

Priests of burden

THE WEIGHT OF BURNOUT ON CLERGY



- + Pornography research plan
- & Helping to understand Islam

S. Mason

Southern CROSS MAY 2016

volume 22 number 4



PUBLISHER: Anglican Media Sydney
 PO Box W185
 Parramatta Westfield 2150
PHONE: 02 8860 8860
FAX: 02 8860 8899
EMAIL: info@anglicanmedia.com.au

MANAGING EDITOR: Russell Powell

EDITOR: Judy Adamson

ART DIRECTOR: Stephen Mason

ADVERTISING MANAGER: Kylie Zahra
PHONE: 02 8860 8850
EMAIL: ads@anglicanmedia.com.au

Acceptance of advertising does not imply endorsement. Inclusion of advertising material is at the discretion of the publisher.

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

PRINTED BY: Pegasus Print Group



5

“

...the song serves the singing of the people, and... the people serve God in their singing.

”

Rob Smith

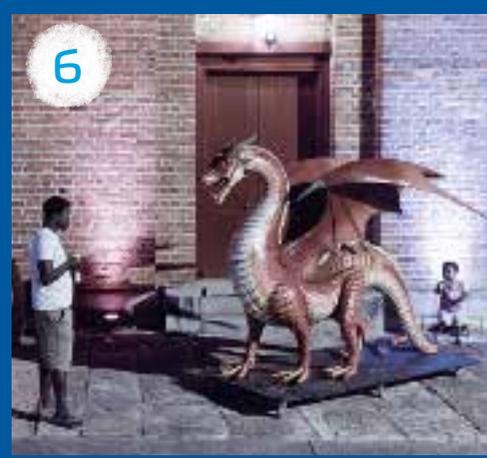
CONTENTS

- 3 SYDNEY NEWS
- 8 AUSTRALIAN NEWS
- 11 WORLD NEWS
- 13 LETTERS
- 14 CHANGES
- 16 ESSAY
- 17 ARCHBISHOP WRITES
- 18 COVER FEATURE
Burnout and what to look for.
- 23 MOORE COLLEGE
Grace and final judgement.
- 25 POSITIONS VACANT
- 25 CLASSIFIEDS
- 26 EVENTS
- 29 BOOK REVIEWS
Tackling our understanding of Islam and our thinking on the sacraments.
- 32 FILM REVIEW
Anrthony LaPaglia returns to his home town of Adelaide in *A Month of Sundays*.



18

COVER
The painful reality of clergy burnout.



6



27



28



32

Missed April *Southern Cross*?
 Download it here:
sydneyanglicans.net/southerncross



Research on resisting porn

THE CHAIRMAN OF THE Taskforce for Resisting Pornography, the Rev Marshall Ballantine-Jones (right), is undertaking a major research project on pornography, with a particular focus on reducing its impact among teenagers.

Established under the auspices of the Professional Standards Unit in 2013, the taskforce includes sexologist Dr Patricia Weerakoon, counsellor Nicky Lock, psychologist Greg Powell, the Dean of Students at Moore College, Dr Keith Condie, and PSU director Lachlan Bryant. Mr Ballantine-Jones, who also works as the director of publishing at Youthworks, was appointed chairman of the taskforce last year.

"We already have substantial data on our church workers, new graduates, congregations and schools – and we are focused on providing education, resources and support for our church members," Mr Ballantine-Jones says. "For this to

happen we must thoroughly explore the research and provide solutions which are evidence-based, practical and enduring. Such information is absent in the literature. My research, through the Westmead Children's Hospital under Dr Kim Oates, aims to help provide this."

The taskforce's first project was in 2014, when it commissioned a survey of ministers, chaplains and licensed lay church workers on attitudes to pornography use. The results formed a major part of the Faithfulness in Service seminars, drawing on the expertise of Dr William Struthers, a professor of psychology at Wheaton College in the United States. Dr Struthers urged a major overhaul of how Christians approach the problem, rather than trying to simply ignore pornography or relying on attempts to limit exposure.

A study from the University of Sydney has indicated that 70 per



cent of men and 30 per cent of women access or have accessed internet pornography. In the US, one survey said 93 per cent of male college students and 62 per cent of females had seen pornography online by the age of 18.

"We are at Ground Zero and younger generations in particular are being saturated in pornography and porn culture to an extent that is unparalleled in history," Mr

Ballantine-Jones says. "So in addition to the adults currently debilitated by this scourge our future leaders, parents and church members will battle lifelong scars. The problem is urgent and we all must own the solution."

Archbishop Glenn Davies says the work of the taskforce and the research being undertaken is vital. "It requires our concerted efforts to block this evil, invasive activity. The Bible encourages us to protect the vulnerable in our society. Unfortunately over the past 20 years the invasion of pornography on the internet has attacked not only the vulnerable but those who thought they were secure.

"That Christians and Christian ministers can fall prey to these temptations should raise an alarm and give us serious reasons to reflect on how we can best protect everyone from this pervasive spread of evil in our world."



PROTECTION AND CARE FOR EVERYONE

"I am committed to strengthening our culture of 'safe ministry' through education and professional development of our clergy and lay people, as we seek to maintain the standards of Christian ministry which are grounded in the teaching of the Bible."

Glenn Davies, Archbishop

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

A Pastoral Care and Assistance Scheme is available to provide counselling and other support to victims of misconduct or abuse.

The Safe Ministry Board formulates and monitors policy and practice and advises on child protection and safe ministry for the Anglican Church Diocese of Sydney.

Abuse Report Line 1800 774 945




Come along to check out the College, be involved in classes and get a taste of Moore's in-depth theological training.

Open night

MONDAY 2 MAY
7:15PM - 9:00PM

Open week

MONDAY 2 MAY -
FRIDAY 6 MAY

15 KING STREET, NEWTOWN

MOORE.EDU.AU/OPEN · (02) 9577 9999

From car wash to care

ST JOHN'S, DARLINGHURST HAS reached an agreement with HammondCare to build a residential care home for the aged homeless in the Darlinghurst and Kings Cross area.

HammondCare will lease the site next to the church, now occupied by a car wash, and hopes to have the home operational in 2017.

"We believe this project will make a significant contribution to the lives of people who are currently homeless, or who are at risk of ending up on the streets," says the rector of St John's, the Rev Ed Vaughan.

