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CROSS

February 2011

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PUBLISHER: Anglican Media Sydney
PO Box W185, Parramatta Westfield 2150
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Acceptance of advertising does not imply endorsement.
Inclusion of advertising material is at the discretion of the publisher.

SUBSCRIPTIONS: Garry Joy

PHONE: 02 8860 8861 EMAIL: subs@anglicanmedia.com.au
\$44.00 (incl. GST) per annum (Australia)

PRINTED BY: Torch Publishing Company, Bankstown, NSW

Our need for conversion

DR PETER JENSEN

I HAVE been tracing the path of God's dealings with us as he brings us to salvation. At first I mentioned 'regeneration' by which, in a once-for-all event, God brings us to new life, new birth. Working back in the order of events from there, I discussed the beginning of God's plan in 'election', that is, his choice of us before the foundation of the world. Last month, I dealt with the subject of the dynamic 'call' of God when he, by his word and Spirit, summons us into new birth. From that new birth comes conversion. If you are not converted, you are not yet a genuine Christian. I will explain why.

Such a mighty event as a new birth must change everything. We are now a new creature, related to God in a totally different way and with the gift of a new heart, a new disposition. It is a heart to love God and to obey him — not something we do perfectly in this life but something we begin. The very beginnings of it show up in conversion.

Let me make three points about conversion.

First, it is shaped by the gospel itself. A short summary statement of the gospel is that in 2 Corinthians 4:5: 'we preach Jesus Christ as Lord'. What we need to notice from this is twofold. In the first place this gospel is made up of words, in fact, a sentence which is an assertion that Jesus Christ is Lord. The gospel is not a set of actions nor is it transmitted in a set of mystical experiences.

Next, it is an assertion which makes a demand on us. The proclamation that Jesus Christ is Lord means that he has sovereign rights over our lives. We cannot benefit from the gospel merely by bowing to it or treating it coolly. We need to submit ourselves fully to Jesus, entrusting ourselves to him and making it our aim from now on to please him. Necessarily this is a transforming experience, a conversion.

Second, conversion when broken down consists of faith and repentance — the very things that Jesus sought from us (eg. Mark 1:15). By faith, we abandon all trust in ourselves, all trust in idols of any sort and we trust in Jesus as the Lord who gives salvation through his death on the cross. Faith sings, 'Nothing in my hand I bring, simply to thy cross I cling'.

In repentance, we renounce the power of sin and especially the pride which has kept us from following Christ and commit ourselves to the Lord Jesus to be his true soldier and servant from now on until our life's end. Naturally our faith is small and often troubled; naturally our repentance is incomplete and often needs to be reaffirmed. New birth is a once-for-all event; the conversion which flows from it occurs once but then we need to lead a converted life,

constantly exercising faith, constantly repenting and seeking forgiveness.

Third, conversion can be noisy or quiet; it can be a huge turning point or pass almost unnoticed. It is not surprising that for many people these are moments of excitement, joy and enthusiasm.

The essential point is this: not that you can testify to a particular moment, good though that may be, but rather that you can say here and now that you are converted. It may be that you slipped into Christian faith. It may be that your regeneration occurred when you were very young and that you have always known the Lord as far as your conscious experience is concerned. That is not the point. The real question is this: are you now converted? Are you trusting Christ and him alone for your salvation? Have you turned your back on sin, the world and the devil and determined to follow Christ as Lord? Is this your testimony today? Then you are converted.

Your spiritual state today is what matters. The experience of conversion can, unfortunately, be counterfeited and a testimony can be fraudulent. Or we may drift into Christian company and Christ habits without ever inwardly committing ourselves to the Lord through faith and repentance. It is possible to be a regular church member, a church warden, even a minister, and be unconverted. People in this situation often do unintentional harm in churches because they are not walking with Christ and do not have his mind.

It is always immensely important to seek spiritually minded church leaders and not merely assume that a person who wants to be ordained or occupy a special role in church is therefore regenerate and converted. Although it is not always given to us to know the truth about the spiritual state of others, we should look for the fruit of repentance and the assurance of faith before we entrust leadership to professing believers in our churches.

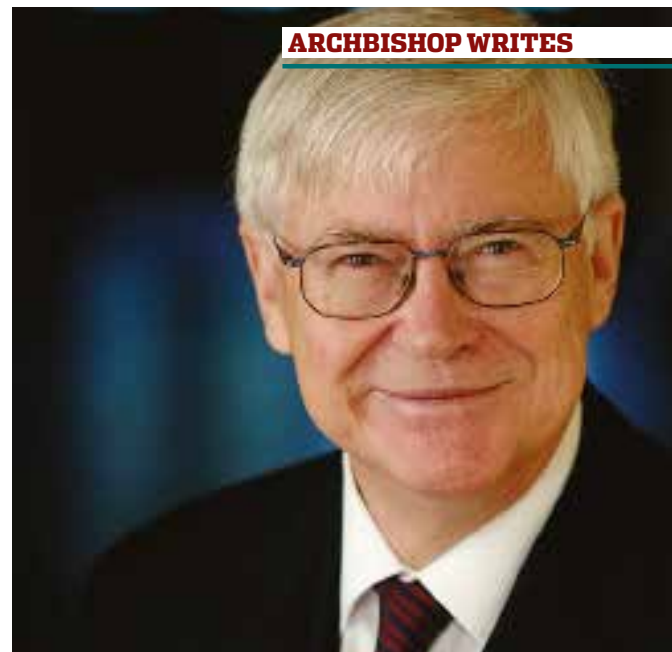
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DUBLIN TO DARLO

Ed returns to his city roots

JUDY ADAMSON

IT'S a far cry from a snowy Irish winter — and infinitely noisier — but Ed Vaughan is once again walking the streets of Darlinghurst where he spent a decade living above his dad's pub, the

Green Park Hotel on the corner of Victoria and Liverpool streets.

"It's changed very much here," he says. "It's a much more gentrified area, with many young professionals. When I lived here it was a very working class area.

"The number of young families living here is also

a big change... there's an enormous number of small children and women with prams."

Five years ago, Ed Vaughan and his family moved to the Crinken Church of Ireland in Shankill — a quiet suburb 40 minutes south of central Dublin — with the expectation

of reaching out to a planned new suburb for 20,000 people.

Development plans were scrapped after the country's economic collapse, which made Mr Vaughan rethink his ministry there because "the challenge of what the church needed had changed and it looked

less like us".

Enter the parish of Darlinghurst. Initially Mr Vaughan didn't think he was the right man for the area but over time, and with an updated idea of the local demographics, he began to see the possibilities in his old stamping ground. "A place like

Darlinghurst is a place of exile" he says, explaining that, for many, it's where they choose to live "because there are things in the past they want to leave behind".

But, he adds, while exile "is sometimes the place where you experience judgment, it is also sometimes a place of renewal".

The parish contains everything from the professional, cosmopolitan set to street people, and St John's responds accordingly — providing after-school kids' programs side by side with the Rough Edges Community Centre, open several nights a week to offer a listening ear and food for those who need it.

Mr Vaughan says parish members are already "a blessing to a city that needs them" and have "a lot to offer the Diocese of Sydney.

"There's enormous potential."

PHOTO: Russell Powell

SAUERKRAUT ON THE MENU

Rectors training course fills up

JEREMY HALCROW

AFTER three years helping South Sydney rectors with strategic planning, the eccentrically named Sauerkraut course is now being offered to senior ministers across the Anglican Church.

For the first time the

outside the South Sydney region. Nine have signed up, with one minister even flying up from the Melbourne Diocese to participate in the day-long monthly sessions.

With no serious promotion and little fanfare, strong word-of-mouth recommendations for the course have meant the 'outsider' group is already oversubscribed.

The conception of the program was a paper presented by the Rev Andrew Katay to the South Sydney Regional Council in 2007 in response to ongoing discussions about how to help parishes use their regional grants more effectively. Mr Katay's paper was based on English Archdeacon Bob Jackson's book *Hope for the Church*.

Archdeacon Jackson had demonstrated through a detailed demographic analysis that there are a few simple but key things all churches can do to ensure a viable and growing ministry.

Taking Archdeacon Jackson's parish growth plan and the eight ministry systems identified by former Saddleback pastor Nelson Searcy, Bishop Forsyth and Mr Katay developed a fresh model specifically for urban Australia.

The course focuses on a number of systems such as infrastructure, breaking them up into digestible sub-categories such as money, property and people. Likewise a complex and esoteric notion such as church growth is made more manageable by breaking

it up into three smaller systems: outreach, assimilation and membership growth.

The advantage of this kind of systems theory approach is that it is highly flexible and organic. Each participating church can adapt the systems in a way that best suits them.

"Our template forces rectors to ask the right questions and gives them examples of the answer," Mr Katay explains. "It doesn't enforce one 'right' answer. It is mandatory on the questions and illustrative in the answers."

Mr Katay's own systems are a "work in progress" and he admits he has been challenged to rework them thanks to the other rectors in his training group.

What is the feedback?

Entering its fourth year in South Sydney Region, 16 rectors have so far completed the Sauerkraut course.

For the South Sydney Regional Council the aim in funding Sauerkraut was to increase the percentage of growing churches, moving them out of the decline or plateau categories. Feedback shows the course has particularly helped newer rectors who had reached a plateau after a few years of initial growth.

"A number have found the course giving them a real kick along," Bishop Forsyth says. "It's not the only answer and it's not an alternative to other training models but we do believe the best way forward for many parishes is small, incremental changes." The Rev Antony Barraclough, rector at All Saints', Petersham, describes Sauerkraut as "professional development [that] all rectors should think about doing. It helped me see that what I thought were a hundred balls in the air were really just five. If you think about those five systems then all of a sudden it comes a bit containable."

Mr Barraclough found it particularly helpful for planning evangelism: "How do you do evangelism in this day and age? What is your plan? What is your budget?" Asking these questions led him to start a community garden and a monthly letterbox drop. "We now have 40 or 50 people from the local boarding houses going to our community garden program, so it has been excellent," he says. "The monthly letterbox drop has helped build community profile."

Mr Barraclough, who is also mission area leader for the inner west, said he would "encourage the guys in the mission area to do it because it was such a help for me".

The Rev Jim Croswell from St John's, Maroubra also felt the benefit, saying "Sauerkraut gave me a clearer idea of the big issues in my church and less anxiety in setting about pursuing a culture in which they might be addressed".

Why Sauerkraut?

The quirky name comes from Captain Cook's attempts to get sailors to eat cabbage to protect themselves from scurvy.

training program will be run for two separate groups. As usual a group of six South Sydney rectors will do the course for free, while a separate group will be run for a small fee for rectors

LAND BUY IN NORTH-WEST

New church for Stanhope Gardens

ANDREW BUEGER

AFTER 15 months of work the Diocese has acquired a block of land for a church to be built in Stanhope Gardens in Sydney's north-west.

Contracts on the land, near the Stanhope Gardens shopping precinct, were exchanged on Christmas Eve.

"It's a great block... it's in a really prominent place on top of a hill," said Geoff Kyngdon, chairman of the Mission Property Committee.

The land was purchased as part of the diocesan greenfields

project, which is being used to buy land in growth areas of Sydney.

No starting date has been set for the construction, as immediate priority is being given to the building of another church at Oran Park.

