

Southern CROSS

September 2010

Sydney Anglicans Connecting

Why are our sexual attitudes changing?

- › Gen Y chooses its own religion
- › Your say: informal churches have lost the Bible
- › Davies disputes Tribunal's advice on deacons

WITH THIS ISSUE:
OUR MINI-MAG
FOR WOMEN



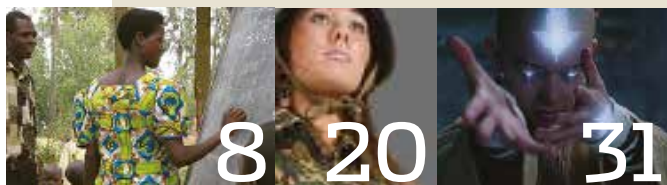


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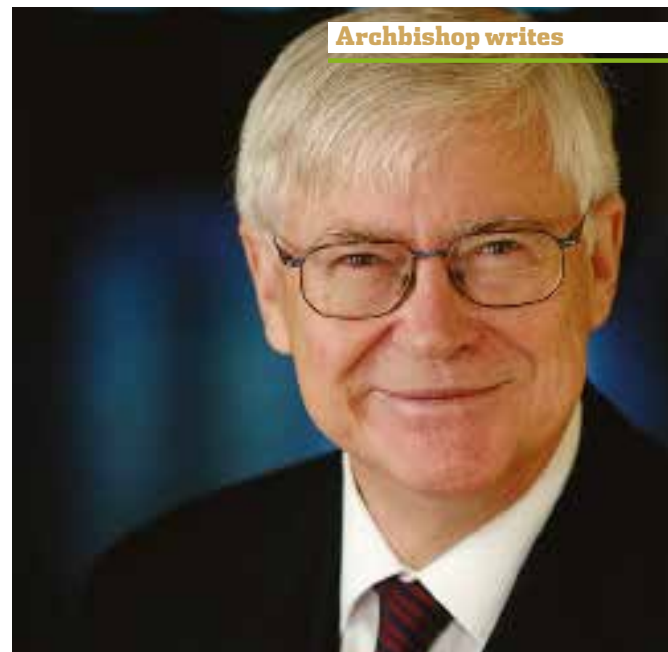
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You must be born again!

DR PETER JENSEN

I THINK that the popular use of the phrase 'born again' goes back to the days of President Carter in the late 1970s, when to the surprise of many the President was described as a 'born-again' Christian. Since then, especially in the US, it seems to refer to those Christians who have made an outward profession of faith, perhaps by going forward at an evangelistic meeting. It is often simply another way of saying 'evangelical'.

But of course the requirement to be born again actually stems from Jesus himself as he spoke to Nicodemus (John 3). Far from it being the preserve of a particular group of contemporary Christians it is an indispensable requirement for all Christians. You cannot be a true Christian without being 'born again'

Some of the worst decisions in church life are made by well-meaning but unregenerate people...

— or 'regenerate' to use an older technical word. It is the point at which the blessings of salvation are applied to us.

The picture of rebirth turns up in a number of places in the New Testament (eg 1 Peter 1:3). But the idea is far more prevalent than just the one picture. The fact of salvation is so huge that it requires a number of different descriptions. Thus it is to become a new creature (2 Corinthians 5:17), to pass from death to life (John 5:24), to be transferred from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of God's Son (Colossians 1:13), to die and be resurrected (Colossians 3:1-5).

One of the key features of these descriptions is that they are clearly an activity of God. Not only is salvation accomplished by God through Christ's death on the cross, it is applied to us by his Spirit. Rebirth is both indispensable and totally from God. This must be so, because our position in Adam is turned away from God. We are so alienated from him that we cannot — we will not — make our way back by our choice. It has to be his work which opens our hearts to him and brings salvation. That is why even infants may be born again, although God's usual means is through his word blessed by his Spirit.

Sometimes regeneration and conversion are confused. The word 'conversion' is really an English expression for what the Bible calls repentance, or indeed the whole experience of repentance and faith since the two cannot really be separated. When we are regenerate, our new state shows up in our lives as repentance and faith. Regeneration leads

to conversion. And here we do have a part to play, in that we are called on to repent and to have faith. Mind you, even here the Bible protects the grace of God by saying that repentance and faith are at the same time gifts from God and also human activities.

I remember C.S. Lewis making the distinction in one of his books between nice men and new men. Many people think that Christianity is all about making us nice, making us moral, making us respectable. But niceness will not save us. We are too far gone for that. We do not need a nice journey but a revolution in our lives, one that makes us new creatures. That is why Jesus used this powerful image of being born again and why we should never be frightened of it, or frightened to describe ourselves

as born again if it is true that we are. Some of the worst decisions in church life are made by well-meaning but unregenerate people, since they persist in thinking that Christianity is a form of outward religious display and moral accomplishment.

As with so much else in the Christian message, the doctrine of rebirth is a great reminder to us of the grace of God. As Paul says: 'But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Saviour appeared he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Saviour, so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life' (Titus 3:4-5). There is no sense in which we can be proud of rebirth — it is a testimony to our helplessness and to God's mercy. We should glorify such a great God in our praise of him. **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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LEGAL OPINION ON LORD'S SUPPER

Tribunal: deacons don't break bread

AN ANGLICAN judicial panel has disagreed with Sydney's Synod resolution on the administration of the Lord's Supper by deacons.

In 2008, Sydney Synod overwhelmingly agreed there was nothing to bar deacons from administering Holy Communion.

The national church's Appellate Tribunal — consisting of three bishops and four senior lawyers — has given an advisory opinion both on lay administration, which is not sanctioned in the Diocese of Sydney, and on administration by deacons, which is practised.

Since the 2008 Synod resolution, some Sydney parishes have allowed deacons to administer the Lord's Supper.

The tribunal was not asked to consider the theological merits. Instead, it considered only legal argument.

Russell Powell, Sydney Diocese's media advisor, said he expects "the advisory opinion of the Tribunal" to "receive attention at the Diocesan Synod to be held in October".



Bishop Davies responds

Bishop Glenn Davies made a personal submission to the Appellate Tribunal. SC asked him to respond to the Tribunal's opinion. Here are some highlights:

WOMEN BISHOPS PRECEDENT

The Tribunal's opinion claims it "is not just a matter of legalism but a matter of fairness and protection of the ordinary members of the church". Yet the narrow interpretation of the new definition of canonical fitness of bishops provided no protection and was manifestly unfair to a large number of church members who hold conscientious objections to women bishops.

ANALOGY TO BAPTISM

What logic did the Appellate Tribunal use to deny deacons their role of assisting the presbyter in administering the Lord's Supper? ... the Tribunal argued that 'assist in' and 'assist by' are materially different... But given that the same term is used for baptism, then the deacon could not conduct the sacrament of infant baptism unless the presbyter were at least present or in some way involved in the baptism. Yet this contradicts the Ordinal of BCP, which specifically authorises deacons to baptise infants in the absence of the priest!

WAY FORWARD?

It is difficult to predict how Sydney's Synod will react to this latest opinion of the Appellate Tribunal. In the words of Archbishop Keith Rayner in 1998, "Some of us will be pleased with the majority opinion of the Appellate Tribunal, others will agree with the minority. My hope is that we shall not retreat into separate bunkholes on the issue, but that we shall see our conflicting views as an incentive to pursue vigorously — and together — underlying questions".

SUBMISSION ON ETHICS LESSONS

Anglicans suggest revamped SRE trial

THE MAJOR churches of NSW have made submissions to the State Government's review of ethics classes, objecting to the extension of the trial to SRE students.

Presentations came from the Anglican Diocese of Sydney, the interdenominational SRE committee ICCOREIS, the Catholic Church and Presbyterian Youth.

The Anglican submission concludes that problems with the trial mean it cannot be used as a sound basis for the introduction of the

classes in all schools.

Despite public statements from Education Minister Verity Firth that the ethics classes were simply an effort to occupy students who did not attend SRE, the trial went ahead including students who already attended Scripture.

The Anglican submission argued public confusion was caused by labelling the lessons as 'ethics', when the classes really focused on the process of philosophical

inquiry. There was no actual ethical or moral instruction given during the lessons.

However, it argues that if the Government is determined to push through a parallel program of non-religious lessons at primary level, a very carefully prepared further trial of "humanist philosophy" should be undertaken, involving a truly representative sample of schools across the state, before any Government decision is made.

TACKLE BULLYING

Grievance policy makes Synod comeback

AFTER altering a draft grievance policy discussed at Sydney Synod last year, Standing Committee has approved its return to the Synod floor in October.

The policy was created in response to reports about bullying in parishes in 2008.

One of the original sponsors, Canon Sandy Grant, says a change to the 2009 draft is that there will now only be three steps in the conciliation process.

The first is between the parties themselves, the second is at a local or parish level and the third at a regional level.

Likely issues SYNOD 2010

- Deacons administering the Lord's Supper
- Diocese's new financial strategy
- Grievance policy

A suggested fourth level, which involved the Archbishop, has been removed from the policy on the advice of the Safe Ministry Board.

Another change is that rectors are no longer the default conciliator because "there was a desire to have more flexibility," Canon Grant

says. "The rector is still responsible for finding the conciliator at the local level, although if [the complaint] involves the rector or his family it automatically moves to the regional level."

One hotly debated issue at Synod last year was whether anonymous complaints should be received. Standing Committee's decision was that anonymous complaints could not be handled fairly.

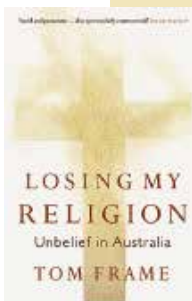
Yet Canon Grant says, "a wise rector may not completely dismiss the significance of such complaints in other forums".

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UNBELIEF WINS



A wide ranging survey of Australian unbelief which critically engages so-called "New Atheism" has won this year's Australian Christian Book of the Year award.

Losing My Religion: Unbelief in Australia, written by Anglican bishop and academic Tom Frame, was described by the judging panel as "a sophisticated, nuanced and fair-minded treatment of the issues".

Bishop Frame says he wrote the book in response to "the promotion of atheism in the media".

Second prize went to Matthias Media's ministry blockbuster *The Trellis and the Vine*.

Amanda Perry

CHURCH PLANTING

Parishes urged to become mission bases

THE retasking of Evangelism Ministries to grow new churches kicked off on July 30 with training for rectors at the Wesley Centre, Sydney.

About 60 Sydney ministers attended, with the focus on turning ordinary suburban churches into 'bases for mission'.

The main sessions were led by the Rev Bruce Hall from St Paul's, Carlingford, who has been involved in planting 15 churches.

He covered a host of practical issues for 'mother churches' looking to plant – everything from raising funds to how to end a church plant that has proved unviable.

A highlight was an expert panel of

five church planting practitioners who explored the points raised by Mr Hall.

One interesting discussion focused on the appropriate level of training for lay missionaries. On one hand there is a need to recruit lay people from outside the usual middle class professions who will drive mission in disadvantaged areas.

Yet, as the Rev Rick Smith put it: "We must ensure theological standards are maintained".

The Rev Michael Williamson from Shellharbour City spoke about his recruitment of a young man who had the background and gifts to minister to a lower socioeconomic



Expert panel: (l-r) Michael Williamson, Peter Hughes, Martin Morgan, Bruce Hall and Rick Smith.

demographic unreached by Anglican churches. He is also highly unlikely to make it through a Moore College degree.

"For men like this to minister at the theological standard we rightly expect is an impossibility," Mr Williamson explained to SC. "Therefore I work much more closely with him than with other fully-trained staff. He undertakes theological training suited to his

level and along the way I am involved in his mission, acting as his theological brains trust."

Church planting was also on the agenda as the Diocese's Ministry Training and Development unit held its 'Trailblazing – Ministry with Purpose' conference at St Andrew's Cathedral on August 23 and 24.

Key speaker, the Rev Richard Coekin, senior minister of the

Co-Mission Initiative, London, used his vast church planting experience to encourage new partnerships.

"Can I urge you to work together – we're all sinful and competitive but we need to be in partnership with each other," he said. "If you don't have the resources for a certain ministry, invite another evangelical church into your area to undertake that ministry."

Cameron and his brother Mark had a very successful business doing long distance freight runs down the eastern states of Australia.

Three years ago, about three hours into a trip, Cameron pulled over to the side of the road and stopped his truck. He left his truck by the side of the road and disappeared into the night.

It was the start of a whole new journey for Cameron. He never drove his truck again.

At only 37, Cameron has younger onset dementia

Cameron now lives with us at Elmston Cottage, at our Horsley facility. It's the first home in the country specifically for younger people with dementia like Cam. Elmston Cottage is home to around fifteen people, all with younger onset dementia.

The Ben and his Friends Project – help us make a difference.

We've launched the Ben and his Friends Project to help Ben, Cameron, and the others living with younger onset dementia at Elmston, and we have two goals in mind...

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(Names and details have been changed to protect the privacy of the people involved)

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House sale gifts Kerrie more than she bargained for

Kerrie Lay had given up on God, until a casual conversation with a building inspector took a surprising turn.
JUDY ADAMSON reports.

AS Kerrie Lay arranged to sell her house in June, the last thing she expected was to find Jesus along the way.

"I'd lost my faith," she says. "I'd been involved in the Catholic Church and ministries for many years and become disillusioned. Becoming a human rights activist didn't help, because then I started to blame God and Jesus for everything. I'd been bringing up my daughters alone and I thought, 'I'll just plod along on my own'."

Made redundant from her job last year, Kerrie was finding the mortgage too much. Her three girls had grown up and moved out, so she decided to sell the family home in Toongabbie. A potential buyer wanted a building inspection — and this brought Jim Abbottsmith to her door.

Kerrie admits she did not like Jim much at first, as the noise he made while checking the house upset her rescue dog. But unknown to Kerrie,

Jim had other things on his mind: he had prayed before leaving his car that he might have the chance to "speak the words of eternal life" to her.

Near the end of the inspection, they began to talk about her passion for social justice. Says Jim: "I said, 'I am also into justice issues, I'm into rescuing people... not for the next 40 years or 50 years but for eternity'."

Jim asked Kerrie about the crucifix she kept on her wall and they spoke of religion and past hurts. Then Kerrie told the story of a funeral she had recently attended where the widow, amid her grief, had wondered if she or the dead man's first wife would be his spouse in heaven.

"I had said to her, there are no husbands or wives in heaven," Kerrie recalls. "I thought I had made it up to make her feel better but then Jim ran out to his truck and came back with a Bible. He opened it and there it was in the Bible, what I

had said to her. I went all strange — hot and cold. I couldn't believe it.

"We just kept reading passages from one to another as we talked,

"desperately wanted to go back to church", but felt too uncertain to go alone. Ann and husband Ray offered to pick her up and Kerrie

"It's just the willingness of one Christian to put himself out there in terms of faith"

and then we prayed and I just fell apart. It was like something hit me, and I knew that this was what I had been looking for."

Hearing that Jim was an Anglican, Kerrie decided to look up her local Anglican church in Toongabbie. She rang minister Raj Gupta who came to visit with one of his parishioners, Ann Stephens. Kerrie now

remembers sitting with them in the service, unable to stop weeping.

"I was overwhelmed," she says. "Every time a hymn came on I'd start crying."

She kept reading her Bible and praying for God to give her courage to deal with the upheavals in her life. Her prayer was quickly answered.

"I still get teary," she admits, "but it's because I'm so happy."

