

FEBRUARY  
2014

# Southern CROSS

THE NEWS MAGAZINE FOR SYDNEY ANGLICANS

## On shaky ground

WHEN FAITHFUL CHURCHES ARE ABANDONED

- + Beach missions return to Sydney
- & Can you be a Christian and a homophile?

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It's a lonely time for those living out the truths of the gospel while being attacked from within their own denomination. We hear about Anglican struggles in the UK and beyond.

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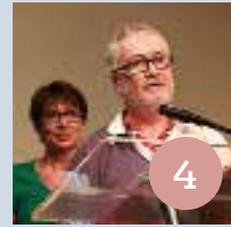
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“ If I say that  
I believe in God,  
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I can hear  
my leaders say,  
‘Idealism is  
no good’. ”

Shifang Wang

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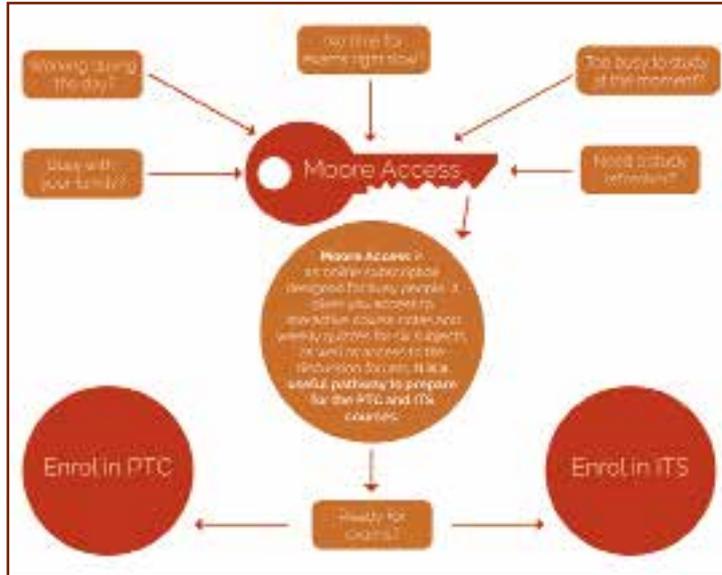
# Moore revamps distance education

RUSSELL POWELL

WHAT BEGAN IN 1940 AS THE Moore College Correspondence Course is to be relaunched for the 21st century as Moore College Distance. The revamp comes after an 18-month consultation and research process of student needs, new technologies and course structure.

"For around 70 years we have been involved in distance education through our correspondence courses and evening lectures," says Moore College principal Dr Mark Thompson. "Now we are taking the thrilling next step of providing our courses online. We are also taking the opportunity to totally revamp our processes to make it easier to enrol, receive feedback and progress through the course."

Already catering for about 5000 students, the college is hoping that



How it works: a diagram of the Moore Distance program.

number will grow after the launch next month.

There will be three course streams. The first, six subjects of the PTC (Preliminary Theological Certificate), is correspondence only and includes

the traditional correspondence course books, a paper-based multiple choice exam and detailed exam feedback. The second, the ITS, (Introduction to Theological Studies) is entirely online and features 18

subjects and scheduled time with an online personal coach as well as interactive notes, weekly online quizzes, and online forums which are accessible at any time.

The third option, called Moore Access, allows students to join the online learning environment community, with access to interactive course notes for six subjects, weekly quizzes with feedback and forum discussions. When students wish to sit an exam, they can enrol in the PTC or the ITS.

"I am excited about this initiative," Dr Thompson says. "It will enable us to take good Bible teaching to people in the most remote places and to those whose busy lives mean they have no other way of accessing the teaching available at Moore College."

The college expects there will be a 12-month transition period for existing students to finish their courses or transfer subjects to the new structure.

## From Katoomba to SEA

WHEN THE GENERAL SECRETARY of CMS NSW & ACT, Malcolm Richards, jokes about CMS Summer School being "dangerous", he's not talking about summer in a bushfire region like the Blue Mountains. It's the potential for the event to call faithful Christians to missionary service.

His observation was highlighted by an interview before the assembled crowd in Katoomba last month with his workmate – another Malcolm – who, having spent eight years as director of Summer School, was leaving to prepare for service in South-East Asia with his wife Leanne.

"It [Summer School] has been 'dangerous' for us," he agreed with



Leanne and Malcolm at Summer School.

a laugh. Unlike most couples using a holiday simply for relaxation, in 2013 the pair took long service leave and "travelled around South-East Asia with a mind about where

we should go".

They had felt God was leading them to a Buddhist country in South-East Asia and, in a "Macedonian moment", people in that country

had asked them to "come and teach our pastors".

"This country is opening up," Malcolm said. "There are lots of opportunities to train and teach, particularly in this part of the world."

Leanne added that their grown children had been their most important partners in the process to date, because they had "given us permission to go".

And while there was a level of anxiety in the leaving and the sending, both were confident in God's hand with them, as well as their children's support.

Malcolm and Leanne will spend the next six months at St Andrew's Hall, the CMS training college in Melbourne.

# Glenbrook welcomes new church

JUDY ADAMSON

AFTER MORE THAN 15 YEARS OF planning and 10 months of building, a new church at St Peter's, Glenbrook in the parish of the Lower Mountains has opened – much to the delight of its congregation.

Rector Ted Brush says the parish has planned for three “openings”, from the first service in late November (which was attended by more than 400 people) to the official opening on February 22 with Archbishop Glenn Davies.

He describes the old church as “one of those dreaded A-frame things”, and says the process to replace it had taken time in terms of dealing with the local council, planning and raising funds.

“People are pretty excited,” Mr Brush says. “There’s a huge degree of ownership and there are a whole bunch of families that have joined us.



Welcome for all... the new face of St Peter's,

We had planted a family service in the local high school hall – Blaxland High – and that pretty quickly grew to the point where we couldn't come back to this building, so we either had to rebuild or stay in the school. God was gracious to us.

“Because of the church plant there are members of our parish who've never been in one of our own buildings until now. They joined us during the time at the school so they think it's absolutely wonderful.”

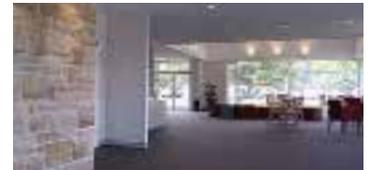
Compared to the old church, which effectively seated 120 people, the \$2.5 million new building officially seats 250 – which Mr Brush says made the first service somewhat of a happy challenge, with overflows into the foyer. There are now video link facilities into the new hall for very big events, plus extra meeting spaces for church groups and a state-of-the-art sound system.

“A lot of people in the community came over Christmas to have a bit of

a look – and the sort of things they're saying is that it's really comfortable and warm and welcoming,” Mr Brush says. “We did a Christmas Day service at 9 o'clock and the last person left around 11.30. The building just seems have that effect on people – they don't want to go.

“We have a very large foyer that is nearly all glass on the outside wall... and one visitor said the space 'brings the outside in and the inside out'.

“It's hard to say yet how we're going in terms of newcomers... but people are coming up to me in the street and saying, 'We're planning



on coming to church once your children's programs start'. So I think it'll be a couple of months before we really know what will happen. It's very exciting.”



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# New bodies to replace Mission Board

THE MISSION BOARD, ONE OF THE key decision-making bodies overseeing the Diocesan Mission, has been discontinued and will be replaced by two new groups. Standing Committee voted to dissolve the board after hearing the results of a review of its operations.

Bishop Peter Hayward, who chaired the review, said the board's own evaluation had been that it was ineffective. "It had to straddle two major responsibilities," Bishop Hayward said. "The first was to exercise various functions on behalf of Standing Committee – largely to

do with Synod finances – and the second was to operate as a think-tank on mission."

The review concluded that the first task dominated much of its thinking, especially navigating the reduction in finances available in the last four years, and it was not effective in carrying out the second task because "the composition of the board was not conducive to frank discussion on the implementation and evaluation of progress in mission".

Standing Committee decided to establish two new subcommittees.

The responsibility for making recommendations on funding priorities will now pass to the newly established Diocesan Resources Committee, but Bishop Hayward said there was "still a pressing need to continue with a group which considers the whole diocesan network and thinks strategically and missionally as to the future". So a body provisionally known as the Strategic Research Group will now work on high-level vision and strategy issues.

The group will be chaired by the Archbishop with an initial

membership of three lay members, three clergy and three people chosen by the Archbishop.

The SRG will be "an advisory group for the Archbishop and the Standing Committee in their formulation of missional goals for consideration and adoption by the Synod". Further, as a sub-committee of Standing Committee, it will oversee the "objective measurement and reporting on progress toward achieving those missional goals".

The SRG is expected to report to Standing Committee at least four times a year.

## Youthworks mourns Smith remembered



Kathy and Andy Stirrup at the recent Vivid Light Festival in Sydney.

THE SYDNEY ANGLICAN DIOCESE'S youth arm, Youthworks, and the wider church community is mourning the loss of Youthworks College lecturer Andy Stirrup, who died suddenly on January 9.

He collapsed following a run with his son, and was not able to be revived by paramedics. He was 51.

Mr Stirrup joined the faculty of Youthworks College in 2001 after missionary service in Tanzania. Born and raised in the United Kingdom, Mr Stirrup came to Australia to study at Moore College in the early 1990s. He spent five years teaching theological students in Tanzania with the Crosslinks mission organisation.

At Youthworks College in Loftus, Mr Stirrup lectured in Old Testament, Greek, New Testament

Exegesis and Family Ministry.

"Andy was a foundational and much-loved member of the college faculty, who over 12 years impacted and shaped the lives and ministry of several hundred students," said Youthworks College principal Andrew Nixon. "He will be greatly missed by the college community, but most especially by his wife, Kathy, their children, Alex, Chris and James and his wider family.

"Please join us in prayer for them as they grieve the loss of Andy, that they may draw comfort in the faithfulness of our Lord, and the sure knowledge that Andy is now with his Saviour."

Mr Stirrup was a member of St Paul's, Menai in southern Sydney, where his funeral was held on January 21.



Ridley Smith's daughter Ingrid (centre) and grandchildren lead the congregation in singing "In Christ Alone". PHOTO: Ramon Williams

**RIDLEY SMITH, A FORMER** chairman of Scripture Union NSW and an architect who worked on many projects in Sydney and beyond, died on December 22 aged 77.

Mr Smith is especially remembered for more than 50 years' contribution to the work of mission through Scripture Union. He served as its chairman for a number of years, and was particularly known for his personal energy and commitment to mission.

"Ridley's one of these guys who has seen SU through many eras, and who has been a constant over that time," said the current chairman of SU NSW, the Rev Simon Flinders.

"[He was] a man who knew the movement and its ministry inside out, and who has contributed his particular skills and enthusiasm at

every step of the journey."

