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February 2012

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Do our schools have room for a fourth “R”?

- › Church welcoming: what we get wrong
- › Mission musical comes to Sydney



## COVER

The importance of having a fourth "R" — righteousness — taught in Sydney's schools.

PHOTO: Stephen Mason

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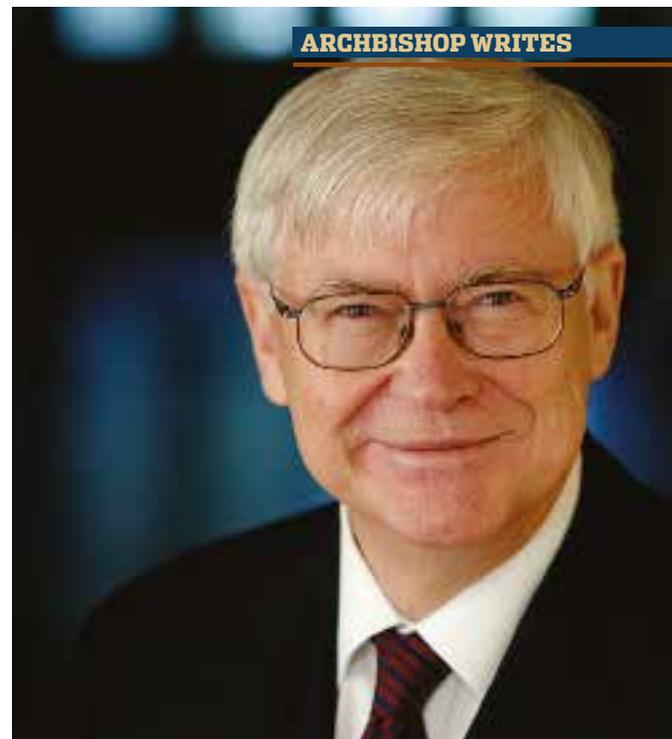
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# True power is dependence

DR PETER JENSEN

**T**HE prayer of a righteous person has great power... Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed fervently that it might not rain, and for three years and six months it did not rain upon the earth. Then he prayed again, and heaven gave rain, and the earth bore its fruit' (James 5:16,17).

What I like about that verse is the phrase 'with a nature like ours'. To hear that the prayers of the righteous have great power scarcely fills me with confidence. But when I realise that James is speaking of Elijah, who certainly had his doubts and difficulties, and to hear furthermore that he had the same nature as we do, is an encouragement. Indeed the righteousness of Elijah, like that of all the Biblical saints, was the righteousness which is born of faith — first, given on the grounds of the death of Christ and then given by the Spirit's work in our lives. In that case I, too, am righteous and may pray with great power.

And so to prayer.

The other day an overseas friend of mine asked me about a third person. He had met this person occasionally in 2002 and it puzzled me that he still knew his name and was so interested. I had good news. The man in question has come to know the Lord, with life-transforming results. Good, said my friend. I have been praying for him that this may happen for the past 10 years.

Ten years of prayer without any real news of the man involved and at a great distance! You can imagine the joy which followed this news.

But this is not unique. Christian people often bear testimony to prayer answered, often in astonishing ways.

I suppose this made me think of several things.

First, inevitably, why don't we pray more than we do and with greater endurance and with greater confidence in God?

Second, how good it is to pause for a moment and actually see the results of our prayers. Sometimes the Lord does something wonderful and we forget that we have prayed, fail to thank him and even take credit for it ourselves.

Third, prayer is one of the chief ways we have of fulfilling the mandate to 'fill the earth and subdue it'. We were meant to rule the world, wisely and well. As we pray, we are playing a part in God's rule of

the world and so doing the work we were designed for. That is why even the smallest, even the oldest, even the sickest, even the loneliest person can do great things for God.

Here is true power. Human beings hunger for power because it is the means by which we order our world and make it safe for ourselves. Because of our sin, this hunger for power is often distorted and corrupted and we exercise power at the expense of others.

But true prayer and hence true power is an expression of dependence and of love. For our prayers to be as powerful as those of Elijah, we have to depend on the Lord and his wisdom, sovereignty and righteous will.

Indeed, asking for things in intercessory prayer is the heart of prayer and worship, because it is acknowledging that we are mere creatures and that God is the Lord of all things. When we pray for others, we are engaged in one of the most loving activities possible. Imagine the sadness of being a person for whom no-one is praying.

I think that one of the things to learn as a Christian is to live at God's pace, or rather to accept God's pace. Sometimes this will involve a whirlwind of change and we will need to adjust ourselves to the new thing God is doing and see how it is fulfilling his purposes. At other times, God works in a way which to us seems unbelievably slow. Then it is a matter of constancy in prayer and endurance in hope. Indeed, for some, there is no answer to a special prayer in this life.

Elijah was one of us, just like us, but his prayers were powerful. So, too, are ours when they express our dependence on the living God.

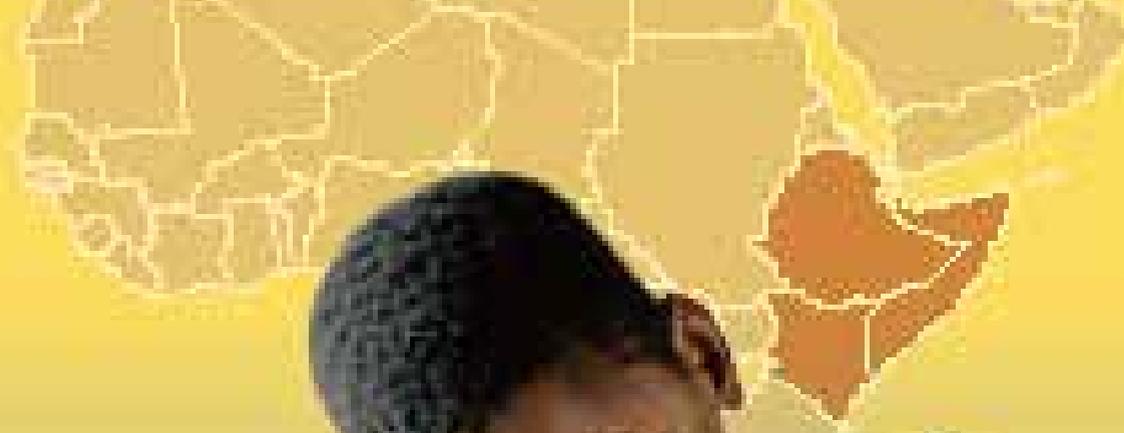
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## Mission Prayer

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.



# Thank You!

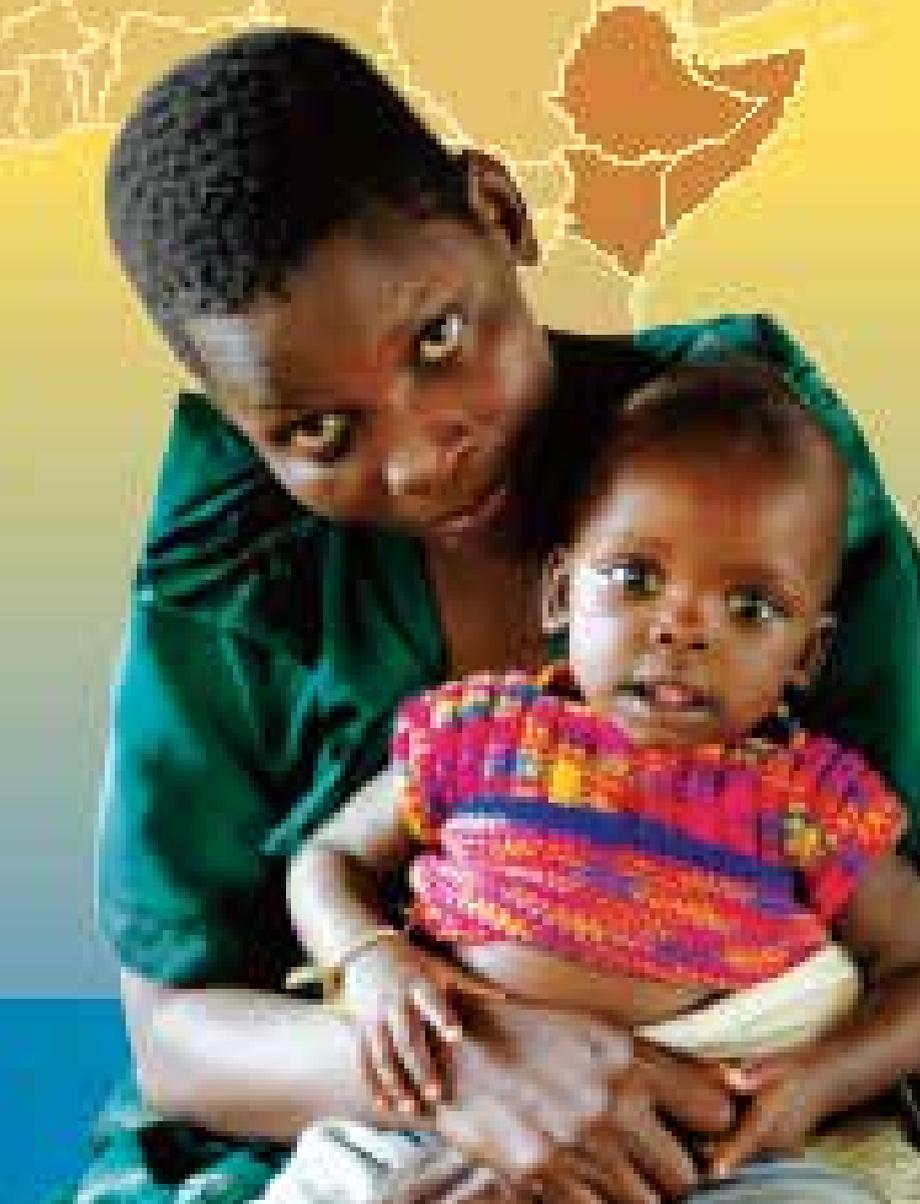
During 2011 Anglican Aid raised \$1.4m for those in the Horn of Africa affected by one of the worst famines in world history. Your donations were boosted by the Federal Government's matching dollar for dollar scheme. On behalf of those we are helping in Kenya, Somalia and Ethiopia thank you!

A young Kenyan woman, Harish, was given food from the Keepon Church. She said: "How could I have faced my children without the food? I truly thank God for all who have given to make us survive in these very hard times!"

This year will be a major challenge as we attempt to raise vital funds for all our projects. I ask that you prayerfully consider helping us to undertake Jesus' ministry in Sydney and overseas.

Let Grace Flow!

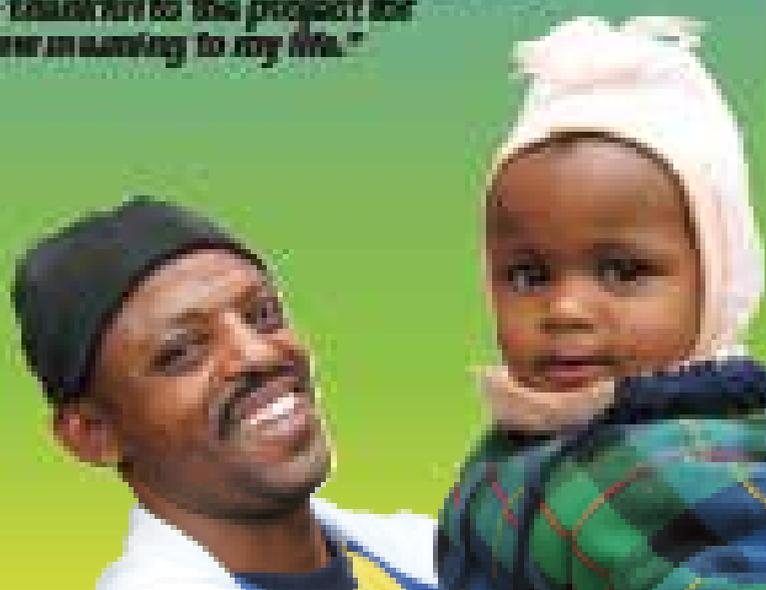
Rev David Mansfield  
 Director, Anglican Aid



Our challenge in 2012, apart from continuing to help provide food, water and shelter in Africa, is to fund our regular projects both overseas and here at home. We ask that our supporters consider donating in 2012 to our regular projects such as:

## HIV and Development Project

HIV/AIDS is decimating the Keepon community. Gijah has AIDS and lives in a Keepon slum with his wife and six children. With Anglican Aid's help Gijah is now improving and is supporting his family through selling eggs at the market. Gijah says, "I am so thankful to the project for giving new meaning to my life."