Raj Gupta invited Kerrie to tell her story to the congregation: "I thought, 'I can't do that!' but then I realised I could, because Jesus would give me the words," she says. "I explained how I now realised at this point of my life that it's all about my relationship with Jesus. I'd never had that before — if I had I would never have worried about what people were thinking of me."

Now happily settled in a Bible study with Ann, Kerrie wanted to thank the man who had come to her home with a Bible in his car, willing to speak about Jesus.

She contacted West Ryde Anglican Church to ask for "Jim the builder" then rang Jim Abbottsmith to tell him what had happened.

"It's just the willingness of one Christian to put himself out there in terms of faith," Kerrie says. "It's an encouragement to others to do the same, as there are people out there who need to know the gospel."

It's a sentiment echoed by Jim. "Never let a chance go by," he says. "Wherever you can, stick a word in. Every contact you have, every person you meet... Speak it out! Not because you're compelled to — just think of what peril these people are in."



Team effort: (from left) Ray, Ann, Kerrie and Jim.

PHOTO: Stephen Mason



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MARK'S GOSPEL FOR EVERY HOUSEHOLD

“Connect09” comes to Kangaroo Is

A short-term locum job on Kangaroo Island in South Australia has turned into a gospel opportunity for a former vice-principal of Moore College, Michael Hill.

Shortly after his arrival at the Anglican church in Kingscote in early April, the island's interdenominational church committee discussed its hope to reach out to every home on the island by giving away a gospel.

Only 4400 people live on Kangaroo Island despite its 150-kilometre length, so any evangelistic efforts need to be targeted well. Mr Hill was asked to use his Sydney contacts at Evangelism Ministries to find an appropriate publication.

The committee has since decided to buy



more than 2000 copies of the magazine gospel of Mark to give out to KI locals in the lead-up to Christmas this year. Mr Hill says the plan is to knock on the door of each home on the island, offer residents a gospel and strike up a conversation.

“[The interchurch committee] wanted something that was attractive yet was a gospel, and the Mark's gospel suits admirably,” he says. “They want to build a bridge and

create an opportunity for evangelism — but not high-pressure evangelism — and invite people to a Christmas service.”

While the different churches on the island are working together well to serve the spiritual needs of KI people, the Anglican parish of Kangaroo Island — which is under the auspices of the Bush Church Aid Society of Australia — has not had a full-time minister since April 2009.

A range of clergy from around the country, such as Mr Hill, have filled in for two or three months apiece but BCA is still seeking someone willing to be appointed on a permanent basis to the small three-church parish.

Mr Hill says he enjoyed

his time on the island — and the interaction with locals — very much but observed it was “mostly retired people who go to church” and there was little contact with young families. His hope is “a young man with school-aged children” will take up the position to provide a more immediate link to locals.

BCA vice-president Canon John Butler, who has also spent two months as locum on KI this year, agrees “the man who goes will have a big task ahead of him”, but adds that the people of Kangaroo Island “are waiting with open hearts for someone to come. They are anxious to support the new appointment and there is a very valid ministry that can happen in that community”.

LEICHHARDT CANTATA

Urban church packed for classical service



INVITING non-Christian friends to church can be hard, but by embracing a very traditional format, All Souls', Leichhardt welcomed almost 200 extra people.

On August 1, a professional orchestra performed Bach's cantata 192, with musicians coming from as far as Orange to participate.

“We're in an area where people don't

invite their friends to evangelistic events,” said All Souls' rector, Darren Hindle. “I wanted to do something that would move my congregation to invite their friends to hear the gospel.”

The community response has him planning a repeat.

“We got lots of families coming along... many of them wouldn't even come to a Christmas service,” he said.

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WORLDWIDE AID AGENCY FOR SYDNEY ANGLICANS

Appeal funds relaunch as Anglican Aid

ARCHBISHOP Peter Jensen has announced the amalgamation of the Diocese's three relief funds under one new brand: Anglican Aid.

In a video interview with Sydneyanglicans.net to announce the rebranding, Dr Jensen emphasised the important work

undertaken by all three funds over the years (see comments below) and his hope that this "very significant work of the Diocese of Sydney" will "grow and prosper".

Dr Jensen says Anglican Aid will have a strong philosophy of gospel partnership.

"We try to link up aid

— like aid in education or in helping people grow crops or whatever — with the growth of the gospel as well," he says.

The Rev David Mansfield, who will head Anglican Aid, says the relief work of the Diocese has been hamstrung by "confused" branding.

"Many people don't

know we exist and those who do, know us by many different names. The message has been confused."

Until now appeals within the Sydney Diocese have been marketed through five different brands: the Overseas Ministry Fund (OMF), Overseas Relief

and Aid Fund (ORAF), as well as the Community Care Fund (CCF) which mostly raises funds via the Archbishop of Sydney's Winter Appeal and Christmas Appeal.

Mr Mansfield says the rebranding does not herald any change of direction but is aimed at boosting ownership of

the funds among Sydney Anglicans.

"We hope the rebranding sends a clear message that the Diocese has its own aid agency," he says. "This is not just the Archbishop's aid agency: it also belongs to all Sydney Anglicans. We have our own worldwide aid agency."

Overseas gospel partners



A KEY PROJECT:

The Alexandria School of Theology in Egypt is training Christian leaders for the church in the Middle East, North Africa and beyond. It has 135 Egyptian and Sudanese students. Anglican Aid is funding student scholarships.

ARCHBISHOP JENSEN

SAYS: "It is pretty important work. I've been in Cairo and seen Sudanese church leaders who are refugees being

educated. I've seen it also, so to speak, at the other end of Africa in South Africa. In Kenya also, there's important training for urban mission. I've seen with my own eyes... people who would otherwise remain illiterate, they have nothing and need everything. Our support of theological education, stretches from Cairo to Capetown and it is directed carefully in ways that will do maximum good."

Development aid/disaster relief



A KEY PROJECT: The Anglican Church in Kenya works with people living with HIV/AIDS in the Majengo slums. One aim is to encourage income-generating activities. The project also targets orphans and vulnerable children, assisting them with access to better health, food and education.

ARCHBISHOP JENSEN

SAYS: "There was an earthquake in Chile recently and [to have]

the capacity to ring my friend Bishop Tito in Chile and to say to him that we were praying for him, to find out directly from him what the needs were and then to launch an appeal here in Sydney was tremendously important.

"Whether domestic bushfires... or emergencies such as [Chile's] earthquake, these are moments when Christians can really do the good works God has called on us to walk in."

Local community projects



A KEY PROJECT:

The aim of the parish of Glenquarie's Break the Cycle project aims to help people escape chronic unemployment and addictions.

The project has recently entered into an exciting partnership with the local TAFE to provide a community garden course on the church property at Macquarie Fields. A Men's Shed ministry and a cafe are also being used effectively to connect

with and help people in the community.

ARCHBISHOP JENSEN

SAYS: "We've always taken a great interest in the welfare of our citizens around about us here in Sydney. You can give generously through Anglican Aid for the support and relief of suffering here in Sydney... This is just a way of loving your neighbour, which we are all obliged to do, because the Lord told us."

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Tasker visit confirms value of Anglican Aid to Africa

AFTER spending five months travelling through countries in Africa, the Indian Ocean region and parts of Europe on behalf of the Sydney Diocese, Bishop Peter Tasker is full of enthusiasm for the overseas work being funded by Sydney Anglicans through the newly named Anglican Aid.

One such enterprise he visited, in the Tanzanian Diocese of Mara, is a development and discipleship project.

A Tanzanian project manager and a young clergyman travel out to village churches and bring key members of the leadership together for three weeks of Bible teaching, as well as training them to run a suitable project that will help the community.

Projects become self-supporting after one

Launch dates

- Parishes are being asked to pray for Anglican Aid on Sunday, October 24.
- The official launch of Anglican Aid will be at a dinner at St Anne's, Ryde on November 10.

to two years, and among those Bishop Tasker saw was an enterprise that involved rearing sheep and earning income from those that were sold.

"Some of that money was used to help support their pastor [a subsistence farmer], some was used to help educate children in the village whose parents had died of AIDS and some was used to help young widowed women whose husbands had died of AIDS," he says.

"There was also money



to put towards building a church for their village. I was impressed... a very small amount of money was doing all this."

Bishop Tasker has also been in discussions with the recently established St John's University in Tanzania, which is seeking help from Sydney's Moore College to set up a bachelor degree in theology.

"In Tanzania right now there is a massive push for education," he says, "and so the church itself is now crying out for pastors who have at least a degree in theology — rather than just a certificate or diploma — to be able to minister in the growing towns where people have a university education."

Q&A with Archbishop Jensen

Q: With Anglican Aid, how do we know where our money is going to on the ground?

PETER JENSEN: We often get advice, either from people here in organisations like CMS or from people who we know on the ground and of course that's far better than simply hoping that money we've raised may do some good.

Q: So the money goes to places where firm links have been forged with the Diocese of Sydney?

PETER JENSEN: Yes, this is called partnership. In the New Testament, one of the interesting uses of the word 'fellowship' is to do with money. We have our money in common so to speak. We share in the money that we have.

In so doing, you partner with other people, particularly other people you know who are committed to the same gospel, the same work, who can see the needs and who can help you, sitting here in Sydney, to do good in Africa, or Asia, or elsewhere as well.

So partnership is one of the keys to the work we do.

Two Tanzanias

Tanzania is listed by the UN as one of the world's poorest countries.

"In the villages very few people have clean drinking water and medical facilities are dramatically stretched,"

Bishop Tasker says.

"However, the whole country has 3G mobile coverage, so I'm on a bus in the middle of nowhere picking up emails on my BlackBerry from Peter Jensen. That's the crazy world in which we and these people live."

Grace changes everything.
It's even changing our name.



Sydney Anglicans have always had an obsession with grace. It's one of the things that makes us a bit different — even the way we do aid. We're moved by the extravagance of God in Jesus. That's why, in September, the Archbishop of Sydney's Appeals Unit becomes The Archbishop of Sydney's **Anglican Aid**. And soon, we'll reveal our new-look logo and website. The new name shows there's an aid organisation that belongs to you. That believes what you believe. That invites you to participate in aid, because God has aided us so powerfully in Jesus.

It's still using our three proven programs: the Community Care Fund, Overseas Relief and Aid Fund, and the Overseas Ministry Fund. But we'll be doing it because, like Paul proclaims, we want to "excel in this act of grace". Discover more at www.anglicanaid.org.au

† 2 Corinthians 8:7 ESV



THE ARCHBISHOP OF SYDNEY'S
APPEALS UNIT

Letters

Encouraging workers

The cover article in last month's *SC* highlights the need to encourage our workers. As a dedicated young workers' minister, I am passionate that people view their work positively.

In Colossians 3:22-24 work is an opportunity to obey, love and serve the Lord Jesus. The theology of Jesus' lordship can helpfully apply to the issues young workers face.

Some issues the City Bible Forum has addressed include: 'How to Cope with Redundancy', 'Working for the Boss' and 'Work-Life Balance'. This year we've run half a dozen dinners giving young workers opportunities to encourage each other in their work and also in their mission in the workplace.

The disconnect observed between church networks and people's work contacts shows the need for workplace-based Christian mission. The fact is that most of the people we work with don't live where we live. There are geographical hurdles to inviting them to be part of our local church-based ministries. Hence the need for work-based ministries.

It is time we also devoted resources to reaching the workers in our workplaces. Perhaps churches could even think about releasing some of their key people to do workplace-based ministries. I commend *SC* for raising this overlooked issue.

Tho Luu
City Bible Forum,
Sydney, NSW

Ramadan idea unhelpful

The "Mission idea of the month: greet a Muslim this Ramadan" (*SC*, Aug), is seriously flawed. By all means extend the hand of friendship to our neighbours, but John Thew's suggestion, "Wish [them] God's blessing during Ramadan" affirms rather than questions this Islamic practice. Why would God, who has shown his grace and truth in Jesus Christ, choose to bless a religious duty that encourages a trust in Allah, thereby denying the Bible's insistence that salvation is by faith alone in his Son? This unhelpful suggestion will only confirm a Muslim's ignorance as to the true nature of God's character and encourage Christians to wrongly think that Islam is an equally valid path to God.

The Rev John Barrett
Castle Hill, NSW



Informality has thrown the Bible out with the bathwater

We owe a debt to Noel Pilcher (*SC*, Aug) for drawing our attention to the demise of Bible content in our Sunday services. For a diocese that has built its reputation on the authority of the Bible as the word of God, it appears that we may have "thrown the baby out with the bathwater".

Barry George
Cherrybrook, NSW

I just wanted to thank Archbishop Jensen for his article on the structure of our church services (*SC*, Aug)

I agree with the need for extra careful planning of the overall flow of these less formal services and especially a focus on personal examination as preparation for corporate confession.

As a regular leader of a service that comes under the "less formal" category, this article was a helpful reminder of the need for more than a brief time of reference to our sin and a quick mention of forgiveness. I have taken notes from the article to apply the next time I lead!

Thank you also for keeping *SC* going in its printed form — I read it monthly and usually find useful content and encouragement for my walk with Jesus.

Dr Linda Beeney
Asquith, NSW

In our church bulletin I posed a *SC* August edition quiz and asked readers to identify "the great archbishop on page 2". Those who looked beyond the pictures identified the great one as Thomas Cranmer. His Holy Communion service shows how much he understood the gospel, perhaps more than our present Archbishop gives him credit.

At the start the Ten Commandments are read. But the expected response is not repentance, as some might think, but panic. As each commandment is read we say we have failed. After the last commandment we plead with God to "write them on our hearts" because we realise that we break the commandments without even thinking about them. We sin without even feeling guilty.

Cranmer realised this is a dreadful position to be in and the rest of his service outlines the remedy. The Scriptures are read. The response is faith. Now that we have expressed our faith we are ready to repent. Only then are we encouraged by being directly reminded of God's forgiveness. This brings us into full fellowship with God and with our brothers and sisters. The Lord's Supper gives active expression of this truth.

The structure of Cranmer's service is vital. Repentance follows faith, which follows the hearing of God's word. The great archbishop gave us a great expression of the great gospel.

Stephen Miller
Chester Hill, NSW

READER'S ESSAY by Elwyn Jordan

As a child I remember walking into a church and being handed two books: a blue one and a green one. The blue one was a hymnal; the green one was the Book of Common Prayer. Hymns, referred to by number, were sung from the blue book and the service followed a step-by-step format laid out in the green book. Music was provided by a lady playing piano and the minister wore robes.

That was a while ago and very different to the contemporary service I attend at the same church today! But as churches dispense with staid formality and present services more attractive to secular society, there is a danger that essential elements are omitted. In "Approaching God Trivially" (*SC*, August), Dr Peter Jensen focused on corporate confession of sin as something that is often lacking in our modern services. I also believe that in reducing formality we are at risk of reducing reverence.

When Jesus died on the cross and the curtain of the temple was torn in two he opened a way for all people to access God directly. But God should always be

approached with due reverence. Today, God is often presented as a kind of warm and fuzzy father figure.

A concept often bandied around today is to regard Jesus as "our mate". But Jesus is never "our mate"! To regard him as such is to remove rightful reverence. The old hymn might have declared, "What a friend we have in Jesus" but it did so in the context of Jesus being the Son of God, our great high priest who sacrificed himself to take away sin and "appear for us in God's presence" (Heb 9:24).

