.