## Project Red Kids

Project Red Kids is our regular overseas development project that'll be launched at the Queensland Anglican Diocese on Saturday 14 March. The aim is to inspire, educate and care for vulnerable Indigenous children through a number of Christmas exchanges. When Red Kids comes to Australia generously and often to our events, we are praying, I will receive your strong support on the night of the launch and throughout 2012.

Website:  
[www.anglicanaid.org.au](http://www.anglicanaid.org.au)  
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## PRAYER PASTORS

# Street walkers minister to Manly revellers



Walking the streets of Manly: the 'street pastors' provide a calming influence.

ANDREW BUERGER

THE CORSO AT Manly can be a fairly rough place on a Saturday night but a group of Christians from 13 different churches around the Manly area are trying to

ease the tension.

Involved in this interdenominational ministry, which includes members of Baptist, Uniting and Salvation Army churches, are the Anglican churches in Balgowlah and Manly.

Collectively they provide the 'street pastors', a group of about

70 men and women who walk the Corso from 11pm-3am every Saturday night, acting as a Christian presence on the streets.

"We're not there to evangelise," said co-ordinator Deb Patnell.

"The motto is 'Care, listen and help'. We aim to show the love of

Christ by being a regular presence."

Each week about six people go out in two groups, walking loops around the clubs, pubs and bars in Manly and talking to anyone who wants to talk to them.

"If we see a situation that looks like it is getting tense we will try

and calm it by talking to the people involved," Mrs Patnell said. "We are there for when people need us."

Each street pastor receives six hours of training to prepare them for their late-night ministry.

Another part of the job each week is collecting glass bottles left around the Corso. Over the course of the night the pastors can pick up more than 100 bottles.

"We are removing them because they can be used as weapons," Mrs Patnell said. "Manly is known for its violence and we just want to try and make the streets a little safer."

Walking around Manly with 'street pastor' emblazoned on your back can be a little daunting but after

two years the locals are getting used to the group and people often thank them for what they are doing.

"There are still people who approach us and try to argue but generally people are receptive to what we are doing," Mrs Patnell said.

She added that the topic of Jesus does come up, even though the aim is not to evangelise.

"In the course of a conversation people often ask why we do this and invariably the answer revolves around our faith," she said.

"We have had a few conversations about Jesus and we have invited people to church but that isn't the reason we are out here — just to try and get people to come to church."

## COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

### Swanepoel joins Anglican Aid

ANGLICAN AID HAS appointed the rector of Glenquarie, the Rev Stephen Swanepoel, as its community development manager.

Starting this month, Mr Swanepoel (right) will be working with a range of parishes to help them introduce community development initiatives relevant to their social and economic context, and will also oversee many of Anglican Aid's overseas development projects.

"I am looking forward to the challenge of helping local parishes connect with their communities in helpful and effective ways, showing the love of Christ in action," he says. "When people ask me why we do this work, I always respond by saying, 'Because the love of Christ compels us!'"



Mr Swanepoel came to the Sydney Diocese from South Africa about 15 years ago and has been in charge at Glenquarie for the past five years.

Community development initiatives undertaken by the congregations and communities of Macquarie Fields and Glenfield during that time include the Break the Cycle project, which has been supported by Anglican Aid's Community Care Fund for many years and has helped hundreds of people and families struggling with a

variety of addictions, chronic unemployment and domestic violence and abuse issues.

More recently Mr Swanepoel has initiated a community garden project with local TAFE training, crisis accommodation for homeless people and a Men's Shed ministry.

Mr Swanepoel describes his time at Glenquarie as "very challenging but rewarding", adding that "I want to thank the congregation for being strong and courageous as we made some hard decisions to turn our church community from being inward- to outward-looking. They have so reformed themselves that they are truly a new church plant reaching unreached people in Macquarie Fields and Glenfield."



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The Finance Manager is charged with the leadership of a small accounting team, providing critical financial analysis and advice to senior management as well as managing the annual budgetary process. In addition to the preparation of regular financial reports, he/she is also responsible for the development and implementation of sound systems and procedures that incorporates the strategic growth of BWAA. Pivotal to the success of the role is the ability to be client-focused and solutions driven to outcomes that strongly supports the programs and projects nationally and overseas.

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## READING GROUP MINISTRY

# Learning to read at South Coogee

ANDREW BUERGER

GROWING UP IN A non-English speaking household is a reality for many migrant children in South Coogee. One of the consequences of this can be a substandard level of English literacy.

The local Anglican church, St Paul's, is running weekly reading groups to help children from these families improve their skills.

Volunteers meet weekly with children from Russian and Pacific Islander families who have little or no English literacy.

"The problem for these children is that they can't read English because there is no-one at home who can read with



Fun and educational: reading groups at South Coogee.

them," said minister the Rev Stephen Bainbridge.

To help the church run the group Anglican Aid has provided a grant of \$24,000, in three instalments, to assist in paying for a children's worker to run the program.

Every Thursday afternoon up to eight children gather in the local community centre where they read, play word games like Scrabble and once a month enjoy a BBQ together. "We have seen

some of the children come along to kids club as a result of coming to the reading groups," Mr Bainbridge said.

Another benefit is the greater connection that can be made with the wider family.

"People have a tendency to stay in their homes and it is difficult for us [as a church] to meet them," Mr Bainbridge said. "It is really hard to get them out of their lock-ups. This group give us a way to make contact with the parents."

The students in the group are receiving a high-quality education from a retired school principal, schoolteachers and a former university lecturer.

At the end of last year, as a way of bringing all the families involved together, the monthly BBQ included Christmas carols and other festivities.

With the employment of a children's minister in 2012, the church hopes the group will grow. "We hope to see it flourish as it is a really important part of the local community," Mr Bainbridge said. "There is a need out there for these children who can't read properly and the local community is totally behind this program."

## KEY MINISTRY APPOINTMENT

## Gilbert new Archdeacon

THE REV KARA Gilbert, (right) women's minister at St Paul's, Carlingford, has been appointed by the Archbishop as the new Archdeacon for Women's Ministry.

Dr Jensen said, "I am delighted that Kara Gilbert has accepted my invitation to succeed Archdeacon Narelle Jarrett in this important role. Many people suggested her name to me. She brings fine gifts and much experience of ministry and I look forward to working with her." Archdeacon Jarrett will retire in September, after being in the position since 2002.

A graduate of Sydney Missionary and Bible College and Moore College, Miss Gilbert worked on the staff of St Thomas', North Sydney for eight years before



spending the past four years at Carlingford.

Now she has the opportunity for wider ministry, Miss Gilbert is looking forward to the challenge. "I have a great desire for the gospel to go out among women in our city and believe we have wonderfully gifted women who will see that happen," she said. "It will be a great privilege to be involved in supporting and promoting ministry by women and among women across the Diocese."

## SPECIAL RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

## Diocese welcomes tighter guidelines

THE ARCHBISHOP and Anglican Education Commission have welcomed a revision of the guidelines on Special Religious Education, saying it should strengthen parents' confidence in SRE.

From 2012 all providers are required to make curriculum information available to parents via the internet. This applies both to providers of SRE classes and to the groups teaching ethics classes.

Anglican Youthworks co-ordinates the SRE program for the Diocese and publishes the Connect material used by teachers. Approved curriculum materials are online at <http://cepconnect.com.au/curriculum>; for secondary curriculum and resource materials see <http://whysre.com.au/cepcurriculum>.

Dr Bryan Cowling, the executive director of the Anglican Education Commission, has commended the NSW Department of Education for promoting curriculum transparency and Anglican Youthworks for its foresight in equipping voluntary SRE teachers to teach a biblically based curriculum with confidence and creativity.

"We are entering a period in which the purpose, quality and content of what and how children are taught and learn in schools is going to be placed under increased public and professional scrutiny," he said. "It is important SRE lessons are as engaging and substantial as lessons in other subjects."

Archbishop Jensen was pleased all providers would be scrutinised. "We have a curriculum

of which we can be proud," he said. "It is biblical, contemporary, and engaging for young minds."

Late last year, the NSW government agreed to a push from Christian Democrat MP Fred Nile for a parliamentary inquiry to examine the objectives, curriculum, implementation and effectiveness of the current operation of 'special education in ethics' and whether the Education Amendment (Ethics) Act 2010 should be repealed. The inquiry report is due by June.

The government has also announced a minimum time of 30 minutes a week for SRE and ethics and an annual "celebration of special religious education" to recognise the efforts of Scripture teachers.

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MOCLAM GROWTH

# Grace under fire

CMS missionaries to Mexico Peter and Sarah Sholl (right), with church friends Adriana Plata and Vicente Roldan.

ANDREW ROBINSON

THOUSANDS OF students across Latin America are studying the Moore College correspondence course in Spanish, with exponential growth even in countries deeply hostile to Christian ministry.

Peter Sholl, a CMS missionary with his wife Sarah in the violence-torn Mexican city of Monterrey, is the director of MOCLAM — Moore College in Latin America. Taking up the reins in 2009, he says the course's popularity is due to its clarity and deep commitment to teaching the Bible. But the course also cuts across boundaries in a denominationally rigid environment and comes with Australia's reputation for providing

quality education. MOCLAM began with the work of Australians Grahame and Patty Scarratt in Chile but exams for the correspondence theology course are now being sat by almost 3000 students in 15 countries.

Sometimes a handful of people in a church will be studying the course, sometimes it will be an IFES student group and sometimes entire networks of pastors and church leaders.

The course has unexpectedly flourished in one of the most restricted nations for Christian ministry in Latin America. In that country, 1000 students study the course — from a group of 15 in 2007. Peter Sholl trains pastors to teach the course in their own churches: "In one little Baptist church in the capital

they have 60 people on Tuesday nights studying subjects," he says. Growth has been so dramatic the Australian-based markers have struggled to keep up, and locals are being trained not only as teachers but exam markers.

But as the popularity of courses has grown rapidly across the continent, the Sholls have faced a complicated situation in Monterrey. The northern Mexican city was rated Latin America's safest in 2005 but has since become an epicentre of violence between rival drug cartels. Shootings, beheadings and attacks on civilians have become commonplace.

At CMS Summer School, Sholl shared his ambivalence about whether to stay or go. The threat of violence is real and confronting.

"I wrote a series of articles on the security question [looking at Paul in Acts] — 'cause Paul sometimes leaves, sometimes goes but, usually, he goes because the locals tell him to go," he says. "So we're really keen to be talking to the locals about when they think we should go. How else do you know?"

Yet everyday life is not always on the edge and staying means plenty of opportunities for witness. "Quite a few people have made comments about how they value us and how they value what we're doing, particularly in the context of what is going on around the city," Sholl says.

"They are blown away when they hear that there are people in Australia praying for us, and praying for them because they know them through us."

MISSION WORKERS NEEDED

## Out of Africa

THERE ARE NO MORE CMS missionaries in Johannesburg but the city is wide open for more gospel workers to serve, says recently returned CMS church planter Mark Grieve.

Mark and his South African wife Carol have spent the past seven years working among students, homeless youth and families in Johannesburg, planting a new church in the suburb of Sophiatown in 2008. They have now returned to Australia to take up a chaplaincy position in the Illawarra.

Ans van der Zwaag, who worked with marginalised women in inner-city Hillbrow, has also returned. This leaves no CMS missionaries in a city with a strong history of Australian partnerships.

Despite South Africa's long Christian history and high church attendance — 56 per cent of people attend once a week — Grieve has found the gospel is not well understood and that nominalism is rampant.

"When we used to survey people on campus, we'd ask if they were Christians and they'd say 'yes'. But invariably they'd say that they believed they were going to heaven because they went to church and were a good person.

"Every now and then you'd find someone who understood the gospel — it'd be like a shining light. But they were few and far between."

Grieve calls South African gospel work 'older brother' ministry — referring to the self-righteous brother in the parable of the prodigal son. "People have heard the message, they've been to church, but it's good works and what you do that saves you. [Ministry in South Africa] is just teaching people what the true gospel is, and I think there's a very small network of churches actually doing that."

He sees it as a strategic place, ripe for further Australian mission partnerships, and believes his experiences there will enrich his ministry here. Working with poverty-stricken Johannesburgers has deeply ingrained in him the gospel imperative to care for people's physical as well as spiritual needs.

"CMS thinks of it as a field they're happy to send more people to," he says. "There are good opportunities to serve as a children's worker or a student worker. Including the short-termers, there's been a presence of Australians for seven years in Jo'burg... It would be a shame if it just dried up."