Change is necessary for the church to survive and grow. The church needs to appear relevant to the society it is reaching out to. But as Dr Jensen points out, "Our less formal services need far more careful planning than do the structured ones".

In our efforts to make services more attractive to modern society we can be guilty of watering down the gospel. It seems the message today concentrates more on God's forgiveness than on God's judgement; more on God's love than God's wrath.

I'm not suggesting that all services return to a liturgical format and "fire and brimstone" preaching but the message of the gospel must be preached in its entirety. This message might not be popular or attractive, from a secular viewpoint but our services should be based on truth, not on attraction.

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

Please email your (600-word maximum) submission to: newspaper@anglicanmedia.com.au

Atheist calls us to do better at evangelism

**BISHOP ROB FORSYTH
meets the world's most
famous ex-Muslim.**

I NEVER imagined I would meet an atheist who would insist that we Christians be much more active in evangelism and providing welfare and care. But I did. The atheist in question was Ayaan Hirsi Ali, the author of *Infidel* and *Nomad*, a Somali woman who was once a Muslim. She has a long and remarkable story and is now a courageous fighter for human freedom and Western secular cultural values. Hirsi Ali is also one of Richard Dawkins' favourites: he has said, "This woman is a major hero of our times".

However, unlike Dawkins — who thinks the only way to get rid of the oppressive threats of religion to human freedom and wellbeing is to get rid of religion — Hirsi Ali is well aware that all religions are not the same. In fact, she was urging me to encourage Christians to evangelise Muslims in Australia and also to provide good quality and active care and help.

Basically, Hirsi Ali believes that Islam is, when taken seriously, a dangerous and damaging religious practice. She ought to know. She is speaking from experience. And she is concerned about the rise of hardline Islam even here in Australia. The issue is not so much about bringing radical Muslims into the country but rather that fairly nominal Muslim immigrants and their children are being targeted by the active extremists who are here and becoming extreme themselves. Unless, that is, they are presented with an attractive alternative that is more congruent with the Australian way of life.

Hirsi Ali is a passionate advocate for the values of Western civilisation. Although an atheist herself, she believes that in helping Muslims come to terms with Western civilisation, atheism won't always cut it.

There are two problems. First, many Muslims are not prepared to give up a belief in God and concern about the afterlife. Second, as she put it "we atheists are not that evangelistic. We don't get up in the morning and go round actively knocking on doors or providing services to people promoting our convictions but that's exactly what the radical Islamists are doing".

This is where the Christian faith comes in. If atheism won't do, Christianity is a lot better than Islam (even if, in her view, it is not actually true) and Christians can, or should, be more energetic in outreach and service. That is why she wants Muslims to experience and even convert to Christianity and was urging me to get on with it.

It was, to be frank, a strange experience to have an atheist urging me to take evangelism of Muslims



"Your God is a nice god": atheist Ayaan Hirsi Ali.

more seriously. It raises a puzzling question. She is a defender of Western values. She believes they are not just Western but ultimately the best human values: tolerance, freedom of religion, economic freedom, equality of the sexes and so on. And she is right. They are the values of the society we live in and are well worth preserving. In many ways they are partially the product of the long influence of the Christian faith in the history of the West. But should Christians make common ground with atheists in that cause?

Of course for us Christians, there are two pauses for thought. First, although I for one do believe we should defend these values, Christians do not simply evangelise to preserve a culture. The preservation of a culture will be a by-product of a greater cause: to bring people into life-changing relationship with the living God and prepare them to inherit eternal life.

Second, there are some things about the Christian faith which Hirsi Ali, I am sure, would not be happy to accept. For example, she is impressed with the very liberal versions that make no fuss about gays but orthodox Christians call upon homosexual people to live lives of sexual chastity. The more liberal the Christian, of course, the less likely they are to do any evangelising, or challenge Islam.

I left my lunch with her intrigued and challenged. "Your God is a nice god," she said.

"I hope you meet him one day," I replied.

An atheist urging us to evangelism: who would have thought it!

Editorial

Happy little vegemites?

AUSTRALIANS in 2010 are amongst the happiest people ever to walk this Earth. This is one of the headline findings of the latest AMP-NATSEM report — *The pursuit of happiness: life satisfaction in Australia*.

As co-author of the report, Rebecca Cassells, rightly observes: "happiness is the goal that most Australians strive for". This should come as no surprise. The 'pursuit of happiness' is the guiding principle of our entire culture. It justifies the drive for wealth creation and the focus on economic growth.

Our cover feature this month looks at sex and hedonism. But hedonism isn't merely, or even mostly, about sexual promiscuity. The contemporary concepts of 'wellbeing' and 'life satisfaction' flow from the 'social hedonism' theory of John Stuart Mills. It is this form of social hedonism that is used to evaluate public policy in Australia. These terms frame social research such as the AMP-NATSEM report and have become our society's accepted benchmark for assessing right behaviour.

Summary of research findings

This new report provides some ammunition against consumerism in favour of that old-fashioned puritan idea of thrift.

1. Big debts make you unhappy

The larger your credit card debt the more likely you are to be dissatisfied with your life. Happier people have a larger pool of savings and other investments (including superannuation — which was the take home message from the research sponsors AMP).

2. Material possessions don't buy happiness

Spending more on consumer goods, such as a new TV, is not linked with a greater sense of wellbeing. (The opposite is true of spending which helps strengthen relationships, such as taking a holiday.)

3. Envy destroys happiness

In rich countries like Australia, there is a very weak connection between happiness and earning more. But there is a catch. The report concludes: "the most dissatisfied people have lower incomes than their peer group". The issue is your disposable income relative to the people you socialise with. As Dr Tim Sharp, founder of the Happiness Institute, said at the report's launch: "One of the greatest paths to unhappiness is trying to keep up with the Joneses".

Christian response

Given that they think in utilitarian categories, Australians will find it easy to accept a critique of consumerism when it is framed by the findings of 'happiness research'. Most Australians already suspect money cannot guarantee anything more than short-term happiness because they see their longer term wellbeing tied to their relational capital: strong community connections, faithful marriages, respectful children and deep friendships.

So how should Christians respond to research on wellbeing? After all heaven, not happiness, is the goal of our life's race.

Sure we have to be careful not to reinforce hedonistic thinking. But nor should we be so down on this sort of project that we make it sound like God is against happiness and that Christianity has nothing to say about human wellbeing.

SC

SEAFORTH CALLS DICKSON

THE Rev **Jaime Dickson** will take up his first position as senior minister next month after accepting the job of rector at St Paul's, Seaforth.



Associate minister in the parish of Avalon-Palm Beach for nearly five years, he chose to put himself forward to be ordained as a presbyter late last year because of "a growing conviction that God had given me the skills and a personality to lead a church".

He didn't expect to be approached so soon to take on the role of senior minister but says he and wife Katrina "have a strong conviction that this is right; this is where God wants us at this time".

While acknowledging it will be sad to leave Avalon-Palm Beach, Mr Dickson is "really excited about the possibilities".

"What I want to do is ask those hard, basic questions about who we are, why are we here and where we are going... [helping] people focus and get excited about this task of building God's kingdom in Seaforth."

DAWES JOINS ARV PARISH PARTNERSHIP

AT the beginning of 2011, the **Rev Garry Dawes** will leave his assistant minister's position at St Luke's, Miranda to be an assistant at St Philip's, Caringbah. Through Caringbah's parish partnership with Anglican Retirement Villages (ARV), Mr Dawes' day-to-day role will be full-time chaplain to the Woollooware Shores village in Taren Point.

"It's a great privilege to be able to join the team and build on the ministry that's already happening at Woollooware Shores," Mr Dawes says.

"Together we can encourage the saints that are there and also find opportunity for people who may have had a Christian connection at some point in their life to say 'Hey, have another look at Jesus' — to introduce people there to Jesus who don't already know him."

Mr Dawes has worked at Miranda since 1993, particularly in pastoral care for young families. He was made a deacon by the Archbishop in 2008.

The **Rev Tony Tress**, who has headed the chaplaincy ministry at Woollooware Shores in a part-time capacity since 2007 (under the same ARV-parish partnership arrangement), expects to continue his ministry at the village next year at a reduced level.

BEGBIE RETIRES



AFTER 38 years of ordained ministry, mainly in the western suburbs of Sydney, the **Rev Graeme Begbie** retired last month from his role as senior associate minister at St John's provisional cathedral in Parramatta.

Mr Begbie had been in charge of the cathedral's wedding ministry and the Parramatta City Bible Talk. The church's 8am and 11am Sunday congregations were also under his care.

At a farewell event held last month at St John's, Mr Begbie said that "being called to teach God's word and help care for God's people has to be the greatest privilege given to anyone. I am so grateful to God for allowing me to do this".

Mr Begbie was ordained in 1973 by Archbishop Loane and served in the parishes of Wahroonga, Blacktown, Ashbury, Tregear and Dundas before taking up his role at Parramatta in 2005. He also served as Archbishop's ordination chaplain from 2000-2004.

Quoting a favourite family Bible verse, "Along unfamiliar paths I will guide them" (Isaiah 42:16), Mr Begbie said he and his wife Stella were looking forward to the future God had in store for them at their new home on the NSW South Coast.

CMS GOES TO IRELAND



THOSE at CMS NSW's Summer School in January would remember hearing **Catherine Read** who, just before she set off for missionary training at St Andrew's Hall in Melbourne, spoke of the great call on her heart to minister to university students overseas. She spoke of a country where paganism was on the rise and less than 1 per cent of the people were evangelical Christians. When Ms Read named the country as the Republic of Ireland, there was an audible gasp from those present.

She was invited last year by the

International Fellowship of Evangelical Students (IFES) to work with them on some of Dublin's university campuses, and so asked CMS Australia to send her. CMS in this country has never sent a missionary to Ireland before, so Ms Read is grateful the organisation "graciously agreed" to let her go out under its umbrella.

"Overseas work's been in my mind since high school, really," she says. "I'm excited about working with IFES Ireland and the team there. In some ways it's quite daunting but I'm trying to think of it as one student at a time — reading the Bible one on one — and that God will be changing lives. I just need to be faithful with what I'm doing, whoever I come across."

Ms Read has spent more than six years working for the Australian Fellowship of Evangelical Students — first at Charles Sturt University, Orange and then in Sydney. She hopes to leave for Ireland in January.

WONG WAY TO GRANVILLE

ST Mark's, Granville will welcome Malaysian missionary the **Rev David Wong** as their senior minister on September 1.

Mr Wong, who studied theology at the Malaysia Theological Seminary, has spent 17 years serving in Malaysia's Anglican Church, including four years as a missionary on Borneo.

He is excited about the opportunity that God has given him to reach the multicultural population of Granville.

"I hope to be able to use this opportunity to reach the different ethnic groups in the community of Granville," he says. "Having served in a Chinese church, I hope to use that experience to minister to the Chinese community."

IN BRIEF

THE **Rev Glenn Farrell** has resigned as the rector of Lithgow, effective at the end of this month.

Vacant Parishes

LIST OF PARISHES AND PROVISIONAL PARISHES, VACANT OR BECOMING VACANT AS AT 16 AUGUST, 2010:

- | | |
|---------------------------------|----------------|
| • Berrima cum Moss Vale | • Keiraville |
| • Beverly Hills with Kingsgrove | • Menai |
| • Blakehurst | • Menangle |
| • Culburra Beach* | • Moorebank |
| • East Sydney | • Shellharbour |
| | • Ulladulla |
| | • Waverley |

* DENOTES PROVISIONAL PARISHES OR ARCHBISHOP'S APPOINTMENTS.

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Sex AND OUR CITY

JEREMY HALCROW looks at the impact of hedonism on our sexual attitudes.



HEDONISM AND MONEY

Hedonism is the belief that pleasure should be the goal of life. In Australia, hedonism is more common because of consumerism than sexual promiscuity. So before Christians get too self-righteous about sex, we should look again at how we are influenced by hedonistic thinking around money. SC explores this issue further in the editorial on p11.

IN the popular mind the Christian view of sex has come to be equated with misery. Sydney Anglican youth minister Scott Petty starts *Sex*, his new Christian guidebook on the topic, with an 1894 quote from Ruth Smythers' "Instructions and Advice for the Young Bride".

"One cardinal rule of marriage should never be forgotten: give little, give seldom and above all, give grudgingly. Otherwise what could have been a proper marriage could become an orgy of sexual lust."

As Petty tells it, the 'advice' from Ruth Smythers — supposedly a 19th-century minister's wife — is an internet hoax. An over-the-top send-up of the imagined Christian view of sex. But what the success of this hoax tells us is that many people are convinced that Christians think sex is dirty.

In contrast, Petty wants his readers to find a middle way, not seeing sex as dirty but neither taking the hedonistic path, treating sex casually as mere physical act of pleasure.

"In the light of the two options before us, that sex is either dirty or just physical, I want to offer a third alternative: that sex is a profound gift from God for our benefit," he writes. "It is not dirty, because it is designed

by God himself, who only gives good things... And it is not just physical, because God designed it to be intensely emotional and spiritual..."

There is strong evidence that most Australians agree with the high view of sex in marriage advocated by Petty and the Christian churches. Most Australians recognise that emotional intimacy and trust are not compatible with casual sex, taking a dim view of infidelity.

Nevertheless premarital casual sex is on the rise. The 2009 Australian Survey of Social Attitudes suggests that premarital sex is no longer considered wrong by the vast majority of Australians. In the mid-1980s about half of Australians believed premarital sex was OK if the couple were in love. Today more than 65 per cent believe premarital sex is "not wrong at all"

In 2008 Illinois-based psychology professor David Schmidt released a study of sexual attitudes based on a study of 14,000 people across 48 countries.

Worldwide, promiscuity is most common in the former communist Eastern Europe and Scandinavia. Of the 15 major OECD nations, Britain tops the list followed by Germany and

Holland. Australia was ranked fifth. And it is clear in Schmidt's findings that promiscuity in Europe is linked to a decline in religious belief.

In Australia, cohabitation was virtually unknown before the 1970s. Now more than 75 per cent of married couples say they lived together before they wed.

In fact, 15 per cent of Australians are now living in de facto relationships. Some of these are long-term partnerships but many are far more unstable relationships, with people moving on from partner to partner.

Nearly 35 per cent of Australian children are now born to unmarried mothers. In the 1970s the figure was below 10 per cent.

All this is despite vast evidence (see March's *Southern Cross*) that cohabitation is dangerous to a happy family life. Married couples that choose to live together before they wed double their risk of divorce. De facto parenting statistics are even worse. One in three unmarried couples will split before their child's fifth birthday, compared to 1 in 17 married couples. Nearly three quarters of family breakdowns affecting children are de facto relationships.

It is clear that hedonistic thinking so

continued next page »

SYDNEY = 'SIN CITY' Is it a myth?

The notion of Sydney as 'sin city' — a place of 'hedonistic modernity' — has a long cultural history. Some historians place its origins in the debauchery of the penal settlement, which was quickly intensified by the wealth that flowed into Australia's biggest eastern port during the gold rush period.



"Christmas in the Colonies" from the *Illustrated Sydney News*, 1882.

But Sydney's reputation today as our most hedonistic city is unwarranted. Research shows Sydney is quite a conservative city relative to the rest of Australia. This is linked to it becoming Australia's most religious capital city, in part thanks to recent immigration.

governs our culture that contrary evidence does not find an easy audience.