Said Mr Kyngdon: "God has been good to us and provided the land... we need to leave the future in his hands. The next steps will need to be worked out, and some fundraising will have to occur, but God is in control."

The 1.85 hectare block is directly opposite a site upon which Anglicare is planning on building a

retirement village. This will give opportunity for ministry to the village as well as the Parklea Correctional Centre to the south.

"It's in a great spot for ongoing ministry to the community," Mr Kyngdon said. "It's right in the thick of things and everyone will know it's there."

Stanhope Gardens is part of Blacktown City Council, which estimates that the population of the area will reach 68,000 by 2016.

Quakers Hill Anglican Church has a congregation that meets at a leisure centre in Stanhope Gardens.



ACL DEBATE

Leaders to be quizzed

NSW Premier Kristina Keneally and Opposition Leader Barry O'Farrell during a debate last year.

PREMIER Kristina Keneally and Opposition Leader Barry O'Farrell have agreed to address and be questioned by church leaders prior to the March election.

The Australian Christian Lobby's state director David Hutt

says the 'Make it Count' event, like the leaders' debate before the last Federal election, aims "to have the Christian constituency accepted as one whose opinion needs to be considered".

Senior Anglicans will be among those

asking questions at the invitation-only function on February 15 at State Parliament.

Unlike the Federal debate, there will not be a live webcast but the comments will be videotaped and posted on the ACL website.

UNDER REVIEW

Strategic Commission on track

The Archbishop's Strategic Commission on Structure, Funding and Governance is on schedule to report mid-year, in order to have its recommendations considered by Synod in October.

The committee has a brief to maximise, 'consistent with prudent management', funding for the Endowment of the See, as well as reviewing the operations and governance of major bodies such as Glebe Administration Board, Sydney Diocesan Secretariat, St Andrew's House Corporation and Anglican Church Property Trust.

Protest policy rethink

The Board of St Andrew's House Corporation, managers of Sydney Square, will review policies relating to the use of the square for protests. Responsibility for management of the land passed last year from the Glebe Administration Board to the SAHC.

There are an increasing number of requests for

Chaired by the CEO of Anglicare, Peter Kell, the commission includes three significant figures from the private sector: Tony Clemens, senior tax partner of Price Waterhouse Coopers; Robert Freeman, owner and CEO of property consultancy Finch Freeman; and Simon Pillar, founder and managing director of Pacific Equity Partners.

Says Mr Kell: "There's a general acceptance in the Diocese that reform is necessary in order to keep in step with 21st-century business practices within a distinctively Christian framework."

permission to use the square for public protests and there is concern about insurance, security, damage to property and conflicts with other uses of the land. Most of the square, between Town Hall and St Andrew's Cathedral, is privately owned, jointly by the Glebe Board and the Endowment of the See.



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NEW PLANT 'HOTHOUSE'

Dozen churches up, 15 more in the chute

HUMID Canberra weather amid the frantic start of the holiday season did nothing to dampen the enthusiasm of more than 110 church planters and their supporters who attended the second national In The Chute conference over three days last December.

Bishop Al Stewart, one of the directors



of church-planting network The Geneva Push — which hosted the conference — says Geneva has been responding to the nation's desperate need for more churches in a very Australian way.

"There's an Australian expression about confronting an overwhelming situation:

'Bite off more than you can chew, and chew like ... well, do the very best you can,' he says. "That's exactly what we've been doing for more than a year now and we're encouraged by the results."

Don Carson, who spoke at the conference, encouraged the church planters to learn the lessons of history. He highlighted the longevity of the Wesleyan movement, noting that "Whitfield was the better preacher, Wesley the better planner".

This was the ninth conference run by Geneva in its first year of operation. It is already helping plant 12 new churches and there are another 15 projects under consideration.

Bishop Stewart says it has been "great to see the real progress in terms of new churches starting and new people being reached".

SURRY HILLS EXPERIMENT

Toby seeks hard core to enter 'no religion' zone

MARK HADLEY

TOBY Neal (pictured) knows religion is not high on the agenda for Surry Hills residents.

The suburb is one of the dead zones in the Australian Census — an area where more people ticked 'none' for their religion than any other alternative.

"Surry Hills is one of Sydney's least religious regions, with just 43 per cent nominating a religion compared with 74 per cent for [all] Sydneysiders," Toby says.

So he recognises there are probably many easier places to plant a new church. Yet 73 supporters gathered in the Surry Hills Neighbourhood Centre on a Friday late last



year to hear how he plans to challenge those statistics.

Toby Neal and his wife Liz have headed out of Moore College to lead a team keen to bring Christ to a hardened inner-city this year.

"People are moving into the cities faster than the church is," Toby says. "And if you love what God loves, then you'll love the cities. If you want to go where the people are you've got to

go into the cities."

Bishop Al Stewart, the CEO of New Churches and a director of The Geneva Push, was on hand to lend his support to the Neals' pre-launch party. He believes the nation desperately needs new churches.

"It's clear that we're just scratching the surface in reaching Australia," he says.

Toby and Liz have planted the seeds of the Vine Church by

establishing a roving fellowship group designed to gather support and figure out the shape of the community.

"We're looking at a series on Ephesians called 'The weight of glory,'" Toby explains. "Each week our venue changes as we try to find somewhere that works for us. This week we met at The Sebel on Albion Street. Our website notifies people of the venue by Friday arvo each week."

"We're looking to grow our launch team to 45 by March, at which point we will launch."

Bishop Stewart will provide the Neals with resources and one-to-one coaching in the first two years of the plant.

More info: www.vinechurch.com.au

SOMA BECOMES A "FELLOWSHIP"

Shopping mall congregation comes of age

JEREMY HALCROW

THE experimental SOMA church plant, which holds its main gathering in the Macquarie Shopping Centre and started 18 months ago as a congregation of St John's, North Ryde, has made its first steps toward independence.

Last month it officially became a "fellowship" under the oversight of Bishop Al Stewart and New Churches, thanks to the legislation passed by

Sydney's Diocesan Synod last October.

Likening it to the move "from a child to a teenager", church planter Peter Hughes said New Churches "will continue to give us oversight and administration muscle but also enable us to move from being a congregation to a fellowship".

Mr Hughes said a 'coming of age' was planned right from the beginning, although the details were then unclear.

"When St John's approached me in 2009 the agreement was



always that they would support us as a church planting initiative for a few years and then we would move off on our own... this New Churches model is just perfect for us."

Mr Hughes, who previously spent 15 years in university

ministry, said leading SOMA is the first time he has seen people have true 'lightning bolt' conversions.

"It's so exciting," he said. "There are people who have suddenly realised they have to turn their life around and become Christians."

SOMA's real point of difference is that the church has worked intentionally at "getting out in the world" rather than "gathering people in". It is structured around the small group gospel community model similar to Crowded House in the UK, where each gospel community develops projects to reach into the friendship networks of unbelievers.

One of the exciting projects that have been developed at SOMA is The Gate, which, Mr Hughes explained, is "basically a guy who runs

concerts in his backyard. We support him by providing infrastructure.

"It has really helped us get to know the sorts of people who would never come to church, who really despise Christianity. It's helped them realise that Christians are not a bunch of redneck Republicans but normal people."

As the Sunday gathering approaches 50 adults plus kids the space in the shopping centre is "feeling full". The new fellowship is hunting for another location.

STUDENT MINISTRY

Campuses for Christ — overseas

ANDREW ROBINSON

OVER the past 15 years, evangelical staff workers on Australian university campuses have multiplied by 400 per cent but the number sent abroad by CMS has dropped by half.

While celebrating growth in Australia, four CMS student workers in

European universities called for a renewed commitment to under-resourced campuses beyond our shores at CMS Summer School.

Paul King, working among French students in Strasbourg, called for a “frank conversation about why it’s not working out”. He asked CMS members to reflect on the massive effect of university ministry on

the Australian church.

“Think about evangelicalism: what has kept us faithful to the gospel in Australia?” he asked. “Think about the people preaching and teaching in our churches and Bible colleges — they are the people who were trained... while they were students.”

Catherine Read, heading to Ireland to work on university

campuses in Dublin, agreed it was a pivotal time for ministry. “It’s young people at the start of their lives,” she said. “They’re really deciding who they are.”

She said university was a time of spiritual openness for many people. “It is an environment where people are discussing and thinking. You can just walk up to a group of

students sitting in a café or on the grass and talk to them about Jesus.”

Dean Ingham (pictured), who has just returned from years of student ministry in Milan, spoke about the lack of resources. “In Italy there are 44 universities and there were four people working across the country — none of them full-time,” he said. “At church when



I was in Canberra, we had nine people doing student ministry across two campuses. Bit of a disparity, really.

“[But] Italy’s just one country: I could name so many countries that are desperate for help.”

God still at work

Church of England evangelicals are dangerously divided but God is still very much at work in England, said Summer School’s main speaker, London-based rector the Rev Hugh Palmer. “Satan’s had a field day with us in lots of different ways,” he said. “We have not been robustly theological, just pragmatic.”

Mr Palmer said divisions were making it difficult to find a way forward on issues such as women bishops, ordination for clergy planting churches outside the C of E system, and homosexuality. He was uncertain about the future for evangelicals but said, “God’s bigger than the Church of England... I haven’t given up on the Church of England yet”.



No room for complacency

CMS president Archbishop Jensen spoke at Summer School about teachers who “plausibly falsify the gospel”, giving people a message that trivialised sin, did not hold the world accountable to God and marginalised Jesus’ sin-bearing death. “[False teachers] are not so silly as to come along and teach you a totally different gospel,” he said. “They give you... a selective gospel.” He urged his listeners to remember the word, and the Lord. “You will find your true joy, you will find your true freedom in being a Bible Christian. Each generation needs to assimilate the heritage of biblical Christianity for itself. It is never an easy business.”



Keep gospel central: Bales

Outgoing CMS NSW general secretary the Rev John Bales said in his Summer School address that CMS must continue to see the world with God’s eyes. “In human terms, we would never send people to Afghanistan, or Pakistan or India or Bangladesh... yet we must continue to view the world from a gospel perspective.”

In the past five years Mr Bales has seen CMS grow more flexible in its missionary placements. He is “thrilled” about the growth in support from the Canberra-Goulburn region and excited about CMS’s growing contribution to Muslim ministry.



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CAFÉ CHURCH

Changed by faith, in God's timing

JUDY ADAMSON

WITH no connection to the things of faith from the age of 12, Lyn Farmer wouldn't have chosen to go to church by herself — but she felt she “needed some grounding... to belong to something” after she retired, so she began to go with a friend to her local Anglican church in Dapto, south of Wollongong.

“My friend was a Christian and I have to admit I wasn't at the time,” she says. “But I felt really welcome. Leigh-anne [the wife of rector Steve Semenchuk] and Mary [the children's worker] came up to us and were lovely to us.”

Before too long Dapto started up a Wednesday

morning service each fortnight, calling it Café Church. Lyn found the idea attractive so she began to attend.

Steve Semenchuk says Café Church was set up to cater for mums connected to the parish who had come to faith. Their husbands, however, “were still keeping an arm's length and didn't want them to come to church on Sundays. We didn't want to replicate another service so decided to make it a stepping stone to a more conventional church format by putting in round tables and a few distinctive things that would suit women.”

These included the informal table set-up, coffee and cake before the service and time to discuss questions at the

table that would come up in the sermon later on. As time went on, other women looking for something a little different also linked up with Café Church, including a group from the local nursing home.