A development application has gone to the City of Sydney Council outlining plans for a five-storey building to accommodate about 50 people, with a low-impact design that will allow clear views of the church's heritage-listed spire.

The chief executive officer of HammondCare, Dr Stephen Judd,



Darlow care: an artist's impression of the HammondCare home.

says the project will fill a major need because although there are existing homes providing short-term shelter or long-term accommodation for the homeless in the Darlinghurst area, they do not provide higher levels of care.

"The aged homeless are increasing

in numbers and, sadly, often fall through the cracks of existing service provision," Dr Judd says.

"This project aims to alleviate this demand in inner Sydney and also provide a unique care model for this group – long-term, specialist care for people with complex needs."

HammondCare has begun discussions with health and community providers in the area, including St Vincent's Hospital, about possible referrals for the home.

"This is a significant development in an area that has the highest concentration of older people who are homeless in NSW," Dr Judd says.

Mr Vaughan says the church's congregation is excited about continuing a history of service to the area.

"St John's has been serving homeless people for almost 30 years through the Rough Edges café, as well as other ministries like our legal centre, education program and provision of social work services," he says.

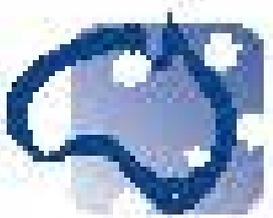
"We are keen to continue to make a positive contribution to our community and be a blessing for the people of Kings Cross and Darlinghurst."

Anglican National Super

The good that keeps the difference between right and wrong

Take the time to invest ethical investment of your superannuation and protect your superannuation for life.

www.anglicanethicalinvestments.com.au
or call 1300 304 000



EMU flies to South Africa



EMU's Andrew Massey (centre) jamming with some of the students at George Whitefield College.

EMU RECENTLY TOOK A TRIP TO South Africa, visiting churches and colleges and leading workshop and training sessions on music ministry.

The trip, which kicked off in Durban in early February, saw team members Rob Smith, Greg Cooper, Alanna Glover, Andrew Massey, Ryan Miller and Philip Swadling host day conferences and a series of workshops in a variety of locations, helping musicians think clearly about musical worship and how to most effectively edify congregations through it. Musicianship and band leading courses were twinned with Bible teaching.

"We did a mixture of theology and practice," Mr Smith says. "There was input from me from the theological end, for instance, and most workshops would start with some set of theological principles, but there was also a heavy amount of hands-on things as well.

"One of the workshops I ran was called 'How to play guitar so people want to sing' and that tied into our overall message, which is that it's a good thing to play in a way that serves the song, so that the song serves the singing of the people, and so that the people serve God in their singing."

The tour also included workshops run at Cape Town Baptist Seminary and George Whitefield College, from

whom the idea for the trip originally came. The team was also invited to lead the music at some local church services on their visit.

"Initially it came from connections between Christ Church, St Ives and George Whitefield College, and then EMU were asked whether they wanted to have involvement," Mr Smith says. "It basically evolved from there and became more of an EMU venture, and one that took in George Whitefield but also other churches and colleges as well."

While the majority of visits were to English-speaking churches – in particular churches involved with the Reformed Evangelical Anglican Church of South Africa (REACH) – the team also spent time in Xhosa-speaking churches and a local orphanage.

"We tended to spend most of our time [in places where the] way of doing church was most like ours," Mr Smith says. "But we still had very worthwhile exchanges with others as well.

"The lady who ran the music at one of the Xhosa churches had plenty of questions. She came to one of the Saturday workshops and had things she wanted our input on. She wanted to know should their choir move up the front, for instance. This church had unaccompanied music sung in Xhosa, with a choir seated

amongst the congregation. It was quite amazing... and I told her that what she was doing already worked brilliantly, that leading from within

was fine, and unless there was a clear reason to change something they shouldn't change just because they saw us do something different."

HomeCare Care Staff

Recognised as one of Australia's leading providers of aged care services, ARV is a Christian organisation committed to excellence. With God's help we aim to enhance wellbeing, maintain dignity, foster choice and encourage relationships, as we present the good news of Jesus.

Due to an increase in our client base, ARV seeks to expand our HomeCare team of professionals to service local clients at various locations across Sydney. Designed to make a genuine difference in the lives of older people, you will support and assist them to remain in their homes.

You will need to have a current drivers licence and comprehensively insured vehicle.

A qualification in aged care or equivalent and previous experience is desirable but not essential, as training and support are provided. Preferred applicants need to be available 3 days a week or more.

ARV are looking for people who want a rewarding career whilst supporting their current lifestyle and commitments.

ARV's mission and values reflect strong Christian principles, so this is a great opportunity to work with a team of dedicated professionals in a caring Christian environment.

ARV – Reaching out, enriching lives, sharing the love of Jesus

To apply visit our website at www.arv.org.au/jobs



Liverpool markets head to St Luke's

Plenty of space: the markets get off to a great start in the grounds of St Luke's, Liverpool.

THE COMMUNITY NIGHT MARKETS regularly held in Liverpool have recently found a new home on the site of the local Anglican church.

The markets, traditionally held on Liverpool's Macquarie Street, outgrew their previous home. The local council had been looking for an alternative site and settled on the more spacious grounds of St Luke's.

"Interestingly, we had been thinking about doing something similar on our site, because we've got blocks of units going up around us," says the rector of St Luke's, Liverpool, the Rev Stuart Pearson.

"We didn't have the people resources or skill base to do it ourselves, though. But then council

approached us about the possibility of running it on our site. We're right in the middle of Liverpool's CBD and they thought it would work well for the night markets, so that's where it kicked off."

The most recent markets, held early in March, had a medieval theme, with combat re-enactments, dress-up options, rides and community stalls all available.

Mr Pearson sees it as a great way for the church to engage more with the community and for the community to check out the church in a neutral setting.

"We had our own stall with information about our ministries, our play groups and ESL classes

– things like that," he says.

"We also opened up the church building so people could have a look around [and] have a chat with parishioners.

"There was one guy I spoke to who probably would normally never set foot in a church or talk about things, but wanted to talk about how his life was going and was happy to do so in the context of that event.

"It was actually surprising how many conversations were had through that about the church and about life. The night itself was terrific, it ran for six hours but we're looking forward to it happening again."

Mr Pearson says that while the

church was prepared to host it as a monthly event, the plan from Liverpool Council is for them to host the markets quarterly in order to concentrate the people and scale of the event.