Sections of Australian society have been explicit in promoting hedonism. As cultural critic Felicity Collins from La Trobe University has observed, Australian artists celebrated an idealised national hedonism throughout much of the last century.

As prize-winning novelist David Malouf wrote in a 2003 *Quarterly* essay: "that thing people refer to as Australian hedonism and which they see Sydney as the centre of [...] this might be a place where things like social gatherings, eating, drinking, the sea, sex, physical love, might develop an almost sacramental status. [...] Maybe we are developing a genuine paganism here which could be a sustaining thing."

MORE CONSERVATIVE ON INFIDELITY

However, the type of hedonistic thinking that dominates in Australia does not always produce what Christians would see as 'immoral' behaviour.

Andrew Norton, research fellow at the Centre for Independent Studies, has been charting Australians' changing attitudes to sex. Consistent with the evidence above, Norton shows that attitudes to premarital sex and homosexuality have become more liberal over recent decades.

However, what is surprising is that Australians' attitudes to extramarital sex

have actually become more conservative in the same period.

Norton has a little bit of difficulty explaining these apparently contradictory results. He rightly links the liberalising trend to a decline in Christian adherence. So why are Australians also moving towards a more 'Christian' view of fidelity in marriage?

Norton has only identified one half of the puzzle. The answer is that most Australians have replaced Christianity with a faith in 'social hedonism' — or what philosophers would technically call 'classic utilitarianism'.

Liberal societies like ours are built on the maxim attributed to Jeremy Bentham: "The greatest happiness of the greatest number is the foundation of morals and legislation".

This "greatest happiness principle" found its deepest and most influential articulation in John Stuart Mill's classic work *Utilitarianism*. What Mill added to Bentham's formulation was a *qualitative* view of happiness rather than a *quantitative* approach.

As you would expect from a thinker grounded in Victorian Christianity, the 'social hedonism' of Mill smells a lot like Proverbs: it is biblical wisdom sans God. In fact Mills was the intellectual inheritor of 19th-century Christian utility theory, which he tried to shake free from its grounding in biblical wisdom and the 'fear of the Lord'.

The contemporary concepts of 'wellbeing' and 'life satisfaction' flow from the social hedonism theory of John Stuart Mill. It is this form of social hedonism that dominates Australian public discourse.

All three of Norton's findings are entirely consistent with our society's growing commitment to social hedonism. As Norton himself explains in relation to homosexuality, Australians have come to believe "that prevailing laws and norms caused huge misery to gay people and their partners in sham marriages".

Likewise a belief that 'try before you buy' would ensure long-term happiness has helped boost widespread social acceptance of de facto relationships and premarital sex. As we will see reflected in the interviews with Sydney youth ministers and teachers (right), there is a very widespread view among young people that you need to be experienced at sex to be truly fulfilled in the long run.

In contrast, infidelity is increasingly being associated with divorce and the misery felt by those betrayed, rather than seen as a path to freedom from loveless marriages.

The point is this: in general, Australians place more value in longer term wellbeing than momentary pleasure.

And this is where contemporary social hedonism demands a Christian perspective. Given the hard evidence about the longer-term damage caused by casual sex and cohabitation, there is an open door for Christian apologetics.

But in a conversation that has already equated the Christian ethic with misery, Christians must work harder to explain what the Bible means by concepts such as sin. **SC**

Recommending Sex to teens

What are the real sexual issues for teens?
JEREMY HALCROW asks seven experts if a new Christian guidebook hits the mark.



You have all indicated you would be happy to recommend Scott Petty's book *Sex to Year 11 and 12* students but, Katrina, you were quick to say you would also recommend it to even younger teens. Why do you think kids aged 13 and 14 are ready for this discussion?



I think the issues are relevant. The sexual topics [author Scott Petty mentions] they are exploring anyway. I don't mean this negatively but it was a typical look at sex from a Christian book... there was nothing radically new or shocking.

What questions do teens ask about sex?



I have had some of my youth asking the practical questions, such as "I'm in a relationship and how do I not go too far, how do I guard myself?"... they are asking questions like "I am thinking of starting a sexual relationship with my boyfriend, what do you think of that?"



Matt, you are a youth minister who is not so keen to recommend this book to younger teenagers. Why?



Kids are at all stages of development and some would find this book pretty full-on. There are kids I know who are quite awkward about this issue and are not

Our Panel



Katrina Lee
Christian Studies teacher
Roseville College



Rob Hughes
Assistant chaplain
Scots College



Nathan Lee
Youth minister
North Sydney



Rebecca Mawhinney
Christian Studies teacher
Beverly Hills Girls' High



Andrew Spalding
Youth minister
Narellan



Matt Jacobs
Youth minister
North Epping



Susan Benson
Youth minister
Sadleir



Jeremy Halcrow
Managing Editor
Southern Cross



As Nathan was saying, with the layout and typeset it seems it would suit university students more. You need a bit more eye candy for the teenagers.



I found the longer chapters helpful because it felt you were following one long thought... But I do agree with what Nathan said about pictures. It would have been good to have something that engages visual learners like me... even if it was just [fact] boxes.



I agree that books for teenagers [should be] more visual. But with this topic, it already has the interest of teenagers [so] they will read even though it isn't set out that attractively. I also think a book is a really valuable format for this subject because sex is such a taboo topic particularly in churches. I find a lot of my youth don't ask many questions even though I know they are thinking things through. They don't have the courage to raise the topics. So having [a book] and saying, "Just read this". It's a lot less confronting for them.

In the high school context — I teach in state schools as well — the kids there don't have the same qualms. They are quite happy to ask questions about sex, about homosexuality. That gives me an insight into what teenagers are thinking. So I know my church kids are thinking those things, they are just not asking the questions. So I think the book is quite valuable for that reason.

continued next page »

ready. I think I would take it on an individual basis. There are kids in this age group who I probably would give it to but I would talk to their parents first if I thought there was a bit of concern there. But for the majority of kids I know, they aren't there yet.



I really liked the book. To me it was really obvious that it was adapted from material that had been preached. So each chapter read really well as an intellectual argument. But I'm not convinced that it will be really accessible to kids reading the book. Youth these days are far more used to reading things in a non-linear way, on the web and in magazines. I'm not sure kids will have the patience to get to end of the chapter.



So the presentation of the book may put off teenagers who could benefit from reading the material?



I was actually pretty disappointed with the presentation of the book. I thought the content was excellent. But whether or not a 14 or 15-year-old would actually pick it up and read it through to the end — I doubt it. The pages are very dense with text. There are not a lot of ways into it. The headings just summarise the points made, which may make you not want to read... you could just read the subheadings. There are no pictures so there is nothing for the visual learner. There is not a lot of white space. So it seems like a very long book even though it isn't. The content was excellent and important stuff... it is just a shame that the publishers didn't see it as important enough to present the material well... in a way that was accessible for those readers who could benefit.

What questions do teens ask about sex?



I teach a lot of non-Christian kids — Muslim kids, Hindu kids and kids who just don't believe in God. These subjects won't be brought up unless the topic is raised in class. Unless it's a very safe environment they won't ask the questions Susan was talking about.

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Girls, porn and body image

Why is porn is such a problem for teenage girls these days?



Pornography is definitely one of the main resources teenagers have for finding out about sex. All they have to type into Google is 'sex' and they will have a billion websites to look at.

Especially girls — but maybe boys as well — they may not want to look at pornography but they will be very curious about sex. They might just want to find out what it is like, then they Google it... and find pornography.

A lot of people say Christian girls could never look at pornography. But I definitely know for a fact that they do... because they have told me personally: sweet, beautiful innocent girls that I thought "Wow I could never imagine"...

But I think they are watching it for different reasons to the boys. They are not just checking out pictures of guys. From the girls I have spoken to, they are watching videos of sex to find out how to do it, what it is about, how to please guys.

They think, "I don't want to be bad at sex... I want to please a guy".

You have to reassure them that the best, best sex [happens] when you get married to someone and you can explore it together. You are going to have a lifetime of getting to know that one person's body rather than having to watch pornography to learn the best techniques.

Why is this particularly damaging to girls?



Perhaps just read what Melinda Tankard Reist has to say about this... [laughs].

I think it is really damaging for how they see themselves. It changes their ambitions and what they want to do with their time. Rather than wanting to be a great friend or [have] aspirations... to be a nurse, or a mum, or a pilot, or a lawyer, they just want to be sexy. That makes me really sad, because I want them to be more than that.

Rather than trusting that God will give them great sex and help them figure it out when they get married, pornography changes them to think that their purpose is to be a girl who is good at arousing boys.

They think they are just sexual creatures who are there just to please males.

I imagine this would also affect a girl's body image. Do we need to talk about sex in terms of body image more?



Definitely. Girls struggle with body image much more than we realise. They are trying to be too sexy too young. I teach in a school and Year 7 and Year 8 girls are trying to dress sexy. They are getting lots of images from their phones, from TV, from the internet — from everywhere.

It's helpful to talk not just about waiting for sex but also the whole issue of pushing 'being sexy' further back [to an older age].

Does over-sexualisation in media affect real-life sexual behaviour?



Yes it does. A lot.

As Katrina said before, they want to know how to have sex so they can please their

boyfriends. They want to be good at it even before they have sex. The media pushes them to want to be sexy, to have experience and to excel in that area.



I recently prepared a talk... and I looked at a [teen] movie called *Hey Hey It's Esther Blueburger*. There is a

line in it where she says, "I would be horrified to be a 14-year-old virgin". If that is what our young people are thinking is the right thing... then we need to be dispelling that.

In schools girls talk about how many different partners they have had...

It's not cool in our society to be a virgin. I think we have to change that attitude. It's something very precious given by God.

But I think we also have to be careful not to say, "Oh, you stuffed up... see you later".

We have to say, "Yes you stuffed up but we all do. God has forgiven you and God's grace is there."



"I would be horrified to be a 14-year-old virgin."

A scene from Hey Hey It's Esther Blueburger.

« from previous page



Would you recommend this book to a non-Christian teenager?



I reckon I would give it to a non-Christian... just as a way to open their eyes. Not to change their life but for them to have a quick read [so we could] keep talking about it.

What questions do teens ask about sex?



In our context, it's more that we are the ones who have to ask the questions [and] raise the topic... kids haven't really been coming to us unless they are the real keen Christian kids who are in a relationship and struggling with the physical [side].



My students have a perception of what Christians think about sex. And so I think that is where Scott's book would be good to give them... as something provocative to get them thinking about the Christian view because it is set out quite clearly. However... I felt it was aimed at Christians. The chapters are questions Christians have about sex.



I think the tone... Scott uses is quite strong and I probably wouldn't give the book to a non-Christian student. However I think the chapter on homosexuality is great and would give that chapter alone to a non-Christian.



In your classes?



In the senior classes. Yes



What is the most helpful section of the book?



I agree with the others that the homosexuality chapter was probably the best chapter. It really seemed to hit the mark with the key issues.

The main question teenagers ask about it is: "If that's how someone feels or that's how someone is, how then can God say they can't act it out?"

Scott really helpfully draws some good distinctions between attraction and action and that identity can be grounded on much greater things [than sexuality].”... He had a lot of good practical applications for a lot of areas — such as advice for dating relationships and where to draw boundaries. He named body parts and was a lot more specific than I often feel comfortable to be in my youth group talks. I feel that often when we talk about sex, because it is uncomfortable it forces us to talk in very vague terms. And so we may get them onside but we don’t move them to something else.



What was the least helpful section?



There were two areas that needed more discussion. Firstly, there was nothing about Christians dating

non-Christians. I think that would have been helpful to bring in because it’s when Christians date non-Christians that the whole physical and sexual side of the relationship gets out of control most often. That was one area.

The other was that Scott jumped back and forth in what he was saying about masturbation. The message was unclear and confusing. I wasn’t clear if he was saying it was right or wrong in the end.



I agree exactly. That last section on masturbation — I didn’t get that. Also in the chapter on pornography I noticed that he oscillated between saying sometimes, “This is a problem for guys *and* girls” and then at other times he said, “The reason *guys* struggle with this is...”

He gave the statistic that by the age of 15, 97 per cent of girls and 100 per cent of boys have looked at pornography... it would have been good if he had [explored] the different reasons girls and guys look at pornography.



So basically he assumed it was more a problem for guys.



Yes, that’s right.



Do others agree he downplayed a female perspective?



I agree with that. He left the girls out a lot. But I guess he is a male author.

I would have appreciated more real-life examples. If you look in girls’ magazines often they talk about real situations and when the girls pick up those magazines they relate to the examples... It

What questions do teens ask about sex?



I actually find that kids are really comfortable with approaching the topic. For example, last semester I had a Year 11 class and they were very open... asking personal questions about my own experience growing up... They want to talk about what it means to be sleeping around... How does a Christian approach it? What does the Bible say about it?... You get a lot more questions about homosexuality. Kids are much more open about it. Ten years ago you would never get [such questions].

would have made the book much better to have examples from both boys *and* girls from different ages and in different situations. That would have been very helpful...

Can I add something else?

I felt the first two chapters were aimed at Christians who haven’t had sex and were thinking about sex before marriage.

If I was a non-Christian or Christian who has had sex... I would have felt attacked and very shameful.

It was very heavy on how much God dislikes [sexual promiscuity] and the punishments that go with that [behaviour].

It would have been better if grace and forgiveness had been talked about more. **SC**

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Keeping kids safe

Why STEVE KRYGER changed his mind about a mandatory web filter.



TEN things parents should do

- 1 Understand what your child is doing online (put the computer in a public space, talk to your children, use accountability software).
- 2 Ask your child to explain to you what they are doing and why they are doing it.
- 3 Talk to your child about your values and how these should be lived out, regardless of the environment.
- 4 Obtain a 'personal' filter to moderate the content that your family views online.
- 5 Understand the minimum age requirements for different websites and technologies (children under 13 should not be on Facebook).
- 6 Understand how these popular websites are used and what the opportunities and threats are.
- 7 Understand what avenues are at your disposal if something goes wrong (e.g. your child's Facebook account is hacked).
- 8 Consider how you will respond if you discover your child is acting inappropriately, or viewing inappropriate material.
- 9 Decide when or if your child will get a mobile phone.
- 10 Understand the new functions of mobile phones and what the opportunities and threats are.

AS I speak with churches about cyber-safety, one thing continues to stand out: many parents have very little idea about what their children are doing online — both the opportunities and threats that the internet presents.

To a large extent, this is due to the particular point in history that we inhabit.

Parents who played under the sprinkler, borrowed books from libraries and read documents on microfiche, have given birth to children who spend their holidays in front of screens, Google anything they don't know and are in constant contact with their friends via Facebook, SMS, MSN — or whatever else has caught their attention this week. Children are living in a different world that their parents know virtually nothing about.

In his submission to the Joint Select Committee on Cyber-Safety, Internode engineer Mark Newton made this point: "We are currently in a state of flux:

On one hand we have a generation of people who have never known a time without ubiquitous internet access, who have integrated it fully into their lives, using it fluidly and naturally, barely considering whether it's even possible to perform certain tasks without it.

On the other hand we have a generation of people brought up in the legacy of previous communications systems, who often don't understand the technology or the new social environments it is enabling. Between the two extremes we have an

amorphous mix of people with both attributes, who, in relation to the internet, are either fluent or foreign depending on the situation before them. Overlaid on top of the whole mess is a media environment which seems purpose-designed to produce befuddlement for the uninitiated."

The difference in knowledge between parents and their children about the internet goes to the very core of the issue of internet filtering, and indeed parenting, in 2010.