Lyn was a keen member of the service right from the start: “Whenever I walked away from Café Church I got a sense of peace — comfort and peace,” she recalls.

Yet despite her sense of belonging and enjoyment, she still had not made a decision to follow Christ. When she was invited to join a Bible study, she remembers feeling “very apprehensive about it — I thought, ‘This is too much’”. But in the end, she decided to go.

The study took its



All smiles: Lyn Farmer (centre) on the day of her confirmation at Dapto, with Leigh-anne Semenchuk.

members through the Introducing God course and Lyn jokes that she was “probably a little harder to convince than other people. I wanted my autonomy and I wasn't prepared to hand it all over to God so it took me a while to come to grips with that.”

Yet about 18 months ago, the Spirit helped her make that final step. “I was in church and

somebody was saying, ‘Just give your heart over’ and I sat there very quietly and thought, ‘Alright — I will’, and since then I've been a very happy lady.”

Coming to faith in Christ has also helped Lyn give up control of worries and concerns about herself, her children and other things in her life. “I was always trying to fix

things but now I realise that's not my job — it was a relief.”

She decided to publicly declare this change a few months ago in a confirmation service held at Café Church. “I'm a very private person so it was a really big statement for me to stand up in front of everybody,” she says. “But I just knew it was the right time. I was at peace — it felt good.”

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SURF'S UP

Backpacker ministry starts in Collaroy

ANDREW BUERGER

SYDNEY is a haven for backpackers but because of their transient nature they are not easy to evangelise well.

James Dakin has worked at the Sydney Beachouse YHA in Collaroy since 2005 but took ownership of the hostel last month, aiming to grow the number of Christian staff which in turn will allow for more effective evangelism.

"The goal of this place is to provide backpackers with a place to stay and using opportunities to share the gospel," he said.

Mr Dakin, who attends St Andrew's, Wahroonga, completed the one-year Bible and Missions course at Moore College last year. "I've always wanted to do ministry wherever I was," he said. "When the lease came up last year, my wife and I prayed about it and I felt this was what God wanted us to do."

The 220-bed hostel's

only other Christian staff member is Mr Dakin's business partner, Mike Lark. Together they hope to increase Christian staff levels to further evangelism — and Mr Dakin believes the best method of evangelism to backpackers is just talking to them.

"Backpackers are amazing creatures. They're doing things for themselves, often for the first time. They have plenty of time to chat and it's really easy to start a conversation with them. The main message they need to hear is that the Christian God isn't just for some people, he is for everyone."

Rather than being explicitly Christian, the hostel offers guests an opportunity to get involved with local Christian events. Church groups hold weekends away at the hostel, inviting guests to attend talks and Bible studies. This summer, members of St Faith's, Narrabeen have also provided a free monthly BBQ, handing out Bibles and chatting to backpackers.

Mission idea of the month: Café Church

Building relationships with people on the fringes of our congregations is difficult. Dapto Anglican Church has taken the traditional coffee morning and adapted it into a church service aimed at women who don't or aren't able to attend a Sunday service.

Leigh-anne Semenchuk, wife of senior minister Steve, believes that Café Church is a great opportunity to train and equip women to serve each other. "We encourage the women to serve and get involved at Café Church and build their confidence to serve in the wider church," she said.

Up to 40 women regularly attend the fortnightly service held during each school term. The service is highly interactive, featuring interviews and group involvement, and has featured talks on everything from 'Things you can't buy at the mall' (James) to the benefits and failings of *The Vicar of Dibley*.

"The service is focused on outreach and building relationships with those who may be on the fringes of our church," Mrs Semenchuk said.

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CHURCHES HELP FLOOD VICTIMS

Queensland begins long road to recovery



EYEWITNESSES



East Toowoomba, January 10

Timothy Swinson



Sumner Park, Brisbane, January 10

Tatiana Gerus



Ipswich, January 13

Jim McKee

RUSSELL POWELL

SYDNEY Anglicans have contributed more than \$200,000 in just two weeks to help east coast flood victims.

The Archbishop of Sydney's Anglican Aid was among several appeals announced by churches in the hours after the flood peak in the Brisbane River on January 13 – but the flood crisis began a month earlier, with severe impact in Central Queensland.

It is estimated 70 per cent of the state and 60 per cent of Queensland's population was affected. Twenty-eight thousand homes were impacted by flooding to some degree

and about 2000 houses inundated.

Church communities joined with other community groups in offering food and shelter as well as help cleaning away the mud and debris.

Margie Ripoll, the wife of the Federal Member for Oxley, Bernie Ripoll, praised their efforts.

"A lot of the church groups have been phenomenal... some guys came from somewhere on the north central coast of NSW – they've been here for a week," Mrs Ripoll said.

Archbishop Peter Jensen has also spoken with the Archbishop of Brisbane, Phillip Aspinall, to convey the support of people in the Sydney Diocese.

Dr Jensen said that

Anglicans in Sydney should continue to pray for the clean-up and rebuilding effort, and especially about the spiritual consequences of the disaster.

SHORT- AND LONG-TERM HELP DAVID Mansfield, the director of Anglican Aid, says that, "Post-flood trauma will be a longer-term issue and will need careful and compassionate help. Assisting churches and Christian ministries in the area to get back on their feet will be a significant focus for us."

Anglican Aid is also considering assistance for other flooded areas in Australia such as northern NSW and Victoria.

Even Prime Minister Julia Gillard, a declared atheist, wrote an open letter of thanks to 'faith communities'.

"I want to particularly acknowledge everything that faith communities all over Australia are doing to assist," Ms Gillard wrote.

In the wake of disasters such as the New Zealand mine tragedy, Ms Gillard seemed to be at pains not to use phrases such as "Our prayers are with them", choosing instead neutral terms such as "our best wishes".

In her letter, however, she acknowledges that, "Many flood victims I have met are also very grateful for the prayers that people of faith have been making".

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BCA'S NATIONAL DIRECTOR RETIRES

Search for top bush missionary begins

AFTER 18 years as national director of the

Bush Church Aid Society the Rev Canon Brian Roberts (pictured) will retire from BCA in August.

"[My wife]

Denyse and I have reached this decision after a long consideration, realising the society needs a fresh face at the top and we a change of life-work balance" he says. "It has been an exciting and rewarding time for us, a privilege

to be part of it all".

The BCA executive has formed a nominations committee to find a replacement.

Throughout Canon Roberts' 18 years as national director the society has seen many positive changes, with an emphasis on intentional mission in all appointments. With a renewed focus on the 'new bush', mission has expanded around Australia, increasing the society's potential to reach more Australians for Christ.



AUSTRALIA DAY HONOURS

Anglicans recognised for selfless service

FORMER Treasurer Peter Costello heads the list of Anglicans named in the Australia Day honours list. Mr Costello, who attends an Anglican Church in Melbourne, was made a Companion of the Order of Australia.

In Sydney, Geoffrey Kells was named a Member of the Order of Australia for service to international relations through Opportunity International China, plus aged care, charitable and church organisations.

Mr Kells is a former chairman of Anglican

Retirement Villages.

Joyce Hayman, who founded the Courts Program based at the Children's and Juvenile Courts in Sydney and Wollongong, was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia. Other Sydney Anglicans receiving the OAM include William Humphreys of Kiama, Alice Oppen of Hunters Hill and Walter Williamson of Maroubra.

Aside from the official honours list, Professor Ron McCallum was named the 2011 Senior Australian of the Year.

ERIC MA FAT TO RUN THE PTC IN MAURITIUS

Moore College in the Indian Ocean

THE Anglican Diocese of Mauritius will offer Moore College correspondence courses in 2011 to ensure that clergy and lay people have access to sound theological training.

Eric Ma Fat and his wife Jacqueline (pictured) spent 2010 in Australia studying a Diploma of Bible and Ministry at Moore College to be better equipped to serve others in Mauritius.

Mr Ma Fat will be ordained as a minister in the Anglican Diocese of Mauritius on February 27.

The couple returned to Mauritius in December — Mr Ma Fat also returning to his position in charge of St Paul's Anglican Church in Plaine Verte.

He has also begun a new role as co-ordinator of the newly formed Department of Mission and Evangelisation in the Diocese of Mauritius. Through this role he will be promoting and running the Moore College correspondence course, the PTC, in Mauritius, Seychelles and Madagascar, where it will be taught in French.



"Eric is an extremely godly and gifted man," said the Bishop for International Relations, Peter Tasker. "He will be very busy but I have faith that God will help him do a very good job."

Mr Ma Fat, along with Mark and Kah

Lin Wormell, from St Barnabas', Broadway, have already taught the first PTC units in Mauritius and Seychelles.

Mr Ma Fat hopes to run the PTC in each of the five dioceses of The Anglican Communion of the Indian Ocean.

Forgiveness urged after Sudan poll

SUDANESE Christian leaders have joined the President of Southern Sudan in calling for forgiveness for deaths and atrocities during the 21-year civil war.

Observers believe the result of a January referendum will be in favour of the south declaring independence from the country's predominantly Muslim north.

The Sudanese president has promised to respect the outcome of the referendum — even if the south votes to break away — but the UN fears fighting could break out, with hundreds of thousands of Sudanese fleeing to neighbouring countries.

Some analysts say disputes over large oil deposits in the south could follow any independence vote. Others fear a wave of genocide.

The secretary of the Sudan Council of Churches, Baptist pastor the Rev Ramadan Chan Liol, told Ecumenical News International that, "Our faith is built on forgiveness. If there is no forgiveness, there will be no peace".

Sudan has suffered civil war for 39 of the past 50 years and Christians throughout the world are being urged to pray that the independence vote will not result in further hostilities.

Several areas of the south are strongly Christian and many Sudanese immigrants have joined Anglican and other churches in Sydney. As well, the Sydney Diocese has had strong links with ministry in Sudan through Anglican Aid.

In 2010, Anglican Aid helped train and equip 22 clergy and Christian leaders from six dioceses in Southern Sudan.

Sydney's archbishop, Dr Peter Jensen, describes it as a crucial time for the country and for the Anglican (Episcopal) church in Sudan, under the leadership of Archbishop Daniel Deng Bul.

Archbishop Deng has been appointed to a panel of reconciliation which will hold talks with Sudanese rebel leaders.



In Torit, Eastern Equatoria, Southerners register to vote in the referendum on November 15, 2010.

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Letters

It's what you do with your \$ that counts

I agree wholeheartedly with the thrust of your 'Christmas spirit' article (SC, December) and am dismayed at the idea that 'some people' might be 'offended' by depictions of the Nativity. (Who has complained? Who is going to work through the Christmas period in protest?)

However, I do take exception to the highlighted phrase 'Christians are often a bit simplistic when we talk about money'.

Just what does this all-embracing phrase mean? Christians are no more, and no less, money savvy than anyone else in society. It is what we do with our money that should make us different. Please don't blanket us all in the 'We... spend money on parties and so on'.

The point is valid, but not when it assumes every Christian is like this.

Mary Purnell
Revesby, NSW



Wrong on refugees

I was disappointed as a Christian and as a migrant in Andrew Robinson's article on being generous to refugees (SC, December).

Australia is more than generous to refugees. Young Christians forget the generosity of Australians after World War II to refugees from war-torn Europe.