Mr Smith's contribution, however, extended beyond his time on the organisation's board, from which he eventually retired in 2007.

With his architect's hat on, Mr Smith designed St Andrew's House and Sydney Square, and continued the work of Arthur Stace by installing a version of the signature "Eternity" in cast aluminium in the square.

His contribution to church, college and other building projects included the Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture in Canberra. Much of this work was done through his architectural firm, Noel Bell Ridley Smith and Partners, which was founded in 1968.

Mr Smith was remembered at a special service in St Andrew's Cathedral on January 3.

# Beach missions make Sydney metro return

NICK GILBERT

SCRIPTURE UNION HAS concluded its 2013-14 season of summer missions along the beaches of NSW as well as inland, including a new mission in metropolitan Sydney.

The Summerlife Narrabeen mission, designed to connect particularly with youth and young adults, is SUFM's first foray into the Sydney metro area in several decades, and came about because of a desire to facilitate stronger follow-up and church networking with those who attended SU programs.

"Doing mission, you're there for two weeks and then you're away for 50 weeks – it's kind of hard to spur people on and help them through stuff," says Narrabeen mission team leader Daniel Leech. "So that was the motivation: to be able to continue to work with people because they were in our own town.

"The mission itself is a great way to get people who wouldn't otherwise go near a church to come to something that is run by Christians, and we can share the gospel with them. It's just a good opportunity to engage with local surfers, and meet them on their own turf."

Missions Director at SU, Steve



Summer life: a youth and young adults night at the Scripture Union Narrabeen program.

Windsor, who also co-led the new Narrabeen mission, says this was another strong year for the missions, and the success of the Narrabeen event has him hopeful about starting another new metropolitan mission in the coming year.

"We're planning to go to Manly, at least that's my hope, for next year as well," Mr Windsor says. "We're just going to see what happens with Narrabeen, and if we can get some good ideas we'd like to move more and more into the Sydney beaches as we can."

Further north, the Solid Rock Café in Port Macquarie – run by an

SUFM Theos mission team – had a tumultuous year, with the death of team member Zac Young after a shark attack in early December.

When the team found Zac had recorded a video testimony earlier in 2013, however, they decided it could be an opportunity to share his beliefs and the hope of the gospel with the people who dropped in at the café.

On the night the testimony was shown, Port Macquarie team leader Deb Aitken says that between 400 and 500 people came to see it – more than double the usual attendance level for the evening café.

"I found out while we were up there that his testimony had been recorded by Youth for Christ [an interdenominational Christian youth association]," Ms Aitken says, "and they were going to use it for some of their own activities. I spoke to the guy who was running Youth for Christ, and he said it would be great to share that testimony on mission like he was with us on team.

"We know plenty of people from being up in Port Mac for years, and the word kind of spread. A huge number of people turned up and got to hear Zac, through the video, share the reason for his faith."



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# Point Church and Canada Bay join as new parish

NICK GILBERT

THE ENC-SUPPORTED CONCORD-based Point Church, and a Christ Church Gladesville plant in nearby North Strathfield have joined together in the new provisional parish of Concord North.

A special service marking the occasion, which included the ordination and induction of the rector, the Rev Stew Witt, was held on December 19 and presided over by the regional bishop, the Rt Rev Robert Forsyth.

Mr Witt, who has been with Point Church since 2010, says that he was thankful for the occasion and is looking forward to continuing the work that has been done in the area.

"It was really good, there was an air of excitement," he says. "I think one of the great things is that I wouldn't want to be anywhere other than in an Anglican church doing mission in Sydney.

"We have the flexibility to be a church plant, but the groundedness and support of an organisation that has been faithful to the gospel here for a long time. In fact, in the formal documents for the parish of St Mary's [the building that Point Church meets in], the title is, from 1887, St Mary's Mission Church. It started with mission on the agenda, and we see ourselves as nothing new, but simply continuing that work."

Mr Witt says another high point of the process has been the opportunity to work with the Rev Andy Bleach,

who pastored the Canada Bay plant and will continue to serve in the new parish as an assistant minister. He is also thankful for Gladesville's willingness to allow the church to join Concord North.

"Partnership aligns different groups of people who are on the same page, theologically and missiologically," he says. "What that means is we can get an energy, and an effectiveness, as we resource one another – as the two congregations serve one another – and we're massively excited about it."

Mr Bleach, who will transition from being a staff member at Gladesville to being a part of Concord North, says he thinks it is a blessing to be part of this new opportunity.

"When Stew and I were chatting about this six months ago, and we

seeded the idea, we wanted to know whether it was good for the gospel in this area – and as we talked more and more we thought that was the case," he says.

"We're in that transition at the moment, moving everything into the entity of the Concord North parish, but very excited. It's amazing, I haven't heard anything negative from the morning congregation, I've only heard positive things, which is a real blessing. There will be challenges in the future, of course, we're not blind to those sorts of things, but there's excitement and energy about combining as one church with two congregations in this area."

The new parish of Concord North officially came into being on December 12, 2013.



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Archbishop Glenn Davies

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Professional Standards Unit

# The end of darkness



A heart given to the Lord: the Rev David Wong, Shifang Wang and the Rev Rodney Kerr at Shifang's baptism. PHOTO Alfie Ma

## LEA CARSWELL

**THE NIGHT BEFORE HIS BAPTISM,** 78-year-old Shifang Wang found it hard to sleep.

"I slept only about four hours last night," he says. "I was very nervous. In all my life, this is my first time to believe."

Shifang, born in Shanghai in 1935, was raised in an environment in which everything was regulated, including where he placed his belief. From his youngest days, he remembers soldiers in the streets around his home, when China was at war with Japan. He was 14 when the People's Republic of China was established in 1949.

"I have never been part of any organisation or belief," says Shifang, who has now given his heart to Christ. "I never touched anything to do with the church. If I say that I believe in God, in my head I can hear my leaders say, 'Idealism is no good.'"

Shifang worked until he was 71,

even though the official retirement age is 60 for men in China. He and his wife, Jing, came to Australia in 2011 to be with their daughter, who studied in Sydney and has raised a family here. They have another daughter who lives in London.

Initially they lived with their daughter in Coogee, but decided the house was too crowded and noisy with their grandson and his friends. They found a house in Merrylands and, early in 2013, Shifang came to the ESL class at Merrylands Anglican Church.

"At first I hoped to get better in speaking and reading English and I came to the church," he says. "It was difficult and Albert Lee [a Chinese Malaysian] sat next to me.

"Albert and everyone, especially the ESL teachers like Howard Meyers, were friendly and helpful – this was my first time knowing about God's love. I was very honoured. I think without Howard perhaps I wouldn't be a Christian.

"They told me about James Ng, who was running activities for

elderly Chinese people in the area from Monday to Thursday. In May James and another Christian man, Alfie Ma, started a group of people meeting to have church together on Saturdays, speaking Mandarin. I started going. I heard people in the group talking about the Bible and how God has changed their lives."

Says Albert: "Shifang has heard testimonies from people in his own language. He gradually started understanding the very new idea of grace. It was a big thing for him to accept new ideas after having his mind controlled for so long."

The Rev David Wong from St Mark's, Granville has been leading the Mandarin service at Merrylands since September, with the support of Merrylands' senior minister, the Rev Rodney Kerr.

Says Rodney: "I came to know Shifang through ESL and then the Chinese service. He seemed to be interested in knowing more about Jesus and it was not long before he was asking me to help him understand what baptism is about.

"I met with Shifang and Alfie, who helped with translation, several times – Shifang wanted to really know Jesus. I remember the first time he prayed out loud; it was a very moving experience as he spoke to God in his native tongue."

Shifang's wife, Jing, was unable to attend his baptism because she was unwell.

"She is happy for me," he says. "Every Friday, some Christians have been visiting her to help her to understand what I believe and what it means to be baptised."

The sermon during Shifang's baptism service, based on Romans 13:1-14, included the comforting reminder for all of us, that "the night is nearly over; the day is almost here".

"I once would have said that all good things in my life were just luck," Shifang says. "Now I know that God has protected me and brought me to this time when I could hear his word and accept Jesus into my heart. There has been darkness in my life, but now the light is shining."

# Farewell to "Chis"

DESCRIBED AS "A LEGEND OF THE region" by a local paper in New England, Bishop Peter Chiswell (right) – who served the Armidale Diocese as bishop from 1976 until his retirement in 1999 – died on December 6, 2013.



The present bishop, Rick Lewers, noting that the diocese celebrates its centenary in 2014, said that for nearly a quarter of that time Bishop Chiswell had "led the diocese with dignity, blessing its many communities by his selfless service. [His] term as bishop was marked by approachability and accessibility.

"He was esteemed by his clergy as a strong leader; a man of prayer, wisdom and discernment... as bishop he drove in excess of 40,000 kilometres each year in his extensive travels across the diocese and its parishes, often accompanied by his wife Betty – deeply appreciated in her own right for her hospitality, her ministry to clergy wives, and

her support to the bishop in his exacting role".

Born in 1934, Peter Chiswell – or "Chis" – grew up in the Sydney suburb of Oatley, studied civil engineering and worked for the then Department of Main Roads before beginning study at Moore College in 1956.

He was ordained to serve in the Armidale diocese in 1958 and completed his training in New England before becoming vicar of Bingara, to the south-east of Moree.

From 1967-1976 he was vicar of Gunnedah, after which he was called to be Bishop of Armidale.

Bishop Chiswell's eldest son, Graeme, in a eulogy given at the funeral at St Peter's Cathedral in Armidale, spoke of his father's faithful work in that region – including well after his retirement – but also noted contributions to the wider church through General Synod and his long-term support of and involvement with CMS at a state and federal level.

Bishop Lewers recalled that in March 2012, as Bishop-elect of Armidale, he stood next to Bishop Chiswell as the new hall at Calrossy Anglican School was named after him "in recognition of his part in the school and diocesan history.

"The 1997 foundation stone of the St Peter's Parish Centre in Armidale, part of the Heritage Award-winning building works realised under his leadership, also bears his name,

although to his known reluctance," Bishop Lewers added. "'To the Glory of God', carved above it, was his aim in all things."

Graeme Chiswell reflected on the character and style of his father as someone who was unpretentious and counter-cultural in a world of constant consumerism; who loved the bush and was concerned for the environment long before it was popular; who was a strategic thinker and planner; and who was loving and generous to those he came into contact with – most particularly, his family.

"We thank God for his gift of Peter to us," Graeme said. "That same love of Christ which compelled Dad's life has now welcomed him home. He is with the Lord and one day there will be a great reunion in the new heavens and the new earth where there will be no more tears, no more separation, no more cancer. As Dad would say, "Isn't that marvellous!"

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# CMS missionaries care for the lost in Nepal

NICK GILBERT

CMS MISSIONARIES ARE continuing their work in Nepal, working alongside Christian NGOs to provide health and development services with a Christian ethos.