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## NICODEMUS THE MUSICAL

# “Israel’s teacher” comes to life

A GOSPEL MUSICAL written by two Sydney Anglicans in the 1980s but never performed outside regional NSW is about to have its first local production.

*Nicodemus* came about when Matthew Adams and his friend Russell Larkin bemoaned the fact that musicals written about Jesus treated him simply as a man, and made his death the end of the story.

Wishing for a production showing Jesus as the Son of God, “complete with the resurrection”, they realised they had the skills to take it on themselves (Adams was a published poet and Larkin a professional musician). The result, *Nicodemus*, revolves around the inner turmoil

of the teacher of Israel after he is confronted with Jesus’ teachings.

In 1988 part of Act II was shown at an Australian Christian Music Seminar. Barbara Mackay, the widow of murdered anti-drugs campaigner Don Mackay, was at the seminar and wanted the show to come to Griffith, so Adams and Larkin agreed to the stage the world premiere there in 1990.

*Nicodemus* played to 5000 people in a successful Griffith season but, back in Sydney, no producers were interested because of the subject matter and the manner in which it was treated. So a further production did not happen. Until now.

Adams came across the original videotapes of the Griffith production

during a clean-up last year. Transferring the ageing material to DVD, he re-edited it and then played the show to his family — who had never seen any of it before.

“To my astonishment and complete delight, they absolutely loved it,” he says. “They cheered when their favourite songs were reprised... they played the CD constantly on their iPods, MP3 players — they still play it today. I thought, if my four teenage children can get such enjoyment from watching a video of the show, how powerful would another live production be?”

Adams approached the ministers at his church (St Matthew’s, West Pymble) and the head of the Upper North Mission Area, the Rev Bruce



Rick Bardsley-Smith and Clare Burgess play Nicodemus and his wife Sarah.

Stanley from Waitara — all of whom supported his idea to have *Nicodemus* produced again in the lead-up to Easter. Planning quickly became action, with three days of auditions and a season booked in at Covenant Christian School in Terrey Hills.

In keeping with Adams’ and Larkin’s original desire for a “mission musical”,

Christianity Explained courses will also be advertised in the program and foyer along with brochures giving Easter service times at local churches.

“I’m thrilled that it’s taken off at last and it’s amazed me that as I’ve approached people they’ve just said, ‘Yes, yes, I’m in,’” Adams says.

Bruce Stanley is enthusiastic, noting

that the production will be “the first expression in our Mission Area of all churches working together under one banner. *Nicodemus* has great potential to reach so many people that churches aren’t often able to reach — and we all have the opportunity to be involved.”

*Nicodemus* will run from March 21-31. See [www.stmattsweb.org.au/nicodemus](http://www.stmattsweb.org.au/nicodemus)

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## GOD IN CONTROL

# Deep love found in the word



Changed: Kim Moseley with three of her four children.

## ANDREW BUERGER

FOR KIM MOSELEY Christmas 2011 was a very different experience than in years past. On previous occasions she has spent the whole day with her family but, as a way of combating society's materialism, Kim spent last Christmas morning volunteering at a homeless shelter.

"I wanted to show my kids there are other people who are much less fortunate than they are," she says. "As a single mum I work really hard to provide for them and sometimes they don't seem to appreciate that. I just wanted to try and teach them some selflessness."

Three years ago giving

up her Christmas morning to serve others would never have been on Kim's agenda — but her life has changed.

"I think in some ways I have always believed in God," she says. "But I wouldn't have called myself a Christian."

As Kim's family isn't Christian it was a friend from work named Pura who started talking to her about Jesus. Her own hard times in life had left Kim feeling very alone and struggling with low self-esteem.

Yet, after meeting regularly with Pura and reading her Bible, she began to feel something she had not experienced in a long time. "I felt this deep, deep love that Jesus had for me," she says. "That was really amazing to me, that he could love

me that much."

Kim attended the Walk to Emmaus conference at Stanwell Tops last year which cemented her understanding of just how much Jesus loves each of his people.

"As part of the walk we received letters from family and friends telling us how important we were to them," she says. "That was really moving and showed me how much not just my family and friends cared for me, but it also showed me Jesus' love."

Kim has three boys and a girl and is excited to see how their lives are changing. "I really want to instil the love of Jesus into my children — I want them to grow up knowing him," she says. "They were a bit resistant at first but now they love Sunday school. It makes me so happy when I hear them singing at church."

Even though she still doesn't completely understand God's place in bad things that happen, Kim has a new perspective on it.

"It is really comforting to know he is in control no matter what," she says. "There are times... I don't know what is happening or why but I know I can completely rely on God to be in control. I may not know what he's doing

but he does."

Last September Kim took the step of publicly acknowledging her faith at a confirmation service at Eagle Vale Anglican Church.

"My family came along to support me," she says. "That was really encouraging, that I could stand before them and show them the impact Jesus has had in my life. My church family have become so important to me and they have helped me so much. It's so comforting knowing they're always there for me when I need them."

Kim says the biggest thing that has changed since becoming a Christian is learning how to give God control of her life. "Jeremiah 29:11 is a verse that is a real encouragement to me," she says. "It helps me to see I am part of God's big picture and that he has a plan for my life even if I can't see it."

What about her recent Christmas Day experience? "The overwhelming sense of joy and peace it brought me to help the less fortunate was amazing. It really did make me realise how wonderful and gracious our God is and be thankful for the blessings he has bestowed on me and my family."



CMS IN CAMBODIA

## Take care

Bonnie Lepelaar distributes Operation Christmas Child gift boxes to children in Phnom Penh.

## ANDREW ROBINSON

AT THE COALFACE OF community development and theological education in Cambodia, Rolf and Bonnie Lepelaar are convinced solid teaching and loving mentors are chief among the troubled country's needs.

Bonnie has spent much of her time involved with the Sunshine Centre in Phnom Penh — a project that helps marginalised families with school enrolment, tutoring, clothing, food and more. She is now manager of the centre's fundraising and public relations but hopes to make more time in the future for one-on-one mentoring.

"If you're going to see genuine change in Cambodians' lives, one-on-one is probably a better way than doing it in a group," she says. "You don't get that group mentality, where everyone nods and

no-one asks questions."

Rolf, who has been teaching at the Phnom Penh Bible School, says his work has been strategic because of the time spent with students.

"To really get them to grasp God's word well, have biblical convictions and be transformed in their thinking and lives, there isn't a substitute for time," he says.

When the family returns to Cambodia later this year Rolf's role will include visiting Bible school graduates, starting a Preliminary Theological Certificate course in Khmer and checking translation work for the Khmer edition of the *New Bible Dictionary*.

He is cautiously hopeful about the Cambodian church's future. "It's grown a lot in the last 20 years... but it's a young church with leaders who didn't have pastors over them before [and] there's a lot of confusion about the Bible."

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SOUTH AFRICA AND JAPAN

## Single, missionary, female

Ans van der Zwaag (second from right) with some Hillbrow friends.

Single women have done significant gospel work in challenging locations throughout history, and this year's CMS Summer School proved that these efforts are continuing. *Southern Cross* spoke to Ans van der Zwaag and Karen Darda.

ANS VAN DER ZWAAG has just returned to Australia after seven years' ministry in the notorious inner-city Johannesburg suburb of Hillbrow. "Nothing in Australia relates to

Hillbrow at all," she says.

The suburb is home to tens of thousands of people (usually recent immigrants to South Africa) packed into apartment buildings, and it is a haven for

drug-dealers, prostitution and crime. Even Ans's pastor initially thought it would be far too dangerous for her to live there. Within a month someone smashed the back window of her car

and stole her phone.

However, a landlord in a safe but highly sought-after apartment block near Hillbrow felt God had 'put them together', and provided Ans with a home only a week after she had begun to look.

Living alone in inner-city Johannesburg was a dramatic change for Ans but she gradually found a network of support from other missionaries and local Christians.

"It had its lonely times because you don't know many people," she says. "But I would meet with Mark and Carol Grieve [fellow CMS missionaries ministering nearby] every two or three weeks to pray — we did it the whole time I was in South Africa."

Karen Darda has been ministering in Japan for 20 years and it's usually the opposite to South Africa: a safe country where "everything works — even better than it works here!"

But in March 2011, as Karen's church-planting team met in the salubrious but churchless town of Shin-Urayasu, east of Tokyo, the earthquake struck. They dived under the table and began to pray.

"We were probably the only ones praying in that town of 40,000 people," she says. "For Japanese people, you actually do the religious stuff so the gods will be nice to you. If something like that is happening, it's too late. It's only Christians who can say, like in Psalm 46, that God is our refuge when the mountains fall into the sea."

Karen has often found being a single missionary tough, as "loneliness can easily be a problem", but it has also provided her with many opportunities. "If I'd been married, I never could have done the travel I did when I was doing student work."

It also gave her space to be involved in a ministry

where usually married men would be involved, not their wives.

As she returns to Japan, she is committed to bring hope to a nation that has very little: while the earthquake and tsunami killed about 20,000 people there are still 30,000 suicides a year.

"The church is tiny and struggling," Karen says, but she is inspired



Karen Darda (centre) and church planters.

by many passionate local Christians who live out their faith and share it with others — even if they are the only Christian on their campus. "I have great respect for them," she says. "It was a great privilege to work alongside them."

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**NEW ORPHAN PROJECT**

# Hope for Bali's future

Children involved in Projek Bali Kids.

BALI IS AN ISLAND deeply embedded in the psyche of all Australians — known for cheap tropical holidays and our worst terrorist attack. But most people are unaware that very few Balinese benefit from tourism dollars. Most are peasant Hindu farmers struggling to survive, feed their families and educate their children.

Now Sydney Anglicans have begun a partnership to care for the orphans of the Indonesian island. The Archbishop of Sydney's Anglican Aid has developed a partnership with Widhya Asih, a development arm of the Protestant Church of Bali, which provides family and pastoral care and education for

almost 500 Balinese children at its seven orphanages scattered throughout the island. Anglican Aid has called the program Projek Bali Kids.

The project aims to help the orphanages develop greater sustainability through a range of income-generating activities plus water purification,

bio-power generation and agricultural development initiatives.

As it is linked to Anglican Aid's Overseas Development Fund, donations to the project are tax deductible. Anglican Aid director David Mansfield says it aims to have more than 1000 Australian donor partners within the next four years.

**GAY MARRIAGE BILL**

# Conscience vote controversy

RUSSELL POWELL

A PRIVATE MEMBER'S bill to allow same-sex marriage is likely to be introduced to Federal Parliament within weeks, despite the objections of major churches and their leaders.

As late as the 2011 Synod in October, the Anglican Diocese of Sydney expressed its opposition to such a move, urging Parliament to retain the current definition of marriage at law, namely as 'the union of a man and a

woman to the exclusion of all others, voluntarily entered into for life'.

Archbishop Jensen also called on Federal Labor MPs, before their National Conference in December, to reject the false rhetoric of 'equality' surrounding same-sex marriage.

"Redefining marriage will have unintended and unwelcome consequences for the meaning of parenthood, our openness to other forms of marriage, sex education and our commitment to religious freedom," Dr Jensen said. Later the Primate,

Archbishop Phillip Aspinall, reinforced recent General Synod decisions on the subject.

"Changing same-sex marriage laws has been a topic of discussion across the worldwide Anglican Communion, and resolutions at the Australian General Synod consistently support marriage between a man and a woman in lifelong union, based on Scripture," he said.

After three days of debate, the ALP National Conference voted to change Labor's policy platform to

recognise same-sex marriage. But it also accepted Prime Minister Gillard's call for a conscience vote in Parliament.

Setting the scene for a close vote, Opposition Leader Tony Abbott then reminded coalition MPs of the party line. "It was the clear policy of the Coalition at the election that marriage was between a man and a woman," Mr Abbott told Sky News. "Every single member of the Coalition was elected on that position and I don't think we can break faith with the electorate."

## World round-up

**KASHMIR:** Indian Christian leaders have condemned a Sharia court ruling against an Anglican minister and a Catholic priest, both accused of 'enticing' Muslims to convert to Christianity.

In November, the Rev Chander Mani Khanna of the Anglican Church of North India was arrested in Srinagar and brought before Muslim authorities accused of baptising 15 Muslim boys. One local mufti was reported as saying that Khanna "confessed he drew the attention of Muslims to convert them to Christianity" and it "was proved beyond doubt that the pastor has been doing this work for years, along with other accomplices".

The All India Christian Council condemned the verdict against the Protestant pastor and his co-accused, a Catholic missionary. The council's investigation found no evidence of force or fraud in the conversions. Compass Direct newsagency reported that even though the court rulings have no legal force, many Christian workers had been forced out of the Kashmir Valley.