The people who are legislating and the parents who are parenting don't understand the technologies that are so familiar to their children, who have grown up using them. This affects how they seek to address the issues the internet presents our society with.

Parents hear a lot about the risks — porn websites, cyber-bullying, cyber-stalking, addictions (internet, gaming, porn), identity theft and so on, and are rightly concerned. So, when the government proposes a filter and the Australian Christian Lobby says, "Mandatory ISP level filtering of Refused Classification material will make the internet safer for our children", it's understandable why this suggestion would attract mainstream support. Measures that protect children from some of the worst content online have got to be good, don't they?

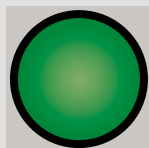
I thought so and supported the idea of a filter for some time, despite opposition from just about everyone. But I was sceptical. Lots of people oppose the filter for bad reasons. I also thought that to reject the filter was to reject a basic measure for protecting our children. And when the average age a child



Given past trends, the Diocese's Professional Standards Unit would expect to receive a handful of complaints this year about the misuse of electronic communication within our congregations. The use of email, Facebook, video chat and other technologies can be a bit of a grey area for church workers.

While our concern to care for children, young people and other vulnerable church members should always be paramount, there are also plenty of pitfalls for the naïve churchworker.

The Professional Standards Unit has released this month its new 'Electronic Communication Policy' guidelines. Based on that advice, *Southern Cross* publishes the following checklist designed to guide your church's thinking in the area of electronic communication.



Churchworkers and volunteers are advised to favour:

1 Face-to-face pastoral care

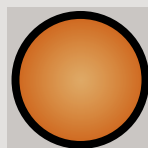
Pastoral care is an integral part of ministry and something that is to be encouraged. However, pastoral care should occur primarily through face-to-face contact rather than electronic methods. When meeting a child or young person privately, you should:

- have parental or guardian consent, where practicable;
- ensure where appropriate that a parent, guardian or suitable adult is present;
- inform another member of the clergy,
- an adult church worker or another adult of the time, location and duration of the meeting, and
- not invite or have children to your home or visit children in their home when no other adult is present;

Make a record of the time, location, duration and circumstances of any meeting where it is impracticable to follow these guidelines.

2 Fixed-line telephone calls

When contacting the child or young person by phone, call on the home phone if possible. Ensure that parents or guardians are aware of the phone call. This may mean asking to speak to a parent first, or letting the parent know that you will be calling.



Churchworkers are advised to be cautious when:

1 Using mobile phones

While not wishing to exaggerate the dangers, churches should be aware there have been a handful of recent cases against churchworkers involving complaints about the misuse of mobile phones. For this reason, the Professional Standards Unit advises churchworkers to keep mobile phone use to a minimum.

Mobile phones should never be used for long calls, especially for pastoral care.

SMS messages should never be personal. It's wise to keep them entirely general in nature such as meeting time reminders.

2 Emailing

Email is the electronic equivalent of a postcard, not a sealed letter — anyone with basic hacking skills can read other people's email.

Defamation actions are a particular risk with emails, and civil lawsuits have been launched against a number of churchworkers on this basis. Although such cases are rarely successful, the personal cost to churchworkers affected can be significant.

Emails should be restricted to purpose-only emails, such as "meet at this place, at this time". Deeper conversations regarding more personal issues should be face to face. Church workers are advised to:

- carbon copy the church office email address into all emails;
- save all emails to and from children/young people in a separate soft copy folder.

3 Using Facebook

Think carefully about the reasons for 'socialising' with children and adolescents in such forums. Does this give the message that socialising with youth workers is appropriate in any forum and that youth workers do not have their own 'space' for socialising? Writing on 'walls' should be kept to a minimum and only of a broad nature, such as "Hey, hope you're having a good week, cya Sunday".

Avoid publishing personal details on 'walls', including names of schools, addresses, phone numbers, etc.

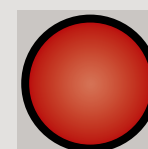
4 Organising photography

Regarding images of young people, privacy laws are strict. Distributing photos of children without parental permission is forbidden.

If you do find a photo from your youth ministry posted on the internet by a young person, gently ask them if they have permission from everyone in the photo to post it. If they don't, then advise them to either seek permission or remove it from the internet.

Nevertheless churches sometimes need to organise photographs of children and youth activities for promotional and other ministry purposes. When organising a photo shoot ensure:

- you have written parental consent;
- the focus is on the activity and not on a particular child or young person;
- all children and young people are appropriately dressed (no water sports);
- the photographer has been appointed by the minister.



Churchworkers should never:

- 1 video chat with children or young people;
- 2 photograph children or young people with a mobile phone;
- 3 allow themselves to be photographed by children or young people on their mobile phones;
- 4 post photos of children or young people on the internet;
- 5 use pseudonyms;
- 6 transmit, retrieve or store any electronic communication that is:

- discriminatory or harassing;
- derogatory to any individual or group;
- defamatory or threatening;
- obscene, explicit or pornographic;
- in violation of any licence governing the use of software;
- for any purpose that is illegal or in contradiction to the Anglican Diocese of Sydney Safe Ministry Guidelines.

first views porn is 11 years and teenagers are lured to their death through Facebook, care is what our children desperately need.

But I've come to see that the proposed filter isn't the way to do it. Basically, this is because the proposed filter is akin to cleaning the ocean with a bottle of detergent.

There is so much content on the internet that is unsuitable for children and teenagers. The proposed filter will block very little of it, for a very limited period of time, for a very small number of people, searching for a very specific type of content, while simultaneously lulling the non-tech savvy (i.e. most Australians) into a false sense of security about how safe their children are online. And our children need more than this.

A report for Microsoft Australia nailed this on the head:

"Most Australian parents are concerned about the safety of their children online. But new research shows that parents don't back up their concerns with meaningful actions and that, in any event, they might well be concerned about the wrong risks."

The proposed filter wouldn't prevent your child from being bullied online, from having their identity stolen, from being stalked on Facebook, from being chatted to by a stranger, from being exposed to pervasive advertising or from accessing most of the forms of pornography that they can currently access.

Yet, these are the things that concerns most parents, aren't they?

The solution goes deep beyond a government-imposed filter and needs to

address a greater need — helping parents to parent their digital natives.

I urge parents to get familiar with the opportunities and dangers of the technologies to which their children are exposed.

There's lots more to be said.

Your children are miles ahead of you. But it's not enough to remain ignorantly hopeful and claim "it's too hard". Your children need you to do this for them.

The government, industry and churches can and should do more to help parents. But ultimately, parents need to take greater responsibility.

Keeping children safe cannot be outsourced.

Steve Kryger is media pastor at Church By the Bridge, Kirribilli.

NEXT STEPS

Steve Kryger and SC can host workshops for Christian parents on this topic. The Professional Standards Unit is encouraging churches to recognise Child Protection Week on Sunday September 5 or 12. A set prayer is available. Contact newspaper@anglicanmedia.com.au

SC

In the marketplace of ideas, what shapes the identity of young Christians?

The consumer is king

ANGELA OWEN interviews Jack Gabig, keynote speaker at Youthworks College's upcoming Theology of Youth Ministry Conference.

Could you tell us something of your early experiences of youth ministry and why you first got involved with it?

I have been involved in youth work for more than 25 years now. Although my parents were deeply Christian, my teenage years were somewhat of a drug-filled, new-agey blur. I had created a designer god to suit my perceived needs that had no power to save me.

My conversion was rather dramatic, even Damascus Road-like. When I came to vibrant faith in Jesus things really started changing in and around me. In hindsight there were a few other influential adults in my life who it turns out were actually pointing me in the

wrong direction. I realised what a vulnerable and crucial time of life the teenage years are and I wanted to point young people Godward in Christ.

Consequently, I found myself sharing with young people in my neighbourhood about what the Lord was doing in my life. Many of them came to faith as well. I thought to myself, "Hmm. Something seems to be happening here. I should pay attention to this."

I started working as a volunteer at the local Anglican church and wound up in charge of the program.

One thing led to the next, I began a course of study in youth ministry at Trinity where I now teach. Soon afterwards I was hired as a professional youth worker. I was ordained in 1995 and continued working with youth. I guess if you don't quit something you just keep doing it.

What involvement do you currently have in the youth ministry at your local church?

I continue actively in youth ministry in the parish where I served after ordination. I have been in and out of that community for nearly 16 years. After my time living in the

UK, I returned there because of the sense of community. I still get to preach, lead a small group, sometimes lead youth retreats and oversee the Confirmation process... It's fun. I still get to be involved on a regular basis with young people whom I love but I don't set the tone for the program.

Why are you still involved in youth ministry after all these years?

It's a call. I have threatened a number of times to "grow up" and get a "real job" but the Lord doesn't seem to let that happen. He keeps me working with and for the benefit of young people. I've seen too much fruit to give up on this part of the vineyard.

Could you give us a brief summary of your doctoral thesis?

During the course of my work with young people I began to notice a shift in how young people were processing information. In particular I noted the important role popular culture played in how they were making sense of life and how they expressed what was important to them.

I observed that young people quoted the movies and music more than Scripture. I taught them the Scriptures all the more. They learned them but still quoted films. So I studied the role of film in the religious lives of young people in various congregations in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, USA. Empirical research from one of those congregations became the focus of my PhD thesis, *Youth, Religion and Film*.

I found film is a significant resource in the religious lives of youth in America — providing ideas and concepts, role models and language. There was a convergence of the practices of religion and the consumption of media with everyday choices of young people drawing upon both religion and film as resources for everyday living. Yet neither religion nor film holds the exclusive authority to determine meaning and practice in their lives.

What became evident in my research was that individual young people use the process of textual poaching (cutting and pasting of media) in surprising ways for the purpose of religious expression. This means that popular film and its consumption serve as a starting point for understanding how young people in contemporary American society understand and practice religion.

What sort of value have you seen from your academic study of youth ministry in a local church?

Several things:

1 For the youth minister, there is much to be gleaned from academic study of youth ministry. Everything rises or falls on theology, good or bad. Good theological study lays a foundation for good youth ministry. Poor theology leads to poor youth ministry with loads of fun and games and a little spiritual fluff added in which will likely not avail much in the way of deep discipleship and the transformation of life



Who is Jack Gabig?

The Rev Dr Jack Gabig is co-chairman of the Catechesis and Curriculum Task Force, which is redesigning Christian education programs for the newly formed Anglican Church in North America (ACNA). He is also a lecturer at Trinity and Nashotah House, two seminaries aligned with ACNA.

that abiding faith in Jesus holds out to us. As a youth ministry colleague and friend of mine says about youth, "what you win them with, you win them to..." Youth ministers serve more effectively when trained well to think critically, theologically and systematically about their work.

2For youth, I take the approach of expecting young people to think critically about the media rather than merely consuming it mindlessly. They can be quite savvy, actually. When challenged to think about what is being represented, they come up with quite sophisticated theological reflection. This is important because the renewal of the mind is central to discerning the will of God. Further, in my own experience this has led some to create their own media works in the light of the gospel as a means of provocative and creative proclamation.

3For congregations, I have discovered (somewhat inadvertently) in my consulting with congregations that through their systematic study of their own youth ministry they become more intentional about reaching, discipling and integrating youth work into the life of the congregation. Sometimes youth ministry is treated as an afterthought — a good idea but not really intentionally integrated into the life of a congregation.

What are the challenges that you see facing youth ministry in the US?

I think the greatest challenge for youth ministry in America may well be the implicit power of the marketplace that undergirds our way of life and thinking. We tend to understand ourselves as consumers — as the saying goes, "the customer is king".

Much of our identity is bound up in the things we consume and the ways we do so. Young people search for identity through the consumption of goods, even religious goods. In response, many churches supply a hearty array of religious goods and services through various programmatic offerings.

The effect is that religious practices become commodified, such as worship through mega-churches' high-value productions, youth work through extravagant programs and mission through short-term mission trips emphasising personal experience more than the work of the gospel.

Left unexamined these assumptions create a North American syncretism whose effect is so subtle and implicit that it often goes undetected. The end result is that mainstream Christianity in America may be creating young people who are consumers of religious goods more than disciples of Jesus Christ who are worshippers and servants of the living God.

SC

The Rev Dr Jack Gabig will present his paper "Exceeding Human Culture: A Christology that Transcends" at the upcoming Theology of Youth Ministry Conference (Sept 23-24). He will also give the conference dinner address. To register for the conference visit www.youthworks.net/events.

WORLDVIEWS WAR AT FILM NIGHT

Anglican Youthworks held a 'Film and Theology night' on August 25 designed to help people engage with popular culture on a theological level.

"It is really important for us to try to understand our culture so that we can engage with others more effectively and more decisively talk about Christ," says Graham Stanton from Youthworks.

The Hurt Locker was the third film screened as part of the program which began in May 2009 as a way of raising funds for Youthworks.

The film was followed by a theological

response and discussion led by Charlie Brammall, chaplain to the entertainment industry in Sydney, with Jenni Stoddart and Graham Stanton from Youthworks.

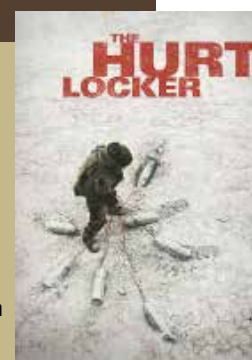
Stanton explains that questions were posed to encourage a deeper engagement with the film and popular culture because if young adults can interpret and understand culture from a Biblical perspective, gospel sharing will be much more effective.

Stanton also explains that these nights are about helping young adults

feel a part of the world around them rather than separate from it.

"It's something that is very useful for discipling young adults by helping them feel engaged with the world, rather than being overtaken or taken in by the messages of the world," he said.

"We want to teach young adults how to engage deeply but still maintain a Christian identity."



No-one gets left behind

MATT BRAIN believes the local church should be the bridge between "gospel and culture".

THE US Marine corps takes pride in the famous motto, 'No-one gets left behind'. The whole unit counts, not simply the skilled or even remnant members. A fallen soldier can safely expect the rescue and support of his comrades and intense loyalty grows between the interdependent members of the team.

While for many of us the wartime context of this saying is blessedly distant, the attitude of mutual importance, support and care it implies can provide a powerful metaphor for the way we approach being 'church' in a post-Christian world.

Against the background of vibrant youth culture many local churches seem small, dull and unlikely to attract new people to Christ. In this context it is easy to dismiss the local church as a bridge between the Gospel of Christ and the culture of young people.

It is easy to criticise the established churches as being entrenched in old routines and turgid patterns of worship.

This is particularly so when immersed in the exciting and rapidly changing world of the information technologies. However, a deeper disconnection has occurred in which the spiritual questions being asked by young people are now quite different from those which we in the church tend to answer in the course of our ministries. These are, in turn,

driven by fundamentally different assumptions about what makes for a spiritual life.

Is it possible for the heroic vision of the Marines' motto, 'no-one gets left behind', to apply as we think about mission to young people? Is the gap between the gospel and the culture

of young people just too great for the church as a whole to span?

Lesslie Newbigin's theology of witness can help us answer these questions. He contends that the church, even as it is demonstrated in its diverse and weakened state, is called to play a significant role in bearing out what God has done in and through Jesus Christ. In bald terms, in the mission of God each local congregation joins with the other to interpret God's activity in, with and for the world.

Leaving no-one behind implies a long, hard slog with no easy way out. In fact, it seems to me that one of the defining characteristics of the Marines is that it is a fraternity based on common view of the importance of each to the other in its goal.