Kate Dalitz and Kirstin Hawkshaw are CMS missionaries on secondment with the International Nepal Fellowship (INF), assisting the poorest in the Nepalese community, particularly those suffering from leprosy, tuberculosis, HIV/AIDS, spinal injuries and various other physical disabilities.

Both are based in Pokhara, the third-largest city in Nepal and close to many of Nepal's poorest communities. Ms Hawkshaw is an occupational therapist, providing training to local staff as well as primary care and rehabilitation services to those with disabilities.

Ms Dalitz works as INF's Integral Mission Advisor, with the job of enhancing the Christian character of the organisation and also strengthening ties to indigenous Nepali churches.

"Like Australian culture, Nepali culture has cultural values that are different from biblical values," she says. "Things like forgiveness are just totally foreign to Nepali people. It's a human nature thing to not forgive, but in Nepali culture it's seen very negatively. If you're born with a disability, or a child is born with a disability, it's often looked at as though you deserved it. There's often guilt and shame in the community, and so that means care and respect for those with disabilities is often a very alien thing in some communities."

After over 200 years as an executive monarchy built on Hindu principles, Nepal transitioned to an officially secular republic in 2011. The country is ranked among the poorest in the world.

"Politically and socially it's very



Kate Dalitz (second from left) with INF work colleagues.

complicated," Ms Hawkshaw says, "and those things we've discussed with local Christians, and we take their lead in terms of what is appropriate for Christians to be involved with in society. Daily life for many people in Nepal still features many religious aspects, so we follow the local churches in that respect."

Ms Hawkshaw works primarily in INF's community rehabilitation program, but also helps run camps for children with disabilities, providing health education and devotional opportunities.

"Sometimes the mothers will talk to us when they hear about Jesus and about God's love," she says. "We

don't push it, we're just planting seeds.

"We also had a Christian mother come along with her son, who had a different disability to the others and we wanted to send him to doctors. Afterwards she said her husband didn't want him to go to the doctor, because he said we should pray for the son instead. She was confused about coming to a Christian camp that would send him to a doctor. So there was an opportunity to say yes we can pray, and yes we will ask for God's help, but that God has also given us doctors to care for the sick."

Ms Dalitz says one of the great joys of her work is being able to encourage INF employees to live out biblical principles in their work. She says there was one Christian staff worker who was impacted by a workshop Ms Dalitz helped run, who was encouraged to care for a person with leprosy, despite the discomfort that brings in Nepali culture.

"He'd been thinking that he didn't want to go down there," she says, "and didn't really want to touch this person, but then remembered what we had been talking about, that because of God's great love for us, we are to love other people. That's what drives our work, not that we're paid for it or whatever."

## new missionaries in 2014

**Nathan and Maki Clapham** will be based in Chiba, a fairly wealthy area within greater Tokyo, Japan. Nathan will partner with Kirisutosha Gakusei Kai (KGK), an IFES-affiliated student group, as a full-time worker. Maki is originally from Kobe in Japan, and will be adjusting to life in a new part of the country of her birth, while particularly assisting their two children, Samuel and Ian, as they adjust to Japanese school life. The two will also serve in their local church.

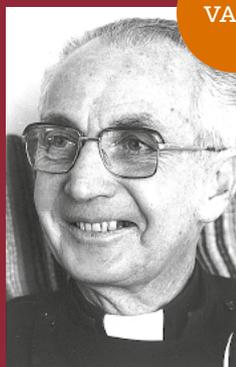
**Chris and Karen Webb** will be working in Broome, with a particular focus on partnering with local Aboriginal Christians. They will be working with the Anglican Diocese of North West Australia, encouraging Aboriginal Christians in their faith and evangelism.

**Daniel and Kate Morris**, along with their young daughter, will serve in France, with their initial year spent in Paris learning the language. The pair will then be working through the IFES-affiliated Association des Groupes Biblique Universitaires (GBU) in evangelism and discipleship through university ministry.

**Gary and Julie Haddon**, along with their four children, are headed to Chile and its capital, Santiago. They will be working with the Anglican Church of Chile, particularly through its Centre for Pastoral Studies (CEP), training up local Chilean Christians as ministers, but also as teachers and administrators of the CEP itself.

**Steph** will be working in a secure country in south Asia, assisting local Christian communities, as well as sharing the gospel with those who are yet to hear it.

VALE



**Ron Patfield**  
1924-2013

On December 20 the Rev Ron Patfield succumbed to oesophageal cancer and was, in his own phrase, promoted to glory.

I met Ron in 1968 when he became the rector of St Paul's, Seaforth, after an effective decade-long ministry at Wentworthville, short incumbencies at Annandale and Normanhurst and curacies at St Paul's, Wahroonga and St Philip's, Eastwood. In his early forties he brought an energy and vibrancy to parish life in Seaforth that I had never experienced before.

Ron loved to share the gospel and proclaim the excellencies of the Lord Jesus. His own adoption as a boy enabled him to explore the depth and significance of our heavenly Father's adoption of us as his children, and he would not countenance anything that became a barrier to people hearing and responding to the gospel. This sometimes included human structures (like ecclesiastical bureaucracy!) and brought him into conflict with bishops and archbishops. But he was undeterred. Unlike James Dean – a

rebel without a cause – Patfield was a rebel *with* a cause. His cause was Christ and no obstacle was so great that he would not seek to dismantle it so Christ might be pre-eminent.

One of Ron's particular gifts was guiding and encouraging young men and women into ministry. During the 1980s, after St Matthias', Centennial Park, St Paul's, Seaforth provided the greatest number of students at Moore College from one parish. Ron would mentor these people, encourage and equip them for ministry – and in some cases (like my own) plot, plan and pray for an appropriate marriage partner!

Following his resignation from Seaforth, Ron joined the staff at Moore College where, again, he had a profound effect upon the lives of students in their journey toward full-time ministry. He then undertook 50 locums across the Diocese, as he was not a man to take early retirement, and continued to exercise an active ministry among residents of Mowll Village until his final months.

Ron challenged the status quo with a gospel edge; sought new ways to proclaim Christ to an unbelieving world; and stirred the heart, imagination and will through his evocative sermons and straight talking in one-to-one conversations.

A man gripped by the gospel of grace, Ron was uniquely gifted and called by God to have an effect upon several generations of gospel workers. He could not have done this as effectively as he did without the support, love and generosity of his wife, Mary. As a Diocese we are indebted to them both for their servant-mindedness, which under God has produced a remarkable harvest for his glory.

Glenn N. Davies



**Marie Robinson**  
1925-2014

Mrs Marie Robinson died on January 7. Born Marie Taubman in 1925, she attended Meriden school in Strathfield, where she was an excellent student and athlete, and was made Head Girl in 1942. Her son the Rev Martin Robinson says the impact of the death of Marie's mother when she was 10, and her brother Ken during the war in 1944, strengthened her "capacity to feel deeply but with great self-discipline on the surface".

Marie studied at Sydney University, obtaining a degree in anthropology with first-class honours under A.P. Elkin – who provided influential academic support for CMS's commitment to minister to Aborigines in Australia as those made in the image of God, rather than as subhuman.

She and her future husband Donald Robinson became close when vice-president and president (respectively) of the Sydney University Evangelical Union in 1946. They became engaged the following year before he went to Cambridge to study theology.

Marie spent most of 1948 helping out at the main house of the Roper River (now Ngukurr) CMS mission. Her visit coincided with that of the National Geographic Survey Team – which collected art at the time that formed the basis of the Yiribana collection at the Art Gallery of NSW. Her daughter Anne Robinson says, "These experiences had a profound effect on Mum and for the rest of her life she had a deep compassionate interest in both Aboriginal people and culture".

In 1949 Donald and Marie married at St James', Croydon, and the couple travelled to Cambridge so Donald could complete postgraduate study. On their return in 1950, Marie entered wholeheartedly with him into the fellowship, service and responsibilities that came with work in parish, as Lecturer and vice-principal of Moore College, as Bishop of Parramatta, and eventually Archbishop of Sydney. She was president of the Mothers' Union and, in addition to many speaking engagements in this and other roles, taught Christian Studies at SCEGGS for many years, and became a trained ESL teacher.

Martin Robinson calls Marie the "other mother" to his wife Jann, saying she "diarised a day a week while 'Mrs Archbishop' to help for the first year of our twins, Alice and Jane... [Our daughter] Emma was not sure who was more important, Grandma or the Queen."

In a speech on behalf of the family at her funeral last month, much was said by Mr Robinson of his mother's selfless, servant heart, including this comment by his niece, Stephanie Judd: "She modelled to me what it is to be servant-hearted. I have never seen the effect of the gospel so clearly displayed in making a person's heart directed outward and upward instead of inward".

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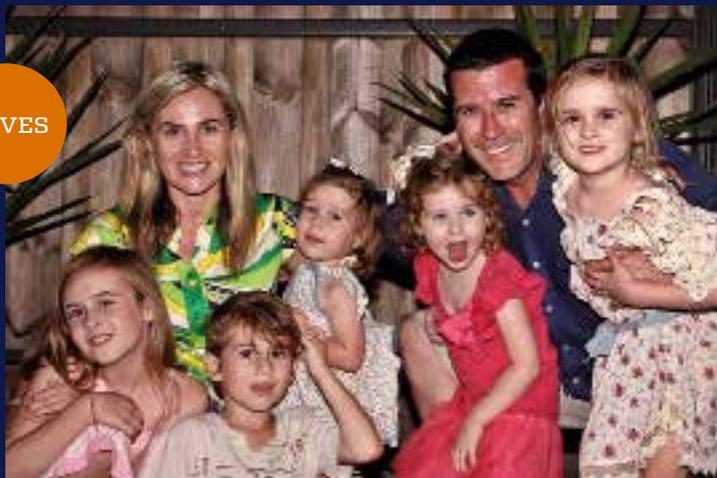


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## MOVES



## FROM SURF TO HILLS

After eight years ministering on the northern beaches, the Rev Mike Heptonstall became the rector of Kellyville at the end of last month.

Mr Heptonstall spent four and a half years as assistant minister in Narrabeen, and was senior assistant at Manly from 2010 until now. He says that after years of "solid training and experience" at St Faith's and St Matt's he and his wife Leanne were open to a move, "but how it all happened was just out of the blue".

As a northern beaches boy born and bred, he admits that when the nominators from Kellyville made contact, he wasn't sure where the Hills district suburb was.

## MOUNTAIN RECTOR RETIRES

The Rev John Gaunt will retire from his position as rector of Blackheath later this year.

Mr Gaunt, who came to the parish in 2008, officially leaves in September but actually finishes this month in order to take accumulated long service leave.