**PAKISTAN:** Asia Bibi (right), the Christian mother of five jailed in 2009 accused of insulting Islam's prophet Muhammad, has been the target of violence by other inmates.



In an interview published in London's *Telegraph* newspaper, Bibi said she was being given her own food to cook because of fears others may try to poison the meals. A guard has already been suspended for trying to strangle her. She is on death row awaiting a ruling on her appeal. In the interview, her first from jail, Mrs Bibi said, "I am hopeful that I will be released, although there is a bounty of about \$8000 offered by the Islamic clerics to anyone who will kill me. I have left everything on God, I will accept his will."

**LONDON:** The archbishops of Canterbury and York have called for "an open-ended engagement" between the Church of England, the wider Anglican Communion and the Anglican Church in North America (ACNA). The report, from archbishops Williams and Sentamu, is a significant but cautious document. Two years ago the Church of England General Synod passed a motion recognising and affirming the ACNA's desire "to remain in the Anglican family" but said it was not yet ready to be in full communion with the member churches that had left the Episcopal Church in the US and the Anglican Church of Canada because of liberal theology. The archbishops called their latest submission to the synod "a report on work in progress" and said the consequences of establishing ACNA were "still emerging and on a number of issues any assessment at this stage must necessarily be tentative". In 2009, the GAFCON Primates Council recognised the Anglican Church in North America as genuinely Anglican and recommended all Anglican provinces affirm full communion with the ACNA. In response to the report ACNA's Primate, Archbishop Robert Duncan, said: "We are encouraged by the desire of the Church of England to continue to embrace the Anglican Church in North America and remain in solidarity with us as we proclaim the gospel message and truth as revealed in Scripture in the way it has always been understood in Anglican formularies".



## Real leadership

I AGREE WHOLEHEARTEDLY WITH “Pastoral Essentials” in December’s *SC* but would like to add that many churches no longer have one minister but a team, assistant minister, youth pastor, pastoral care worker et al. So therefore an equally necessary truth (not always grasped) is that leadership is a skill not to be confused with dictatorship.

Leadership skills should also be included in the pastoral course and be mandatory for every ordinand for the priesthood.

Wilma Norman  
Gymea

## Freedom with love

ROBERT DOYLE OFFERS READERS A challenging and scholarly opinion about the extent to which the gospel can transform a secular society (*SC*, December). Yet how can Christians not speak out for those oppressed by gambling and other addictions against the commercial and political interests that perpetuate their misery? The freedom that

we have in Christ is not to be exercised for our satisfaction or at the expense of our weaker brothers and sisters.

Perhaps the real challenge we face is to make our churches places of refuge, where such problems are spoken of openly and honestly but with the love, grace and forgiveness that is only truly found in the gospel of Christ.

Philip Cooney  
Wentworth Falls

## Biblical understanding

JIM BATES’ LETTER (*SC*, NOVEMBER) seemed to suggest we can rarely read and understand the Bible for ourselves. He conceded that understanding the story might be easy but understanding its meaning can be very difficult. As a result he insisted Tyndale didn’t really want the ploughboy to understand or interpret the Bible for himself and that none of the major Reformers would have either.

There is a range of difficulties with Mr Bates’ argument. First, the practice of translating the Bible in the vernacular was precisely so that ordinary people, using their

everyday language, might hear and speak the words of Scripture to each other. The commentaries the Reformers wrote were never meant to suggest the Bible was difficult to understand. Rather, the difficulty lies with our reluctance to listen and put into practice what the Bible is teaching.

Secondly, the Reformation confession of the clarity of Scripture ought not to be confused with the simplicity of Scripture. Even the apostle Peter had difficulty with some parts (2 Peter 3:15-16) but these were the exception rather than the rule.

God has given us a clear Scripture and, with the aid of the same Spirit who caused it to be written, the whole Bible as a context for each part. As a community of believers — including gifted teachers and scholars — we need not fear an unintelligible or inaccessible word.

The clarity of Scripture is a precious truth that goes back to the New Testament and has been cherished by believers in each age. God finds no difficulty in communicating clearly and effectively to his people. We, on the other hand, too often have difficulty listening.

Mark Thompson

Letters should be less than 200 words

Email: [newspaper@anglicanmedia.com.au](mailto:newspaper@anglicanmedia.com.au)

## SOAPBOX

# Global vision?

ROWAN KEMP

IN a world of gospel need, from Sydney to Slovenia, are we as Sydney evangelicals too Sydney-centric?

At CMS Summer School last month we heard of explicit invitations to the Australian evangelical community from Fiji, Papua New Guinea and Tanzania (to name but three) to send gospel workers. Moreover, according to the former international director of IFES, Lindsay Brown, Sydney evangelicals are particularly placed to meet some of the pressing current gospel needs around the globe. We have open doors for ministry — but will we pray and work to send people through?

As part of his list of the top 10 challenges facing the global evangelical church (see below) Lindsay Brown highlighted the great need in many places for training and teaching.

Setting the scene, he outlined the incredible growth in God’s global church in the past 20 years. The evangelical church in Nepal, as one example, grew from 30,000 in 1989 to 900,000 by 2009.

The challenge presented by this amazing growth is to disciple large numbers of new believers and establish them in the Christian faith. Such discipleship is essential if we are to fulfill the Lord Jesus’ commission in Matthew 28 to ‘teach them to obey everything that I have commanded you’. Only solid Biblical discipleship will avoid a Christian faith that fails to progress beyond the superficial or nominal.

Brown’s point was that this is where evangelicals in Sydney are particularly

equipped to serve the wider global church. Having been blessed with high levels of biblical teaching and training in our churches, we are beautifully placed to bless our brothers and sisters in less resourced places where God’s church is rapidly expanding.

Is this a door through which we are prepared to walk? Will we pray, as a community of resource-rich Sydney evangelicals, for the Lord to raise up significant numbers of workers to meet this substantial need? Will we actively seek to encourage and send appropriately humble, mature, servant-hearted people to serve in the global harvest?

Sometimes I hear the objection that there is a lot of work to do here in Sydney and that we need to look after our own patch. This is undoubtedly true. But I wonder if we are too focused on our own needs instead of looking also to the needs of our sisters and brothers overseas.

Of course we support global mission. But tithing our church budgets, or even our theological college graduates, towards the global church frankly seems a bit stingy. Especially given our relative richness in resources, and the fact that many in our churches preach that for the resource rich tithing hardly meets the NT standard of generosity.

The substantial need for teaching and training overseas is not merely a question for us as individuals. As churches and a community of richly blessed evangelicals in Sydney, are we owning the needs that exist

outside our own patch? In fact, maybe that question betrays part of the problem. The issues overseas (or outside our own suburb) are not ‘our’ problem. But the picture in the NT is of global interdependence among God’s people (2 Corinthians 8-9). Maybe when those who are closest to the global situation say that we in Sydney have a particular opportunity to serve the wider church, we need to prayerfully consider our generosity.

Hearing the explicit requests to send gospel workers reminded me of the apostle Paul’s vision of the man from Macedonia who begged him to “come over to Macedonia and help us” (Acts 16:9-10). Given the explicit invitations extended to us, why are we waiting? Are we waiting for our own individual ‘Macedonian’ vision? Might not these invitations be our ‘Macedonian’ moment?

Top 10 challenges for the evangelical church:

- |                                    |  |
|------------------------------------|--|
| 1 pluralism;                       | 6 growth of mega-cities;               |
| 2 unreached people groups;         | 7 training and teaching;               |
| 3 provision of Scriptures;         | 8 concern for every aspect of society. |
| 4 aural learners and slow readers; | 9 use of technology;                   |
| 5 contribution of the diaspora;    | 10 partnerships.                       |

Rowan Kemp is leader of the Evangelical Union (EU) staff team at Sydney University and CEO of the EU Graduates Fund. For further information about the Top 10 list, see <http://sydneyanglicans.net/news/stories/open-doors-will-we-walk-through>

### READERS’ESSAYS

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

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

# Training in righteousness

Finding a new generation of committed Christians is an important way to ensure the fourth “R” of teaching continues to have an impact, writes DAVID MCINTYRE.

**A**LL Christians are encouraged by the thought that some of the men and women teaching their children share the same beliefs. But the ministry of Christian teachers to kids in private and state schools is under strain because of the looming departure of a generation of educators. Up to 4000 Christian teachers within the Sydney Diocese are due to leave the profession over the next five years as the Baby Boomer generation comes up for retirement.

Compounding the pressure on believing teachers are the high expectations placed on all in their profession by society and schools, and the greater workload that comes as a result — often for less recognition and lower salaries than other career choices. It does make it less attractive, in a worldly sense, than other better paid professions.

Yet there are a significant number of young Christians who are taking up the challenge to be teachers as they recognise the importance, and reward, of being able to relate to kids and their families in a way that perhaps no-one else can.

Eva Shepherdson started her arts degree in ancient history and religious studies, with

a vague inkling that she might do teaching. The inkling grew into a conviction as she led Bible studies with the Sydney University Evangelical Union and realised she enjoyed teaching others.

She is now in her second year of the Masters of Teaching course, with the vision of becoming a teacher in a public school. And while public school teachers cannot speak to students about their religion, unless to answer a direct question, Shepherdson says there is still plenty of opportunity to demonstrate the love of Christ.

“They have to come to school, they’re there in front of you, you get that time to build relationships over years, you see their lives [and] they see yours,” she says. “There’s so much opportunity for them to see the gospel lived through you.”

One of the reasons Shepherdson ultimately enrolled to study teaching was the example of her high school ancient history teacher, who was also a Christian and showed her students a level of care that left a strong impression: “My teacher at school invested a lot of time that the students could see,” she says. Shepherdson also

received encouragement from her pastor and university staff workers, who saw she might have a teaching gift.

This sort of encouragement is essential for students who have the potential to be good teachers but have not considered it or, like Shepherdson, may have only considered it in passing without further support.

Recognising this, in 2004 the Anglican Education Commission appointed Ian Keast as director of the Christians in Teaching project. Part of his role includes visiting school and university Christian groups to challenge students to consider teaching as a long-term career and ministry.

“A big challenge... is the whole question of ministry and the fact that a lot of young people, particularly young guys, see ministry in terms of parish-based ministry,” he says. “That is taking off some of our really very keen, committed and well-equipped teachers.

“I run into this a lot when I work with the tertiary students: they think teaching’s terrific but not for the long term. They want to get some experience and then go into training for ‘real’ ministry. So we do have to counter that and underscore the value



Teacher in the making: Eva Shepherdson at home.

of teaching as a ministry... that ministry is, well, anywhere you are, really, and it isn't just church-based or parish-based."

A public high school teacher and later a head teacher at Barker College on Sydney's north shore, Keast says he and head teachers at other schools noticed a gradual decline in the number of Christians applying for positions. For Anglican and other Christian schools, fewer Christians on staff in the future will make it difficult to fulfil the mandate of the school — especially if Bible-based content is an explicit part of the curriculum.

At public schools, the decline in the number of Christian teachers means opportunities are lost for local churches to reach many kids and their families who may otherwise not have any regular Christian contact.

Dr Bryan Cowling, executive director of the Anglican Education Commission (AEC), says university graduates' increased choice of career, many of which pay more than teaching, has been one of the reasons for the decline in teacher numbers. Added to that, over recent decades, are the higher expectations placed on teachers by schools and the community — with increased paperwork and broader responsibilities — which have made the job more difficult.

"It's not an occupation for the faint-hearted," Dr Cowling says.

Given the number of Christians leaving the profession in the next five years, Dr Cowling says replacing them is just the beginning of what should be regarded as a strategic ministry.

He points out that Scripture teachers, while important, might have contact with 25 to 30 kids for an hour or two once a week, whereas the Christian class teacher has more direct and regular involvement — often with more students.

"What we need people to wrestle with are the strategic areas in which we need Christians," Dr Cowling says.

So the AEC employed Keast to attract more Christians to teaching, and is also working to better equip Christian teachers to show the love of Christ in the classroom. In a report submitted to the AEC in November, Keast said 500 Christians had

## Church future may depend on schools

John Collier

When I was a teenager in the 1960s I read a book by Gavin Reid, an English clergyman, called *The Gaggling of God* (not to be confused with Don Carson's more recent book of the same name).

As I recall, Reid had one big point to make: what we call 'outreach' is actually 'in-drag'. This metaphor for our church-based evangelism helps explain why it so often doesn't work; in post-Christendom, people simply will not submit to be dragged into church.