"We see this as seeking the welfare of the city," Mr Pearson says. "This is a way we can contribute to the life of Liverpool in a positive way.

"Apparently we had something like 3000 people onsite and the space means people can circulate, chat and just connect more rather than walking up and out of the main street. We're glad we've been able to provide that, while also having an opportunity to just connect with people more."

Locum motive for Chau

THE REV ERNEST CHAU OF ST Basil's, Artarmon is retiring this month only to jump right back into the same ministry as a locum until the end of the year.

Mr Chau (right), who arrived in Sydney from Hong Kong in 1990, has served as rector of both St John's, Kirribilli and St Basil's, initially with a heavy focus on Cantonese-speaking ministries. When he arrived in Artarmon, however, he also focused on ministering to Mandarin-speaking Chinese, a significant proportion of the local population around the church.

"I came here with the Cantonese congregation at Kirribilli, but as soon as I moved here I realised that in our community there were many Mandarin speakers," Mr Chau says.

"So I started a Chinese ministry and it was new to me, even though I can speak Mandarin myself. But it has been growing, not in a very rapid or tremendous way, but we have a



regular Mandarin congregation here now, we have other ministries with elderly people, with Bible studies, a growing Sunday school, so I think we have made progress there."

The majority of Artarmon's population are from non-English-speaking backgrounds, with the largest proportion being Mandarin speakers, followed by Cantonese. The church reflects that trend, which Mr Chau says has given them opportunities to demonstrate

the idea of unity in Christ in a multicultural context.

"It is quite unique," he says. "We are a local Anglican church, so we have a more typical English service, but we also have services for Cantonese- and Mandarin-speaking people and a service for second generation ethnic Chinese.

"Our model is not that we are four different groups worshipping in the same place. The aim has always been to blend together as a family of

God, so there are outings together, market days in the community, various ministries where we work together and show we are one family."

A new initiative at the church has been the introduction of Growth Groups, with a large proportion of parishioners involved. Mr Chau says he is glad he has been able to continue as a locum after his formal retirement in May in order to support such ministries and also allow a smooth transition period to whomever the church nominators select as his successor.

"I want to thank God for giving me this opportunity," he says. "Over the last 26 years, I've been given so much and been able to do so much in my ministry in the Diocese, both in Kirribilli and in Artarmon. I wouldn't change anything about what God has given me and I'm glad to particularly have been able to have this ministry here."

Because life doesn't stop.

Take a one or three year degree entirely online

World-Class Theological Education

- Internationally Renowned Scholars
- Excellent Multimedia
- Qualified Tutors
- Professional Educational Design
- Logos Bible Software
- Christian Formation
- 3 Semesters Each Year

Ridley College is an affiliated institution with the Australian College of Theology. (ACT Online Provider: 00000)

CHECK US OUT IN A FREE SAMPLE LESSON: RIDLEY.ED.UA1/SAMPLE

Condie “confident” of Church’s future in Tassie

DR RICHARD CONDIE IS SETTLING in as the 12th Bishop of Tasmania, having been consecrated in March.

St David’s Cathedral in Hobart was at capacity with a 700-strong crowd, including many representatives from the 45 Tasmanian parishes, local Anglican schools and agencies, and even a contingent from Bishop Condie’s former church in Melbourne, St Jude’s, Carlton, where he ministered for 13 years.

The Archbishop of Sydney, Dr Davies, and the bishop of South Sydney, Dr Michael Stead, joined the Primate of the Anglican Church of Australia, Archbishop Dr Philip Freier, who led the consecration. A former principal of Ridley College and one-time rector of St Jude’s, Carlton, Dr Peter Adam, spoke on 2 Timothy 3, encouraging the new bishop to remember that “a bishop without a Bible is no bishop at all”.

After his consecration Bishop Condie spoke of his hope for the Anglican Church in Tasmania, and for the whole Tasmanian community.

“We can be confident as a church because God is in the business of new life and firm hope for the future,” he said. “The resurrection of Jesus, that we commemorate this coming week, is the source of our hope.”

“The church is sometimes depicted as a ‘has-been’ organisation,



Tasmania’s new shepherd: Bishop Richard Condie at his consecration in Hobart.

irrelevant to contemporary Australia. But on the contrary, I see the church having a positive influence in our communities, especially bringing hope to the hopeless and care for those in need. These things are expressions of God’s love for our world.”

Bishop Condie’s previous parish of

St Jude’s, Carlton is one Melbourne’s largest Anglican churches, reaching out to the University of Melbourne, the Carlton public housing estate and the local community through five congregations spread across Melbourne’s inner north.

During Bishop Condie’s time as vicar at St Jude’s the church partnered

with two declining parishes for revitalisation and planted three new Anglican congregations. He was also Archdeacon of Melbourne for 10 years.

Bishop Condie replaces the previous Bishop of Tasmania, the Rt Rev John Harrower, who retired in September last year.

AK ALBERT & MEYER FUNERAL DIRECTORS

02 9484 3992
www.albertmeyer.com.au

ALL SUBURBS 24 HOURS
301-303 PENNANT HILLS ROAD, THORNLEIGH

Rebecca Phoenix and Michael Bolton

Australian Family Owned & Operated

Imagine if your church had 25,000 new faces each week

Christianity.net.au

Southern Cross ALPINE LODGE

A Christian lodge in the heart of the Snowy Mountains providing quality accommodation and hospitality since 1969

From \$75 per day including 3 meals daily

Snow season 9 June to 4 October 2016

Reservations and bookings: 022 9118 6267
www.southerncrossalpine.com.au

MORE BATHURST SALES

The Diocese of Bathurst will sell its remaining school to repay debt to the Commonwealth Bank, but has given an assurance that no churches or graveyards will be sold.

The decision was taken on the first day of the Bathurst Synod last month that All Saints' College, which opened in 1874, would be put on the market to help pay a debt of at least \$14 million. The other diocesan schools, Orange Anglican Grammar and Macquarie Anglican Grammar in Dubbo, were sold three years ago to the Sydney Anglican Schools Corporation.

News of the sale comes just a month before the new head of All Saints' College, Steven O'Connor, is due to begin his term.

The Bishop of Bathurst, Ian Palmer, told local newspapers he hoped the school would thrive under new ownership. "I can honestly say that if we go by the example of the Macquarie and Orange Anglican Grammar schools, they have prospered," he told the *Western Advocate*.