"The parish is blessed with some very fine, mature Christians who have been active in their local churches all their lives," he says. "We are also fairly denominationally mixed in terms of history and background. In some parts of the parish we're the only church functioning so we pick up everybody who's Christian and who wants to be at church. We are here to preach the gospel and build up the body of Christ and keep each other encouraged."

Blackheath is likely to be the highest parish in the Diocese above sea level, and Mr Gaunt wouldn't

"It's the 'insular peninsula' thing – you don't really grasp all the different areas of Sydney," he jokes. "But we looked it up on Google maps to get a feel for where it is in Sydney and then drove out the next day. And as soon as Leanne and I got to the area, we just thought, 'Wow this really feels like it could be us'. We've got five young kids from nine to two and this is just a really great, growing young families area... the good Lord just kept opening the doors and the whole process was pretty smooth and seamless."

"This church is well positioned for growth so we're looking forward to getting stuck into ministry here and serving the saints and promoting the gospel."

be surprised if it were also the largest in terms of area, given that it encompasses Mt Victoria, Mt Wilson and Hartley, and it takes an hour to drive between his two most far-flung regular attenders – one at Mt Irvine and the other on the way to Jenolan Caves.

"It's a sociologically diverse community in this area," he says. "There are affluent people and there are others living on benefits, including some with mental health issues. There are a number of group homes for the intellectually disabled, a significant gay and lesbian community, and also a significant inclination towards the new age and Buddhism. But in the end they're all people who need the gospel. The joy and the challenge is to share the word of God with the people of God and work with them in various ways as we seek to present the gospel to a far-flung and diverse parish."



## EXTEND GRACE

I read Carl Beauchamp's letter about refugees and asylum seekers (SC, December) with a measure of disappointment. The discussion on this issue is complicated, but very much worth having.

Australia, as a signatory to the UN Refugee Convention, is obligated to receive and process claims for asylum. Such claims are legitimate, whether they are made from a refugee camp in Kenya or from a boat that has entered Australian waters, and there is no reason for our country to exempt itself from its obligations to responsibly process these claims while expecting others to continue doing so.

Beyond this, Mr Beauchamp's assertion that humanitarian arrivals by boat are economic refugees who are less needy than those who wait in camps is not backed by known facts. The UN Human Rights Council has repeatedly found that conditions in the three major source countries for these arrivals (Iran, Afghanistan and Sri Lanka) are characterised by serious human rights violations, including public executions, torture, arbitrary arrest and severe restrictions of religious minorities. In my experience of meeting with asylum seekers from these places, their stories are almost invariably tied up with political or religious persecution. This is especially so for Christians. Objecting to the economic means by which they've sought asylum isn't a good reason for denying these people that right to asylum.

While many Australians may support hardline policy on asylum seekers, the Christian tradition

of extending grace to the stranger suggests (at least to me) that we would do well to encourage truth and integrity in the public discussion.

Ben Atwood  
Toongabbie

## TIP OF THE ICEBERG

Thank you, Ann Young of Thirroul, for your response "No Lord or Christ?" in December's *Southern Cross*. I am glad that someone has had the courage to highlight a great deficiency in our Diocese concerning a biblical understanding of evangelism.

This seems to be the tip of the iceberg. For the same reason, perhaps, there is a lack of substance in our approach to missions, Christian education and in children's material.

I concur with Ann that there is so much left out that the *Jesusbrings* program doesn't reflect the Bible's method and content in evangelism. It is simply not true to Jesus' words. In fact Charles Spurgeon said, "I do not believe that any man can preach the gospel who does not preach the Law". And R. C. Sproule: "Addressing people's 'felt needs' is.... the recipe for success for the false prophets of the Old Testament".

What we have in this program will bring false conversions and a response of faith that won't be sustained. This program, and others like it, fail to do evangelism the way Jesus and the apostles did. Please, can we at least have some avenue for discussion and input on such programs in the future?

The Rev Warren Smith  
Mt Druitt

Without wanting to overstate the point, I agree with Ann Young that the name "Jesus" is too often used as the only name when referring to our Lord. In the gospel narratives he is regularly referred to by his earthly "given" name, for understandable reasons, but in the letters of Paul and others it is a different story.

I happen to be looking at the last two chapters of Romans with a view to future Bible studies, and the variety of references to our

☉ Saviour is interesting. Paul uses the terms "Christ", "Christ Jesus", "Lord Jesus Christ", "Lord Jesus", and "Lord".

There are times when using "Jesus" on its own is appropriate but some, including ministers and theological students, seem to have no other name in their vocabulary.

David Morrison  
Springwood

## SABBATH FOR man

Geoffrey Davis is correct to point out that Eric Liddell's refusal to compete on the Sabbath in the 1924 Olympic Games was honouring to God (Letters, December). However, one needs to be aware that Liddell involved himself in refereeing Sunday sport when interred by the Japanese in the Weihsien Camp during World War II.

It is one thing to recognise participation in the business of commercial sport on the Lord's Day as wrong, along with other commercial activity. To suggest that all modes of Sunday relaxation other than reading and going on contemplative strolls, sports in particular, are dishonouring to God is another thing altogether.

One of the reasons for the alienation of many ordinary people from the church in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries was the tendency of its leaders to condemn the innocent amusements of people who endured drudgery for a whole six days and had only Sunday to relax. It was also a piece of hypocrisy in that those preaching this were of a class that had sufficient leisure to enjoy entertainments at other times.

Certainly, we are far too casual about our observance of the Lord's Day at present, but it would be unfortunate if our zeal to reform this were to lead us into once more ignoring the Lord's teaching that the Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath, thus making Sunday observance a burden.

Gary Ireland  
Camden

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

ESSAY  
OF THE  
MONTH

# The search for decency

DAVID HEWETSON

ONE OF MY ACQUAINTANCES – let's call him Ted – claims his aim in life is to be a "decent human being". He is certainly a human being – no doubt about that! He is also a community-minded person, always ready to help out. And he does this along with a polite and respectable rejection of the Christian faith.

I have a problem because I, too, want to be a decent human being, and believe I have biblical backing for this. How do I show Ted this is similar yet radically different from that to which he aspires? Warning him "good works" might alienate him from a God in whom he does not believe will not affect his philosophy much. He might even point out my good works are often identical (or inferior) to his, so is there any real difference between him and me? How do I solve this dilemma?

As a Christian I know God has, in advance, "prepared" for me to be a good person and do good things. This is part of his original workmanship, part of his age-long plans to fashion me into this new kind of humanity. But such goodness is a gift only granted when I abandon trust in my own abilities – my "works" – and transfer my confidence to God as Saviour and friend. This inner revolution produces a completely new life, distinguishing my goodness from Ted's human decency. But how can I explain that to him?

Ted and I are both men of faith. My confidence is in God and his, to be realistic, is in himself. Ted may well object to my calling this an act of faith since he has declared himself as not "religious". But surely whatever we trust in is either God or a substitute. This is graphically illustrated in the Old Testament with Israel's temptation to follow local nature gods for material benefits. The agonies and afflictions of Israel

through conquest and deportation plus the strident warnings of the prophets seemed, by Jesus' day, to have convinced them there was indeed only one God and he was committed to ethical behaviour.

But it is still possible for us to make a god in our own image; for example, Jesus indicates that money is God's rival, competing for our allegiance to him, and St Paul says common human greed is really a form of idolatry. Are there not also other similar objects of worship? And are these not essentially self-centredness masquerading as deity?

If my trust is in God and Ted's is in his ability to be a decent human being, how will this shape our lives? I have a Bible to help me – the New Testament alone has myriad injunctions concerning Christian behaviour, many of which are about the right way to treat others. But is there a governing style that shows them to be more than mere natural endeavour? That says, "This decent human being is quite unlike those who are trying so hard to be that way themselves"? If so, what is the nature of the difference?

My quest for goodness must begin with repentance, i.e. radically changing direction from confidence in my own virtue to centring all I do on God. It is not merely a sackcloth-and-ashes position, perhaps deeply regretful for when I have *not* been a "decent human being". It is a deeper contrition for having lived my life without reference to God. He visited my human condition in the person of Jesus Christ so as – through crucifixion – to deal with my complacent self-confidence. This constrains me to make the radical decision to repent and follow him.

As repentance is an activity that involves a measure of humility it is not very attractive to the human heart. But it is not, as many fear, wallowing in self-loathing; it is rather a preparedness to abandon confidence in unaided human virtue

to gain a goodness for which we were designed by our Creator. This seems the real key to becoming a decent human being because its "decency" is fully human and the very pattern of what humanity was meant to be.

Humility is also essential for good relationships with others. If we are not prepared to "step down" and deny our self-centredness to serve and bless others, a major aspect of decency will be eroded. Loving and serving others is essential to my way of being a good person.

Obviously I cannot accomplish this on my own. I need help – God's help; the Christian is simply in partnership with him. I cannot be self-giving because either do I not want to be, or do I not have the ability to be. There is much for me to do in trying to be a good person but it is God's Spirit who produces that lovely, many-faceted fruit of the Spirit. As with a farmer who digs, plants and nurtures it is the forces of nature that produce the fruit. Similarly with me, though there is much for me to do in trying to be a good person it is God who makes such goodness flourish in my life.

It seems, then, that my way and Ted's are diametrically opposed even when we appear to engage in the same sort of behaviour! There is a huge challenge for me to live in a way that makes Ted inquire about my motivation. As St Peter says, we are to "live such good lives" that pagans will be compelled to glorify God at critical times.

Peter also suggests that when we get the chance to "give a reason" for our faith we do so with gentleness and respect, which may even produce in others a longing for something better. This may be one good answer when dialoguing with the Teds of this world.

Well-considered essays in response to issues raised by SC (700-word maximum) can be emailed to [newspaper@anglicanmedia.com.au](mailto:newspaper@anglicanmedia.com.au)

# Promise keepers

DR GLENN DAVIES



COMMUNITY

**M**AKING PROMISES IS A very significant part of our lives. They are declarations of our intention to do something. At ordination, ministers make solemn promises to do certain things and assent to certain beliefs. In marriage, husbands and wives make vows to one another in the presence of God and of his church. As parents, we regularly make promises to our children, and of course, children make promises to their parents(!).

In baptism the candidate makes certain promises or, in the case of infants, the parents and/or godparents make these promises. Some promises are solemn and other promises are made under oath; yet even if our promises lack the gravity of a courtroom or the presence of God's assembly, Christians should be people of their word. They should be "promise keepers". As King David challenges us, even when keeping our promises is costly and brings us disadvantage, it is no reason to abandon our word (Psalm 15:4).

Jephthah the Gileadite found this to be true when he made a promise to give to the Lord whoever came out of his house in response to God giving him victory over the Ammonites (Judges 11:30). This was a costly vow in that his own daughter came out of the house to greet him. She was given to the Lord's service in the tabernacle, never to marry. But he kept his promise and was commended as a man of faith (Hebrews 11:32) (I am not persuaded that Jephthah sacrificed his own daughter, despite the popularity of this view).