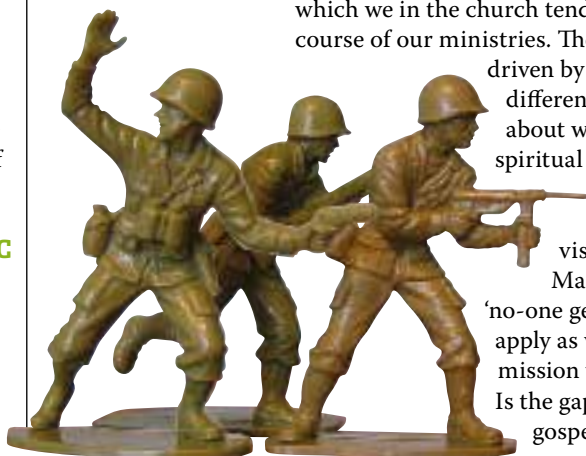
When we're reaching out to youth, it is tempting to become impatient with a slow, clumsy or (even) intransigent church. However, the importance of the church and the reality of the changed spiritual culture of young Australians are present in Newbigin's idea of the local congregation being the witness to God's work in Christ to the world.

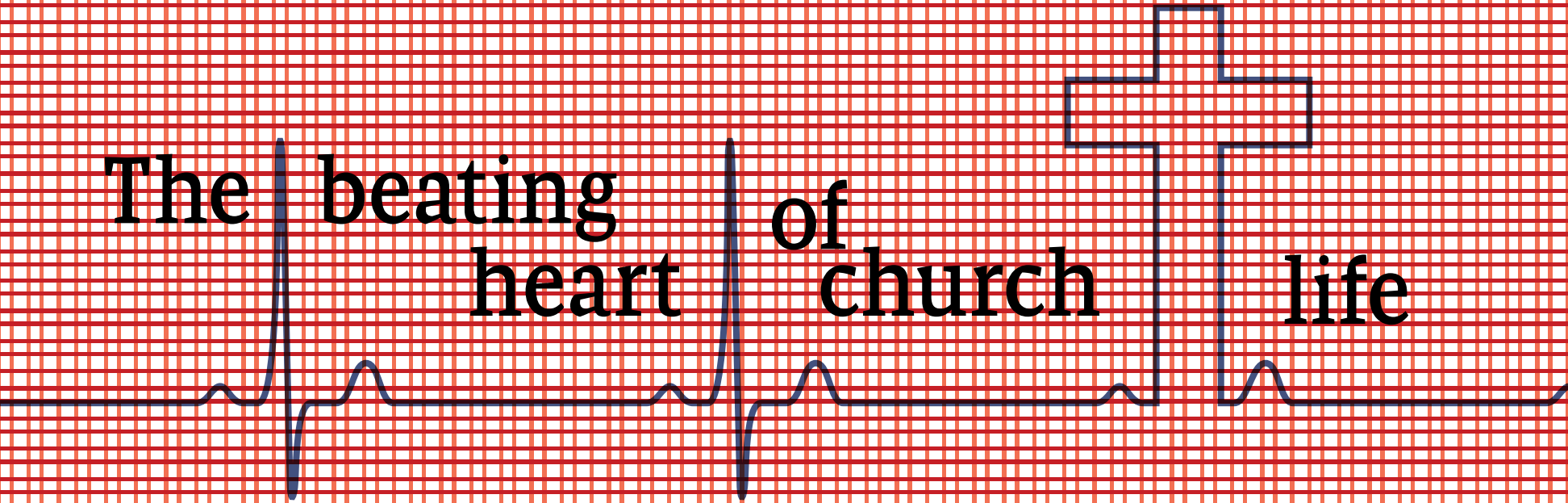
I will argue in a longer paper (see below) that it is the fullness of the people of God who provide witness to the resurrection in-and-through weakness and death shown ultimately when the Father raised his Son from the grave.

What better group could God choose to do this than the struggling and vulnerable gathering that we are! Young people are well equipped to live with glamour, fleeting connections and self-importance. What the church has to offer is life in the grunge, depth in relationship and beauty in fragility — especially when no-one is left behind.

SC

The Rev Dr Matt Brain is the Diocese's of Canberra and Goulburn Youth Ministry Training Coordinator. This is an extract from his paper which will be presented at the 2010 Theology of Youth Ministry Conference at St Anne's, Ryde.





The beating heart of church life

MARK THOMPSON asks: How important is doctrine for the health and growth of the churches?

MUCH modern theological writing seems so remote from the concerns of local congregations that you'd almost be tempted to say we can do without it. The affected cleverness of some theologians (well, they have to get published after all), their highly abstract way of speaking about ideas which the Bible expresses in a much more straightforward fashion, the tendency to question rather than affirm and explain — all of this breeds a distrust of theology and theologians among Christian men and women the world over. Once described as the queen of the sciences and the lifeblood of the Christian church, theology is increasingly out of favour, not only in the secular universities (where attempts are currently being made to prune or uproot theology faculties) but in the churches as well.

It's not always been like this, of course. Evangelical Christianity in particular can look back at profound yet accessible theology written in service of the churches, intended to edify rather than simply to build a reputation. Martin Luther wrote plenty of academic theology in Latin but he also wrote popular pieces, written in colloquial German, in order to help Christian men and women understand the wonder of the gospel and life as God's free children. B. B. Warfield wrote for the churches as well as the academy in the nineteenth century, as did Bishop J. C. Ryle. Many of today's evangelical leaders were nourished in the faith by the profound yet accessible writings of men like Alan Stibbs, Jim Packer and John Stott, all men of imposing intellect with a profound love for God's people. Here in Sydney the Protestant Faith broadcasts of T. C. Hammond and then Broughton Knox made clear yet deep Christian thinking available to thousands.

The staple diet of our congregations, both

from the pulpits and in Bible study groups and the like, is rightly the exposition of Scripture. It is through direct engagement with God's written word that our minds and lives are shaped according to God's purpose in response to God's mercy in Christ. Here the Spirit of God is truly at work. Yet we need to understand how the things we read intersect with our own lives and how they fit within the overall picture of God and what he is doing in the universe. In understanding and in application theology is vital.

Christian doctrine is not an alternative to biblical exposition — the very idea is absurd. Instead it is part and parcel of biblical exposition, indeed the critical element which transforms mere historical or literary analysis into a life-giving message. It guards against trite social commentary and the superficiality of one anecdote after another with only a joke or a poem in between. Theology is not so much something added to biblical exegesis as a proper deepening of that exegesis in a way which advances our knowledge of God. It nourishes faith and builds congregations.

I've heard people suggest that what we need for more effective mission is less theology and more practice. I'd like to quietly demur. As I see it, we need more theology: a clearer view of the world as God sees it, salvation as God provides it, the church as God is building it, the future as God promises it. We certainly need to live the truth and not just talk about it. But we need to proclaim the truth more engagingly, more persuasively and, I submit, that the vital ingredient here is theology.

Perhaps the most famous statement along these lines is Martin Luther's bold description of the doctrine of justification by faith alone as that truth by which the church stands or falls. Luther argued that this doctrine, this particular element of the

Bible's teaching, is vital for the health of the churches. Where this truth is understood and boldly proclaimed, Christian faith thrives and churches function well. Where this truth is obscured, marginalised or denied, Christian faith is undermined and churches lose their way. Taking a wrong step at this point has the most serious consequences.

Luther insisted not only that doctrine matters but that this particular doctrine matters especially. Why? The reason is quite simply that this doctrine, in the writings of the apostle Paul but in the body of Christian doctrine more generally as well, functions to protect the most important of all Christian convictions. Justification by faith alone guards and secures salvation by Christ alone.

Sin and its consequences, as astonishingly far-reaching as they are, can only be dealt with by Christ, the faithful Son of the Father and Israel's Messiah. He alone can save us. 'There is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved' (Acts 4:12). 'No-one comes to the Father except through me' (Jn 14:6). 'There is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus' (1 Tim 2:5). His death for our sins according to the Scriptures, his burial and his resurrection according to the Scriptures, are the matters of first importance as far as Paul was concerned (1 Cor 15:3-5).

Yet the human determination to secure our own future, to be independent intellectually, morally and spiritually, recoils at the suggestion that the hold of sin is so pervasive, so insidious, that all hope of salvation must be anchored in another. The Pharisee in Jesus' parable prided himself on his own religious performance, trusting in himself that he was righteous (Luke 18:11-12, 9). The apostle Paul in his life as Saul the Pharisee considered his religious heritage and his own religious performance as a basis for "confidence in the flesh" (Phil. 3:4-6).

FOCUS QUESTION:

Is academic theology irrelevant to mission practice?

The default position of the human heart is self-congratulation. In such a context the suggestion that without Christ we are enemies of God (Rom. 5:10) and children of wrath (Eph. 2:3) is deeply offensive, something not to be taken seriously.

In the face of such practised self-justification, even the holy, righteous and good law of God can be misused in ways which obscure rather than promote God's great plan of salvation (Rom. 7:12), a plan which from the beginning has been centred in his Son as the promised deliverer

(Eph. 1:3-14). In the Old Testament and the New living rightly before God always arose out of faith and hope and could never properly be abstracted from these things (Gen. 15:6; Luke 1:6, 67-79; 2:25). Salvation has always been God's gift rather than our achievement.

The Christian doctrine of justification by faith apart from works of the law (Rom. 3:28) excludes all other possibilities and draws attention to Christ. It insists that the wrath of God (Rom. 1:18ff.) and the righteous judgement of God (Rom. 3:19-20) cannot be dealt with in any other way than by Jesus' atoning death (Rom. 3:24-25). That is why Paul the Christian could insist that he wanted to be found in Christ, 'not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith

in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith' (Phil. 3:9).

This doctrine keeps our focus where it should be, on Jesus. He is at the very centre of God's purposes and every aspect of Christian living is dependent upon him. If our right standing before God is dependent upon him, and Christian life both individually and together is properly an outworking of that dependence upon him, then the intrusion of anything between us and Jesus (be it personal performance, institutional membership, or anything else) will confuse our message and

corrupt our faith.

Luther understood that. He watched it work itself out in practice in both the Roman Catholic Church and the extremists who left him seeking further experiences of the Spirit. That is why he called justification by faith alone the doctrine by which the church stands or falls. When this doctrine is understood and clearly proclaimed, men and women are directed towards their only true hope and the churches order their lives appropriately. When it is lost, clouded or reconfigured in ways which would never give rise to the objections Paul himself anticipates in Romans 6 and elsewhere, the consequences are far-reaching and disastrous.

This is undoubtedly the most famous example of the importance of doctrine



The Rev Dr Mark Thompson is head of the Department of Theology, Philosophy and Ethics at Moore College and lectures in theology and church history.



for the life and health of the churches. In the face of contemporary debates about this doctrine it is all the more important that we understand what the Bible

does in fact teach on this subject. Yet it is also illustrative of the wider point. Christian doctrine, arising out of rather than imposed upon the exposition of the Scriptures, helps us to retain biblical proportions. It helps us keep central matters central. It shows us the consequences of misunderstanding or reconfiguring the teaching of Scripture in directions more suited to our personal or institutional concerns.

Preaching and Bible teaching are vital, energetic and nourishing when they are profoundly theological. Good theology does not complicate or confuse our message — and it certainly should not make it dry and boring. Rather, good theology, properly understood and well-digested, helps to clarify our message and drive it home. SC

...issues of child abuse and sexual misconduct generally within the Anglican Church have, in the recent past, been widely reported in the public media. I want to reaffirm our abhorrence of such behaviour. There is no doubt that we must continue to maintain a culture of rejection of sexual misconduct and abuse of children within this Diocese as we remain true to biblical standards of morality.

Dr Peter Jensen
Archbishop Of Sydney

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The Professional Standards Unit receives and deals with complaints of child abuse or sexual misconduct by members of the clergy and church workers.

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Teen hero visits Roseville

Jessica Watson, the youngest person to sail solo and unassisted around the world, visited students at Roseville College on August 9.

Can you spot your minister?

MORE than 60 Sydney Anglican rectors attended the Evangelism Ministries training day last month. Held at the Wesley Centre in Sydney, the aim was to boost the number of parishes planting new churches (see story, page 5).



your parish pictures please

If you have photos of any church-related event, send them to us: newspaper@anglicanmedia.com.au

Parra op shop celebrates 50th



TO celebrate 50 years of community shops, Anglicare launched its refurbished Parramatta store on August 17.

As well as a new shopfront, the Macquarie Street store has received new carpets, lighting, fittings and a fresh coat of paint — all of which have

been welcomed by shoppers.

Mrs Jean Robinson, 83, has been volunteering at the Parramatta op shop for 10 years and is very happy with the new-look store.

"The shop looks so lovely," she says. "I love what they've done to it. It looks like a brand new shop now."

Arden welcomes new principal

GRAHAM Anderson was inducted as the principal of Arden Anglican School, Beecroft/Epping, at a service held at St Alban's Anglican Church, Epping on July 26.

Mr Anderson replaces Colin May, who retired at the end of 2009.

In his address to the school community, Mr Anderson spoke about his role as the leader of the school as well as his goal to unashamedly proclaim the gospel of Jesus at Arden.

"It is my job to ensure the great traditions at the school continue, while developing a vision for our future," he said.



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Can we be free with God in our speech?

Can we speak about that without words?

New College Lecture Series 2010

14-15 September 2010

The John Milner Scientific Building, UNSW, Sydney



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Research Professor in Theology at Duke Divinity School, North Carolina

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ADMISSION IS FREE! Bookings for all three lectures are essential and seats are limited.

For more information contact: Rebecca O'Sullivan, 02 9221 2900 or visit: www.newcollege.unsw.edu.au

DIARY

SATURDAY, September 4

'ON SOLID ROCK, A HISTORY OF CHRIST CHURCH, LAVENDER BAY'

THE Anglican Historical Society invites you to hear the Rev Ross McDonald speak on his new history of Christ Church Anglican, Lavender Bay. ENTRY is free.