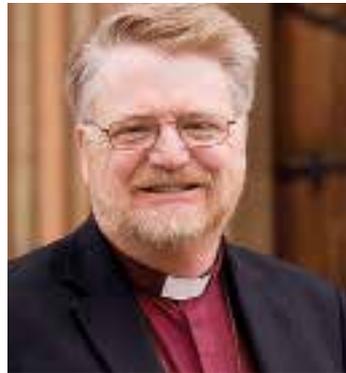
Last year Supreme Court Justice David Hammerschlag ruled the diocese was liable to repay a bank loan taken out in 2008, and ordered both sides to negotiate.

Adelaide's Driver retires

AFTER MORE THAN A DECADE leading the Adelaide Diocese, Archbishop Jeffrey Driver (right) has announced he will retire in August.

When he came to office in 2005, Archbishop Driver had to deal with the aftermath of a paedophile scandal which forced the resignation of his predecessor Ian George, who was accused of mishandling the case. "When I accepted appointment to the Diocese of Adelaide around this time 11 years ago, Lindy and I had a sense that I probably would not continue beyond age 65 as a diocesan bishop and that we wanted to put some time aside to give to some wider involvements, including making a contribution to the Church in developing countries," Dr Driver said in a statement.

"My belief is that the Diocese of Adelaide is now in a sound place and well positioned for the future. Historic abuse issues have largely been dealt with, along with the associated legacy of debt.



Communicant numbers across the Diocese have begun to grow. There is a renewed appetite for mission and community engagement."

Dr Driver said the diocese had tried to deal with the child abuse issues honestly and well. "There is more than a little grief in that much of my episcopate here has been immersed in dealing with a sad historic legacy, continuing through to the recent hearings into CEBS by the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to

Child Sexual Abuse. Aspects of this historic legacy extended well beyond the diocesan response to critical incidents and greatly diminished our sense of mission and community. Responding well to those issues of history and culture have been critical to the diocese moving to a more wholesome place."

The Archbishop has had a long-held interest in ministry overseas and has developed links between the Diocese of Adelaide and the Church in the Southern Sudan, supporting education and health care initiatives. "That conviction [to contribute to the church in developing countries] has stayed with us, although not for a moment did it diminish our commitment to stay in Adelaide until we felt we had completed what we had been called to do here."

Adelaide's Bishop for Mission and Evangelism, Tim Harris, will be administrator of the Diocese for the transition to a new Archbishop.



ON THE EDGE
OF POVERTY | OF SOCIETY | OF LIFE

When Margaret came to Anglicare with her 18-month-old baby, she had just been diagnosed with cancer. Her husband had abandoned them and she was unable to feed her family and had nowhere to stay.

"How will I find the money for the treatment? When can the treatment start? Who would look after my baby when I am having treatment? I don't even have a place to live..." - Margaret

Thankfully Anglicare was able to help. Yet Margaret is not the only one. Every year, around 4,000 families with children seek immediate assistance from Anglicare's emergency relief centres, in need of food, clothing and a safe place for their kids.

Will you help us bring hope to many who have none this winter?

Life-changing care | Donate at www.anglicare.org.au or 13 26 22



Kyngdons come... to the NW

A YOUNG FAMILY HAVE MADE THE trek from Sydney right across to the other side of the nation, with plans for future ministry in some of the remotest parts of Western Australia.

The Rev Roger Kyngdon and his wife Amanda, who are being supported by the Bush Church Aid society, recently moved to Geraldton where they will spend a couple of years learning the ropes before taking on a more remote ministry in the Anglican Diocese of North West Australia.

While the move is quite a leap in geographical terms it's something of a homecoming for Mrs Kyngdon, who is the granddaughter of a well-known former bishop of the North West, the Rt Rev Howell Witt.

Mrs Kyngdon's parents were married in Geraldton, and she grew up further south in Broome and has extended family still living in Western Australia.



Gone west – Roger and Amanda Kyngdon in Geraldton with their family.

"The north west is a beautiful place to live," she says. "We love being close to the beach and not

having to drive in Sydney traffic.

"We have had fantastic support here [in Geraldton] as we have moved and had a baby, from both our church and BCA. Being far away is hard but getting emails and cards from BCA supporters regularly saying they are praying for us is a big help."

The Kyngdons previously attended St Matthew's, Windsor where Mr Kyngdon was the youth and children's minister.

He's currently putting those skills to use at St George's, Bluff Point in Geraldton, where he's co-ordinating the Scripture teaching and Sunday School as well as attending to the usual tasks of a parish's assistant minister.

"There's a vibe to church life and community similar to other churches I've been to out east, which is great to see," Mr Kyngdon says.

"People here are really keen to share the gospel with others – there's a group that's been set up to work out how to do that and plan it. It's done in conjunction with the ministers but the people in the church are really driving that, so there's that feel and passion for evangelism already here."

The family will remain in Geraldton for the length of their BCA ministry training appointment, before

moving to a more remote area in the Diocese of North West Australia.

"The idea is to go out to somewhere more remote and isolated to contribute," Mr Kyngdon says.

"Geraldton itself is actually quite large – there's not really anything you find yourself missing living somewhere like here. What we're looking towards in the future is getting to move further afield in the diocese. We're meeting reasonably regularly with Gary Nelson, the Bishop, and getting prepared to do that."

Moving a long distance to a regional ministry with two young children and a newborn has been difficult, but Mrs Kyngdon says it has been made much easier thanks to family and church connections, as well as knowledge of the great need for more ministers in the remote north west.

"Having three children under four is hard regardless of where you live," she says.

"It's hard uprooting our family but this is the best time to do it, when they are young and before they have settled into a school and made friends there.

"Once we leave Geraldton it will be hard, going to our own church. But people here need the gospel just like they do in Sydney."

TOPIC: What the Bible says about women in ministry

This lecture will explore the Biblical parameters for women in ministry today. After the lecture there will be time for discussion.

ABOUT THE SPEAKER: Thomas R. Schreiner is an American New Testament scholar. He is the James Buchanan Harrison Professor of New Testament Interpretation at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. Schreiner has written commentaries on Romans, Hebrews, First and Second Peter, and Jude.