In Europe it is entirely different as they do not have to travel over the ocean, yet many die as "illegal immigrants" in containers. In Australia people coming by "illegal boats" also die (more than 40 in December!).

I am a proud and patriotic Australian. As a Christian, I do not appreciate your derogative statements about Australia's contribution to refugees. To turn Jesus' words into a political statement is very wrong. Being a student at Moore College, Andrew Robinson should realise this. I hope he takes this advice into his ministry.

Nikolas Margerrison
Balgowlah, NSW

Brain drain is good

THE November edition of *Southern Cross* ran a two-page feature on higher education and the Wesley Institute. Bryan Cowling argued that the newly envisioned Wesley Institute might help fill the gap of 'well-informed Christian educators in the university'.

What Dr Cowling imagines for the university is very similar to what I've come to see this year as I've served alongside Christian academics at Sydney University.

He wrote that we need 'lots of intelligent, mature articulate Christian philosophers of education who are equally skilled and

knowledgeable in their academic discipline as in applied biblical doctrine and theology. We need hundreds of these academics in our public universities and colleges to nurture the next generation of visionary educational leaders (you could say the same about each of the gatekeeping, public policy-shaping professions).'

The university offers a unique opportunity to affect the world. So I was happy to discover that I'm not alone in praying that the hearts and minds of academics would be shaped by Christ. However, there is one sentiment in particular that I do find concerning. After calling for hundreds of thought-out academics in the university, Dr Cowling goes on to argue:

"There needs to be career paths in public universities and colleges in this country if we are to avoid losing our best Christian minds to leadership positions in other countries."

Lose our best Christian minds to other countries? This sounds unbelievably short-sighted and parochial to me.

Instead of worrying about a brain drain, we should be encouraging our best Christian minds to use their opportunities in the academic world to leave.

For EU postgrads and staff, our vision is that when Christian academics finish at Sydney University, they'll go other universities in less reached and less resourced parts of Australia in the world. Our vision is that they'll be people who — with all the energy that God powerfully works within them (Col 1.29) — will be shaping people's lives in Christ. They'll be academics who can engage and speak the gospel into public policy and discourse. They'll be academics who know how to support campus ministry. And if they find themselves in a university where there is none, then they'll know how to start it.

Hoarding our academic minds is not the right response to the 'marginalising of respectable Christian thinking in Australian society'. Taking every thought captive to obey Christ can't stop at the Australian coastline.

Matthew Moffitt
Sydney University, NSW

Gospel central in a Christian school

I read with interest Dr Allan Beavis' response to Professor Cooling's Christian Education approach in November's SC. Christian schools, properly conceived and operated, are significant opportunities for the proclamation and defence of the gospel, based upon the authority of the Scriptures and for teaching and learning about God's good gift of knowledge revealed in his creation, all to the glory of God for the significant benefit of students, families and society.

Professor Cooling outlines two approaches, the apologetic and hermeneutical strategies. The first depends upon the teaching of biblical concepts and is basically

teacher-centred and didactic. The professor concludes this approach alienates many students and tends to be unproductive.

The hermeneutical approach depends more on interpretation and students making up their own minds and is more likely to be productive. This approach is sometimes referred to as the biblical perspective approach to knowledge, aimed at producing a Christian worldview.

I agree with Dr Beavis that the two broad approaches are complementary rather than contrasting, because both are teaching the content and application of the Bible. Methodology differs but that is expected in a school where age appropriateness and differences in ability dictate approaches to teaching. For example, a special education class would not benefit very much from a hermeneutical, more abstract approach, but would benefit from skilfully outlined and illustrated basic biblical teaching.

While the two approaches are complementary and essential, I would indicate a definite priority: the centrality of the gospel, the only means of salvation through the person and work of Christ Jesus. Presumably the church fundamentally establishes schools with a view of mission — to share the gospel — in the context of providing excellent teaching and learning for the temporal needs of students.

Schools' student populations will be dominated by non-Christians, mainly from unchurched people, or from Christian families with unconverted children. The fundamental need of these students is to be exposed to the gospel and to respond in commitment to Christ. These children will not be saved by forming a correct biblical perspective on knowledge (for example in science, maths, technology, literature etc), or on moral/ethical issues (such as abortion, homosexuality, war etc). They may become better citizens by adopting this perspective, and that is important, but they will not become citizens of heaven.

There will be many critics of the centrality of the gospel. Objections range from the view that church is the appropriate vehicle for evangelism, we shouldn't brainwash a captive audience and repetition causes hardness, to the covert view that the Scriptures offer inferior knowledge to the "more important" content of the remainder of the curriculum (maths is more important than the Bible, for example). In response, Christians take the gospel wherever they are — at work, in their neighbourhood, with friends and family.

A Christian school set-up with a gospel purpose is an appropriate place for sensitive and appropriate proclamation. On enrolment, the school must be open about its purposes and families informed that the gospel will be taught. In a democracy, they need not come and can go at any time.

Warwick Wilkie
Former Principal
William Carey Christian School,
Prestons, NSW

Letters should be less than 200 words

Email: newspaper@anglicanmedia.com.au

New SC editor

JUDY Adamson, a journalist with 20 years' experience in the industry, has been appointed as editor of *Southern Cross*.

Mrs Adamson has been working for Anglican Media in Sydney over the past 18 months. She previously spent more than 20 years as a writer and editor for *The Sydney Morning Herald*.

The CEO of Anglican Media, Russell Powell, said "We're blessed to have a writer of Judy's calibre who is 100 per cent committed to ministry in the Diocese and to using her gifts for the encouragement of God's people. She's had a great impact since her work started appearing in *Southern Cross*. I'm looking forward to what she'll be able to do as editor."

She takes over from Jeremy Halcrow, who has moved to Canberra to work as the director of communications and strategic partnerships for Anglicare, as well as media advisor for the Bishop of Canberra and Goulburn, Stuart Robinson.

Editorial

I LOVE being entertained — whether it's by the food of a great chef, the latest film or book, or relaxing in front of the telly after a busy day. But something has got me thinking about how much time and interest are spent on these things. I'm keen to start 2011 with the right focus and with the aim, naturally, of finishing strongly, too.

Last month my family spent a week up at CMS Summer School — something we've done since our youngest was a toddler — and the first talk by English speaker Hugh Palmer got me thinking. He spoke about the death of Jesus for our sins, and his resurrection.

So what, I hear you say. It's the gospel: I've believed it for years. But it's the same issue as hearing a familiar Bible passage or a sermon series on a book we've studied twice before. We need to be reminded (and regularly) about how to live for God, what God expects and what Jesus has done for us so we don't live our lives as though these things are secondary.

As Palmer put it: "What doesn't need saying must be said". He drew from 1 Corinthians 15, and particularly verses 3-5 — 'For what I received I passed on to you

as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that he appeared...'

Was Palmer being a killjoy? Not at all. His point was we don't need to deny the gospel for it not to be central in our lives. It just needs to be shifted to one side amid all the other important things — including ministries.

At church the gospel is why we are there — it's our reason for existing — but it's not hard to find ourselves placing more effort and thought into the finances, the music or getting a new ministry off the ground.

Palmer noted that in 1 Corinthians the apostle Paul "was not saying nothing else [but the gospel] matters. He was saying that nothing else saves".

It was, as he said, something we already knew. And it's challenging. What better time than the start of a year to be reminded of it and, with God's help, to put all other things — work and entertainment, the kids' education, church administration or whatever else is important to us — in their proper place.

Why pewsitters can't hear the sermon

READER'S ESSAY OF THE MONTH
by Lesley Hicks

WHAT would be the most common disability found in a typical church congregation — the one most likely to inhibit and frustrate church members and cause them to complain to each other and, less frequently (because they are too polite), to the minister? My guess is hearing loss.

A recent very helpful *Southern Cross* article (November 2010), based on a Social Issues Executive survey, dealt with ways in which churches can help people with disabilities so as to be more accessible and welcoming to them. I was surprised, however, that it did not mention deafness.

Here I don't refer to lifelong profound deafness of a kind that meant a child could only learn to communicate by means of sign language, etc. I am referring to levels of partial hearing loss typically experienced by many, even most, people as they grow older, in their 70s and 80s and beyond, and to a few people (like myself) from birth. There is also a significant group of younger people suffering nerve deafness caused by their passion for loud music from live bands or piped into their ears at literally deafening volume.

Hearing loss may range across the whole spectrum but most commonly high frequency sounds are lost and this affects the clarity of speech we hear. We hear the sound of speech — in sermons for instance, or ordinary conversation — but because the consonants

are hard to distinguish, we struggle to make sense of what we hear. At times we may as well be hearing a foreign language. Knowing the context is vital and at least in church one usually knows the general gist of the subject.

However in crowds, such as amid the normal hubbub during morning tea after church, the background noise makes it awfully hard to join in the conversation and hear what people are saying to us.

There is a great deal that churches can do to help people like us. There are so many helpful resources these days that sometimes these measures happen almost by accident, sometimes with awareness and careful intent.

Electronic aids are one aspect, but let's look first at the simplest things — above all, clear speech communication. It's a fact of life that some people speak more clearly than others. Those whose life work and ministry involve the communication of the gospel need to work doubly hard at clear enunciation, perhaps slowing down their delivery to make sure as many as possible can hear and clearly understand what they are saying.

Many hearing-impaired people have learnt to rely on lip reading to supplement what they hear, so we need to help ourselves as much as possible by sitting near the front of services and meetings. Even then prayers directed to the floor, or bushy beards hiding lips, are a menace!

Incidentally, these points regarding communication for the deaf are also helpful to people who are learners of English, so are very relevant to churches with many people from non-English-speaking backgrounds in their congregations.

The older means of placing the written word in front of congregations so they could

read as well as hear the word of God was simply the open Bible and liturgy — prayer books, ancient or comparatively modern. Abandoning prepared liturgy in favour of largely spontaneous leading of services or self-composed prayers makes things harder for the deaf but newer visual methods are available — the vital equivalent of film subtitles.

Now computers enable PowerPoint to be projected onto screens during church services. Both the hearing-impaired and NESB people, and all diligent note-takers, appreciate sermon points on screen or hand-out, or even the whole text on paper. More work for the preacher or the church secretary but well worthwhile.

Churches should ensure not only that their microphone systems have a functioning hearing loop, but that it is actually switched on. Ushers need to be able to direct people with hearing aids to the best places for them to sit for optimal reception. If in doubt, commission someone to test it out for you.

People taking part in services often need coaching on microphone use — not getting too close, not suddenly raising or lowering the voice or exploding certain consonants (those Ps!) into the mike in ways that can be downright painful for those with hearing aids. Lip readers are frustrated by people who put the microphone bung in front of their mouth.

"How shall they hear without a preacher?" Well, we have the preachers but many of us still can't hear adequately! I'm referring mainly to believers and churchgoers already in our churches, but maximum hearing-friendliness and lively consideration for those who struggle to hear and understand also make a plus point for inviting friends to hear the gospel — and really *hear* it.

READER'S ESSAYS

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

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



NEW LIFE OF REILLY

AS a student minister the **Rev Dean Reilly** spent two years in the parish of Rosemeadow with his family so, after graduating from college, he happily went back to serve as assistant minister.

"We'd kept in touch with a number of people, so we've had that link with them for seven years now," he says. "We've formed quite significant relationships [so] changing them is a difficult thing."