LOCATION | St Philip's Anglican Church, York St, Sydney | 1:30pm

TUESDAY, September 7

2ND ANNUAL DINNER FOR THE INTEGRAL PROJECT

Dr Bryan Cowling, executive director of the Anglican Education Commission, invites next-generation educational leaders, schoolteachers and others involved in Anglican schools. SPEAKER: Dr Trevor Cooling, Professor of Christian Education at Canterbury Christ Church University. LOCATION | Tara Anglican School for Girls | 6:30pm

SATURDAY, September 11

CMS COMMISSIONING SERVICE

ANDREW and Sarah Lubbock
LOCATION | All Saints' Anglican Church, Petersham | 2pm-4pm

MONDAY, September 13 & Wednesday, September 15

YOUTHWORKS COLLEGE OPEN-HOUSE SESSIONS

GET a taste of college life and sit in on lectures for a day.
LOCATION | 11 Fifth Ave, Loftus, NSW | 9am

TUESDAY, September 14

4TH ANNUAL CELEBRATION OF ANGLICAN SCHOOLING

GUEST preacher: Dr Michael Spence,

Vice-Chancellor of the University of Sydney. Will include an interview with Dr Trevor Cooling, Professor of Christian Education at Canterbury Christ Church University.
LOCATION | St Andrew's Cathedral | 5:30pm

WEDNESDAY, September 15

ISLAM: ELEPHANT IN THE ROOM

THE former Bishop of Rochester, Kent, Michael Nazir-Ali, will talk on 'Australia and the Muslim world'. Lunch will be served.
\$70 per person. RSVP on 1300 365 965 or www.fava.org.au

LOCATION | NSW Parliament House, Macquarie St, Sydney | 12:30pm-1pm

COURAGE IN A HOSTILE WORLD

BISHOP Michael Nazir-Ali will run a public forum on the 'Challenge of radical Islam and aggressive atheism'. \$25 per person. RSVP on 1300 365 965 or fava.org.au
LOCATION | Wesley Theatre, 220 Pitt St, Sydney | 7pm-9pm

WEDNESDAY, September 15 – THURSDAY September 16

MOORE COLLEGE SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY CONFERENCE

THE Wisdom of the Cross: Exploring 1 Corinthians
\$160. For more information phone (02) 9577 9911 or visit external.moore.edu.au/schooltheology/
LOCATION | Moore College, 1 King St, Newtown

THURSDAY, September 16

COURAGE IN A HOSTILE WORLD

BISHOP Michael Nazir-Ali will run a seminar on the topic of 'Promoting the Kingdom of God in an increasingly hostile culture'. \$25 per person. RSVP on 1300 365 965 or fava.org.au
LOCATION | St Anne's, Ryde,

Anglican Centre, Cnr Church and Gowrie Streets, Ryde | 10am-1pm

THURSDAY, September 23 – Friday, September 24

THEOLOGY OF YOUTH MINISTRY CONFERENCE

A conference designed to facilitate theological reflection, exploring how youth ministry should respond to cultural shifts. For church leaders and youth ministry practitioners. To register see www.youthworks.net/events or phone (02) 8268 3355
LOCATION | St Anne's Anglican Church, 42 Church St, Ryde

FRIDAY, September 24

CMS FRIDAY FELLOWSHIP

SPEAKERS: Paul and Sandra King
LOCATION | Level 5, 51 Druitt St, Sydney | 10:30am-12pm

SATURDAY, September 25

KIDS MATTERS CONFERENCE

SPEAKER: Margaret Cooling
FOR anyone involved in preschool to Year 6 ministry. Includes practical workshops.
SEE www.youthworks.net/events or phone (02) 8268 3355
LOCATION | Hoxton Park Anglican Church, Cnr Cowpasture Rd and Latrobe Rd, Hoxton Park | 8:30am-1pm

SATURDAY, September 25 – Sunday, October 10

YOUTHWORKS HSC STUDY CONFERENCES

TO register go to www.outdoors.youthworks.net
LOCATION | Port Hacking, Shoalhaven and the Blue Mountains

SATURDAY, October 2

ZIMaid DINNER CONCERT

HELP raise \$30,000 to fund a range of projects for homeless children's health and nutritional needs in Zimbabwe. COST is \$60 a person. For tickets go to www.zimaid.org/news1.html
LOCATION | Ryde-Eastwood Leagues Club, West Ryde | 6pm

TUESDAY, October 5 – Thursday, October 7

YOUTHWORKS HOWZAT! CRICKET CAMP

For more information on the camp, or to register, go to <http://outdoors.youthworks.net>
LOCATION | St Gregory's College, Campbelltown

YOUTHWORKS GET TAGGED! OZTAG CAMP

For more information and to register go to <http://outdoors.youthworks.net>
LOCATION | Port Hacking Conference Centre, Sutherland



2010
Isaac Armitage Lecture
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Principal, Queensland Theological College

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FEATURED EVENT OF THE MONTH

South no longer left out



Gina Black, pictured with daughters Madelyn, Olivia and Gabriele, wanted to make teaching for women accessible on the South Coast.

THE southern tail of the Sydney Diocese (all the way down in Ulladulla, three hours from the CBD) is a long way away from the centre of the action.

Often the geographical distance can stand in the way of South Coast Christians taking part in conferences and other teaching opportunities available in Sydney and Katoomba.

This is something North Nowra mum Gina Black discovered some years ago when she moved out of Sydney.

"I realised that the big women's conferences were significantly less accessible, especially for the older ladies, the less mobile and those — like myself — who have small children," Gina says. "So, we decided to organise one."

Gina got together with a group of like-minded women from (mainly Anglican) local churches and they have put together a day conference expressly for women who live on the South Coast or in the Southern Highlands.

Known as Switch, the Southern Women's Conference 2010 will be held on Saturday, October 16 at the Anglican Youthworks conference site at Waterslea (near Nowra).

The event is aimed at women of all ages who are keen to live for Jesus and will feature a line-up of top speakers.

Taking the theme 'Faith in a Fallen World', the day will include Bible studies on Romans 12 from Mary

Andrews College director of studies Jackie Stoneman.

Well-known Canberra author and commentator Melinda Tankard Reist will speak about the media's impact on girls, focusing on how to help girls resist negative messages in popular culture.

Seminars on a range of topics will be provided by Christine Jensen, Zara Pennicook and Charissa Forrest.

The day will offer more than just a stimulating program.

"Having started organising the conference, it's become evident that not only will this be a great opportunity for Bible teaching, prayer and encouragement but also for much needed networking," Gina says, "especially for those feeling isolated in smaller congregations from all denominational backgrounds."

For more information about the day or to obtain a booking form, please phone 8268 3322, email bookings@youthworks.net.au or register online at www.youthworks.net.



Melinda Tankard Reist will address the Switch Conference on the media's effect on girls.

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Do we need transitional ministry?

JUDY ADAMSON investigates whether the old 'locum' system for parishes between incumbent ministers has had its day.

MANY churchgoers will clearly remember the last time their parish was between ministers. The gap between the former rector leaving and the new man arriving may have been short or long — and the congregation could have been struggling or in good emotional and spiritual shape — but the impact on a parish during this transition period can be profound.

"It's often seen as down time — when things will go into cruise control — whereas it can be an active time of really looking back and seeing what the church is up to," says the Rev Hugh Isaacs, a former parish minister in the Sydney Diocese who has felt called to work specifically in transitional ministry.

Also called 'intentional interim ministry', transitional ministry in Australia is more common in other Protestant denominations, or in Anglican dioceses outside Sydney. There is even a Transitional Ministry Association of Australia, which is comprised of ministers from Baptist, Church of Christ and Anglican churches.

But why do it? When a rector or senior pastor leaves, surely the most sensible thing to do is find a replacement to ensure the ministry life of the church keeps growing and moving forward?

Yes — and no. While it's important in the long term to have a full-time minister in a parish, issues such as timing and congregational need are also important. If the previous minister was in the church for a long time, there may be issues of grief to deal with once he departs; if there are problems in a parish, these need to be sorted out before new ministry can flourish; and sometimes time simply needs to be taken to think about a church's future direction.

"What transitional ministry gives you is the opportunity for the whole church to sit back and look at who they are, their identity as a church and what things are important to them," Mr Isaacs says. "They can then think about what sort of minister they might want to get in relation to who they are."

"It might be you get a situation where a church is declining, in an



they decide is right, they begin looking for a new rector.

To consider transition from the rector's perspective, the Rev Geoff Deutscher — who has just finished 10 years of ministry in Ulladulla to move to the parish of Wanniasa in the ACT — says he really valued working with an ordained transition coach, who was provided for him by the Bishop of Canberra and Goulburn, Stuart Robinson.

In addition to time spent reflecting on his ministry in Ulladulla — everything from how he had seen God at work to lost opportunities — Mr Deutscher was encouraged to think about "ending well". This included talking with Ulladulla church leaders about the parish going forward and staying on track after his departure, as well as saying farewell effectively.

"We have this magnificent service of

induction in Sydney — we welcome the new minister well — but we don't have anything to say goodbye or formalise the termination of the ministry," he says. "When it's done well, people have been allowed to grieve, as well as celebrate what God has done through us and among us and look forward."

Before the Deutschers' ministry began in the ACT, Bishop Robinson also arranged for a meet-and-greet evening in Wanniasa for Geoff and his wife Karen, so they and parish members could begin to get to know each other. A work-free staff retreat is planned in the next few months, and Mr Deutscher has also been talking to previous rectors about their experiences in the parish.

"It's been really helpful," he says. "My own journey has highlighted that there's a glaring lack of thought that's been given to the idea of transition... it's way, way overdue."

SC

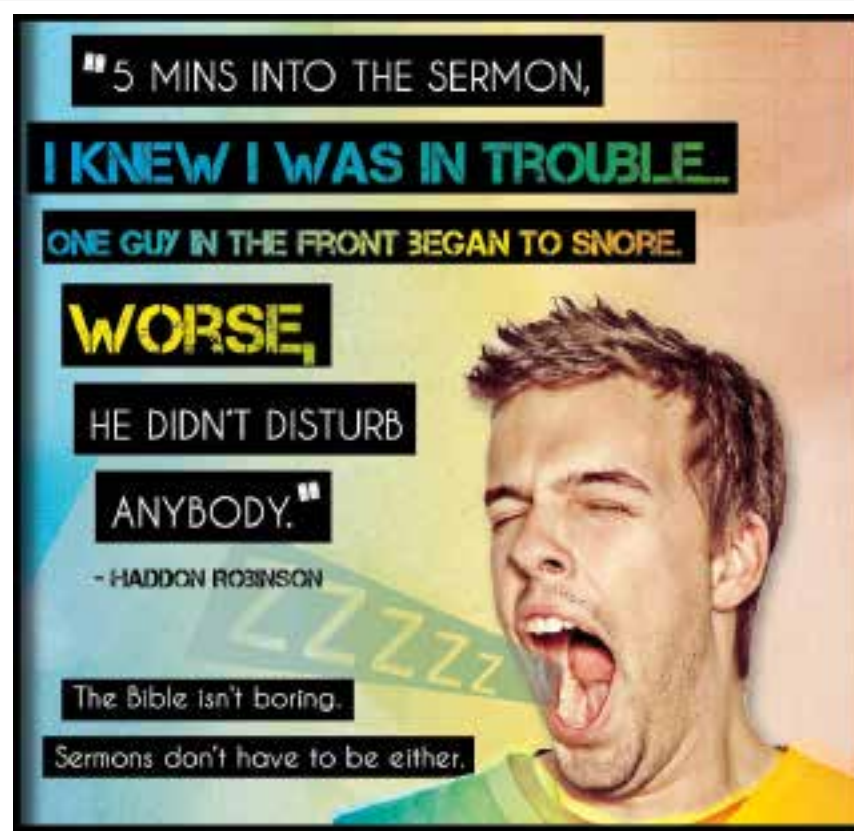
area that has changed culturally — a traditional Anglican church in a cross-cultural area — and perhaps at this point a totally new ministry could be created. A transitional ministry could look at that."

Archdeacon Terry Dein has been interested in intentional interim ministry for some years. He notes that the Nominations Ordinance has already been altered to allow for "a pause" in a parish's nomination process so that transitional ministry could occur.

However, he adds, "our culture is such that no-one wants to hit the pause button... they all want to fill the parish as soon as possible. But the IIM model is you don't fill a parish when it's a mess — you sort it out and then fill it. I think events of recent years have demonstrated that we really need to begin to treat this model seriously and put some hard work into how we can adapt it to fit our [Sydney Anglican] systems."

Mr Isaacs agrees transitional ministry is helpful for a parish in crisis but adds that, "it shouldn't just be viewed as something you do when there's a problem — it's also for a church that wants to work through a process of planning for the future".

He says a transition team is formed from a wide group within a parish, voted on by members. They work through the history, identity and vision of the parish with the help of their transitional minister, then, at the time



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The Chaplain's main areas of responsibility will include:

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- Planning chapel services and if appropriate leading chapel services and associated pastoral duties.
- Conducting occasional Anglican services within the Shoalhaven Area Deanery with the support of local clergy.

All teaching staff participate in the School's extensive pastoral care and co-curricular programs.

The ability to coach boys' or girls' team sports will be a distinct advantage.

Starting Date: 25 January, 2011
Application Closing Date: 24th September

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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www.southerncross.youthworks.net

For Sale

SEBEL 'PROGRAM' CHAIRS FOR SALE: \$35 each. 80 available, good condition. Also lots of older metal framed padded chairs for a donation. Pick up from St Paul's Terrey Hills. For more information contact David on 9450 2840

Miscellaneous

Do you feel God calling you to serve Him in a new place? Mittagong Presbyterian Church is seeking keen Christian families and singles to join them for outreach ministry. Contact David Hocking 4869 3118

HOUSE WANTED TO RENT: Christian family seek reasonably priced 3 bedroom house whilst studying at Moore Theological College for a year and attached to a church in Roseville. Please call Karen on 0437 859529

RETREATS & SPIRITUAL DIRECTION: The Centre for Ignatian Spirituality is set in beautiful grounds at Pymble [Sydney] where you can draw aside with God in quiet solitude. The team includes lay & clergy, males & females, Catholics & Protestants. Info: 02 9488 4524 or cis.jesuit.org.au/canisius.html

SOLICITOR SERVICES: Wright Lawyers and Associates - Sydney area. General Practice including Wills and Estates. Available to visit you: 1300 174 247 or 0404 205 881

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A Caring Community With A Family Atmosphere



Youth Workers

Applications and expressions of interest are invited for the position of Youth Workers at Flo Harris Lodge. Flo Harris Lodge is a ministry of PETERSHAM BAPTIST CHURCH.

Affectionately known as 'Flo', the Lodge provides accommodation for up to 50 young men and women studying or working in Sydney.

Youth Workers are being sought to take up duties in the Lodge from mid-January 2011. The role is ideal for a married couple and is generally filled in a shared capacity by a husband and wife team.

The position requires the Youth Workers to live on the premises to assist the Managers in meeting the pastoral care needs of residents.

A remuneration package in the form of full accommodation, food and living expenses is available.

Inquiries and job description contact:

The Managers, Flo Harris Lodge
floharris1@baptistnsw.asn.au
or ring Peter 0425290176

Applications close 11 October 2010

Head of School

The Headmaster, Mr Tim Richards is retiring at the end of this school year after many years of dedicated service. The Board of the School is seeking applications from dynamic, experienced educators for the position of Head of a progressive Christian school, to commence Term 1, 2011.

Applicants are encouraged to contact the school for an information booklet which contains the selection criteria which should be attached to the application for the position.

John Jones, Secretary,
Headmaster's Secretary, The Scots School,
Church Road, BATEURIST NSW 2785
Phone: (02) 4334 2966
Email: j.jones@scotsnsw.nsw.edu.au
Applications close 24th September 2010

SENIOR ASSOCIATE MINISTER

Holy Trinity Anglican Church is an evangelical Anglican church situated in the eastern suburbs of Melbourne. It is a multicultural church of six congregations with a well-established tradition of evangelistic and expository Bible teaching ministry.

Our recently appointed senior minister, Andrew Reid, is seeking to appoint a senior associate to work alongside him in growing the ministry as a whole and in having particular responsibility for our English-speaking family congregations.

For further information, contact Andrew Reid, Holy Trinity Cathedral, 186 Church Road, DOCKLANDS VIC 3188
T: (03) 9848 9448
E: andrew@holytrinity.vic.edu.au

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(One position may start as early as October 2010)



Families' Minister

St Mark's Anglican Church, Berowra

Do you have
A love for Jesus, passion for people, excitement for evangelism, and
creativity, enthusiasm and energy

Want to be a part of
A growing evangelical church, with three other staff, ministering to
children and their parents

Been thinking about
Working full or part time in one of Sydney's most beautiful suburbs

We're looking for
Someone to pastor our Sunday morning young families service –
who loves the Lord Jesus Christ; has a passion and ability to
minister to, disciple and pastor, children (and their parents); is
excited to reach out to newcomers; is willing to train others in
ministry and outreach; and wants to help grow God's Kingdom in
Berowra. Ideally you will have some theological training or been
working in a similar position for a minimum of two years.