In the days of Jeremiah the Rechabites were likewise commended for their faithful keeping of the promise made by their forefather,

Jonadab, some 200 years earlier, to be a nomadic people. Jeremiah not only pronounces God's blessing upon these faithful "promise keepers", he highlights their commitment in contrast to Israel's infidelity (Jeremiah 35:18-19).

Yet, as we all know, sometimes our promises are broken. What New Year's resolutions have we already failed to keep? How are we going in

evidenced by Peter's inability to keep his word of never denying Jesus (Matthew 26:35, 69-75; cf John 21:15-19).

The wonderful news of the gospel, of course, is that God is the pre-eminent promise keeper. Whatever he promises, he delivers. The Bible is full of such promises and they ultimately find their fulfilment in Jesus Christ: 'For all the promises of God find their Yes in him. That is why we utter the Amen through him, to the glory of God' (2 Corinthians 1:20). Despite our failures, God is faithful and will forgive us our sins.

As our Diocese embarks on a mission initiative under the banner of *Jesusbrings...* what a wonderful message it is that Jesus brings forgiveness to those who have failed him. For Jesus brings rest for the weary, salvation to the lost and forgiveness to the repentant. Let us proclaim this message far and wide, recognising our own need for repentance – and, trusting in his promise to forgive, may we be refreshed by his Spirit to continue in the path of faith and obedience, seeking by his grace to reflect his character and be keepers of our word. 

“ God is the pre-eminent promise keeper. Whatever he promises, he delivers. ”

the more solemn promises that we have made, either to others or to God? Fortunately, the Bible is also realistic about broken promises and announces the accompanying forgiveness that God promises to repentant sinners – 'though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be white as snow' (Isaiah 1:18). Even the apostles needed forgiveness for broken promises, as

## MISSION PRAYER

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

In the name of our Saviour Jesus Christ,  
Amen.

# The Lonely Church

Loneliness for believers in “Christian” nations can come from secular resistance to the gospel, but may also stem from liberal elements in the church. The drift from orthodox Christian belief in some Anglican provinces leaves many congregations isolated. Here, English pastor **PAUL PERKIN** presents some hard truths about faith – particularly Anglicanism – in modern Britain.





Paul Perkin addresses delegates at GAFCON 2013.

**F**IRST, THE GOOD NEWS. THE VISION OF THE GREAT Commission – the church going to the nations, equipped with the authority of Christ and the teaching of Christ – is still wonderfully being worked out in Britain today.

There are many flourishing local churches, people coming to faith in Jesus Christ, young leaders being raised up, and new members being added to the church. A few days ago I heard of one average-sized church, which five or 10 new members were joining each week. In another brand-new Anglican church planted four years ago in one of our large cities, where there was previously almost no Bible-teaching ministry, 860 worshippers are now meeting every weekend.

One man in his 50s told me recently that although he is the youngest person in the little rural village church he attends on Sunday mornings, when he joins his Sunday evening congregation in the city he is by far the oldest, so young and vibrant is that church.

A number of individual churches in Britain each have 20 to 30 apprentices, ministers-in-training for full-time ministry. One growth-oriented inner city diocese has grown by 70 per cent in the past 20 years. Another church has started its own theological college and after three years is already the largest Anglican theological seminary in Europe. The largest Anglican church in England has 23 ordained ministers and thousands of young people being disciplined to follow Christ. It is producing over 30 ordinands every year. Some of the networks bring 10,000 to 60,000 people into holiday conferences.

So Jesus is the sovereign, risen Lord, miraculously active in the UK, prospering gospel evangelism, pouring out his Holy Spirit, growing the churches and planting new ones, and bringing glory to himself in it all.

However, the opposite to the dream of the church penetrating the nation is the nightmare of a secular nation invading the church. This is the contrary scene and it is also happening in Britain.

### CHRIST'S PRAYER

We come closest to the desire of Christ when we listen to the prayers of Christ – and none more significant than his high priestly prayer in John 17. There he pours out his longing for the unity of the church, for

the holiness of the church and for the mission of the church. Its unity, "that they may be one"; its purity, "that they may be truly sanctified"; and its mission, "that the world may believe".

Key to each of these is the word of God in the Scriptures: "They have obeyed your word... I gave them the words you gave me and they accepted them... So that scripture would be fulfilled... I have given them your word... Sanctify them by the truth, your word is truth".

So this is the vision: as in Christ's commission, so in his prayer – a vision of the church taking God's word to God's world.

To that end, what is the church that will fulfil this mission? It is not "of the world", as Jesus himself is not of the world, but neither is it "taken out of the world". Rather, it is "sent into the world", just as Jesus prays to his Father, "As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world". The church is to be in the world; as Jesus said, "I am still in the world", but as Jesus was hated by the world, so the church will be hated, and needs to be "protected from the evil one".

So one of the greatest tragedies is the contradiction of a worldly church – the inconsistency of it – when, instead of the church being sent into the world, it is infected by the world.

If the church is formed by accepting and obeying the word of God, what a tragedy when it departs from the Bible. If the church is united around the word of God, what a tragedy when it is divided by unbelief in that word. If the church is sanctified by the truth of God's

## canada

IN Canada, several churches withdrew from the Anglican Church of Canada and sought alternative episcopal oversight in protest at theological liberalism and moves to bless same-sex relationships. The churches included the largest Anglican church in Canada, St John's, Shaughnessy, led by former Sydney rector David Short. The congregation includes internationally recognised theologian J.I. Packer.

The churches were pursued in court by the Anglican Church of Canada and are finding new places to meet all over the country. The Anglican Church in North America now oversees this network. One of its bishops, Charles Masters (pictured), was rector of a church that withdrew from the diocese of Niagara, and faced lengthy legal proceedings where, among other things, there were efforts "to try to discredit [me]



and say that I was unfaithful as a priest. The [diocese's] lawyer said to our lawyer, 'What have your clients done which has caused my client the Diocese of Niagara to hate them so much?'" Bishop Masters says.

"That is the shame. The Bishop who ordained me wrote that he was sorry he ordained me. We felt that the gospel was at stake. There was another gospel, which is no gospel at all, which was being encouraged and it was very seductive and we could preach our gospel okay as long as we [in] no way questioned it.

"So yes, there are lawsuits, buildings lost and one of my colleagues in the historic church in Ottawa, our nation's capital, when they left their building he said to the press, 'I am proud to lose a building for Jesus'... We also know that as the Anglican Church of North America we've been sort of driven into the streets in a way, but it is not a bad place to be because it has forced us to think about evangelism and church planting. We are seeking to plant 1000 churches in five years. So this very reality, which none of us wanted, has actually been used by God for the gospel."

- word, what a tragedy when unholiness and impurity spread in the church. If the church is the Father's gift to Jesus out of the world, what a tragedy when the church emerges within the world, adopting the world's values. If the church is sent into the world, what a tragedy when the world invades the church.

## INFECTION AND UNBELIEF

Now this is the background, despite the pockets of life I have described – the general climate of the church in the UK today, indeed in much of the West. And the problem is not so much, or is no longer, the problem of

“  
At its heart, and  
in many of its central  
institutions... it is a  
worldly church.”

individuals in the church. The problem is more the culture of the church.

At its heart, and in many of its central institutions, and with much of its leadership and style, it is a worldly church – a church that is of the world, that is infected by the world, that is unbelieving like the world, that is as immoral as the world, that is not very present in the world, and is running away from the world.

According to a survey by Forward in Faith UK, which is available on their website, approximately one out of every four male clergy in the Church of England does not believe in the Trinity, or in God the Father who made the world, or in the Holy Spirit, or that Jesus died to take away the sins of the world.

Almost half do not believe in the virgin birth of Jesus, or in his bodily resurrection, or that he is the only way of salvation. Of female clergy those shocking statistics of unbelief are even worse. Many of the least believing, male and female, are in central leadership positions in the church.

And a worldly church will always tend to restrict or confine Jesus' mission, with his authority, taking his word to the world. The world will always oppose the church, and so a worldly church will always oppose a church that accepts and obeys God's word. And these are the two sides of church life in Britain today.

## PRESSURE POINTS

Now how is this happening? The answer is that it is happening in subtle ways. "Hatred" in Britain is, thank God, not often life threatening but sometimes aggressive, and often very subtle and therefore more difficult to discern.

The five pressure points remain as they have been for years: mission, money, ministers, association and oversight.

Mission – the restriction of opportunities for flourishing growth and planting of new churches. Money – the centralisation of finance that misdirects gospel resources. Ministers – the reluctance, obstacles and delays in selecting, training, ordaining and appointing gospel ministers who believe and live the Bible's teaching. Association – the pressure to conform to a superficial unity masking heterodox beliefs, rather than real fellowship in the truth. Oversight – in some dioceses the leadership has departed from authentic Anglicanism. How can faithful ministers submit to unfaithful leaders?

For example, a minister wrote last week: 'We have three ordinands at the theological college and they are currently very unsettled – the bishop endorsing and supporting the civil partnership of one of his deans'.

For example, when a motion defending Christian marriage was recently put to General Synod, a number of Synod members openly spoke of their co-habitation or gay partnerships. No bishop stood to clarify that this was not the teaching of the Church. So orthodox clergy and congregations who do not want to appear divisive are now often very reticent to teach biblical, Anglican truth on marriage.

For example, churches that long to give life to plant new congregations on redundant church sites are often systematically blocked. Instead, choices are made to close empty churches, or sell or lease the buildings, or to give advantage to projects that have little chance of gospel growth, or are doctrinally heterodox.

For example, the neighbouring diocese to the one which has grown by 70 per cent in 20 years, covering a similar demographic in the same city, has steadily declined through an ideological radical liberalism and opposition to biblical gospel ministry.

The good news is that, overall, nearly half of all clergy and their churches at a local level do believe Jesus is *the* way of salvation! The glass that is half empty is also, or at least almost, half full.

Some of these are in traditional rural areas, others are in inner cities. Some are predominantly white, others are multi-ethnic. Some are mainstream evangelical, others have come into charismatic renewal. Some are mature and wise, others are young and energetic. Some are small and growing, while others are large

## BRAZIL

THE Anglican Church in Brazil began more than a century ago as a "daughter" church of the Episcopal Church of America. It was originally an evangelical and orthodox province, but student exchanges with the US that began during the late 1950s saw the Episcopal Church of Brazil slowly become more liberal in its theology.

However, the diocese of Recife in the north-east of the country has continued as an evangelical diocese and broke away from the rest of the national church in 2005.