The change is because Mr Reilly has now moved to the Southern Highlands as rector of Moss Vale. The family's previous home was in Rosemeadow's branch church rectory in the small town of Appin, "so we feel like we're certainly used to the country life — I'm not imagining too much difference there," he says. "But [Moss Vale] parish is five different church centres... so that will be different, although the ministry is generally the same."

"One of the things we want to try and do is develop the family and youth ministry... and, as always, thinking about how we look at our communities in a fresh way and thinking about how we can reach out to the people in them as best we can."

LUCAS TO BLAKEHURST



Rev Paul Lucas will be "serving our Lord and his people" in the parish of Blakehurst from this month.

He says that once he was ordained a presbyter a year ago he and his wife Narelle "realised that the opportunity to move could present itself at any time and God had been preparing us for this possibility". Once the approach came from Blakehurst parish, he says, "all the pieces just fell into place".

"We spent some valuable time with the nominators and wardens from St Martin's, Blakehurst and we are looking forward to partnering with these wonderful people in the gospel."

Mr Lucas says there is a real sense of excitement for the family to start this

new chapter in their lives, but adds that it is "tainted with sadness as we leave our family at St Paul's. We have learnt so much; we have grown so much and count it a privilege to have shared our lives with the St Paul's family."

JERRYL LOWE RETIRES

AFTER 32 years at the parish of Doonside, the **Rev Jerryl Lowe** is retiring at the end of April.

Mr Lowe was curate at Carlingford, Camden and St Paul's, Wahroonga before spending five years as rector to the parish of St Leonard's in Tasmania. He then returned to Sydney in 1979 to become curate-in-charge of the parish of Doonside with Quakers Hill — with authority solely for Doonside from 1991.

"The people here have been extraordinarily faithful in supporting the ministry, both for the work of the gospel in this area and in terms of the level of their financial commitment," Mr Lowe says.

"I've always believed it's a very important role for a Christian minister to pastor his people, encouraging them along the road to eternal life, and that's what I've been endeavouring to do while I've been here."

MACARTHUR CHAPLAIN TAKES ON PARISH



THE **Rev Steve Davis** is leaving his roles as chaplain of the Macarthur Anglican School — and pastor of its nine-year-old church plant, the Macarthur Family Chapel — to become rector at another local church: St James', Menangle.

"The new ministry comes because, under God, we believe it is time to move," he says. [My wife] Ros and I are a team... we intend to continue in this way at Menangle and wherever God intends for us to be. We have a strong commitment to families and schools ministry... Ros will remain at Macarthur two days a week with particular responsibilities for Transition-Year 2 and Year 3-4 chapels and some Biblical Studies and Bible study groups."

Mr Davis says there have been times of "drought and struggle" during his years at Macarthur but spoke of it as a joy, a privilege and a humbling experience to be part of people's lives and see them changed for Christ.

"The momentum for Christian service and outreach among students is tremendous," he says. "We would

Killick offered warmer waters

When the **Rev Nathan Killick** stood to read a letter to his Merrylands parish telling them he was moving to the Diocese of Newcastle, he admits he got no further than a sentence before bursting into tears.

"I've never cried so much in my life — I was such a wuss," he says with a laugh. Before long his rector's warden, who got up to put a comforting arm around his minister and read the letter instead, was also in tears — and so was the congregation.

"That's really illustrative of the relationship here," Mr Killick says. "They are an excellent bunch here at Merrylands: tremendously supportive, committed to giving anything a go and working together."

Mr Killick has been in charge of Merrylands since 2004, when he became rector of the larger parish of Woodville Road. When that parish split in half three years later, he took responsibility for Merrylands.

In May last year he received an email from friends, who knew people in the parish of Camden Haven, 30 minutes' drive south of Port Macquarie. The parish had been looking for a new rector since early 2009.

"I think for about three months I said 'no'," Mr Killick recalls. "We were well entrenched in Merrylands and had lots to do... but this parish wanted evangelical ministry and they were finding it difficult to get someone to come."

"Elizabeth and I had always thought, when we were at college, that one day we would go outside the Sydney Diocese... this is a good opportunity and it's in God's timing. I have a hope and a prayer we can play a part in the [Newcastle] Diocese as well."

Mr Killick begins his new ministry next month.



love to be training people all the time [but] only so much can be fitted into a day."

The couple begins ministry at Menangle in mid-April with 1 Thessalonians 2:8 in mind: "We loved you so much that we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well, because you had become so dear to us".

GARY OFF TO SCHOOL

THE rector of Helensburgh and Stanwell Park, the **Rev Gary Eastment**, has taken up the role of chaplain to the Nowra and Milton campuses of the Shoalhaven Anglican Schools.

"It's been a very fruitful and exciting time [at Helensburgh] and it's been a privilege to minister here," he said. But as a former assistant chaplain in the chapel at the University of New England he has "always had an interest in school chaplaincy" and was "looking forward very much to ministering under Chris Pitt [the new principal at Nowra Anglican School]".

"It's a very strategic and exciting opportunity. There's a good ministry in the churches in town that I'm looking forward to connecting with."

IN BRIEF

VALE: Last month, the Lord called home the **Rev Tony Humphries** and

the **Rev John Emery**. More in the March edition.

THE **Rev Simon Roberts** will be inducted as the new rector of St Mark's, Malabar on February 8. More in the March edition.

THE **Rev Peter Oates** has moved from his position as assistant minister to the parish of Lane Cove to become an assistant at St Clement's, Mosman.

THE **Rev Jonathan Clare** has begun a new ministry as assistant minister at St George's, Gerringong, after four years as assistant to the parish of Bowral.

AFTER 17 years as lay worker and assistant minister at St Peter's, Cooks River the **Rev Angelo Porcu** has been called to an independent evangelical parish in Esperance, Western Australia.

Vacant Parishes

LIST OF PARISHES AND PROVISIONAL PARISHES, VACANT OR BECOMING VACANT AS AT 7 JANUARY 2011:

- Auburn (St Philip's)
- Earlwood
- Helensburgh and Stanwell Park
- Hoxton Park
- Keiraville
- Merrylands
- Moorebank
- Sutherland
- Ulladulla

Spare the rod?

TONY and JUDY WILLIS argue that physical punishment should play a much smaller part in the discipline of our children.



WHEN one of our girls was three we found that, as young parents, we had a real problem with discipline and did not have a clue what to do about it. Our daughter was blatantly defiant. It didn't seem to matter what happened — her way was the only way. Nothing seemed to work. The tantrums were regular, she never gave in and we were exhausted. We smacked her hand, we smacked her bottom — more defiance. After some time Tony found himself 'smacking' the soft base of the foot as this seemed the only place that hurt enough for her to take some notice.

But what was going on here? Disciplining with the purpose to hurt? Abuse?

In the Bible we read:

And you have forgotten that word of encouragement that addresses you as sons:

Avoid the easy way out

When Tony was teaching back in the days when corporal punishment was still in schools, he had a situation with a teenage boy that needed resolving. He sat the boy down and said, 'We are not leaving this room until we sort this out. I don't care how long it takes. Now what is going on?' The young man quickly responded, 'Oh Sir, can't you just cane me?' For many parents and children, the 'rod' is the quick-fix punishment and we feel that, as parents, we have been seen to act.

"My son, do not make light of the Lord's discipline, and do not lose heart when he rebukes you, because the Lord disciplines those he loves, and he punishes everyone he accepts as a son."... No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it. (Hebrews 12:5–6, 11) The discipline words that we read here are: *encouragement, rebuke, love, acceptance, not pleasant, painful, training* and resulting in *righteousness and peace*.

There is a reality here: discipline is not pleasant but painful. And true discipline is in the context of strong relationships, of encouragement, of love and acceptance.

In this model of God's discipline,

- discipline means raising a child, teaching, instructing, correcting — major component;
- punishment means physical punishment — minor component.

Thankfully Tony realised that in aiming to hurt he had lost sight of the purpose of discipline. Punishment was the focus, rather than disciplining to encourage, love and accept. From then on, smacking became a rare event as it was evident how easy it was to use it wrongly. There were times when it was

still used in correcting, but infrequently and usually with more thought. There were times, however, when it was still used wrongly and in the heat of the moment. From our mistakes, we would strongly recommend you make a conscious decision that smacking not be an option in the discipline of your children.

When we have had opportunities to talk with parents about their children and their relationship, we get fairly quickly on to discipline. The major problem we encounter is that many parents have too narrow a view of discipline. To us, discipline is disciplining. It will be broader than punishment and will include the wider issues involved in raising a child.

What then are some of the punishment options? Our more defiant daughter remained defiant in various situations. Often a stern verbal rebuke was sufficient to correct an action but at other times, different methods and punishments were needed. As you think through the options, remember three things:

- children are different — what works for one won't necessarily be best for another;
- ensure that the punishment is realistic — that it 'fits the crime';
- think about what you are going to do before doing it.

continued next page »



Special times, positive parenting

THE Bible writer of Ecclesiastes recognised the complexities of time in chapter 3. However, there is a difference between 'there is a time for everything' and 'there is *time* for everything'!

If parenting is about relationships, then we need to face up to the fact that relationships take time. We seem to live in a time-poor society and have to be more proactive about how we use our time if we are going to build relationship with our kids and with our partner. We need to *make time* to spend a *time* with our kids.

Special times are for doing special things with our kids.

Family times: These might include a special afternoon tea as kids arrive home from school, a special evening meal, a time after the meal where something is done together — a family movie outing, a board game, backyard cricket, a bike ride. We tried all sorts of things. Some worked and some didn't. One important aspect of family times was reading together — reading all sorts of books, as well as the Bible. This takes some self-discipline, but is well worth it.

Holidays: Holidays are great because they give us more time to relax and get away together. Not all holidays have to be at great expense and they do give the opportunity for doing things we don't normally do. Don't neglect to take the holidays that are due to you each year. 'Rest' as a family is an important part of holding relationships together in the long term.

Birthdays: One of the great things about birthdays is that everyone has them. Celebrate your kids' birthdays. It is a great time to focus on that special person by creating a special day. Take care not to overdo it. Look for a balance that enables your child to know they are special to you — but not indulged by you. Still now with grandchildren, we get together as a family to celebrate each person's birthday.

Traditions: Some special times may end up as a family 'tradition'. Our kids really loved our annual Easter egg hunt. It is now a tradition that continues with our sons-in-law and grandchildren. It really is just an excuse to eat chocolate but the fun of hiding and finding eggs has been going on now for more than 30 years (the ants also love the eggs that no-one finds). **SC**

Why eat at Maccas?

Without going into the health issues, a couple of years back a number of kids were interviewed on *A Current Affair* about why they liked going to McDonald's to eat with their family.

Surprisingly (or not) their response often had little to do with the food. A common theme in the kids' responses was: 'When we go to Maccas, everyone's relaxed and no-one is fighting!'.



« from previous page

RESTRAINT

One method we used to replace smacking when our children were young was restraint. If our defiant child was intent on destroying a game being played by another child, or determined to take a toy or object another child was playing with, we physically removed her. As she determined to return to the destruction/'theft', one parent would hold her to prevent her. She fought to break free but would be held tightly until she gave in. She was still being held but this became a cuddle as we then talked about how silly and selfish it was to want to destroy someone else's game. This method generally ended with a good outcome but could take up to an hour to resolve.