Can focus on
Existing ministries, and awesome growth opportunities via baptisms,
playgroups, GEBS, GFS, Kids Games and primary Scripture

Interested
Please contact our Senior Minister – Rev Ian Millican
ph: 0458.1285 email ian@stmarksberowra.org

We would love to talk to you about ministry with us!



St Paul's Anglican Church Castle Hill is located in north west Sydney with weekly average congregations of 1,000 people over 4 services. Children's Ministry is a large and vibrant area of our church and includes programs in many areas such as: Sunday morning-Kids Alive groups, after school activities-K'Spirit, SRE and lunchtime groups in local schools and two school holiday activity days-Supadays during each year.

Currently we have a position available as Children's Director in our Student Ministry area. The role is a maternity leave position which may develop into a permanent position. We seek a candidate who is an enthusiastic team player and love's to bring the Gospel to children (Theology qualification required). Previous experience in children's ministry (preferably in a larger church setting) and 'Safe Working with Children' accreditation, coupled with the ability to conduct training sessions with church volunteers is essential.

For further information please call the Senior Minister,
John Gray on 02 8848 1111 for a confidential conversation.



St Jude's Bowral

St Jude's Anglican Church, Bowral is looking for both an Assistant Minister and a Youth Worker to commence work in early 2011.

Assistant Minister

This position will involve pastoral leadership of a contemporary service, preaching, service leading and leadership of other key ministry areas. An ordained person is preferred, though a lay leader with theological training and ministry experience may apply.

Youth Worker

The position will involve leadership of a growing youth ministry, high school ministry and SRE in primary school. With the right qualifications and gifts this role could involve leadership of the contemporary evening service and preaching.

For more information phone Rev Stephen Fifer on (02) 4862 2019.

Expressions of interest with resumes should be addressed to:
Rev Stephen Fifer, 34 Bendooley Street, Bowral, NSW, 2576
or stephen.fifer@bowralanglican.org.au



Cross Cultural Ministry Opportunity in Melbourne

St Jude's is seeking a **Senior Associate Minister** to lead our ministry team on the Carlton Housing Estate.

This Estate, in Lygon Street, houses more than 5000 people from over 50 nationalities.

The successful candidate will lead a team engaged in outreach on the Estate; have oversight of the Community Church congregation and its related ministries; and be part of the senior leadership team of a dynamic and growing church, which is committed to church planting and evangelism. They will join a wider staff team of 20 and report to the Vicar/Senior Minister.

Please contact Peter Williams for a position description.

p: +61 3 9347 5152

e: vicarpeg@stjudes.org.au

w: www.stjudes.org.au



Media Marketing Coordinator

Youthworks Media's school publications arm – Christian Education Publications – is seeking a motivated, well-presented and clear communicator to work in a full-time capacity. The successful applicant will be responsible for the production of our schools educational resources across Australia and internationally.

A more detailed position description can be found at
www.youthworksmedia.com.au/marketing_coordinator

All applications must be in writing (emails accepted) and include a resume of your qualifications and employment history. Please provide at least two current references, including one from your church minister.

Forward all applications or enquiries to:
Greg Bridge, Acting Executive Director - Youthworks Media
PO Box 4287, Sydney South 1235
E: jessica.crowley@youthworks.net P: (02) 8268 3335 F: (02) 8268 3357

Families and Children's Minister (Melbourne)

St Jude's is a large inner urban Anglican Church in Melbourne. Children's ministry is a significant part of our church. Core activities are Sunday morning Rhove groups (2 congregations), weekly playgroup and outreach events to children.

We are seeking someone to oversee our Children's Ministry as part of the Urban Family Ministry team. The person will:

- Love children and have a passion to see children love God
- Demonstrate and speak of their faith in Jesus
- Recruit, equip and lead volunteers
- Effectively resource programs
- Have experience in children's ministry and ideally have teaching or theological qualifications.

This position is for 3 days per week and commences in 2011. Please contact Peter Williams for a position description.

p: +61 3 9347 5152

e: vicarpeg@stjudes.org.au

w: www.stjudes.org.au





Choosing my religion

A growing number of young Australians subscribe to a grab bag of beliefs, from reincarnation to astrology. ANDREW ROBINSON investigates the implications of this trend.

A STRANGE but largely invisible feature lurks on the Australian spiritual landscape. It is not the ascendancy of atheism or Islam, neither is it the growth of new religious movements like the Church of Scientology or even the Jedi census pranksters. It's the remarkably high number of Australian youth who hold a whole range of eclectic — and often contradictory — beliefs.

Nearly one third of Generation Y 'definitely' believe in reincarnation, one quarter trust in astrology while 21 per cent believe in the power of psychics.

The figures, from the 2007 'Spirit of Generation Y' study, are even more striking when you compare them with the United States: 13 per cent of US teenagers (13-17) believe in reincarnation, compared to 31 per cent of Australians the same age.

But people holding these beliefs don't neatly slot into established religious traditions like Buddhism or Hinduism. In fact, only a minority of the believers in reincarnation have ever investigated these religions, let alone practised them. Many of them identify nominally as Christians. These ideas circulate through the culture like "folk beliefs" and Australian youth often adopt them simply in an attempt to make sense of life.

Fifteen-year-old Annika told researchers: "I know someone who was raped and then got run over and died — like, how could they have such a short life — and, like, a baby that is stillborn, how could that be their life over... there must be something else".

In fact, the same proportion of Generation Y are New Age as are church-going Christians. To be given the descriptor 'New Age', young people had to hold three or more New Age beliefs — but only half of them have

actually engaged in New Age practices such as Eastern meditation or Tarot cards. It's a term which these young people wouldn't use of themselves but it's a shorthand way to describe a grab bag of eclectic beliefs from Eastern religion and European legends.

There is even a demographic dimension: being female, living away from home, watching more TV and living in an area of economic disadvantage are all 'significantly associated' with being a New Age believer.

TV PROMOTES NEW AGE?

Given the finding that New Age or eclectic spirituality is related to watching a lot of TV, is the popular media promoting this belief system?

Generation Y is certainly the most media-saturated cohort in history. Whether it's the Twilight saga or TV psychic Jonathan Edwards, do films and TV shows with supernatural themes teach beliefs about the world or simply reflect them?

Graham Rossiter, Professor of Religious Education at the Australian Catholic University, points out that the effect of a book or film will depend on whether a person already has a strong spiritual compass. You enter the worldview and values of a text as you follow the story but once the film is over, your worldview and values return to normal.

"However... if there is a vagueness and fluidity in them," he says, "then perhaps they will be more prone to identifying with those in films and television."

This is a critical point to understand. Given that Americans and Australians are consuming the same media, why are our teens far more prone to adopt Eastern and occult ideas? It seems American teens have a far stronger Christian culture through which to interpret supernatural themes.

INTRODUCTION:

'Eclectic' belief in a multi-faith culture

The growth of 'eclectic' spirituality — really a smorgasbord of Western occult practices and Eastern beliefs — is related to the fragmentation of religious belief in Australia as culture becomes more globalised and multi-faith. Many young people are no longer raised with a framework to assess competing faith claims.

Themes such as reincarnation are common in a lot of popular programming because the storylines or ideas originate from East Asia. On the opposite page Judy Adamson reviews a current example, *The Last Airbender*.

But the same trend can be seen in serious literature. HarperCollins has asked Christian geneticist Francis Collins to edit a collection of essays on 'belief' to counter the New Atheist assault on faith. The result is an extremely eclectic mix.

Overall the book is dominated by Christian perspectives with contemporary contributions from N.T. Wright and Collins himself, as well as refreshers from the classics: Augustine, Blaise Pascal, John Locke. Other chapters — such as those by Tim Keller and Oz Guinness — are straight from the evangelical apologetic heartland.

So the addition of two Eastern voices — Mahatma Ghandi and the Dalai Lama — is jarring. It is interesting to read the Tibetan leader's perspective on New Atheism but the extract from an old Ghandi speech adds nothing. It smacks of the publisher's desire to maintain a gloss of multi-faith diversity.

- Jeremy Halcrow

belief

readings on the corner for faith

edited and introduced by FRANCIS S. COLLINS

DIALOGUE WITH TEENS

What implications does it have for how we do ministry to Generation Y?

The Rev Geoff Broughton, an inner-city minister and youth ministry lecturer now completing his doctoral studies at Moore College, says that spirituality has been pervaded by the powerful pragmatism of the general culture.

"For a lot of people, it's an issue of what is practical," says Mr Broughton, who formerly ministered to Glebe's large public housing area. "If they're young mums [in disadvantaged communities] they are great survivors. So they have learnt through hard experience to take what they can get, and not to ask too many questions where it comes from."

"If there was a Christian minister around at a time of need, they'll be open to the Christian faith, but if there's someone teaching yoga, they'll take that."

It's not simply an issue of less educated people being unthinking, he says. "Number one, there's a relationship there. Number two, it's helped them survive."

Pervasive pragmatism means that spirituality is often just another product

offered to people, not a world-changing, take-up-your-cross reality.

"In a sense, the most troubling aspect of many modern spiritualities is that they are not troubling enough," he says, quoting Carrette and King's book, *Selling Spirituality*.

Mr Broughton argues that our churches must not give in to the consumer attitude of our culture. They must also be genuinely interested in people, not just numbers.

"Younger people generally are pretty good at discerning if all you're interested in is getting their bum on a seat," he says. "They will resist that — even if they are interested in Jesus."

George Statheos, senior chaplain at Penrith Anglican College, has spent the last 20 years working with youth. He agrees that Gen Y is definitely more open to talking about spiritual issues.

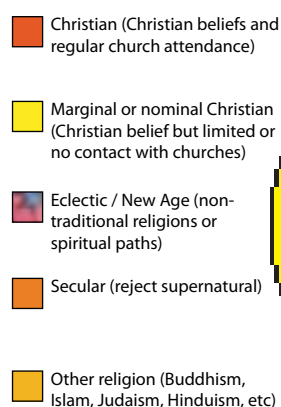
"But not necessarily Christian spiritual things," he says. "There are a lot of kids asking questions about séances and the occult — plenty of kids into that."

He says genuine dialogue is a key starting point and agrees that just being there during the tough times is crucial.

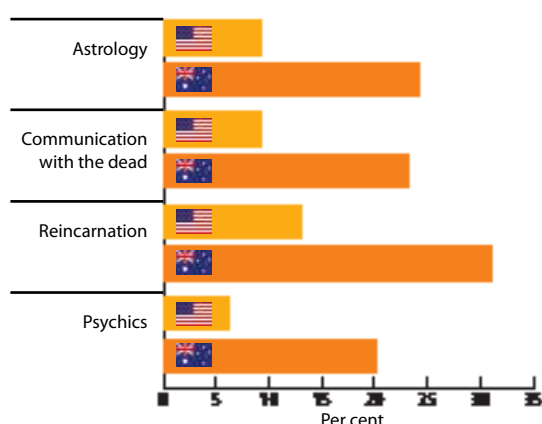
"Years ago, you'd have your seven classic answers to seven classic questions," he says. "Those questions still exist, but they're coming across very differently."

"We've really got to learn to listen. When their worldview doesn't have the answers... we need to be there to pick up the pieces." **SC**

Spirituality Types: Gen Y



US and Australian teens (13-17) definitely believe in...



All Statistics: *The Spirit of Generation Y: Young People's Spirituality in a Changing Australia*. Michael Mason, Andrew Singleton, Ruth Webber. John Garratt Publishing 2007.



A plot that never dies

The Last Airbender: Buddhism for beginners?

This kid-friendly martial arts flick is fun, but don't overlook the Buddhist themes, write JUDY ADAMSON.

THE LAST AIRBENDER 3D
PG

THIS film is a little bit *Star Wars*, a little bit Bruce Lee and a little bit religious iconography — and it will have been on the entertainment radar of your kids for months.

The Last Airbender is based on a popular cartoon series that first screened in 2005 on cable children's network Nickelodeon. The title character is Aang (Noah Ringer) — a boy who, through misadventure, has lain frozen in ice for a century. Accidentally unfrozen by Katara (Nicola Peltz) and her brother Sokka (Jackson Rathbone) from the Water tribe, Aang discovers a world very different to the one he remembers.

For Aang is the Avatar. Not an 'avatar' as created in James Cameron's blue-peopled CGI epic — this Avatar is a unifying, Dalai Lama-like figure who has a series of curious tattoos and does really cool martial arts moves.

It's not Aang's fault his job title matches the name of Cameron's all-conquering film. The cartoon series appeared first and has millions of fans around the globe, some of whom are livid at how *The Last Airbender's* writer-director M. Night Shyamalan has condensed and portrayed the story on film. Just imagine the howls of complaint if Aang was no longer called the Avatar!

But back to the world of *The Last Airbender*. There are four tribes, each connected to the elements of earth, air, fire or water. Some people are "benders", who are able to control their native element, but only the Avatar — who brings and maintains harmony — has power over all four elements. He is also the only person who can speak to the spirits.

However, because Aang disappeared for a century the peace of the planet has been broken. The powerful Fire nation is out for global domination and, knowing the Avatar was to appear next in Aang's tribe, the Air nation, they slaughtered all its inhabitants — so Aang is indeed the last airbender.

In flashback we are shown the Avatar "test" given to Aang and it is very similar to that used to determine the identity of the Dalai Lama in Tibetan Buddhism: a boy is given a range of items and must choose from among them. Only the truly reborn one will select what belonged to him in a former life.

Reincarnation is a core Buddhist teaching, so *The Last Airbender* provides a good opportunity for conversations with our children or friends about the differences between Buddhism and the promises the Bible makes about Christian rebirth. The film also touches on a range of issues from sacrificial love, self-discipline and personal responsibility to the pursuit of power and the effect of the choices we make.

But don't try to make too much of it all. In essence, this is a weekend action special that's meant for entertainment rather than analysis. So while the 3D is an unnecessary distraction, it's not hard to enjoy yourself. **SC**

Also aimed at kids

The Sorcerer's Apprentice

This film may be a Disney creation but it has nothing in common with the famous Mickey Mouse cartoon of the same name. Set in today's New York the story revolves around the search for the successor to the sorcerer Merlin. It mixes fantasy and action, blending magic with 21st-century technology and a truckload of effects. It's still Disney at heart but a bit scary for the littlies.



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The next stage of Anglican Retirement Villages' Glenhaven Green is nearing completion, and RDC is already moved all the plan. This is a wonderful opportunity to move to a beautiful new home in a friendly welcoming community in the heart of the lovely Hills District. Nestled amongst a grove of protected blue gum forest, the new development features spacious and beautifully appointed open plan villas with private landscaped or covered courtyards. Free of the concerns of home maintenance, you can stroll down to the new Community Centre with its indoor pool, gym, lounge, bathroom, clinic and meditation, while Flower Power is right next door and Castle Towers shopping centre is just ten minutes away.

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To arrange an appointment, call Anglican Retirement Villages on 0800 111 838. There's never been a better time, or place, to turn over a new leaf.



glenhaven green