This recognition places a premium on evangelism in the hands of the laity and clergy within secular society throughout the week in what is, in effect, cross-cultural ministry with those in our work and leisure circles who are often generations removed from Christian culture. Some of it is Acts 17 ministry, analogous to Paul in the marketplace of ideas.

One of the key marketplaces of ideas is our schools, as youth form their beliefs and worldviews. By and large, young people are no longer in our churches (at least, not in great numbers) but they are in our schools. Christian teachers, whether in government, Anglican or other Christian schools, are therefore in the front line of Christian ministry. Research shows pre-adult years are the time large numbers of people come to faith, as part of forming the orientations they will take into adulthood.

Within churches, therefore, we need to see Christian work in schools not as a sideshow to real Christian mission, nor

as inferior to church-based ministries but as part of the main game, as taking the gospel to where the people are, in great numbers. ISCF (Inter-School Christian Fellowship) and SRE in government schools, and Crusaders and chapel in Christian schools, are vital instruments of evangelism and Christian nurture. So, too, is the timely witness of Christian teachers in developing worldview thinking within their classrooms and demonstrating Christian love in their pastoral dealings with students.

Where is the strategising of their work? Where is the esteem for it within our churches? Where is the prayer support for and encouragement of it from within our churches? Where is the support for training programs to help teachers think biblically about the process and content of teaching? And where will the next generation of Christian teachers come from when the Baby Boomers retire?

We need to see the work of Christians in our schools — government, Anglican and other Christian — as the most important interface of faith with youth; as valid in its own right as ministry, rather than an avenue to top up church membership. Under God, the penetration of faith in our society may well depend heavily on what happens in schools. Paradoxically, as generations move through our congregations, the future of churches may depend on faith nurturing in our schools.

*Dr John Collier is head of St Andrew's Cathedral School, Sydney, and a member of the Anglican Education Commission.*

enrolled to study teaching following their contact with him. The commission now aims to boost the Christians in Teaching project by hiring a part-time staff worker to join Keast in 2013.

The AEC has also established the Government Schools Forum, which is dedicated to considering how best to encourage Christians to enter the public school system and support believing teachers who are already there.

According to Ian Wing, a former public high school principal who will chair the Government Schools Forum this year, the decline in the number of Christians at public schools was exacerbated over recent decades as the increase in the number of lower-fee Christian and Anglican schools attracted many Christian teachers to the independent system.

For Christian teachers, particularly those just completing their university training,

Anglican and other church-related or non-denominational independent schools often offer jobs many months before the NSW Department of Education has even started making offers for public schools.

Added to the security of getting a job well before the year has finished, independent schools offer Christian teachers the opportunity to speak directly to students about their faith, and in some cases a biblical worldview is part of the curriculum.

As many kids attending Christian schools are not Christian themselves, it is a wonderful opportunity to share the message of the gospel while encouraging students who are already followers of Christ to continue in their faith.

Rebecca Clisdell, a physical education teacher at Thomas Hassall Anglican College in the south-western suburbs, is able to look at the Bible as part of her Personal

continued next page »



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## Working for the Lord

Christian teachers who are good at what they do can be one of the strongest influences on those who will, in the future, consider education as a profession.



Peter Boyages (left) begins work as a maths teacher this term at William Clarke College in Kellyville and says the influence of his own maths teacher, a Christian, in years 11 and 12 is a big reason why he chose the profession. “My maths teacher was a pretty cool guy and I quite liked him and that sparked something,” Boyages says.

While he was studying, Boyages went on to do his practical placement with that same teacher at Barker College. He says he was impressed by his teacher’s passion for teaching maths – which he came to later after time in a different profession – and his ability to make it interesting while maintaining a light-hearted tone during class. He was also a teacher who prayed for his students and was willing to talk to them about Christian issues.

Boyages is now hoping to emulate some of this as he starts at William Clarke, an Anglican school, and is keen to challenge the students about issues to do with faith, the world and the Bible.

He wants to be a role model and demonstrate love and care for the students as he teaches them, “which is hard because there are times when you have to be quite assertive”. He also plans to put plenty of time into preparing for class so he is able to teach his students as well as he can, with Colossians 3:23 his inspiration: “Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men”.

“That might apply to me quite a bit because I can get quite lazy sometimes,” he adds.

Boyages would recommend teaching for anyone who enjoys being around people over an office job.

“In teaching, you’re relating to so many people, not just the kids, but to staff and parents as well,” he says.

« from previous page

Development lessons. “When we look at relationships, I can teach that the greatest relationship is that with God,” she says.

While many of students at Thomas Hassall are from a Christian, Catholic or Orthodox background, there are also Mormon, Hindu and Muslim families and, to enrol at the school, all parents sign a form to say they accept the beliefs it teaches.

However, independent schools still make up a small proportion of all schools within the Sydney Diocese. According to Dr Cowling, government schools comprise 65 to 70 per cent of Sydney’s schools, while about 15 per cent are Catholic and the remainder are Anglican and other

independent schools.

So, as well as filling positions at Christian schools, the challenge is to have enough believers who will enter the public system as teachers.

Wing acknowledges the uncertainty for teaching graduates who have to wait until the end of the year, or the early part of the new year, to receive an offer from the NSW Department of Education. In the meantime many Christian teachers keen to make plans — who often have family to consider as well — accept a position at an independent school.

“The public recruitment does leave a lot to be desired,” Wing says.

He wants to encourage Christian teachers to see public schools as a mission field where they can model a life that serves Jesus.

Kate Cousins, who has taught at Beecroft Primary School as an infants’ teacher for more than two decades, says the greatest difference her faith makes is in her behaviour as a teacher as she interacts with the children, their parents and her colleagues.

“Even though [some children are] not going to fit the norms and they’re not going to do what their parents or teachers might want them to do, it doesn’t undermine their value,” she says. “That’s probably the greatest impact my faith has: on how I appreciate children.”

Cousins agrees that teaching is now harder than it ever was with the use of technology in classrooms, the higher community expectations and issues related to public liability. Still, she says it is a very rewarding job and she would recommend it as a career.

Yet, she adds, to be a teacher “you would have to love children, otherwise it would be a shocking job”.

That in itself is an important point — that not everyone is suited to teaching.

John Partington, who teaches at Blue Mountains Grammar, says the last thing teachers now working in the system want is for somebody to join the profession who is not really suited to it.

“When I have conversations [with people who are considering teaching] I ask them, ‘Do you want to be a teacher, or do you just like the holidays?’” he says.

Partington adds classroom teaching is

not easy and can be quite draining, but he believes it’s also important to be thinking about the work in terms of a Christian worldview.

Thus, as an English teacher, he says he has explained to his students that not all texts are helpful to read or watch.

“Postmodernism is also popular among teens and it’s important to challenge them on that,” he says.

This is another area where Dr Cowling and the AEC are working to provide Christian teachers with resources and an academic framework to help them teach from a biblical worldview. This includes the publication of booklets such as *New Perspectives on Anglican Education*, which attempts to define what education might look like at an Anglican school.

Dr Cowling says he would like to help prepare Christian teachers even before they start teaching by working with the university Christian groups to create opportunities where students can learn to combine the way they teach with their faith. “They could get a taste of the application of faith in teaching,” he says. However, he points out that any such initiatives would be contingent on resources.

The Government Schools Forum is wrestling with how it can best support Christian state schoolteachers without creating yet another thing for them to fit into their busy lives. It is also harder to link up Christians in the state school system because there is no way to find them unless they come forward, or parish ministers introduce their members as public schoolteachers.

Wing says finding an effective way to support public schoolteachers will be a challenge for the forum.

But it is reassuring that younger teachers like the Partington and Clisdell, and prospective teachers like Shepherdson, are thinking about how to apply their faith to their teaching, no matter what the school.

Says Shepherdson: “I need to be doing this job because Christ has loved me in a way that is so boundless and unconditional and I need to take that same attitude to my students. I’m doing this because I want to honour Christ in the way I teach.”

SC



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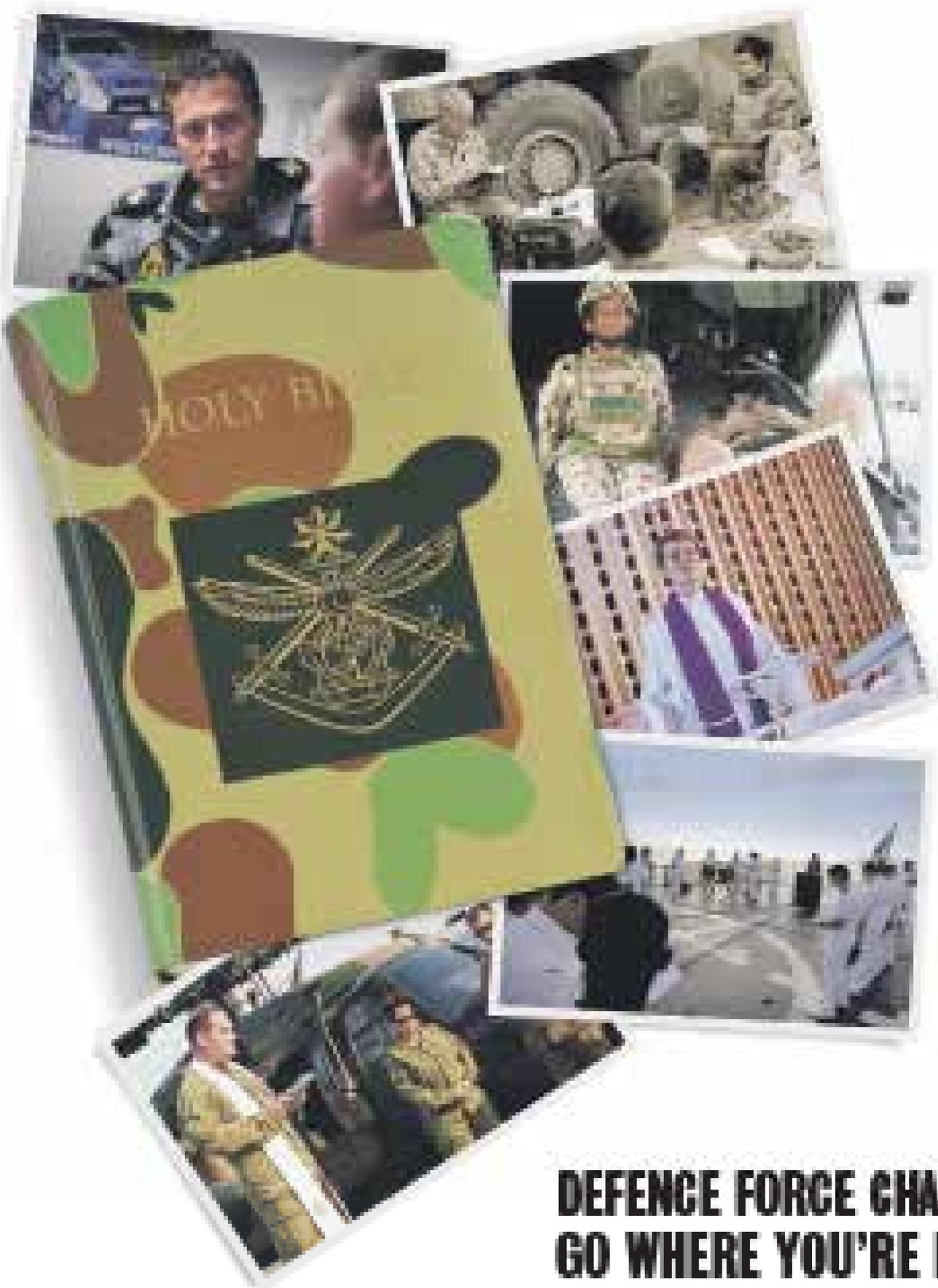
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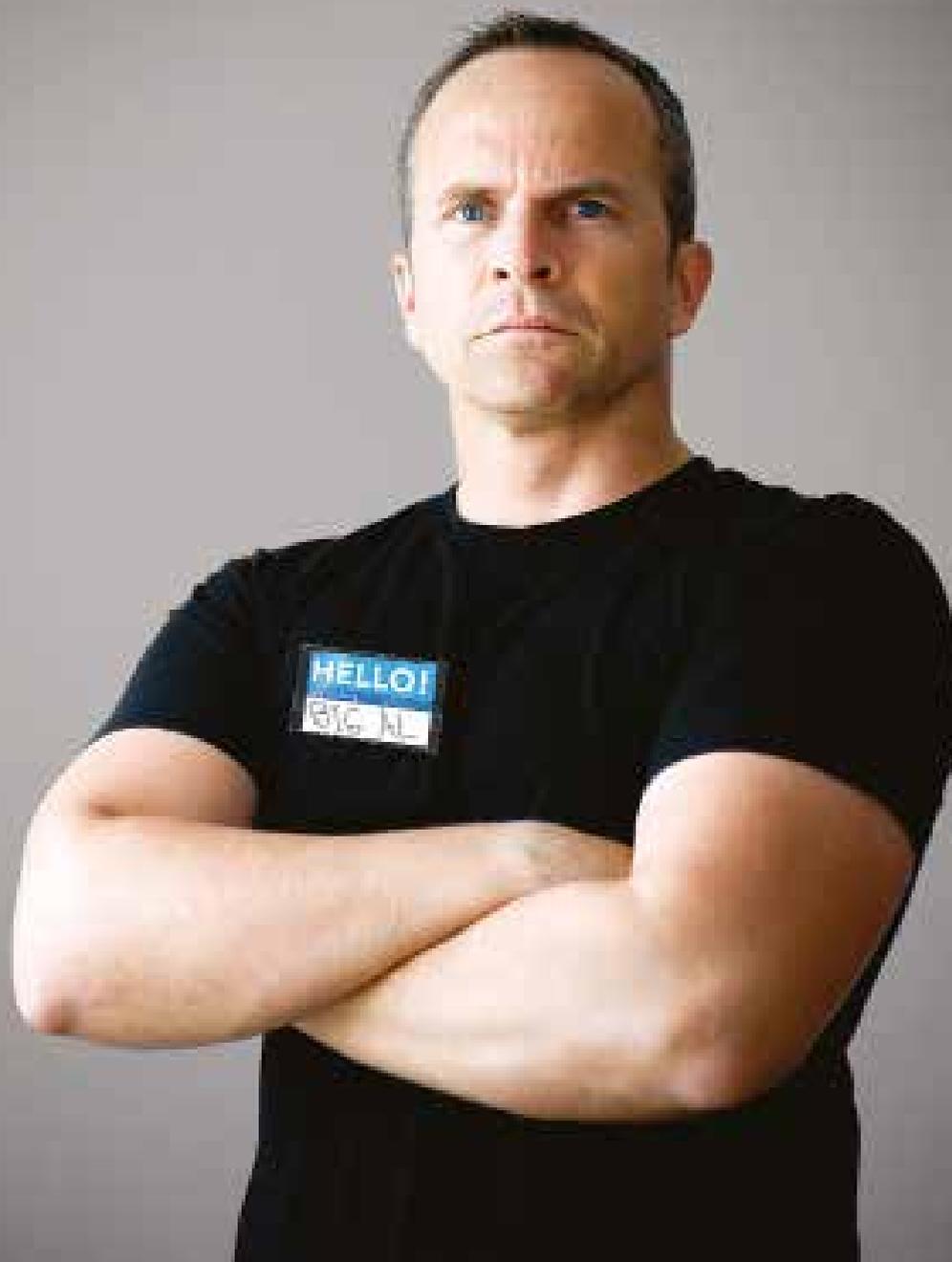
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# Open doors?