One couple we know tried this method with their daughter but she got so worked up it was almost impossible to calm her down. Each child is different and will respond in their own way — try several things and find what works in your family situation. The principle is to think through disciplinary methods that can be put into practice rather than responding in frustration or anger without any real purpose.

ISOLATION

Alternatively, we removed a defiant child to an isolated part of the house until they agreed to behave properly and be a member of the family who cared for others. This time-out location was generally the laundry (ensure it is a safe area) or a corner of a room, as we wanted a neutral area with little attraction. We tried to avoid sending our children to their room as punishment, as we wanted their room to be an enjoyable place. Also, some children's rooms are a play centre and not a punishment to be in at all. Many teenagers we know have bedrooms that would compete with the local games arcade!

Again, as with many punishments, there are dangers. Time out should be relatively short and not over-used. Also, as with all punishments, it is to be used in conjunction with talking through the issues and resolving the problems. It removes a child (briefly) from relationship and the community of family but if your child is prone to withdrawing from social contact we would not recommend isolation as a punishment method.

WITHDRAWING PRIVILEGES

A common punishment method that works for many people is the withdrawal of a privilege. This may involve removing the 'toy' (including computers/mobile phones/car keys etc), asking them to leave the game, taking away special responsibility/tasks, not allowing them to go to the party or special event or declaring, 'You're grounded!'.

There are three key things to keep in mind as you use this punishment option:

Time frame: Your son has been involved in a fight at school. You decide that he cannot go on the camping holiday with his friends four months from now. If this holiday is the big event of the year then your son might as well do what he likes for the next four

months as there are no greater punishments left. Make correction and punishment as close to the time of the event as possible.

Relevance: Where possible, choose a punishment that teaches a lesson. If your daughter repeatedly rides her skateboard on the footpath, terrorising the neighbours, confiscate the skateboard for a time. If your son is surfing the net for pornography, talk it through but ban the internet for a few weeks. If your daughter is smoking against your wishes, cut back the pocket money for a while. Relevance is not always obvious but where it is, a stronger lesson is learned.

Frequency: If you are continually withdrawing privileges, your child has little left to live for and will give up. Take care to use such punishments as infrequently as possible.

SMACKING

If you decide to smack your child, you will need parameters. How will it be administered? At what age should children be smacked? What will be the follow-up or other discipling measures? There may be some children whom you would never smack. But if it is to take place, be controlled — wait until you are calm.

If you use your hand to smack, children will often react by hitting back. We used to feel it was better to use an impersonal instrument such as the 'traditional' wooden spoon. It was even better to have a softer implement used only for the purpose of

... true discipline is in the context of strong relationships, of encouragement, of love and acceptance.

smacking. However, when Judy spoke with a doctor on this issue, the doctor said smacking your child on their hand, using only your hand, is a safer way to avoid physical abuse as you also 'feel the pain'. There is clearly great merit in this.

Physical punishment can be (and is) easily abused. The aim should never be to hurt but to show the child they have done wrong — that relationship has been broken. Smacking should only be a disciplinary measure, not one of abuse. Our encouragement is to develop other means of punishing, avoiding smacking and other similar physical methods.

We are role models to our children. They learn from our treatment of them and their siblings. As you deal with one child, the others watch with close attention. They will be sensitive to harsh treatment just as they will be sensitive to a brother/sister doing wrong.

THE BIG PICTURE

Remember punishment is just one part of the discipline process and should be combined with talking through issues with a view to resolving them. Ensure your child understands what has gone wrong, why it is wrong and what needs to be done to repair relationships and any damage caused.

Bringing up our children to understand accountability and be responsible will be time-consuming. If one or both parents are never at home or do not take this responsibility seriously, it is even more difficult.

Resolving the problem may involve

repentance, forgiveness and reconciliation. We need to take care not to be moralistic or legalistic and must seek a heart response, not simply having the child say or do 'the right thing'. If a child continues to act in the wrong way it would be clear earlier apologies did not mean much. It is still important for children to say sorry — this is part of the learning process. However, it is also important for them to realise "Sorry" must have meaning.

The old 'kiss-and-make-up' idea has merit (although we may need options other than kissing). It shows relationship has been restored through physical contact — a cuddle, handshake or 'high five', an arm around the shoulder. Children will avoid such contact if they are not willing to re-enter relationship or are angry with the person. Often an invitation to such physical contact will break the barrier preventing the child from seeking forgiveness, as the invitation shows forgiveness is readily available — something the child may have been unsure about.

Parents need to lead the way in saying 'sorry' when they need to and accepting apologies from their children.

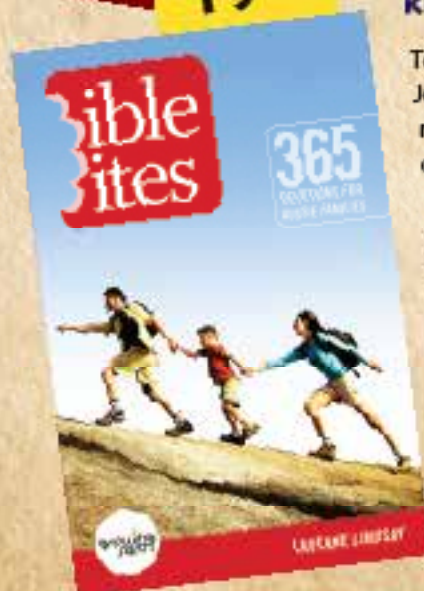
SC

This is an extract from *Let's Talk About Parenting — Everyday Advice For Raising Kids* by Tony and Judy Willis. The book covers all aspects of parenting and is available from www.cep.youthworks.net



Need a little help with the kids?

NEW! \$19.95



For families with kids 3-12 years.

Teaching our children about Jesus is the most important responsibility a parent, carer or grandparent has in their family. Yet, with the myriad other activities our families are involved in, it's sometimes easier to leave Bible teaching to the leaders in our church and schools. *Bible Bites* is designed to make family devotions a fun and interactive time learning about God and his plan for us all.



NEW! \$12.95

For families with kids from toddlers to teens.

Looking at parenting children in our unique Australian culture and lifestyle, Tony and Judy Willis write with candour and humour about their own triumphs and mistakes. They give sound Bible-based advice on a wide range of topics from relationships and sexuality to punishment, schooling and money.



FAMILIES RAISING MISSIONAL DISCIPLES

An initiative of Youthworks.

www.cepstore.com.au

Food for the SOUL

It's always easier to talk about reading the Bible than it is to do it. KEITH CONDIE offers some solutions for those dreaded quiet times.

HOW do you react when you hear the words 'quiet time' or 'time with God'? For many believers these terms raise all sorts of negative feelings.

There are those who maintain that the Christian life is lived under grace; to demand regular times of devotion spent in Bible reading and prayer smacks of legalism. Others, convinced of the importance of these activities, try to forge helpful habits yet somehow are left unsatisfied by the experience. The Scriptures are read and prayers are prayed but the process feels perfunctory and unrewarding. At the end of the day they can tick off that they have 'had a quiet time', yet there appears to be no sense

of genuine engagement with God or lasting benefit from what they have done.

Let's be clear — the Christian life is lived under grace. We know that we are saved by grace but so often in the ongoing life of faith we measure our relationship with God on the basis of our performance. When the question "How is your relationship with God going?" is asked, almost invariably the response is something like, "OK, but it could be better... I'm not reading the Bible enough or praying enough or doing enough evangelism or being hospitable enough..." — the list could go on.

Yet the fundamental answer to that question is, "It couldn't be better". Our relationship with God is wholly dependent upon the infinite merits of Christ. How could I be closer to the Father than I have been brought through the death and resurrection of his precious Son? What was true for the members of the Corinthian church is true for us:

you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God. (1 Cor 6:11)

The wonderful truth of the gospel is that if we are in Christ, then we are as close to God as we will ever be.

Nonetheless, there is more that can be said. It would be foolish for a married person to rest in the status of that condition without

investing in the relationship. So it is with our relationship with God. The consistent message of the New Testament is that the Christian life is a pathway towards maturity. The goal of Paul's apostolic ministry was to 'present everyone perfect in Christ' (Col 1:28-29; cf. Eph 4:1-16), and the author of the epistle to the Hebrews perceived the same need among those to whom he wrote (see Heb 5:11-6:3).

Furthermore, we are left in no doubt as to the means of this growth: it takes place through Spirit-empowered engagement with God's word. Paul believed he was under a commission to present 'the word of God in its fullness' in order to move believers onward in faith (Col 1:25; cf. Acts 20:20-32). Similarly, the apostle Peter encouraged his readers to crave pure spiritual milk so that they might grow up in their salvation (1 Peter 2:2). There is therefore a profound logic to the emphasis upon Bible reading that has been characteristic of evangelical Christianity throughout the centuries; it is the practice that deepens our knowledge of God and his ways that we might grow in godliness.

While this truth is reason enough to encourage us to study the Scriptures, a couple of incentives might provide further motivation. First, the truths of the Bible will keep us from worldliness. We are all aware of the multitude of messages that

Tips that might be helpful

- Choose a psalm and reflect upon it each day for a week.
- Write down on a piece of paper a verse or two of Scripture that strikes you in your daily Bible reading. Pull it out at various points through the day to dwell further upon it.
- Make use of a book of devotions such as Christopher Ash's *Bible Delight*, John Piper's *A Godward Life*, Don Carson's *For the Love of God* or C. H. Spurgeon's *Morning and Evening*.
- Listen to the Bible on your iPod and pause and reflect upon what you have heard.

confront us each day and encourage us to search for meaning and satisfaction in the things of this world. What often eludes our awareness, however, is how these ideas can seep under our skin and subtly exert a deep influence upon us. It is as if we are enjoying a swim at the beach, unaware of the almost imperceptible current that is drawing us away from safety. We need a signal or strong voice to capture our attention and call us back to what is true and right. The Scriptures do this so that we can heed the warning not to 'love the world or the things in the world' (1 John 2:15).

Second, it is helpful to remember that the Bible is a wonderful gift from God to us for our blessing. God's word is described not only as food that nourishes and promotes growth (1 Cor 3:2; Heb 5:12-14; cf. Deut 8:3) but also as being sweet and a source of delight. 'How sweet are your words to my taste,' writes the psalmist, 'sweeter than honey to my mouth!' (Ps 119:103). Real joy is

FOCUS QUESTION:

Do daily devotions bring us closer to God or are they a product of being close to God?

to be found in paying careful attention to what God has graciously revealed to us.

The question remains, however, as to how we can attend to the Scriptures so they might produce such gladness and the fruit of godly living. When life is full and demanding, is it possible to feed on God's word in a way that nurtures our spiritual life rather than leaving us feeling guilty and inadequate? How do we engage with Scripture so that it doesn't simply inform our minds but transform the desires of our hearts and shape our behaviour?

A way forward is the practice of biblical meditation. I am not referring here to meditation as a relaxation technique or as a process of emptying the mind. Rather, this type of meditation involves a focusing of the mind. You might describe it as an anti-speed reading approach to reading the Bible. Some early English Protestant writers captured this idea by using the metaphor of 'digesting'. They understood that the Scriptures were food for the soul but that such fare was of no benefit unless it was thoroughly ingested into our being. Notice this encouragement found in the First Homily issued during the reign of Elizabeth I, entitled *A Fruitful Exhortation to the Reading of Holy Scripture*:

... let us hear, read, and know these holy rules, injunctions, and statutes of our Christian religion... let us with fear and reverence lay up in the chest of our hearts these necessary and fruitful lessons; let us night and day muse, and have meditation and contemplation in them. Let us ruminate, and, as it were, chew the cud, that we may have the

sweet juice, spiritual effect, marrow, honey, kernel, taste, comfort, and consolation of them.