VENUE: 15 King St, Newtown **TIME:** 6:30pm for coffee, 7:00-9:00pm

For more info and registration visit paa.moore.edu.au



Funds for Lahore victims

Women try to comfort a mother who lost her son in the bomb attack. AP Photo/K.M. Chaudary

THE ARCHBISHOP OF SYDNEY'S Anglican Aid has sent the first round of funding to Pakistan after opening an appeal for the victims of the Easter Sunday attack. Hundreds of Christians were celebrating when a suicide bomber detonated more than nine kilograms of explosives at the Gulshan-e-Iqbal Park in Lahore.

The explosion was centred near the carousel at the park's fairground, so many children were among the 73 people killed. A Taliban splinter group claimed responsibility.

Anglican Aid's director the Rev David Mansfield urged Christians to give generously to the appeal.

"The families of the 215 victims,

mostly women and children, are required to feed their injured relatives in hospital," he said. "This is placing a huge strain on families, so the first-wave response will be emergency food. Later down the track there will be a need to offer victims trauma counselling."

An immediate gift of \$10,000 has

been sent with more to come as the appeal gains momentum.

Anglican Aid has well-established partners in Pakistan. In Lahore it supports Exodus 5, a project aiming to smash intergenerational slavery by providing the children of bonded slaves at brick kilns with free education.

Future Chaplain, Amazing Ministry

AIR FORCE

web: www.airforce.gov.au/chaplains email: raaf.chaplains@defence.gov.au

CP15MAY16-10

WORLD BRIEFS

United Kingdom

A Christian student who was expelled from an English university because of a biblical quote about homosexuality in a private post on Facebook has lost an appeal to be reinstated.

Felix Ngole, 38, was studying for a Master's degree in social work at the University of Sheffield. In a discussion about homosexuality he quoted a passage from Leviticus, which a university committee found "may have caused offence to some individuals". This was despite the fact that the post could only be seen by his Facebook friends. A university panel found his Christian beliefs on marriage disqualified him from practising as a social worker.

"Like every other student at university I use social media to communicate and express personal views," Ngole said in a statement. "In my Facebook posts in question I simply expressed support for the biblical view of marriage and sexuality."

Christian Legal Centre chief executive Andrea Williams, who supported Ngole's appeal, said, "The university's decision reflects a worrying trend throughout higher education institutions, which is to censor any view that may be deemed 'offensive'." Mr Ngole has worked with those who identify as homosexual in the past and has always treated them with respect, never discriminating against them. There is no evidence that Felix's biblical views would have negatively impacted his work.

"This is the very first time a Christian student has been stopped even before he enters his chosen vocation to help others – simply for holding traditional Christian views on marriage and sexuality".

Israel



Pottery shards. PHOTO: Tel Aviv University/ Michael Kordonsky, Israel Antiquities Authority

New archaeological discoveries are shedding light on the composition of biblical texts, dating their authorship as early as the First Temple period. Scholars have long debated how much of the Old Testament was composed before the destruction of Jerusalem and the Kingdom of Judah in 586BC. "There's a heated discussion regarding the timing of the composition of a critical mass of biblical texts," said Professor Israel Finkelstein of Tel Aviv University, "but to answer this, one must ask a broader question: What were the literacy rates in Judah at the end of the First Temple period?" Professor Finkelstein and his team studied a trove of about 100 letters inscribed in ink on pottery shards discovered near the Dead Sea fort of Arad and dated to 600BC. The researchers used

sophisticated algorithms to identify at least six different authors. "Adding what we know about Arad to other forts and administrative localities across ancient Judah, we can estimate that many people could read and write during the last phase of the First Temple period," he said. "We assume that in a kingdom of some 100,000 people, at least several hundred were literate." The Tel Aviv researchers suggest this widespread literacy means the early versions of Deuteronomy through to the second book of Kings could have been written during this period.

United States

Highly religious Americans are happier, more involved with family and more likely to volunteer according to the Pew Research Centre's US Religious Landscape Study. The study examined the way religion influences daily life in the US. There were distinctive findings for the "highly religious" – who said they prayed every day and attended religious services each week. Roughly two-thirds said they had donated money, time or goods to help the poor in the past week, compared with 41 per cent who were less religious. And 40 per cent of highly religious US adults described themselves as "very happy," compared with 29 per cent of those who were less religious. Yet highly religious people were no more likely than other Americans to recycle household waste, and when making decisions about what goods and services to buy they were no more inclined to consider a manufacturer's environmental records or whether companies paid employees a fair wage.

LET GRACE FLOW...

END OF FINANCIAL YEAR APPEAL

IN 2014-2015:



| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
|  |  |  |  |  |
| 100,000 | 150 | 1120 | \$200K | 147 |
| EGGS DISTRIBUTED | BIBLE COLLEGE BURSARIES | BRAILLE TEXTBOOKS | OF DEBT PAID OFF | MICRO-BUSINESSES |
| to malnourished children in Rwanda | provided for African Christian leaders | distributed to blind children in Tanzania | through community service thanks to Glenquarie Anglican | started by women in Southern India |

Keep grace flowing by making a tax deductible donation this End of Financial Year.
 80C OF EVERY DOLLAR GIVEN GOES DIRECTLY TO OUR PROJECTS.
www.anglicanaid.org.au | (02) 9284 1406

WHITED SEPULCHRES?

Thank you Michael Kellahan for the thoughtful feature "Forced Silence" (SC, March). You have given us all much food for thought and rightly ask, "How did we get here?"

My observation is that the Christian community has never been silenced on many issues where they could have made "a contribution to the common good". We would have been welcomed by secular groups, for example, if we had urgently, passionately and regularly articulated a biblical perspective on asylum seekers or against climate change denial.

Some Christians have spoken up, but the vast majority of us have chosen to be spectacularly mute and politically passive. Why? Are we afraid to stand up for biblical principles that, if adopted, might actually cost us some of our privileged Western economic and cultural status?

When it comes to issues such as same-sex marriage, statistically speaking few of us are directly affected. It is always easier to prioritise those biblical principles

that aren't hard for us to adhere to, and easier to feel righteously victimised if our contribution is unwelcome in secular Australia.

Perhaps we are finding it harder the talk about God, sex and politics because, as Jesus memorably pointed out, a whited sepulchre really does not have much credibility. Perhaps if we had shown more consistency, selflessness and courage in the past, more people would give us a fair hearing now.

Chris McGregor
Cabarita

We must admire Janet Russell for sharing her opinions on Michael Kellahan's feature when she knows that probably 90 per cent or more of the readers will disagree with her (Letters, SC, April).