Its bishop, Miguel Uchoa (pictured), explains:



"For many years we could deal with the situation but it came to a point where we could not compromise," he says. "Some years ago we decided, after Gene Robinson [an actively homosexual

American bishop] was elected and became bishop, to break relationship with the diocese who supported their decision. So the Episcopal Church came against us and against our bishop at that time, Bishop Robinson Cavalcanti... They decided to excommunicate us.

"A few churches and clergy stayed in the Episcopal Church and so we have two dioceses in the same area. Since we left the Episcopal Church we more than doubled in size and the clergy also, so the ministries are going very well."

The diocese now considers its provincial oversight comes from the GAFCON primates, the group set up after the Jerusalem Conference in 2008.

"We haven't had any province for many years," Bishop Uchoa says. "At first [after leaving the Episcopal Church] the Anglican Communion came and listened, and listened, and listened and never did anything. I went by myself to the Anglican Communion office to share our situation and nothing was done until GAFCON started to happen."

Bishop Uchoa was consecrated more than a year ago after the previous Bishop of Recife was murdered, with a number of bishops linked to GAFCON travelling to the diocese to provide help and support in the lead-up to the election.

"I am not alone because if I was a lone bishop I [would not be] even a bishop," he says. "GAFCON sent five bishops from three different countries to consecrate me."

but may be struggling. Some are seeing a few converted to Christ, others are seeing streams of people converted. Some are seeing addicts delivered and lives transformed, others are seeing physical healings and marriages rescued. Some are raising up an occasional minister, others whole schools of ministers.

## “There is a battle for Britain in our own day, a battle for the heart and soul of Britain.”

Some small gospel churches are thriving, other small ones are vulnerable. Some large gospel churches are thriving, other large ones are in danger, especially in a vacancy. Some are isolated, others are in networks. Some are supported in their dioceses, others are resented and opposed. Some are valued in their communities, others are threatened with legal action. Some in the future will be secure. Others will be taken to court.

And all these gospel churches are trying as faithfully as they can to bring God's word to God's world, under the authority of the Lord Jesus, and in the power of the Holy Spirit. But they are facing not only an increasingly aggressive secular world, but also an increasingly worldly established church.

They, we, are not suffering martyrdom through the physical persecution being experienced by much of the rest of the world. That is why we need to be inspired by the worldwide Communion. And it is why we also cherish the encouragement and the support of faithful churches globally to urge us to remain authentic Anglicans together.

There is a battle for Britain in our own day, a battle for the heart and the soul of Britain. The Confessing Anglicans in the UK and Ireland are uniquely placed to support both those who stay in the structures, and those God is raising up beyond them. Both types of initiative are

## new zealand

THE Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia celebrates its 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year. The Rev Samuel Marsden first preached to Maori people at Oihi Bay in the Bay of Islands on Christmas Day, 1814 – using the gospel message of the angel that proclaimed Jesus' birth as Saviour. The church is split into three "tikanga" or cultural groups (Maori, Polynesian and general New Zealander), and each has its own primate.

The Anglican Bishop of the evangelical diocese of Nelson, Richard Ellena (pictured), says some dioceses are pushing the same-sex marriage issue "very strongly", especially given that the national parliament amended the Marriage Act last year to allow same-sex couples to marry.

"That has defined many of the liberal elements in the church who want the church to move in pace with what is happening in the wider community," he says, adding that it creates a great loneliness for evangelicals in other dioceses who disagree with these changes. The 2013 Synod in New Zealand narrowly voted against making the first steps towards supporting gay marriage and blessing same-sex unions. Clergy voted in favour and it was only lay votes that prevented the move.

Bishop Ellena told the audience at GAFCON in Nairobi last year: "I might be the only evangelical bishop and diocese in New Zealand but there are 13 others from New Zealand here, most of them come from large parishes and not in my diocese. They are the ones who are alone."

The Fellowship of Confessing Anglicans is providing support for isolated Christians in New Zealand and local networks have also sprung up. In the meantime the other Kiwi bishops are looking to advance an agenda of "unity in diversity".

"One of the issues that the bishops are looking at is a dismemberment of the church as we know it and something new growing out of it," Bishop Ellena says. "So who knows what is going to happen."

needed in the huge challenge before us. And we treasure your inspiring example in the global Fellowship of Confessing Anglicans, your fellowship and your prayers. And we need your supportive help and your recognition that we are your Anglican brothers and sisters. We need it more than we can even begin adequately to thank you for.

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The Rev Paul Perkin is vicar of St Mark's, Battersea Rise in London and chairman of the Fellowship of Confessing Anglicans (UK and Ireland). This is an edited version of a speech he gave at GAFCON 2013.





# Gospel Vision

How does the theology of the Bible translate into practice?

MARK D THOMPSON investigates.

IT IS NOT HARD AT ALL TO DISCERN WHAT FIRED UP THE apostle Paul. It's the same thing that would later capture the heart and imagination of Augustine, fuel the restless energy of Martin Luther, give courage to the Reformation martyrs, awaken the passion of Wesley, Whitefield and Simeon, and direct the remarkable ministries of Billy Graham and John Stott.

It has long been the preoccupation of many in our own city: archbishops and Sunday school teachers, Christians in every walk of life and those in full-time ministry (I can't help but think of John Chapman). Through the centuries and all over the world today, men and women have been enthralled by the gospel, the message of God's own Son, the Christ of Israel, who died for our sins and was raised to set in the right with God those united to him by faith.

Our basic stance in the world is determined not by what we are *against*, but by what we are most radically *for* – the gospel of the world's only Saviour and Lord. Historians and sociologists have often observed that evangelical Christians are characterised by a commitment to the priority of preaching the cross of Christ, the priority of evangelism. We might be involved quite legitimately in a myriad of things, but the proclamation of Christ crucified and risen is the only way loved yet lost men and women can be saved in the midst of a lost world. And for that reason it has a priority – a clear and explicit priority – over all the other things.

This commitment transforms every aspect of life, including the practice of ministry. We have a perspective on the world, on culture and on our local community that flows out of the gospel. All of it stands under judgment and in need of redemption. The Christian hope is of 'a

new heaven and a new earth where righteousness dwells' (2 Pet. 3:13). It is of a numberless multitude from every nation, tribe and language (Rev. 7:9-10) gathered around the throne of God and of the Lamb (the saving work of the Christ continues to be relevant even when all things have reached their fulfilment).

Our task is not to redeem the world, the culture or the city but to proclaim Christ so that men and women enmeshed in the world, the culture and the city might share the redemption God has prepared for his people.

We have a perspective on church that flows out of the gospel. We are the redeemed disciples of Christ who are ourselves the agents of salvation as we speak the gospel to those who are loved by God yet lost in sin. We gather as an anticipation and reflection of that great gathering around God's throne of all those who have been bought with the precious blood of God's own Son (Heb. 12:22-24). We are gathered by God's Spirit around God's word to encourage each other to live consistently as disciples of Christ – reflecting the self-sacrificial love which characterised all Jesus did and sharing that passion for the lost which drove him to the cross. Using the gifts that the risen and ascended Christ has given us by his Spirit, we serve each other with the goal of the church maturing to 'the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ' (Eph. 4:13).

We have a perspective on Christian theology and even theological education that is directed by the gospel. Theology is at its very best when it serves the explicit proclamation of Christ – telling men and women that in Christ and through his cross God has acted to save them from the judgment to come. Every doctrine is related to this critical centre, which is also the leading edge of all proper theological endeavour. There is no God to talk about except the triune God of the gospel. There is no world to engage with except the one that stands under judgement and whose only hope is the gospel. The gospel reveals that human beings both deserve condemnation and are intensely loved by a righteous God. It is this combination of our need with God's determined love and absolute integrity that makes the cross necessary. Baptism and the Lord's Supper are signs that, in different ways, expound truths at the heart of the gospel message.

A number of people have recently picked up Professor Richard Lints' idea that the link between our theological convictions and our ministry practice is our 'theological vision'. This is a very helpful way of explaining why we do what we do. Our various theological convictions (the entire and absolute truthfulness of Scripture, the sovereignty of God in creation, providence and salvation, the uniqueness of Christ as the true Son of God the Father who became one of us in all ways excepting sin etc.) are refracted through a vision of what God is doing in the world and the part he has assigned us in that grand plan. The specific way we do things can be explained, and hopefully justified, by the theological vision to which we are committed.

Yet what is it that gives one theological vision legitimacy while calling another into question? After all, thoughtful practitioners of Islam could point to a thoroughly theological vision that explains their practice. So too Roman Catholics, and I dare say many in mainstream liberal churches. We ought not to kid ourselves that those who support the practice of abortion or the concept of same-sex unions have no interest in theology or are unable to articulate a theological vision that justifies their choices in these areas. They are deeply committed to a theological vision which they are convinced mandates their activism in either or both these areas. Being able to articulate a theological vision is not enough in the end. The critical question is whether our theological vision is a genuinely biblical one.

The vision that drives our practice must not only be a theological vision but a gospel vision. The reason for this is simple. The theology of the Bible is profoundly gospel-shaped and so any vision faithfully derived from that theology must be gospel-shaped. The promise of Genesis 3:15, like all God's promises (2 Cor. 1:20), finds its fulfilment in Jesus Christ



The Rev Dr Mark Thompson is the principal of Moore College and head of the department of Theology, Philosophy and Ethics.

and what he has done. The end that has been in mind from the very beginning depends on the sacrifice of the cross and the victory of the empty tomb.

Another way of saying that is to say the theology of the Bible entails a particular theological vision, a gospel vision. If the vision we articulate does not explicitly give a priority to making known what God has done in Christ – why the cross was necessary, what the cross achieves, how life must change because Christ died for our sins and was raised on the third day – then it will be light years away from that which animated Augustine, Luther, Cranmer and his friends, Wesley, Whitefield, Simeon, Graham and Stott.

We are radically *for* the gospel because the gospel is the wonderful message of a salvation totally undeserved, but fully and finally secured at great cost and offered freely to all who will turn to Jesus in repentance and faith. It is tragically easy for this gospel to be swamped by other concerns and commitments. So as a new year begins for us and for our churches, let's ensure that our theological vision is a gospel vision. And then let that gospel vision open up for us new, creative and exciting opportunities to reach the millions in our city and beyond who need, more than anything else, the forgiveness and new life that is only found in Jesus.

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# Tragic confessions of a

Contrary to society's opinion, being a follower of Jesus and a close friend of same-sex attracted people is not an oxymoron, writes **DAVID MANSFIELD**.

'VE LOST COUNT OF THE TIMES I HAVE BEEN CALLED A homophobe, both publicly and privately.

And I suspect that in the months and years to come the name-calling will only intensify in frequency.

But as blind-spotted, prejudiced, racist, classist, sexist, xenophobic and sinful as I am, I don't think I have ever feared or hated a same-sex-attracted person, whether they are active in same-sex sex or not.