The sentiment here echoes that found in the Scriptures themselves. The opening verses of Psalm 1 set the tone for the rest of the Psalter, and the advice proffered is that the blessed find delight in the word of God and meditate upon it day and night. Such careful attention to God's truth will result in spiritual prosperity and the avoidance of godless practices (Ps 1:1-3).

What, then, does biblical meditation look like? In his book *Knowing God*, J. I. Packer offers a thorough and helpful definition:

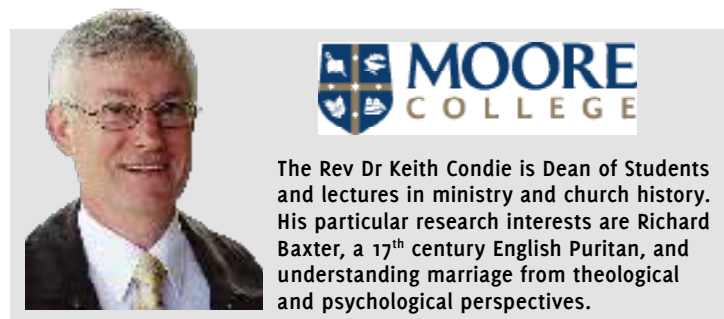
Meditation is the activity of calling to mind, and thinking over, and dwelling on, and applying to oneself, the various things one knows about the works and ways and purposes and promises of God. It is an activity of holy thought, consciously performed in the presence of God, under the eye of God, by the help of God, as a means of communion with God. Its purpose is to clear one's mental and spiritual vision of God, and to let his truth make its full and proper impact on one's mind and heart.

What Packer is promoting is thoughtful reflection upon the contents of Scripture—calling upon God to help us to turn his truth over in our minds and apply that truth into the situation of our lives. Sometimes we allow ourselves to be governed by feelings and desires that are inconsistent with God's revelation. Or our minds are so filled up concerns and busyness that they resemble a banana tree filled with monkeys constantly jumping up and down. What biblical meditation does is to reset the compass of our lives so that God's truth is at the forefront to guide our thinking and choices.

How, then, can we make this practice a reality in the midst of busy lives? Let me suggest a number of possibilities. Rather than simply reading a passage of Scripture, spend some time mulling over it and asking questions. For example:

- What do I find difficult to believe or obey?
- Does the text remind me of something I too easily forget?
- What does it say about the person and purposes and promises of God?
- How should I respond in the light of what God's word says?

I have found in my own life that reading the Scriptures is rarely a mind-blowing experience but it does ground me in a very helpful way. So much of the Christian life is about remembering—being reminded again and again of things that we know, yet



The Rev Dr Keith Condie is Dean of Students and lectures in ministry and church history. His particular research interests are Richard Baxter, a 17th century English Puritan, and understanding marriage from theological and psychological perspectives.

somehow have forgotten or have failed to appropriate in our experience.

The apostle Peter wrote his first letter to encourage his readers to stand fast in the true grace of God (1 Pet 5:12). This is what the Bible does for us: it spurs us on in the life of faith to keep trusting God's promises and obeying his commands. As we read it, we are refreshed in the marvellous truth that our sins have been forgiven. We are reminded that we are beloved children of God despite the abundance of our failings.

When it feels as if life is falling apart, we become convinced once again that we rest secure in the Father's everlasting arms. We are persuaded afresh that the way of humility, love and service really is the best way to navigate this life we have been given. Our hearts are lifted towards God in thankfulness for his gracious provision and to call upon him in prayer to meet our needs. And we find the testimony of the psalmist to be true for us:

Oh how I love your instruction! All the day it is my meditation (Ps 119:97).

SC

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EVENTS



New service for the northern beaches

KEEN to reach out to the northern beaches community, the parish of Manly Vale and Allambie Heights has begun a new Sunday afternoon gathering in the Allambie Heights Primary School Hall.

"In order to reach families for Christ we have decided to vacate our small building on Sunday and gather at the local school hall at the centre of Allambie Village," the Rev Robin Kinstead said. "We are seeking to be a visible and viable evangelical presence in the village. In answer to our prayers, the Lord wonderfully provided the [school] hall."

Last year the church leadership and congregations prayerfully considered and discussed potential changes needed in order to "fulfil the Lord

Jesus' command to make disciples and disciple-makers and grow existing members in maturity".

Mr Kinstead says members across the parish "graciously relinquished" existing church congregations — including a classical prayer book service, a morning service and night church — to make way for a new family gathering at each church site for all ages and stages.

"We have also begun a new 9am gathering at our Manly Vale church," he said. "Our hope is that the church site will become a community hub. We hope and pray these new gatherings will help us reach our neighbours in the northern beaches with the message that Jesus Christ is God's trustworthy saviour and Lord of all."

Are you interested in ministry to the ageing?

You are invited to attend the launch of "Next Phase Ministries"
(formerly To And By the Ageing)



The Chapter House
St Andrew's Cathedral, George St, Sydney
Saturday February 28th at 2pm

Speakers: David and Robyn Claydon
Still Flourishing - Growing Older in a Youth Obsessed World

Afternoon tea provided
Everyone welcome
RSVP February 18th for catering purposes
to mpinchback@adis1.org.au
Phone 02 9284 1478



DIARY

MONDAY, February 7

PRISCILLA & AQUILA CENTRE LAUNCH CONFERENCE

THE conference's aim is to provide an opportunity to think more about how men and women can work better together in ministry. It would be an ideal conference for staff teams and interested lay people to come along together. It is designed for men and women.

FOR more information and prices visit www.moore.edu.au

LOCATION | Knox Lecture Theatre, 15 King St, Newtown

MONDAY, February 7 – Wednesday, February 9

CHILDREN'S & YOUTH MINISTRY INTENSIVE

THESE intensive-mode diploma units are an excellent option for anyone in paid or volunteer ministry to gain the necessary theological foundation and practical skills for effective ministry to children and young people.

The Children's Ministry Skills unit is also available in fortnightly mode at Mary Andrews College from February 7 to June 6.

FOR more details please visit www.youthworkscollge.edu.au/intensives.
LOCATION | Loftus

TUESDAY, February 8 & Saturday, February 12

SCHOOLS MINISTRY CONFERENCE

THESE conferences are a great

Event of the month

Monday February 14
7.30pm
15 King Street, Newtown

CENTRE FOR CHRISTIAN LIVING LAUNCH

Moore College is opening the Centre for Christian Living, which will examine the A to Z of issues from abortion, beauty and climate change through to war, xenophobia, yoga and zygotes — and everything in between. With the Rev Dr Andrew Cameron as director the centre will consider ethical and moral issues from the perspective of Christian theology through public meetings, seminars and writing. Launch night will include a quick overview of Christian ethics, thinking specifically about how we use our money.

opportunity for primary SRE teachers to be equipped and encouraged in their ministry at the start of the school year. Standard charge \$25, student/pensioner \$20.

FOR more details call (02) 8268 3355 or visit www.youthworks.net/events
LOCATIONS | Wollongong & City

FRIDAY, February 25

CMS FRIDAY FELLOWSHIP

LOCATION | Level 5, 51 Druitt St, Sydney | 10am – 12pm.

FRIDAY, February 25 – Saturday, February 26

CMS CANBERRA MISSION FOCUS

SPEAKER: Kanishka Raffel
LOCATION | St John the Baptist Anglican Church, Cnr Constitution Ave and Anzac Park West, Reid, ACT

Leading Groups in the 21st Century

Attention all women

All current & future group leaders. Enhance your leadership abilities by attending this dynamic leadership course.

Course details:

Friday 25th February, 10am to 2:30pm
St Andrew's Chapter House

Free event, all refreshments provided.

Keynote Speaker:

Jane Tooher, Director of the Priscilla and Aquila Centre, Moore Theological College

This is an opportunity not to be missed if you are seeking to serve in your parish.

RSVP Essential: phone MU Office 9284 1440 or email office@musydney.org.au

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SATURDAY, February 26

**NEXT PHASE
MINISTRIES LAUNCH**

FORMERLY To And By the Aging (TABA), Next Phase Ministries aims to encourage parishes to become aware of the possibilities in working with the aging and to involve the aging in ministry. The launch will include an address from David and Robyn Claydon: "Still Flourishing — Growing Older in a Youth Obsessed World". NEXT Phase Ministries plans to run a series of events throughout 2011 to train and encourage everyone in this vital ministry.

AFTERNOON tea will be provided. FOR more information and to RSVP call (02) 9284 1476 or email mpinchback@adisf.org.au LOCATION | Chapter House, St Andrew's Cathedral, Sydney | 2pm

SATURDAY, March 5 – Saturday, March 12

**SAFE MINISTRY
TRAINING WEEK**

YOUTHWORKS offers Safe Ministry Training three times each year across the Sydney Diocese for anyone needing first-time or refresher training (required every three years). Come along with your teams, or by yourself, to a location nearest to you. Safe Ministry is subsidised for Sydney Anglicans by the Diocese. FOR more details call (02) 8268 3355 or visit www.youthworks.net/safeministry.

SUNDAY, March 7

WORSHIP FOR LIFE

THE Reverend Dr Michael Spence, Vice-Chancellor and Principal of the University of Sydney, will be speaking on 'Worship for Life'. Sponsored by the Prayer Book Society, NSW Branch. TO book phone (02) 9371 6953 BOOKINGS close on Tuesday, February 22 LOCATION | St Michael's Anglican Church, corner Vaucluse Rd and Gilliver Ave, Vaucluse | 12pm

Liverpool South celebrates, Indian style

IN November last year, 10 members from Liverpool South Anglican Church spent two weeks in India and Sri Lanka as part of the India Gospel League (IGL) celebrations, held to praise God for what has been achieved through the IGL over the past decade.

The team from Liverpool South attended the celebrations as part of the church's vision to be outward-looking.

"In the past we have been a very inward-looking parish," said curate-in-charge Manoj Chacko. "We wanted

to change that so we organised this mission to go and see how God is working in other parts of the world."

The team, which included three high-school-aged members, were challenged to get out of their comfort zones.

"We heard some amazing stories about persecution and perseverance and the incredible faith of these people," said church member Warren Flood. "I need to get out into my community — there's a great need in my own backyard. That's what came

from this trip. It was life-changing."

The visit also proved challenging for a number of other members with a few contemplating ministry and missionary options in the future.

"This trip wasn't about what we could do for these people," Mr Flood said. "It was about what we could learn from them, and we learnt a lot."

Said Mr Chacko: "This trip was a great challenge for me and for the team. We are planning to go again in 2012."



Ministry to Muslims Conference

A growing number of workers are seeking to share Christ with Muslims in suburban Sydney. They need your prayer, care and financial support. Come and learn more.