Leaving aside for the moment the question of homosexual relationships, our Lord made it clear that marriage is exclusively the union of a man and a woman, and that it was so from the time God created them male and female. It is a fact that almost

every culture and religion has, until recently, regarded marriage as the union of a man and a woman.

An interesting exercise is to read through the marriage vows in the 1662 *Book of Common Prayer*, the standard for Anglican churches and some other denominations for several centuries. If anything the husband is the one who gets the short straw, but the vows emphasise that the marriage union is just that – a loving union with no possible interpretation that the wife may be a chattel or the husband a tyrant.

David Morrison
Springwood

LORD'S SUPPER DEBATE

Thanks to Mark Thompson for his article on Cranmer and his perspectives on the Lord's Supper (SC, March).

We do well to remember the steadfastness, courage and devotion to Christ of people like Cranmer. However, it would be a mistake to believe what Mark seems to imply, that Cranmer's understanding of the Lord's

Supper is more likely to be correct because he went through "the teaching of the Church fathers in detail... searching for confirmation of his discoveries in Scripture in the writings of those who went before him, much as Luther had done", rather than the understanding of those who do not appeal to the Church fathers for confirmation.

In a debate in 1586, Andreae, in defence of Luther's position, cited six Church fathers while Beza, in defence of Calvinism, cited 14, five being common to both! Of, say, Luther, Calvin, Zwingli, Bullinger and Cranmer, all of whom referred to the Church fathers, which one, if any, "got it right"?

A fundamental reliance on the Scriptural documents – humble, prayerful and thoughtful reliance, regardless of what Church fathers wrote – is a better way to go.

Barry Newman
Turramurra

Letters should be less than 200 words.
newspaper@anglicanmedia.com.au
PO Box W185, Parramatta Westfield 2150

CMS | **LASTING HOPE APPEAL 2016**

Gaby is just one of many people who has found lasting hope in Jesus through the work of CMS.

By giving today, you are enabling CMS missionaries to serve in ministry long-term and bring lasting hope to people across the world.

Help others find lasting hope

Give today lastinghope.cms.org.au

Watch her story
www.cms.org.au/lastinghopestory

DEADLINE 30 JUNE

VALE



The Rev Richard Harvey died on March 3, aged 72. Richard Kenneth Harvey was born on August 27, 1943 in Penrith. He left school early and trained as a ladies' hairdresser, but the direction of his life changed completely when he was 18 and future bishop Dudley Foord led a mission at his church, St Stephen's, Penrith.

"He thought, 'What do I do with my life? I don't want to be a hairdresser – anyone can cut hair'," his wife Sandra explains.

"When he felt led by God to go into full-time trained ministry, he went back to night school for two years to get his leaving certificate and then went to college."

Mr Harvey left college after three years without graduating as there were still a few subjects he needed to pass. But Mrs Harvey said that, over time, while doing other work, he finished his studies.

"He wasn't a student but he was determined!" she says.

After Mr Harvey was ordained in 1974 he undertook two curacies – the first for a year at St Paul's, Redfern and the second at St Ives (1975-77) under Dudley

Foord. While at St Ives he and Mrs Harvey were trained in *Evangelism Explosion*, which was to become an integral part of their ministry together.

He then spent five years as rector of Lugarno with Illawong, moving to lead the church at Bulli in 1983 and then, from 1994, spending 13 years at St Matthew's, Manly.

He undertook the additional role of chaplain to the Army Reserve from 1982-2000, and was area dean of Warringah from 1997 until his retirement in 2007.

Writing during his tenure at Manly about *Evangelism Explosion* Mr Harvey said that "even more thrilling" than sharing the gospel with someone who then put their faith in Jesus was "to see someone I have trained, train someone else who then leads another to Christ. This is called multiplication... the pastor cannot and should not seek to do all the witnessing."

Mrs Harvey said her husband retired slightly early because they "felt the need to work with EE [*Evangelism Explosion*] in the Pacific".

For the past seven years the couple spent several weeks each year in Fiji teaching English-speaking national leaders and pastors from across the globe to share their faith, and train others, using EE.

"We enjoyed the time so much – worshipping with different people, praying in a different way, seeing their love for the Lord and hearing their testimonies," Mrs Harvey says.

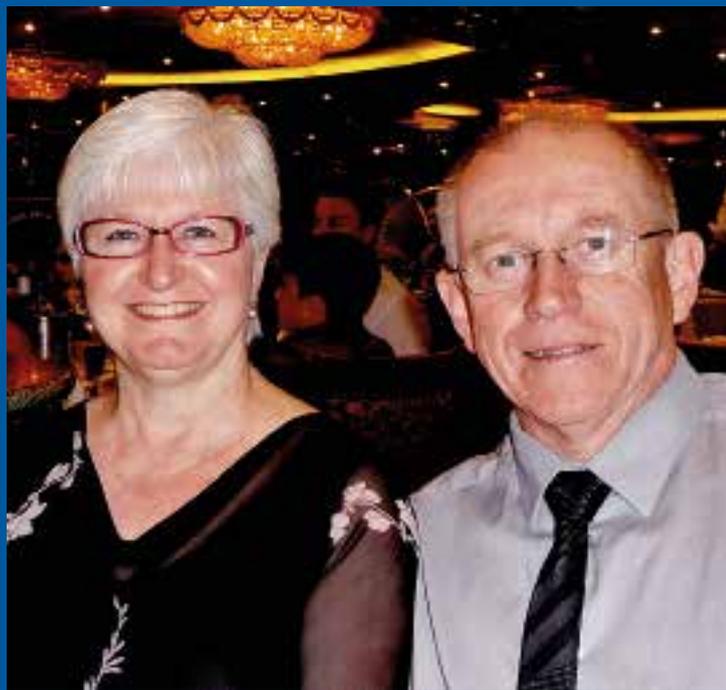
"We saw retirement as not just being retired. We both saw that in our retirement we were used by God in a way we never had been during parish life. It was a different thing and we just thanked God for the privilege to do that."

She says Mr Harvey used all the opportunities he had in ministry to quietly challenge people about their faith, future and the centrality of Jesus.

"He didn't just teach it, he lived it," Mrs Harvey says.

"[After he became ill] he had the opportunity of sharing with one of his carers... and when Richard then got transferred into palliative care this man came and visited him and Richard shared the gospel with him again. He said, 'Let me think about it' and the next time I saw him I knew that he had [accepted Christ] at home. That's such good news."