**We all want our churches to be places where newcomers can feel welcome and discover Christ, or grow in faith. But more often than not we push people away, writes RAJ GUPTA.**

**R**ECENTLY I went to see some people who had visited our church. Ordinarily visitors say they find our church very welcoming, but on this occasion it was just the opposite: they said very few people had spoken to them. They had been thinking of joining us but now were having second thoughts. These were painful but important words to hear.

The theological foundation for welcoming is so obvious that it is easy to assume. God himself is a relational being who has endured great cost to bring us back to himself, through the sacrifice of sending Jesus to die on the cross. The work of Jesus on the cross means that all people can be welcomed to be in a relationship with God and the barriers between different people are obliterated (cf. Ephesians 2). Furthermore, we now have the privilege and obligation of being God's agents

to introduce and welcome others into his kingdom.

Few doubt this simple theological framework. However, putting it into practice seems to be more difficult. I know someone who visited eight churches and found almost all of them unwelcoming. And yet most think that their church is welcoming! Sadly, the statistics indicate that less than 50 per cent of visitors are spoken to and, at most, 30 per cent of people are followed up.

Anecdotally perhaps, the top reason I have been given for people not joining a church is the lack of initial welcome. One person has told me they felt regulars tried to avoid them. And they were correct, for the dynamic of many medium to large churches is that regulars don't know regulars and shy away from the prospect of being embarrassed because they have forgotten someone's

name. The result is an environment that is unwelcoming for new people, and one in which regulars stick to their cliques.

The area of welcoming and integration was one of the three areas of priority identified in the recent Exploring Effective Ministry Under God (EEMuG) conference in Sydney (video of all sessions from this sold-out conference is now available at [www.effectiveministry.org](http://www.effectiveministry.org)).

It is so easy for us to default to thinking just about our regulars and forget what it is like to be someone new, even when we try to do so. A minor but significant example is a church I know that renovated its toilets but inadvertently forgot to put up the male and female signs. The regulars knew which was which but, in each of the three weeks after the 'opening', different visitors had to ask. While some did, the real problem was

for those who just felt alienated and said nothing.

The panel discussion and interaction at the EEMuG conference revealed one of our deep fears in follow-up, that of turning people off by being perceived as overenthusiastic. In an age of telemarketers, many don't follow up visitors because they don't want people to think that they are being hassled. Certainly there is such a danger, but could it be that this is more the exception than the norm?

Someone who has come to a church has expressed interest just by the fact of their visit. It may not be quite, 'Good sir, what must I do to have eternal life?' (although it may), but it is an implicit invitation.

Furthermore, could it be that the average person interprets a lack of follow-up as a lack of interest? This was certainly how I felt every time I was not followed up after expressing interest in an activity for my children. When I did not receive a call, I moved on until I found someone who I felt was interested.

And this is consistent with my own experience of follow-up. Out of the fear identified above I am quick to apologise for hassling someone, particularly on the second or third call. However, the vast majority of people have cut me off and thanked me for calling back and then themselves apologised. On the odd occasion when someone wants to be anonymous (and most of the time when someone does, they *don't* give you their number), it is obvious and not too difficult

to respect their wishes.

Page 60 of the EEMuG presentation pack (downloadable on the website) provides a template for self-diagnosis, split up to help one consider matters before a service or gathering, during, and afterwards (research indicates that someone who is contacted in the first 36 hours of their visit is far more likely to return). Some of the more helpful ideas have been:

- Use name tags. Sticky pre-printed name tag labels help and encourage people to know others, reducing the obstacles even of regulars talking to and knowing other regulars. It is easy to write out one for visitors, which reduces one obstacle for people to engage with them. If people in your congregation (not necessarily you) find it difficult to know everyone's (yes, everyone's) name, this can assist with a relatively fast culture change. It may be harder to navigate the practicalities in larger congregations.
- Personal contact is very important, but can take a variety of forms. The faster the personal contact following church, the more loved someone will feel. I am aware of one family who checked out a church one Sunday morning. That afternoon they received a phone call and the following evening they were visited. One won't be surprised to hear that they joined the church. People from different generations will need 'connection' in different ways. Some of the EEMuG panel shared how

they effectively use social media to this end with Gen Y people. The principle is akin to 'becoming all things to all men' (cf. 1 Corinthians 9:22).

- Unless you have a brilliant memory, you need to make use of some kind of system to help you keep track of people. With options such as *Church Community Builder* (see Steve Kryger's columns on [sydneyanglicans.net](http://sydneyanglicans.net) for an evaluation of some of these tools) it is now easier than ever to use powerful tools to help you care for people in effective ways.
- Integration is just as important as the initial welcome. It is one thing for someone to feel warmly welcomed initially. It is another for them to 'feel' part of a church three to six months after they have made the decision to 'join'. Larger churches may be able to develop more structured ways of helping people make this transition but it is just as important in smaller churches. Things like meeting people at the same stage of life, joining Bible study groups and getting appropriately involved in some way can all help someone settle in.

Even a church that thinks it is doing well needs to be diligent. Changing dynamics mean that the application of the principles may vary from time to time.

However we may apply these principles, we should do so with the same kind of self-sacrificial attitude of Jesus, who gave his life so that we can be welcomed back into a relationship with God. SC

## The top reason I have been given for people not joining a church is the lack of initial welcome.



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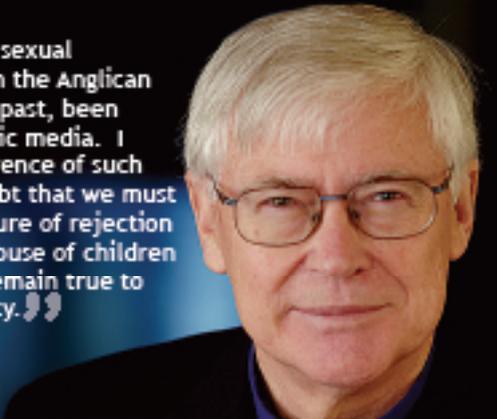
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...issues of child abuse and sexual misconduct generally within the Anglican Church have, in the recent past, been widely reported in the public media. I want to reaffirm our abhorrence of such behaviour. There is no doubt that we must continue to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

Dr Peter Jensen  
Archbishop Of Sydney

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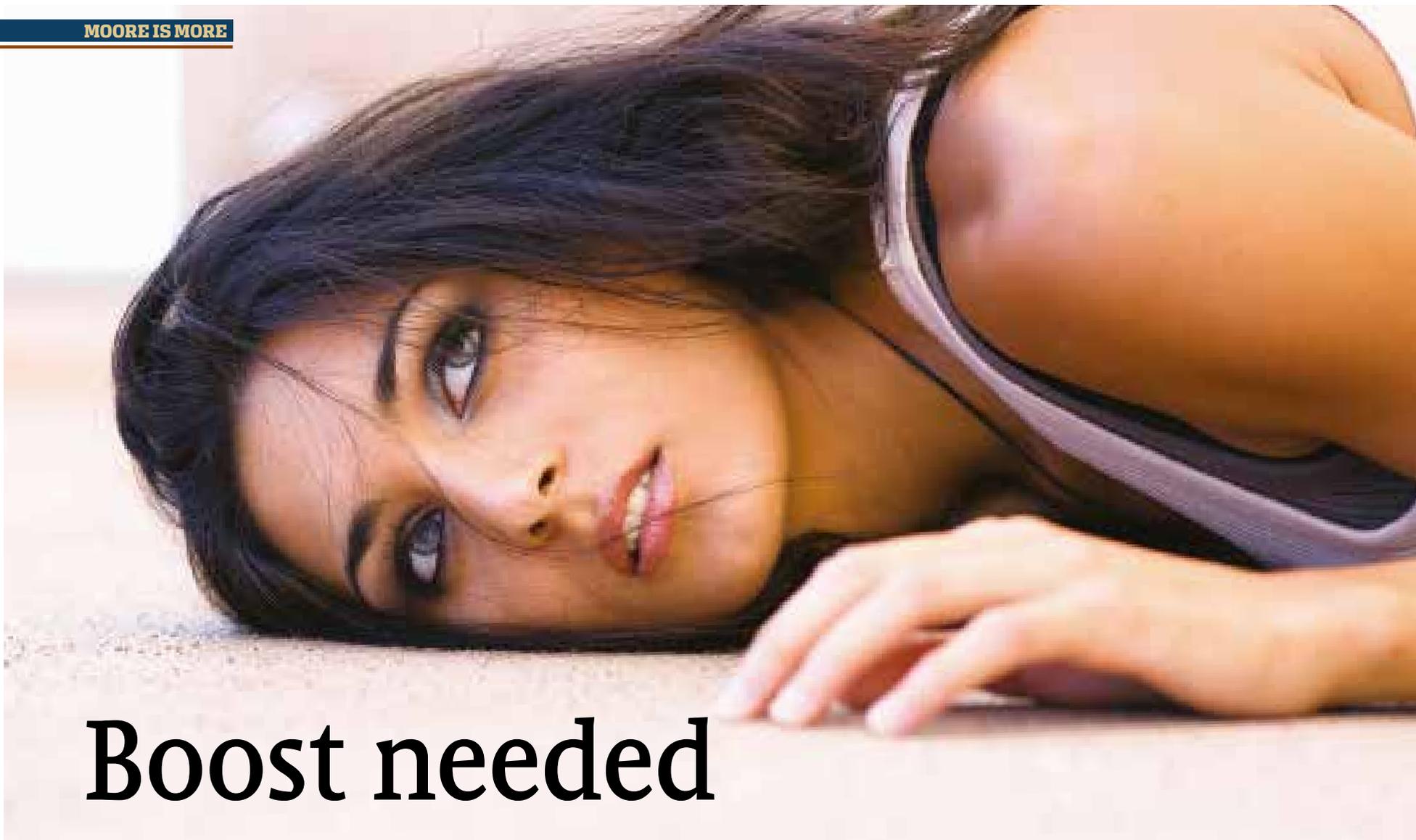
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Professional Standards Unit



# Boost needed

It's never easy to be in ministry, but for women a lack of confidence is often an important issue, writes JANE TOOHER.