I have had, and have, same-sex attracted people among my closest friends, acquaintances and parishioners (I have spent many years as a parish minister) for almost as long as I have been an adult and as long as I have been a follower of Jesus. They have been a blessing and joy to me and, I think, or at least I hope, I to them as well.

I have met and befriended, and been befriended by, same-sex attracted people at the gym, pool, church and neighbourhood and have

never hated nor feared them. I love them.

With many I have laughed and cried, eaten and drunk, played and prayed, holidayed and enjoyed hospitality. We have hugged each other in affection and comfort. We have stayed in each other's homes and helped each other through difficult times.

I have spent many long hours trying to be a good friend to people who are same-sex attracted by listening to them as they talk about their struggle with sexual identity and the temptations they experience.

Throughout our marriage Helen and I have enjoyed a few close friendships with people who experience same-sex attraction. These friends have sought to be chaste, believing, as we believe, that the place for the expression of our human sexuality, and the procreation and nurture of children, is within the safety of an acknowledged, exclusive, permanent male-female relationship.

I have also urged people who are actively and stridently pursuing

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# true homophile



same-sex sexual activity to understand that there is forgiveness, help and a better way. As I have urged them to repentance I have never withdrawn my love or commitment to their welfare.

The Bible is very clear. We have been created to express our sexuality within an acknowledged exclusive and permanent male-female relationship. This principle defines marriage.

Jesus tells us this. Genesis tells us this. Old and New Testaments tell us this. It's a theological, anthropological and physiological first principle.

God made us to be sexual people. That's by far not the sum and total of who we are, but it is a part of it, and the key part of it for this discussion. We are either male or female. We have been created to complement one another. We have been made so that our spirituality, psychology, sexuality and physicality meet and match.

This is not resorting to some oppressive, archaic and cruel religious dogma.

It's simply getting back to first principles. But in the debate that rages, where any minority view is at least given an airing in our culture that, we are told, celebrates diversity, this is the one view that is vilified and not tolerated on an otherwise diverse spectrum.

Our sexuality is one of the casualties and consequences of our foolish rebellion against our Creator and his design for how life is to be lived in his world. Our world is now flawed, broken and this brokenness even extends to our genetics.

Even if same-sex attraction is "nature" rather than "nurture" – and despite the protesting of some, most respected research leans towards nurture – if it is genetic, then is it not the genetics of a flawed universe? We recognise that there is a whole range of genetic "abnormalities".

But on one of last year's episodes of Q&A a former Prime Minister, overreaching his expertise on a number of subjects, heavily criticised a man who was seeking to make a stand on the framework for human sexuality that is taught in the Bible and has been the bedrock principle for marriage and family for societies and cultures for thousands of years.

As a follower of Jesus who is completely committed to the teaching of the Bible, I want to make it absolutely clear that same-sex attraction is not a sin. Nor is the temptation to infidelity by an opposite-sex attracted person.

Temptation to sin is not sin. But acting out those attractions in the mind (lust) or on the mattress (sexual activity) is. So heterosexual sex (outside marriage) and homosexual sex are both wrong.

If the Christian community makes out that one sin is more serious than the other then we have much to answer for, and I think we do! My heterosexual lust, for I have often failed to overcome temptation, and another's heterosexual activity (outside marriage) or homosexual activity, are symptoms of the same failure to obey God.

Sex outside of marriage may reap more bitter social consequences and more devastating family upheaval than lust (lust is not harmless but that is another issue), but both are sinful and symptoms of our fallen humanity and flawed sexuality.

For most of my Christian life, almost every Sunday, I have exhorted others and been exhorted myself with these words: "You must not commit adultery".

This has not just been a call to repentance for the adulterers in the congregation, or those in the congregation engaging in same-sex sexual activity. It has also been for the loving benefit of people guilty of lust, like myself.

I have responded, with my brothers and sisters in Christ, with the prayer: "Lord, have mercy upon us and incline our hearts to keep this law".

This prayer we can pray with confidence, relief and joy, only through the sin-bearing death of our life-giving Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.

And it is Jesus, the true friend of sexual sinners of every variety, who calls us all to a life of repentance and faith, of sexual purity and Christlike love for others.

*David Mansfield is the director of the Archbishop of Sydney's Anglican Aid.*



## CHRISTIANS IN TEACHING

Anglican schools need a steady supply of outstanding Christian teachers. These teachers will need extra training to teach Christianly and effectively, meaning if they are to remain in teaching for many years. The AECO is expanding the Christians in Teaching Project to not only recruit Christians into teaching but assist Anglican schools to train and nurture them.

We are seeking two part-time field officers, one male and one female to pioneer this new venture from the beginning of semester 2. Their work will include speaking passionately in schools, churches and universities, at camps, conferences and conventions and meeting with pastoral care colleagues. It will also involve working with interested Anglican schools to set up and maintain appropriate training and mentoring programs for new teachers.

### Qualities Required

These field officers will be male teachers with:

- teaching experience in secular schools
- a strong evangelical commitment and passion for teaching
- an abundance of energy, initiative and creativity to equip schools to establish approaches to mentoring and professional development that they've not tried before
- outstanding interpersonal, public speaking, and interpersonal skills and a capacity to work on one's own as well as in a team.

It is expected the field officers will commence duties in second semester 2014, complement each other and support the AECO's overall program in schools. Applicants must have a current working with children clearance number which will be verified by the Commission prior to employment. See [www.nsw.gov.au/working-with-children](http://www.nsw.gov.au/working-with-children). Further information can be obtained by emailing [info@ecoclear.com.au](mailto:info@ecoclear.com.au) or visiting [www.ecoclear.com.au](http://www.ecoclear.com.au)

All applicants must include names and contact details of two referees who can attest to their experience, qualities and suitability for the position.

Closing date: 24 February 2014.

### Notice to all intended job applicants

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

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## ALL SAINTS CHURCH JAKARTA

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- Strong English speaker and
- Ordained as an Anglican/Episcopalian
- Ability to work as part of a team with a Reformed Evangelical Heart
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## DIARY

Sunday February 9

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Saturday, February 15

### SRE Conference

As Christians we have been given the great life-giving gift of the gospel, a gift that we take hold of and also pass on. What a privilege to take that gift to thousands of schoolchildren through SRE each week! If you're a first-time SRE teacher or have been teaching for many years, the SRE Conference is a great opportunity to be encouraged for a year of sharing Jesus with students!

The conference includes lunch, and costs \$35 a head, or \$20 for pension concession. Register for the conference at [youthworks.net/events/srec2014](http://youthworks.net/events/srec2014)

LOCATION | Christ Church, St Ives, Cnr Mona Vale Rd and Cowan Rd, St Ives | 9am-3pm

Sunday, February 16

### Who is My Neighbour?

St James', King Street is hosting an information seminar for those who wish to learn about refugees and asylum seekers in Australia. The Rev Elenie Poulos, the National Director of Uniting Justice Australia and Chair of the Australian Churches Refugee Taskforce, will be speaking, as well as

former Commonwealth Ombudsman Allan Asher. A Q&A session will follow.

This is a free event but a gold coin donation would be appreciated in order to cover the cost of refreshments and information material.

LOCATION | St James' Hall, Level 1, 169-171 Phillip St, Sydney | 2pm-4pm

February 28 – March 1

March 7 – 8

### KCC Men's Convention

Men's Convention this year will look at Christian Men v The World, The Flesh and The Devil. Speakers include Bob Glenn, the preaching and vision pastor at Redeemer Bible Church in the USA, and Bill Salier, the vice-principal of Moore College.

Cost is \$90 (\$80 for the early bird rate) for the full convention. Accommodation rates and group discounts apply. Register online at [www.mkc.kcc.org.au](http://www.mkc.kcc.org.au). Early Bird Rates close on February 16.

LOCATION | KCC Conference Centre, 119 Cliff Dr, Katoomba

Saturday, March 1

### Anglican Historical Society Meeting

The Anglican Historical Society of the Sydney Diocese invites all with an interest in the church's history to come along and hear the story of Henry Fulton and early colonial evangelicalism. Mr Tom Melbourne will be giving the presentation. Bistro meals are available at your own expense prior to the meeting, but otherwise this is a free event.

For more details contact Wesley on 0408 182 685, or email [wesleyfairhall7@gmail.com](mailto:wesleyfairhall7@gmail.com)

LOCATION | The Glassroom, City of Sydney RSL Club, 565 George St, Sydney | 1.30pm-4pm

## GUILDFORD TURNS 100

GUILDFORD Anglican Church recently celebrated its 100th anniversary of ministry, with ministers and parishioners from the church's past and present joining together to mark the occasion.

The senior minister at Guildford, the Rev Tim Booker, says it was a great opportunity for the current church community to celebrate alongside those from its past.

"We had a big service, basically, and combined all the congregations, and it also became a great outreach opportunity," he says. "Many people over the years have been linked with us or had something to do with us in the past, and never got back into it. What was impressive was the number of people our guys invited. We had about 300 at the service, and then a lunch afterwards."

While church activities have run in the area since the 1800s, the official licensing of the parish of Guildford only occurred in 1913. Mr Booker says that one of his parishioners, Dave Mathie, had stumbled on the date of the church's inception while conducting research into the church's little-documented history.

"He was in the process of writing up a bit of a history, because he realised that there wasn't a document that explained the history," Mr Booker says.

"There are no signs or plaques about this date, so when we found it we didn't have a lot of time to work with," he laughs "So we made the best of it."

The day showed off the diversity that has come to mark Guildford Anglican over its

100-year history. Guildford has become a multicultural Sydney suburb in recent years, reflected in the presentation of a Karen (Burmese) hymn by members of Guildford's fellow parish church in Villawood.



Judith Turner (left) with her husband, Guildford's longest-serving minister Cyril Turner.

"Guildford's changed a lot, and become very multicultural, very urban, and not being as high socioeconomically as it was," Mr Booker says.

"It's quite a multicultural church, or cosmopolitan, as I like to say. A good mix of people, and slowly but surely the cultures



Bec Crowweller (left), wife of former minister Jim Crowweller, and Anna Booker, wife of current minister Tim Booker.

are mixing. Whenever you start doing that, it can be a bit like oil and water, but the gospel breaks all of those kinds of barriers down and brings people together."

Saturday, March 15

### Prayer Book Society

The annual meeting of the Prayer Book Society (NSW branch) will feature Holy Communion in the St Paul's College chapel with the Archbishop the Most Rev Dr Glenn Davies preaching. The meeting will follow lunch at 1pm.

The cost is \$20, including lunch. RSVP on 9371 6953 before March 8.

LOCATION | St Paul's College, Sydney University, City Rd and Carillon Ave, Sydney | Registration from 10am

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AUDIOVISUAL

## CHURCH TAKES REFUGEES ON A TOUR TO SEE AUSSIE WILDLIFE

A number of refugees currently being cared for by St Anne's, Ryde were recently treated to views of Australia's unique and wonderful animal life on a visit to Featherdale Wildlife Park in Sydney's west.