MOVING



BUSY RETIREMENT

After 38 years of ordained ministry the Rev Stephen Abbott officially retires on May 2.

He has spent the past decade as rector of West Pennant Hills, and leaves a parish of about 700 people spread over seven congregations – five onsite and two offsite in local public schools.

Mr Abbott says West Pennant Hills has sought to be a parish "that reflects the generosity of Christ in and to our community, to the glory of God.

"What that has meant, I guess, is that we work really hard... all of our services have a very different feel about them. We work intentionally on trying to create services that meet the needs of people while continuing to preach faithfully through the Scriptures and reaching out to our community. Which is always a challenge in a comfortable middle class community!"

Over his ministry years Mr Abbott has lectured at Ridley College and worked for the Department of Evangelism as well as in parishes. He says his great desire was always to begin and end his official ministry in a local church, "because I think it's the centre of God's kingdom purposes – and God's been gracious enough to let me do that.

"[My wife] Sue has been an incredible partner. Without her doing what she does with strong gifts in so many ways, I wouldn't

have been able to do half the things I've been able to do. I'm very grateful for God's gift of a partner... we've been in ministry together for a long time!"

Mr Abbott's retirement is already looking busy, with a focus on teaching the course *Everyday Evangelism* (which he wrote while at the Department of Evangelism) wherever he's asked, and the potential for locum work (he already has two months pencilled in at Lord Howe Island).

"But I'm particularly interested to see if there are some doors to helping BCA in North West Australia or in Darwin – what we can work out to see if I can be of any encouragement and support, particularly in training and helping congregations with lifestyle evangelism," he says.

VACANT PARISHES

- Parishes and provisional parishes, vacant or becoming vacant, as at April 15, 2016
- Arncliffe*
 - Artarmon
 - Barrenjoey
 - Canterbury - Hurlstone Park*
 - Chester Hill - Sefton*
 - Concord and Burwood
 - Enmore - Stanmore*
 - Epping
 - Fairfield - Bossley Park*
 - Fairy Meadow
 - Lavender Bay
 - Minchinbury
 - Randwick
 - Sadleir*
 - Turramurra
 - West Pennant Hills
- *Provisional parish or Archbishop's appointment

MATT BLACK PRODUCTIONS
news and corporate photography

Servicing clients such as
News Ltd, Fairfax, FPC, Rural Press,
Torch Publishing and ACP

Specialising in:
PROPERTIES, MACHINERY, GARDENS,
STRUCTURES, TRANSPORT

Suppliers to Southern Cross

contact: 0414 572 050 or
mbpnews@southernphone.com.au



STUDENT OPPORTUNITIES

The Rev **Moussa Ghazal** has moved to a position with the Australian Fellowship of Evangelical Students after 13 years as rector of St David's, Arncliffe and 15 years in charge of the Cross-culture Bible Church (which began in Croydon and moved to Ashbury with Mr Ghazal before following him to Arncliffe in 2003).

"I felt that we had grown the church to probably as large as we could without making significant changes to me – like better skills at managing larger church numbers, needing to restructure and retrain myself in working out how to train people into those kinds of new positions," he says.

"We wanted to try and get the church into a good position where it could make those changes under

a new person and keep going and keep growing. [The next move for me] was either to go somewhere else, where there was a smaller church in multicultural Sydney and do a church plant there, or work in student ministry. We decided the best thing would be to go to Sydney University and do student ministry in order to really accelerate the next generation of leaders – either lay leaders or vocational leaders – to reach out to multicultural Sydney."

Mr Ghazal says it was difficult for the family to leave Arncliffe, go to a different church and start to make new friends.

"It was particularly difficult for the kids – [Arncliffe] is all they've ever known, really," he says. "There are so many people there that we

all love and have known over the years. I've seen their kids grow up, and it's been particularly heartening to see many who've decided to follow Jesus. And now we've moved. But that's what it's like for ministries – you have to do that."

One of Mr Ghazal's great concerns in ministry is that churches in multicultural Sydney "aren't all reflecting the communities around them... there's still a large, great proportion of multicultural Sydney that remains unreached with the gospel".

He has been working with Evangelism and New Churches' Ministry to Muslims team, which for some years has had the goal of increasing Muslim ministry.

"I've often said we need someone

in student ministry because that's an opportunity to reach Muslims – they're thinking [at university] and they're subject to a new worldview, so it's a good opportunity to get them thinking about the gospel as well," Mr Ghazal says. "It's also a really good opportunity to get Christian students to think about using the whole of life for mission, and getting students who remain in Sydney to be thinking about multicultural mission in particular.

"I'm working at Sydney University now to reach out to the Muslims on campus, 'cause they remain the least reached of all the cultural groups. And I think if we can train people to do Muslim ministry we can pretty much prepare them to do any kind of multicultural ministry."

NEW HEADMASTER FOR KING'S

The council of The King's School has announced the appointment of **Mr Tony George** as the 20th headmaster of the school.

After a rigorous international and national search process, the council has appointed Mr George to succeed Dr Timothy Hawkes from July 1, 2017.

The announcement from the council adds: "In making this important decision, the school council assessed many high-calibre candidates with strong credentials. The final decision was not easy, but Mr George emerged from the process as the educational leader best equipped

to lead The King's School into the next decade and beyond."

Mr George is currently the principal of St Stephen's School in Perth, Western Australia, a Uniting Church K-12 school. With more than 2600 students and 450 staff on a multi-campus site, St Stephen's is considered one of Australia's largest and most complex schools. During his tenure as principal, Mr George has introduced a strong focus on teacher recruitment, improving teacher training and professional development, technology in learning, co-curricular programs, school community and strategic



partnerships with external organisations.

The King's council says Mr George "brings a strong background not only in education, but also

in the business and not-for-profit sectors. This diversity of experience provides him with a range of strategic, commercial and leadership skills which will allow him to lead King's as it seeks to equip our young men for life in a rapidly changing and complex world."

Mr George has tertiary qualifications in science, education, management and theology. He is also in the final stages of preparing a PhD thesis on the collaborative roles that religious, philosophic and scientific modes of human knowing contribute to the understanding of education.

To delight in weakness

MIKE BEGBIE

CHARLES SPURGEON, THE 19TH century Baptist pastor said, "I dare say the greatest earthly blessing that God can give to any of us is health, with the exception of sickness".