**A**S I reflect over the past 20 years I think lack of confidence is one of the biggest issues for many women in ministry. Not the objective confidence all Christians have because of Jesus' atoning death for us, but subjective confidence. Because it's not as simple as, "Grow in your relationship with God and you will feel more confident in ministry".

Maybe this rings true from your experience? I'm not saying lack of confidence isn't an issue for men, not at all, but it is an issue for many women.

Whether it's a woman not feeling competent to get involved in a particular ministry, or whether she has been involved and now feels discouraged for a range of reasons, lack of confidence is an issue for many. But a woman's confidence can greatly improve with some help from her Christian brothers and sisters. Therefore the aim of this article is to consider very briefly some things that may help give women — whether yourself or women you are ministering with — more confidence in ministry.

## A VERSE TO REMEMBER

2 Cor 4:7 is a key verse as we think about confidence in ministry: 'But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us'. Confidence in ministry comes from understanding and accepting who we truly are and, like the apostle, we're jars of clay

containing the treasure of the gospel. So we are weak, limited in power and knowledge, and we will make mistakes. But this verse is also extremely liberating — we're not expected to be perfect and God is at work through us.

Following are 10 ideas to help give women confidence in ministry. This list is by no means exhaustive — I have 25 more and I'm sure you have many of your own.

## BE GODLY YOURSELF

Confidence comes from being who you truly are: we were created and redeemed to glorify God, therefore that's what matters most. When we're godly, we're being who we truly are, therefore we will become more confident and content. We'll be men and women who are comfortable in our own skin.

You know it, don't you, when you see an older Christian person who exudes contentment and godliness? It's very attractive. They're comfortable in their own skin because they have worked at being godly. Ongoing secret sin destroys our confidence in ministry.

## BE CONCERNED FOR THE GODLINESS OF THOSE YOU MINISTER WITH

Want what is best for them and, when they are being godly, whatever age they are, encourage them. Pray for them and also thank God for them. This will help us grow in our love for them and therefore want

what is best for them: that they would grow more like Jesus.

## BE HUMBLE

Throughout the New Testament we not only see Jesus' humility, we also see that humility is necessary for any Christian. Thus humility is key to our identity, and therefore key to becoming confident.

When we're humble, God listens to us and other Christians have more confidence and trust in us. Humility helps us to be teachable and not think we have all the answers. It helps us listen to others, learn from them and appreciate them. Therefore humility helps us be a better team player, which is key in ministry. C.S. Lewis helpfully said that, "Humility is not so much thinking less of yourself, it's thinking of yourself less".

Like a few ideas on how to become more humble? Here are eight — and the first five are from Michael Ramsay's *The Christian Priest Today*:

- |                                     |                                     |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. Thank God often and always.      | 4. Don't worry about status.        |
| 2. Confess your sins regularly.     | 5. Have a sense of humour.          |
| 3. Be ready to accept humiliations. | 6. Listen to others.                |
|                                     | 7. Ask questions.                   |
|                                     | 8. Consider others before yourself. |

## SPEAK CHRISTIANLY WITH OTHER CHRISTIANS

I think it's very easy for us not to speak about Christian things with each other, but God has given us each other for our encouragement and edification. Speaking Christianly with one another helps us in our confidence in ministry. We learn so much from each other.

It means Christian things will become so much more part of who we are. It will also make chatting to people who aren't yet Christian about Christian things so much easier — it won't be such a rough change of gears because speaking about Christian things will be more a habit; more part of our character.

## LEARN WHEN TO EXPECT TIMES OF REDUCED CONFIDENCE

You might be someone who never feels confident after teaching Scripture. Know that about yourself so you can be prepared for it — it won't take you by surprise so much. It might be you don't feel confident each week after Bible study because you analyse too much what you said. Perhaps going for a walk after each Bible study for half an hour will help you move on.

## LEAD OR CO-LEAD A CHRISTIANITY EXPLORED COURSE (OR SIMILAR)

This will hopefully help you see God at work — that the gospel is powerful to change and save people. It will help you in apologetics, in your ability to teach the Bible, in pastoral

care, and in understanding what the issues are for people who aren't Christian. It will also potentially help you relate to people you might not normally relate to. It'll hopefully increase your love for the lost and increase your confidence in God to save and change people.

## UNDERSTAND IT'S EASY TO LOSE CONFIDENCE

You might be teaching an apologetics course at church, or a Christian Studies class, and some of the issues are not issues that have come up for you each week in your ministry. So you might take a while to feel comfortable, or you might want some extra aids — even though you've been a Christian for years, or perhaps even been in formal ministry for years. It is normal to forget how to explain issues such as predestination if you're not explaining them all the time.

## TRAIN OTHERS — AND YOURSELF

By training others, we also train ourselves. One idea is to go through the list of people you are responsible for and think about each person. What are their gifts? What ministries have you seen them doing? What do you think they would be good at?

Have a conversation with each woman about ministry and, importantly, ask them what they would like to do. They might say something you have never thought of. Try not to set the bar too high — for yourself or others.

Recognise other people have different ways of doing things and that this can be good. Allow people to fail. Try not to take over or dominate their ministry, but also be prepared to do the ministry with them for a while, or have others more experienced do it with them.

Reflect with them on their ministry experiences, both past and present. Help them have a realistic view of ministry: the joys and discouragements; the hard things. Just because they found something hard doesn't mean they shouldn't give it a go for another year.

And while there are times when age is a concern, don't assume they're too old or too young. I think we worry about this too much.

One of the most important things in training is to rejoice when others are better than you at certain ministries. Don't be threatened by their gifts. When we are, it means we are making ministry all about us, not God.

## MAKE MISSION NORMAL

Give them different models of women in various ministries



Jane Tooher works in the Ministry Department and has been advising the college on teaching the male-female ministry partnership model. She is director of The Priscilla and Aquila Centre, which encourages of the ministries of women in partnership with men.



so they see that 'normal' women do a whole range of ministries. The more we are exposed to various types of ministry, the more normal these ministries become.

## MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR RESOURCES

Keep a resource list with names of counsellors, Christian GPs, Liberty Christian Ministries etc. When you are chatting to someone and it becomes obvious they need some professional help, you are prepared. This will also help them feel more comfortable.

Make use of Christian resources such as prayer, God's word, godly people, Bible college libraries, Christian bookshops, the internet and events. The Priscilla & Aquila Centre conference on February 6 (see <http://paa.moore.edu.au>) is for men and women and aims to both encourage women in ministry and help people think more seriously and creatively about how men and women can work better together in ministry. **SC**



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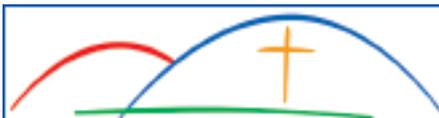
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# MOVES

## HALL HEADS NEW CHURCHES PUSH

THE RECTOR OF CARLINGFORD, the Rev Bruce Hall, has been appointed to head Evangelism and New Churches as the founding director, Bishop Al Stewart, steps down to return to "coalface" evangelism.

Bishop Stewart was appointed in 2009 to establish a framework for aspiring church planters to be licensed in order to reach new communities with the gospel. Mr Hall has been heavily involved in the past work of ENC as well as in cross-cultural ministry.

"Evangelism and New Churches is perfectly placed to be a home mission society for the Diocese," Mr Hall said. "There are many opportunities to establish new churches and fellowships as well as meet the needs of the changing demography of Sydney and the Illawarra in cross-cultural ministries. I am very pleased to be able to play a part in this."

The chairman of ENC, the Rev Archie Poulos, said, "We are extremely thankful that in God's providence Bruce has been working alongside Al for the past two years and is well placed to step into the role".

Said Bishop Stewart: "I'm grateful for the vision of the Diocese and in particular our Archbishop to see the need for new churches to reach Sydney and I look forward to working with the new director to see this continue".

Bishop Stewart will take up a position with the national ministry directed at city workers, the City Bible Forum, with which he has been involved since 2001.

In acknowledging his contribution as ENC's inaugural director Mr Poulos said, "We are sad to accept Al's resignation, but we also rejoice that Christ's love compels him back to the coalface and pray for God's strength to sustain Al and Kathy in their next chapter."

Mr Hall started his new role in January 2012 and will remain the rector of Carlingford.

## CHANGEOVER AT KILLARA

AFTER 21 YEARS AS RECTOR OF ST Martin's, Killara, the Rev Martin Robinson is stepping down at the end of this month.

The unanimous choice of the presentation board for new rector was the parish's senior associate minister, the Rev Matthew Heazlewood, who arrived in the parish last year after five years as assistant at St Clement's,



Martin Robinson and Matthew Heazlewood of St Martin's, Killara.

Mosman. Mr Heazlewood will start in his new role on March 1 — and he has invited Mr Robinson to remain for 12 months as senior associate to support him during the transition period.

"We're excited about the opportunity of taking on Killara," Mr Heazlewood says. "On the north shore you've got a rich history of classical Anglican churches but you've also got the challenge of developing new contemporary services for families and youth. We're looking forward to doing more of that — building our outreach to families and youth in particular."

Says Mr Robinson: "I do not see myself as retiring but simply standing down as rector of St Martin's to explore avenues of useful ministry. I will now have time to explore other possibilities while continuing to exercise pastoral ministry under Matt's leadership within the parish."

## NEW DIRECTOR OF PSU

AFTER CONSULTATION WITH the Safe Ministry Board, Archbishop Jensen has appointed Mr Lachlan Bryant as director of the Professional Standards Unit.

A lawyer with experience in areas relevant to his new role, Mr Bryant is also part of the leadership team at St Michael's Cathedral in Wollongong and has represented his parish at the Sydney Synod.

Mr Bryant replaces Mr Glenn Murray, who resigned as director of the PSU last September.

The diocesan registrar, Dr Philip Selden, said of Mr Bryant's appointment that, "We are confident the appointment is a good one which will serve the cause of safe ministry in our Diocese".

Mr Bryant started his new role in mid-January.

## FRENCH COMES TO DEE WHY

AFTER THREE YEARS AS assistant chaplain at Shore School in North Sydney, the Rev John French has started the new school year as head chaplain at St Luke's Grammar in Dee Why.

Trained as a teacher more than 20 years ago, Mr French also studied at Moore College and has worked as an assistant minister in Bellevue Hill, a chaplain at Scots College and an assistant at St John's, Wilberforce.

"I'm excited by the outreach, discipleship and pastoral care opportunities offered as school chaplain to St Luke's Grammar," Mr French said.

"I love teaching but more than anything I love teaching the Bible to the next generation. In schools you have the diverse role of sharing the gospel with a large captive audience: students, staff and families. The message of Christ is the only worldview with true hope and it's great teaching something with such eternal significance.

"As Jesus came to give 'life to the full' only Christian education can develop the whole person."

## IN BRIEF

The Rev Garry Dibley is moving from his role as NSW director of Interserve to be assistant minister at Panania. He has previously run youth and children's ministries at a number of Anglican churches in Sydney.

After three years as an assistant minister at St Stephen's, Kellyville, the Rev Anthony Flatt has become assistant minister to the parish of Peakhurst-Mortdale.

Following a year lecturing at the Bible Institute of Mauritius, Mr Christian Slack has returned to Sydney to become an assistant minister in the parish of Moorebank.

Canon Ray Bomford died on January 13. More in a future edition.

Adam Burke has voluntarily relinquished holy orders.

## Vacant Parishes

LIST OF PARISHES AND PROVISIONAL PARISHES, VACANT OR BECOMING VACANT AS AT JANUARY 23, 2012

- Auburn (St Philip's)
- Croydon
- Lithgow
- Lugarno
- Macquarie
- Oak Flats

# DIARY

Monday, February 6

## PRISCILLA & AQUILA CONFERENCE

For more information and to book visit <http://paa.moore.edu.au>

LOCATION | Knox Lecture Theatre, Moore College, 15 King Street, Newtown | 9am-4.30pm

Friday, February 17 – Saturday, February 18

## CMS CANBERRA MISSION FOCUS

'Declare his glory to the nations' — studies from the book of Psalms.