The refugees, many of whom come from Iran, have been granted bridging visas, and while they are not allowed to work or study, have been contributing to church life. The excursion to Featherdale, however, was an opportunity to see Australia's famed wildlife.

"It was so fun, it was the first time we had been to a zoo in Australia, and have been able to touch a koala," laughs Kevin, who has adopted an anglicised name since being in Australia.

The group was also able to see kangaroos, wallabies and crocodiles of all sizes, although Dani, another member, says, "I only went and touched the small one".

There were about 24 refugees on the trip, accompanied by parishioners from St Anne's. They



paid a small fee to get in, with the rest subsidised by the church.

The idea for the visit to Featherdale came as an extension of a refugee café that had been running as a ministry of St Anne's for several months. The café was designed as a way to welcome and network with the many refugees housed nearby after they had been released from detention.

"We went in November, and by

that time the numbers in the G'day Café were down to about 40, and so of the 40, 24 came," says St Anne's senior minister the Rev Greg Burke. "We provided lunch, transport, and we just wanted to take these guys and show them Australian wildlife."

The four Iranian men SC spoke to who had been on the trip all came from overseas after being unable to practise Christianity in their home country.

"For myself, there wasn't any physical persecution," Muhammed says. "I've never been in any prison, or anything

refugees. The payments from Centrelink made to the men allow them to eat and pay for housing, but offer very little else beyond that, so transport can often be an issue. Colin West, a member of the church, is one of many at St Anne's who've been able to help out.

"We at the church got together, and started talking, and tried to figure out ways we could help them," Mr West says. "Greg came up with the idea for the café, and over time we forged friendships, and many people here have been helping out how they can. I just happen to have a old truck, and



like that. But in my mind, you don't have to be in a prison to be persecuted. I can say that even my soul was persecuted in Iran. I didn't have the right to choose anything, I could not say what I wanted to say, I couldn't choose what to do with my life, I couldn't choose even my religion. I became a Christian when I was maybe 18, but I could not be a Christian in my homeland."

The four men all attend St Anne's and live in shared flats and other accommodation with fellow

that's come in very handy, I can ferry people and things about... These guys are just nice guys, and I want to help them how I can."

Adds Mr Burke: "In the last six months, I think this is one of the key ministries that has helped us work out who we are. I think it has helped us to put into practice a key thing, which is that the same love of God that leads us to evangelise and speak about Jesus to unbelievers is the same love that leads us to meet the practical needs of those around us."

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# A catalyst for change

BRYAN COWLING

**Teaching Well: Insights for Educators in Christian Schools**

Edited by Ken Goodlet and John Collier

**T**HIS BOOK IS THE REALISATION OF A dream for John Collier, the headmaster of St Andrew's Cathedral School. With the help of 32 of his friends, Dr Collier and Ken Goodlet (a Christian editor and retired deputy head of Blue Mountains Grammar) have assembled 36 chapters on a wide range of educational topics. The writers include a handful of overseas and Australian academics, some recently retired and practising teachers, a couple of consultants and a few school principals. Some of the chapters are quite theoretical and challenging; some are more intentionally practical while others, like Frank Stootman's on the sciences and Alison Wheldon's on motivation, blend theory and practice.

The editors make no secret of the fact that they want the book to act as a catalyst for significant change within school classrooms. Those commending the book refer to it as a 'comprehensive resource for Christian teachers'. They 'insist that the gospel needs to be integral to education', and see the book as 'contributing to the formation of a Christian mind' as well as 'the transformation of the curriculum'.

*Teaching Well* contains some stimulating foundational material from Grant Maple on the importance of a wholistic approach to education. Maple reinforces the concept of education as formation, popularised recently in Anglican schools by the visit and writings of

Professor James K.A. Smith, and emphasises the importance of teachers having a robust pedagogy.

Paul Burgis raises important questions about the way Christians should respond to the secularist environment in which they operate. Justine Toh, in describing "everyday theology", emphasises how critical it is for teachers to contextualise the gospel in schools, while Trevor Cooling warns about the dangers of promoting a reductionist gospel as Christian schools struggle to be distinctive in an increasingly pluralist society. Richard Edlin draws on his extensive experience in delivering professional development to highlight the need for more substantial training for teachers if they are to be effective agents of transformation.

While the book has five sections, each chapter is quite distinct. This is both a strength and a weakness. On one hand it frees each writer to apply their own theology, make their own assumptions, reflect their own philosophy and draw on their own experience, which will be welcomed by some readers. On the other hand, it results in terms such as "Christian school", "Christian schooling", "Christian worldview" and the ubiquitous term "Christian education" being used differently by each writer.

This inconsistency, which weakens the overall impact of the book, could have been avoided, even turned to great effect, had each of the writers read each other's penultimate manuscript and engaged with the variations, interpretations and usage in their respective chapters. We would then not be left guessing how many Christian teachers or Christian students are needed for a school to be described as Christian, or how Christian education is different to a Christian



approach to the implementation of the "mainstream" curriculum. Is there a message in the book for the thousands of Christian teachers in Government schools?

The editors suggest that the heart of the book is

to be found in the 14 chapters that constitute Part D, which focus on transforming the curriculum. I am inclined to agree with them, though there is some meaty material in the earlier parts of the book that should be read in conjunction with this section.

Ruby Holland's piece in chapter 22 (as well as her brilliant treatment of a Christian mind in chapter 5) should be read before the other chapters on curriculum. It will be a real shame if teachers only read the chapter about the subject they teach. They may be surprised how relevant the chapters on the other subjects are to them. David Smith's chapter on languages and James Pietsch's chapter on mathematics are essential reading for all teachers.

The book is large. It contains a lot of rich material but it needs to be read in its entirety if it is to bring about the promised transformation. Most chapters have endnotes and some suggest further reading (an index would have been helpful). It is a pity that each chapter does not conclude with a variety of questions for personal reflection, action and conversation with colleagues.

*Dr Bryan Cowling is the executive director of the Anglican Education Commission. For information about Teaching Well see [www.bartonbooks.com.au](http://www.bartonbooks.com.au)*

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**JOAN AUGUSTA MACKENZIE TRAVELLING SCHOLARSHIP**

Applications are invited for the Joan Augusta Mackenzie Travelling Scholarship to enable the recipient to undertake study and/or gain experience in public work overseas, particularly in the United Kingdom. The Scholarship is usually awarded for post graduate study.

The Scholarship will commence on 1 September 2014 and is for the period of study or experience. The value of the Scholarship is \$30,000 each year, annually for up to three years.

Applicants must:

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- intend to return to Australia at the end of the scholarship period.

The Trustee, The Trust Company Limited, awards the Scholarship in consultation with the Principal of Mission College and the Rector of St Theresa's Church, North Sydney.

Applications close at 5.00pm, 14 March 2014.

For copies and application forms, contact: Elizabeth Arroll, Mission Theological College, 1 King Street, Newcastle NSW 2302, [elizabeth@missioncollege.edu.au](mailto:elizabeth@missioncollege.edu.au), Phone: (02) 8577 8823

# Vegas on Viagra

Boys being boys: old buddies Sam (Kevin Kline), Archie (Morgan Freeman), Paddy (Robert De Niro) and Billy (Michael Douglas) discover the delights of Las Vegas.

JUDY ADAMSON

FILM  
REVIEW

## Last Vegas

Rated M

**G**IVEN THAT THIS FILM IS about four old friends – and I mean old – celebrating the wedding of one of their number in a blokey last hurrah, there was every possibility of a full-on tacky disaster. Recent films covering similar territory have not only reached the bottom of the barrel, they've taken up residence there.

Someone joked to me that this film was “*The Hangover* on Viagra”, which wasn't encouraging, but given the talent in the cast (Robert De Niro, Morgan Freeman, Michael Douglas and Kevin Kline) there seemed a half-decent chance of reasonable entertainment. It's certainly gentler and sweeter than *The Hangover* and its ilk, and tackles issues that are completely absent in such films – but yes, we do have to endure cringeworthy moments and rather too many scantily clad girls as the old gang enjoy their lost weekend.

Billy (Douglas), Paddy (De Niro), Archie (Freeman) and Sam (Kline) are all hitting their seventies and have been friends since their Brooklyn childhoods. Paddy is still there while Archie has wound up in New Jersey, Sam has retired unhappily to Florida and Billy is living it up in Malibu.

As Billy, Michael Douglas is essentially playing a version of himself. Looking successful, slick and over-tanned, he has proposed to his

girlfriend on a whim – at a funeral, of all things. Not only is the girl more than half Billy's age, her father is clearly younger than his potential son-in-law and is not impressed.

The couple decides on a Las Vegas wedding, and Billy wants his oldest friends there. Sam doesn't need an excuse to get out of Florida for the weekend, while Archie – recovering from a mild stroke – is keen for some freedom from his over-protective son. Paddy has become a recluse after the death of his wife, but the other two convince him to come without telling him it's for Billy, as there's an unresolved problem between the pair.

So, the stage is set. The four friends are in Vegas and (between them) have gambling, fun, sex, more fun and – maybe – marriage in mind. Before long they're set up in the best suite of a ritzy hotel planning parties and some cheerful havoc and, amid many old guy jokes, each has what can only be described as a weekend of self-discovery.

Sam has permission from his wife to fool around while he is away, on the understanding that he comes back as the happy man he used to be. Archie just wants to drink, smoke, and stay up late – all the things his son and doctors won't allow. Paddy is cynical and reserved, while Billy is trying to bluff through the nerves of facing marriage for the first time at 70.

Integral to their weekend is a chance meeting with Diana – a lovely performance

by Mary Steenburgen. A retired tax attorney turned lounge singer, Diana is refreshingly able to see the friends far more clearly than they see themselves, coaxing Paddy out of his shell and bluntly telling Billy that he's not as charming as he thinks he is.

There's quite a bit of fun to be had as the old guys live it up, although a bikini contest they go to is base in the extreme, particularly the cameo from LMFAO lead singer and *X Factor* judge Redfoo as the contest “host”. It's almost all lust and come-ons, yet he (and the girls) seem just fine with that. What were they and the screenwriters thinking?

At its best, however, *Last Vegas* is about friendship, the importance of love and commitment and the value of truth. The four friends are too old to mince words, and too experienced to ignore the fact that the time they have left is too precious to waste.

“We were 17 five minutes ago,” mourns Billy. “I don't know how it [getting old] happened.”

We don't need as much of the old fogey stuff as we get but there are plenty of laughs along the way and the four central cast members work well together – although Kevin Kline's turn as the world-weary yet unworldly Sam is definitely the pick of the bunch.

Essentially *Last Vegas* is a simple story without many surprises. And while it's not going to make anyone's “Best of” list for 2014, it's (mainly) pleasant viewing.