Where: Moore College, Cavill Ave Newtown

When: Sat, 2nd July 2011 – 3.00 to 9.00 pm

Speakers: Dr Peter O'Brien & the workers

Cost: \$30 (including dinner)

Bookings: office@angelicministries.org.au or 9871 6077

GOSPEL-CENTRED LEADERSHIP at school

The Anglican Education Commission invites leaders and aspiring leaders in Anglican and other Christian schools to the

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Conference

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Miscellaneous

GRADUATION CLASS MOORE COLLEGE 1900. My grandfather Rev W.E. Pugh was a graduate. I would like a photograph of that class, named if possible, for our family history. One located in a Sydney Anglican church was removed. Please contact Rev Bill Pugh, 03 9598 5841.

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words, actions and body language. The more time you spend together, the more you communicate.

Guys (and girls), when you make a bee-line for the one you like and then hover around them for an entire evening, they tend to work out your motives.

Whether it's biological, instinctive or cultural, humans are often less attracted to something when they know they don't have to work very hard for it.

By contrast an individual who is comfortable hanging out with a range of people rather than just the person they're interested in communicates the kind of self-confidence we find attractive.

This is about taking hold of the self-worth you have been blessed with in Christ Jesus and realising that you are a catch!

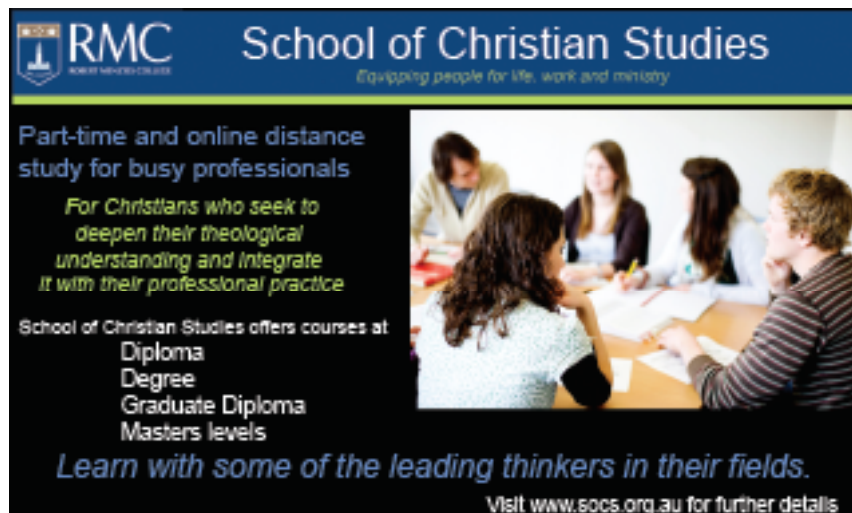
It's also important to educate yourself about what you really want, not to mention what is most important from a Christian perspective. Time and again I have seen people go with their first instinct and head straight for the person who scores highest on their physical attraction quotient.

My humble advice is to be open to any and every possibility God may have in store for you. The person God thinks is a brilliant match may not be the 'hottest' guy or girl at church who sings up front with the band and dresses with style.

Women, for example, need to work out exactly what sort of man makes a good husband — not what their fairytale romance and wedding will be like with the hottest guy in the congregation on their arm.

The parable of building your house upon the sand or upon the rock is obviously about standing on the promises of Christ. However, I think it is a good analogy for the sort of man a woman should be looking for.

I would argue that women should look to marry a 'rock'. There are going



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to be storms in any marriage and 'sand' men are always the first to disappear.

In practical terms, it pays for both sexes to stop and look at what they're actually *doing* to find a prospective wife or husband. If the common pattern you are following is not working, try something else.

My wife goes to great lengths to share her story. She stood before God one day, analysed exactly what dating pattern she had been following and prayerfully decided to turn that on its head. She decided to take up a new strategy.

One element involved opening herself to opportunities God put before her by saying 'yes', at least once, to any Christian guy who asked

...no-one wants to marry a human handbag.

her out for coffee. Luckily the next guy to ask her was me. The bottom line is, you have to do different to get different. Be willing to trust God, take a risk and know that if things don't work out the way you want, it's still going to be okay.

And now for the fellas: take a shot; they can only say no.

Some guys disagree with me but I think it's a complete waste of time to pine away over a girl for months, becoming her handbag, becoming 'friends' and finally working up the courage to ask her out, only to hear those dreaded words — "I just don't think of you like that".

I was once told that if you ask a girl out and nothing happens, you should wait six months before asking another girl out.

Rubbish! If I followed that rule I would have been 70 by the time I got married.

Once you have established a nice acquaintance with a girl, there is nothing wrong with taking a shot and asking her out for a casual catch-up.

If they say no, most of the time you'll still remain friends — and that's a positive outcome. You also haven't invested mountains of emotional energy leading to heartbreak if she does say no.

If she says yes, it will be a great opportunity to spend quality time one-on-one, where each of you can determine whether or not there is a spark worth pursuing.

Ah, but what about being branded as desperate or labelled as using a scatter-gun approach to dating?

Granted, you need to be wise in the way you treat your brothers and sisters in Christ. Love, respect and honour should never be far from your thoughts, especially in the area of romance.

However I would caution women who are quick to criticise blokes who seem comfortable asking girls out. Just because they don't seem terrified is not a reason to doubt their sincerity (and, of course, they may just be good at hiding their nerves!).

By hastily labelling a confident young man as a scatter-gun dater, women run the risk of shooting themselves in the foot.

When other men discover their brother has been labelled for asking a few girls out in relatively quick succession, they will simply shut up shop, not wanting to make any romantic advances lest they be tarred with the same brush.

And then we're back to square one, with women lamenting the lack of motivation among Christian men.

There should be more to dating life in Christian circles than this. We need to have the courage (on both sides) to step out, a desire — above any others that we might have — to care for each other and the willingness to trust God in the midst of it. **SC**

Brad Emery is a freelance journalist and member of Church By The Bridge, Kirribilli.

Articles of our faith

Defining Convictions and Decisive Commitments.
The Thirty-Nine Articles in Contemporary Anglicanism
Michael Jensen & Tom Frame

THE publication late last year of *Defining Convictions and Decisive Commitments* by Dr Michael Jensen and Bishop Tom Frame provides a welcome discussion of the significance and relevance of the Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion for Australian Anglicans today. Not since 1967 has an Australian author (Knox's *The Thirty-Nine Articles: The Historic Basis of Anglican Faith*) devoted a book to this topic.

Despite its somewhat clumsy title, Jensen and Frame have provided an excellent resource for Anglicans who are interested in (or even unaware of) the importance of the Thirty-Nine Articles in the life of the Anglican Church. In particular, the authors are rightly concerned by the diversity of views on the meaning of the articles among ordinands in the Australian Church, who are still required to give assent to the articles before ordination.

The authors long to see 'consistent attention to the content of the Articles by ordinands throughout their preparation for ministry, honest reflection of what subscription means, and why adherence to a statement of belief remains important' (p193). However, the authors are also keen to revive interest in the articles among Anglican laity and have courageously provided suggestions for revising the articles believing there should be 'open debate about where and why the articles might be amended'. The explanation of the articles and the suggestions for revision will be of special interest to many readers, though the historical chapters of the articles' origin and the way they have functioned in the life of the church ought also to be read, with their helpful analysis of the varying approaches of Anglo-Catholics, evangelicals and liberals.

Numerous calls for revision have been made over the past 440 years, not the least of which (though not mentioned

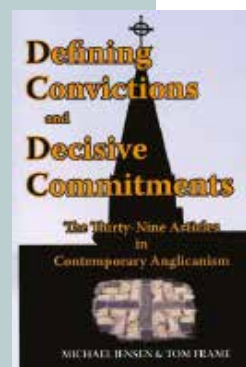
in the book) was the Westminster Assembly in 1643 during the English Commonwealth, which began as an exercise in rewriting the articles.

Only after they had redrafted the first 15 articles did they abandon the task and commence afresh on a new confession. Jensen and Frame (p176) have a prior (unexplained) commitment to retaining 39 as the number for any revised set of articles so they bravely delete some and skilfully combine others, allowing for 17 new articles addressing contemporary concerns to be included. Although some textual suggestions are made to the original articles, no suggestions are put forth for the text of the new, though several topics are canvassed.

To this reviewer, the case has not been made for a revision of the articles. Unlike the Prayer Book, which went through four revisions in its first 110 years, the articles stand as a doctrinal summary of the matters of contention for the Church of England in the 16th century. These were defining battle lines, which the authors agree are still relevant for today.

While there is a quaintness of style and certainly a different set of priorities for today's church which was not present 450 years ago, they are not beyond comprehension (as the authors have shown). A new confession, supplementing rather than supplanting the Thirty-Nine Articles might be more feasible, although gaining agreement for such a document will have its difficulties. Perhaps the Jerusalem Declaration of 2008 is the closest formulation of such a document, which while recognising the authority of the Thirty-Nine Articles also recognises that a restatement of Anglican doctrine is needed for the 21st century.

Glenn N Davies



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Love life 101: you need to start with God

Christians should stop making the business of dating so complicated, writes BRAD EMERY.

MY father always told me that the Bible tells us what we need to know, not what we'd like to know.

For a child who wanted to know if Dr Who was real and whether or not dinosaurs were running around in the Garden of Eden, this was a disappointing answer to my queries.

For a young adult seeking a wife, this response became excruciatingly frustrating.

God's word is full of guidance on the certainty of one's salvation, how to live for God and how to live with one's brothers and sisters in Christ.

However, the Bible does appear to be somewhat lacking in guidance on how to find your life's partner.

In John Richardson's book, *God, Sex,*

and Marriage he highlights the fact that the Bible's only stipulations for a Christian marriage are that a prospective spouse is alive, not a member of your family and a Christian.

In fact, although God told Adam it is not good for man to be alone, nowhere in the Bible are Christians promised that they will find a wife or husband.

And rightly so, since our purpose for existing on this beautiful planet is to glorify its Creator, not satisfy the checklist of our own desires.

Yet the desires remain. It is how we have been wired by our God and much of a single person's prayer life is taken up with issues of contentment and the longing for a spouse.

It seems no issue so lightly touched on

in the Bible has had more Christian 'help' books devoted to it.

In my church I have borne witness to and taken part in the deliciously frustrating endeavour of trying to find a spouse.

I have seen people twist themselves into knots trying to work out the how to, where to and when to, as well as the if they should and why not of finding a partner.

It made me ask the question: do Christians make finding a husband or wife harder than it really is? Or do things just get complicated all by themselves?

I don't know if I have come to a conclusion about this conundrum. However, in my limited life experience I have made a few observations along the way. Readers may or may not agree with these ideas but some may find them helpful.

Firstly, a Christian who is independently secure in their relationship with God shines.

Being independently secure as a Christian means you understand that you are an adopted son or daughter of the Most High.

Your self-worth is not wrapped up in the acceptance of other people but in your adoption by your Lord.

As you come to a strong understanding of this and truly see yourself in this way, a healthy by-product is that others will also see it and find themselves drawn to you.

Another point that is particularly relevant to guys (although I have seen it with girls as well): no-one wants to marry a human handbag.

This is perhaps another healthy by-product of my first point. People are attracted to those who are confident and comfortable in their own skin.

I have been guilty of this myself and I see so many guys replicating the mistake. We find a person we're interested in and we hang around them like seagulls at a picnic.

Even if we're not in the same conversation, we're hovering only a few feet away, pretending to talk to someone else.

We think that if we can spend as much time as possible with our prospective love match, we'll score enough points for them to see us as 'the one' for them.

When you spend time with another human being, you naturally communicate;

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