For more information please see [www.cms.org.au/cm](http://www.cms.org.au/cm)

LOCATION | St John's, Reid, ACT

Monday, February 20

## CENTRE FOR CHRISTIAN LIVING OPEN NIGHT

For more information visit [ccl.moore.edu.au/opennights](http://ccl.moore.edu.au/opennights)

LOCATION | 1 King Street, Newtown | 7.30pm

Saturday, March 3

## PRAYER BOOK SOCIETY EVENTS

The Prayer Book Society NSW branch invites you to the following events: 10.30am | Organ recital by Miss Sophie Gerber

11am | Holy Communion BCP 1662. Bishop Rob Forsyth will preach on the topic: 'The Book of Common Prayer 1662: a primary source'.

12.15pm | Lunch. Donation \$10. To book please call (02) 9371 6953.

1.30pm | AGM for full members of The Prayer Book Society NSW branch  
LOCATION | Christ Church St Laurence, George Street, Sydney

Saturday, March 10

## PROJEK BALI KIDS LAUNCH

To book please call Anglican Aid on (02) 9284 1406.

LOCATION | Annandale Anglican Church | 6.30pm for a 7pm start

Saturday, March 17

## MINISTRY CONFERENCE

Col Marshall, author of *The Trellis and the Vine*, will be partnering with Mary Andrews College in a day of thinking about how to use our church programs for the sake of people, rather than the sake of the programs. Call 9284 1470 or visit [www.mac.edu.au](http://www.mac.edu.au)

LOCATION | St Anne's, Ryde, 42 Church Street, Ryde | 9am-5pm



# Gymea celebrates 85 years

THE old photo above shows 18 adults — mostly women — with two children and only two men (one of them the then rector of Sutherland, A. R. Shaw). Where were the men? Out fishing of course: in 1927 Gymea Bay was a weekend fishing destination.

A wet morning and thunderstorm warning meant about 200 people squashed into and around the former St Barnabas' church at Gymea Bay on January 15, just one day short of 85 years since the first gathering was held under trees nearby. The property continues to serve the community as a children's resource centre for Sutherland Shire Council.

Dr Barry Newman spoke about growing up in the area, attending and teaching Sunday school and then leading services

and preaching as a young man. He encouraged all present to be grateful for those who have touched their lives and say "Thank you", especially to God. Several other parish "oldies" also reminisced about the early days and everyone, toddlers to 90-year-olds, sang "Jesus Loves Me" and many other old songs and hymns.

The 1959 Billy Graham Crusade greatly influenced local church growth

— a Bible study group continues to meet 52 years on, in the home of leader Dr Ron Bonamy, who began preaching at St Barnabas' in 1947.

Lots of friendships were renewed and memories shared through chats and by looking at displays, and fellowship continued over afternoon tea at the main church centre.

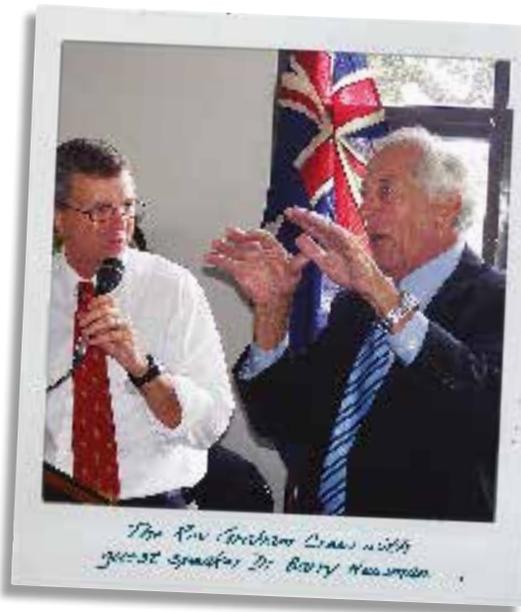
Anniversary celebrations will continue throughout the year.



*Parishioners arrive at the healing that used to be in St Barnabas' church.*



*Dr Barry Newman (L), Fred Dr Alan Nelson (R) and others who grew up at Gymea including the Rev Guy Nicholson & the Rev Chris Clarke.*



*The Rev Graham Cross with guest speaker Dr Barry Newman.*



*The Rev Graham Cross with Mrs Norma Andrews at the anniversary.*



*1927 St Barnabas' Sunday school children stand next modelling. Boy kneeling in the centre is miss Wollongong, injured Bishop - Peter Hayward.*



**The Coping Quadrant**  
A recovery clinic for emerging adulthood and earlier later

**DAY WORKSHOP FOR MEN: Men as Mentors**

<p>MENTORING CONCEPTUALLY AND PRACTICALLY</p>	<p>MENTORING SUBJECTIVELY AND OBJECTIVELY</p>	<p>MENTORING WITHIN THE DOMAIN OF GOD'S GRACE</p>
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**Saturday 18th February 2012, 9.45am-4pm**  
 Conference Room (upper level of Memorial Hall)  
 St Thomas' Anglican Church  
 McLaren Street, North Sydney

<p><b>Cost:</b> \$50 includes lunch/refreshments (maximum 30 mins)          "preexisting work" Counseling psychologist</p>	<p><b>Forward Saturdays:</b> 3rd March, 17th March  <b>Registration:</b> Suzanne Brownhill PhD          0487717122 or <a href="mailto:suzanne.brownhill@bigpond.com">suzanne.brownhill@bigpond.com</a></p>
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**ST JAMES' INSTITUTE PROGRAMS**

**LAW IN THE OLD TESTAMENT BIBLE STUDY**  
 Weeks 8, 21 Feb @ 14, 28 March from 7.30-8.30pm

**BELIEVING, BELONGING, BEHAVING, BECOMING**  
 Saturday 25 February from 9.30am-4.00pm

**LENT STUDY GROUPS BEGIN**  
 27 February

**SING A NEW SONG: A HISTORY OF MODERN AUSTRALIAN HYMNODY**  
 Sunday 4 March from 2.00pm till 4.00pm

Subscriptions available to full range of programs.  
 Visit [www.stjames.org.au](http://www.stjames.org.au) for full details and bookings.

**Telephone: 8227 1300**



**CHORAL EVENSONG (BCP)**  
 Every Wednesday at 6.15pm, with the Choir of St James' and visiting Choirs.

Visit our website at [www.stjames.org.au](http://www.stjames.org.au) for all details of ministries at St James'.

# Sydney brings Morogoro to its feet



Paul Beeston, Colin Buchanan and Con Campbell with children from Railway Anglican Church.



Peter Lin gets the Tanzanian crowd moving.



Bruce Stanley gets some iPhone assistance.

FIVE ministers, along with singer-songwriter Colin Buchanan, embarked on a week-long trip to see the field work of aid agency Compassion.

The group included the rector of Bossley Park, Peter Lin, Waitara's Bruce Stanley, Menai's Steve Wakeford, David Sheath from the Lakes Evangelical Church and Moore College lecturer, Con Campbell.

The members of the group found themselves as honoured guests at the Railway Anglican Church in Morogoro, Tanzania.

The service included preaching by the local minister and upbeat, traditional Tanzanian hymns sung by a 14-person choir that soon saw the ministers up off their chairs and

dancing beside their African brothers and sisters.

Both Colin Buchanan and Peter Lin also led local children in Sunday school songs.

**1 TO 1  
IN ACTION**

**ATTENTION ALL  
WOMEN**

LEARN TO ENGAGE THE MALE WITH  
COMPREHENSIVE GREAT TRUTH BIBLE STUDY

**FREE EVENT, ALL REFRESHMENTS PROVIDED**

**Seminar Details:**  
Friday 24th February 10am to 2:30pm  
St Andrew's Cathedral Chapter House.

**Session Leaders:**  
Sarah Sholl, CMS Missionary, Mexico  
Jacquie Marshall, Vinegrowers,  
a new disciple making ministry.



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**RSVP Essential: Phone NU Office 0284 1430 by 17th February  
Email: office@nuosyd.org.au Web: www.nuosyd.org.au**



**The Mary  
Andrews  
COLLEGE  
Vinegrowers  
CONFERENCE**

**17 March 2012**  
10am – 4pm  
*Registrations from 9.30am*

Venue: St Anne's Anglican Church  
42 Church St, Ryde 2112

Cost for the day is \$60 including lunch, with a church discount for groups of ten or more.  
RSVP by Monday 12 March



*Join us for a stimulating, eye-opening and motivating day with Colin Marshall author of "The Trellis and the Vine"*



**"We want to understand people as we minister to them from the Word. We want to grow disciples of Christ throughout their lifetimes, and particularly, on this day, we want to see the women of local parishes equipped to lead others in this life-long growth."**

*For more information call (02) 9284 1470 or visit [www.mac.edu.au](http://www.mac.edu.au)*



# Silence is golden

THE ARTIST  
PG

JUDY ADAMSON

**Y**ES, *The Artist* is a silent film. Yes, it's in black and white. And no, it's not some strange hangover from the era of Buster Keaton and Mary Pickford — this is a new-release film, directed and written by Frenchman Michel Hazanavicius.

Feeling intrigued, or put off? The above was certainly enough to push away my kids — after all, how could a film possibly work if it lacked both colour *and* sound?

The thing is, it does work. And not just as an interesting experiment or a piece of arthouse theatre that you “should” like. *The Artist* is stylish and entertaining, with compelling drama in addition to a challenge to consider how we ourselves might respond if the core of what we knew and loved changed utterly.

The film opens in 1927, when George Valentin (Jean Dujardin) is the darling of Hollywood. He's handsome and dashing, charming the crowds at the premiere of his latest film with his style and the tricks of his faithful dog, Jack.

George is a bit of a ham, clearly loving all the attention, and bright-eyed fan Peppy Miller (Bérénice Bejo) is in the front row outside the cinema to catch a glimpse of him. When she drops her purse over the rope line, the two meet — by cinematic accident — and suddenly she's on the front page of the gossip papers the next day.

George's wife is furious. Peppy is delighted, reading all about herself as she takes a bus to the studio to sign on as an extra. Her exuberance and dance talent are spotted by the casting director, who selects

her to be involved in a party scene with George. It's clear there's a spark between the two, and George advises Peppy to find some point of difference to help her to get noticed in future.

Until now, the action has been innocently charming and slightly reminiscent of *Singin' in the Rain* — but once talking pictures appear on the scene, any resemblance to the all-singing, all-dancing musical classic quickly fades.

For unlike Gene Kelly's character, George Valentin wants nothing to do with talkies. He doesn't see them as the future of cinema, or himself as an anachronism if he doesn't get involved.

In one of the few scenes in which sound appears, it is used to give the audience a brilliant snapshot of George's uncertainty and confusion. In the security of his dressing room, aural elements we would normally take for granted like putting down a glass suddenly seem loud and alien. He is in a nightmare world where everyone else seems able to engage with sound and use it confidently, while he can't.

Peppy, however, is more than ready for the change. While George determines to use his own money to create a new silent film, she is snapped up by the studio as one of its new faces for talking pictures. Before you know it she's a star and George is a has-been, with only his loyal chauffeur and dog for company after his wife walks out.

George has been selfish and prideful, but as a famous actor used to the adulation of the masses, that's hardly surprising. What choices will he make now, when all he has

really lived for is taken away from him?

The film could have become maudlin or preachy at this point, but it's not seeking to be heavily dramatic or tragic. It's a homage to the silent movie era with a simple tale to tell about love, loyalty and choices, filmed beautifully by Hazanavicius with the clever use of cinematic styles from the late 1920s and options he has at his disposal today.

Sound is used sparingly, always to enhance the story — and sometimes the lack of sound is just as dramatic or engaging. It's also a classy-looking piece, with lovely design touches such as the old-fashioned opening credits and music, the silent-movie style “titles” after people speak and cameos from actors such as John Goodman (as the studio boss), James Cromwell (George's chauffeur) and Penelope Ann Miller (George's resentful wife, Doris).

The best thing is that, as with the silent era, it doesn't matter what the accents or origin of the actors are. They're from all over, and it's irrelevant. What matters is their performance.

This film proves you can make a good movie even if you strip away all the modern trappings. There's no need to blow things up or spend big on digital special effects — or even on colour and sound. There can be comedy, drama and pathos, engaging entertainment and real tension, with none of those things.

Michel Hazanavicius took a big risk with *The Artist* and it's paid off artistically, critically and in terms of awards and nominations around the globe. The film is a (silent) blast; you'll love every minute. **SC**