Spurgeon himself was physically and mentally ill for much of his ministry life. From the age of 24 he was prone to depression. Gout began at 35 and was joined by rheumatism and Bright's disease.

As a sufferer in the ministry he is not alone. David Brainerd, missionary to the Native Americans in the 18th century, was often forced away from his mission labours because of physical illness and depression. William Cowper, who wrote hymns like "O for a closer walk with God" and "God moves in a mysterious way", was stricken by depression and spiritual barrenness

for months at a time.

And what of ministry spouses? Spurgeon's wife Susannah was so unwell from the age of 33 that she was virtually unable to leave the house and seldom heard Charles preach. Annie Warfield, the wife of 20th-century theological writer and principal of Princeton Seminary B.B. Warfield, was struck by lightning on their honeymoon and permanently paralysed. For their 39 years of marriage Warfield was her primary carer, rarely leaving her alone for more than a few hours.

There is also the Apostle Paul. He speaks of feeling weak, fearful and insufficient – deserted by all human companions, anxious for the churches. His physical illnesses were a trial for the Galatian church and he had that constant thorn in his flesh. With all this illness it's not surprising that Paul confessed to the Corinthians that at times he despaired even of life itself. And

yet in 2 Corinthians 12:10 we hear him confess delight in these trials and hardships. Why? For the sake of Christ.

What does that mean? Firstly it means that Paul was willing to endure these illnesses in order to proclaim the news of Christ. But secondly, these physical and mental trials were helpful for his proclamation of Christ and his service to Christ. Paul reflects that the news of Christ's suffering and glory was delivered to the world with greater power when he was a broken vessel. So he concludes, "I delight in weakness... when I am weak, then I am strong".

A physical and mental illness will certainly shape our ministry labour in new ways. Charles Spurgeon was kept out of the pulpit by his illnesses for about one third of the last 22 years of his life. Warfield rarely left Princeton. Susannah Spurgeon could serve only from within the confines of her home. David Brainerd died at the age of 29.

And yet what power from our Lord Jesus Christ rested on their ministry labours. What a blessing they have been to millions. When the stench of illness hung upon their bodies, their testimony of new life in Christ came with greater power. Though they were often kept away from the work, when they were at the work these men and women preached, taught, wrote and prayed with a greater strength because of their physical and mental illness.

It is not necessary to be physically

or mentally ill to be an effective minister. And there will be some whose illness, or that of their spouse, is so acute that wisdom says step out of the harness. But illness does not necessarily preclude someone from ministry labour either. In fact, it can increase the effectiveness of their gospel proclamation.

We must be very careful not to follow the mindset of our age, which welcomes the strong and excludes the weak. Modern Australia has no room in its leadership structures for a weeping Spurgeon, a blood-coughing Brainerd or a childless, house-bound family like the Warfields.

Do we have room for them in our ministry structures? For the sake of Christ will we rethink what ministry labour looks like and learn to delight in weakness, despite the complexity it brings, so that the news of the suffering and now-glorified Jesus might be proclaimed not just by those who are strong, but also by those who are weak?

Spurgeon would rejoice if we were so blessed by our Father.

The Rev Mike Begbie is an assistant minister at St Luke's, Miranda.



CENTENARY CONFERENCE

Declare his glory among the nations

DON CARSON & JULYAN LIDSTONE
13-15 SEPTEMBER 2016

More information at: smbc.com.au/events

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

HAMILTON FUNERALS
A Family Owned Funeral Service



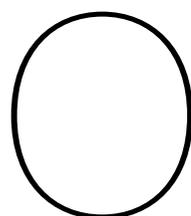
Hamilton Funerals is a boutique family business owned and operated by Adam and Michael Flanagan.

We aim to fulfill the needs of our clients in the most dignified, professional yet personal way.

North Shore 9489 2228 | Eastern Suburbs 9326 9707 | Northern Beaches 9907 4888
www.hamiltonfunerals.com.au

Visible mercy

DR GLENN DAVIES



ONE OF THE JOYS OF rainfall – apart from the refreshment it gives to a parched land – is seeing the rainbow at its end. It

really is a delight to see this bow form in the sky after a shower of rain. It is manifestly part of the beauty of God's creation. However, we grow so accustomed to seeing this spectacle of glory that we fail to appreciate its beauty – or worse, treat it as a meteorological phenomenon of no intrinsic worth.

For those who remember their school science classes, the rainbow is caused by reflection, refraction and dispersion of light in water droplets. The result is a spectrum of light taking the form of a layered arc of red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo and violet (or ROYGBIV for those of us who remember the mnemonic). Well, that's one way of describing a rainbow!

This was not the case for ancient Israelites. They knew that every rainbow stood as a testimony to the promise of God – his covenant promise never to flood the earth again as he did in the days of Noah (Genesis 9:12-17).

Hebrew has no word for "rainbow" so the author of Genesis uses the normal word for "war-bow" – yet here the instrument of war has become the signature of mercy. For in the aftermath of the rain that brought the destructive flood upon the land, God set his "war-bow" in the sky to declare peace between himself and all life on earth – his covenant of preservation.

In fact, the rainbow is one of only three covenant signs described in the Old Testament (the others being Sabbath and circumcision). Yet the sign of the rainbow is not in the first place a sign for us, but rather a sign for God:



Ancient

Israelites... knew that every rainbow stood as a testimony to the promise of God.



"Whenever the rainbow appears in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and all living creatures of every kind upon the earth" (Genesis 9:16).

The rainbow is a reflection of God's glory. The radiance around God's throne is therefore described as resembling a rainbow in Ezekiel's vision (1:28) and similarly in John's vision of the heavenly throne (Revelation 4:3).

Yet it is not just reflective of God's glory but declarative of his mercy – a testimony to God's grace, his common grace to all living creatures that he will not judge the world again by flood.

So what should you do when you see a rainbow? Remember that God is a promise-keeping God. Teach your children that here is a sign that God has given to us to remind us of his mercy to this world – for a season. Of course, God's promise not to flood the earth is not a promise to delay judgment indefinitely. For the Day of the Lord will come and it will come with vengeance for those who do not believe in his Son. The world ignores the rainbow to its peril, if it likewise ignores the one whose word of promise is in the rainbow.

We, therefore, who know God's redemptive grace in Jesus Christ, have opportunity to remind our friends and neighbours of God's mercy whenever we see a rainbow – God's covenant sign for all humanity.

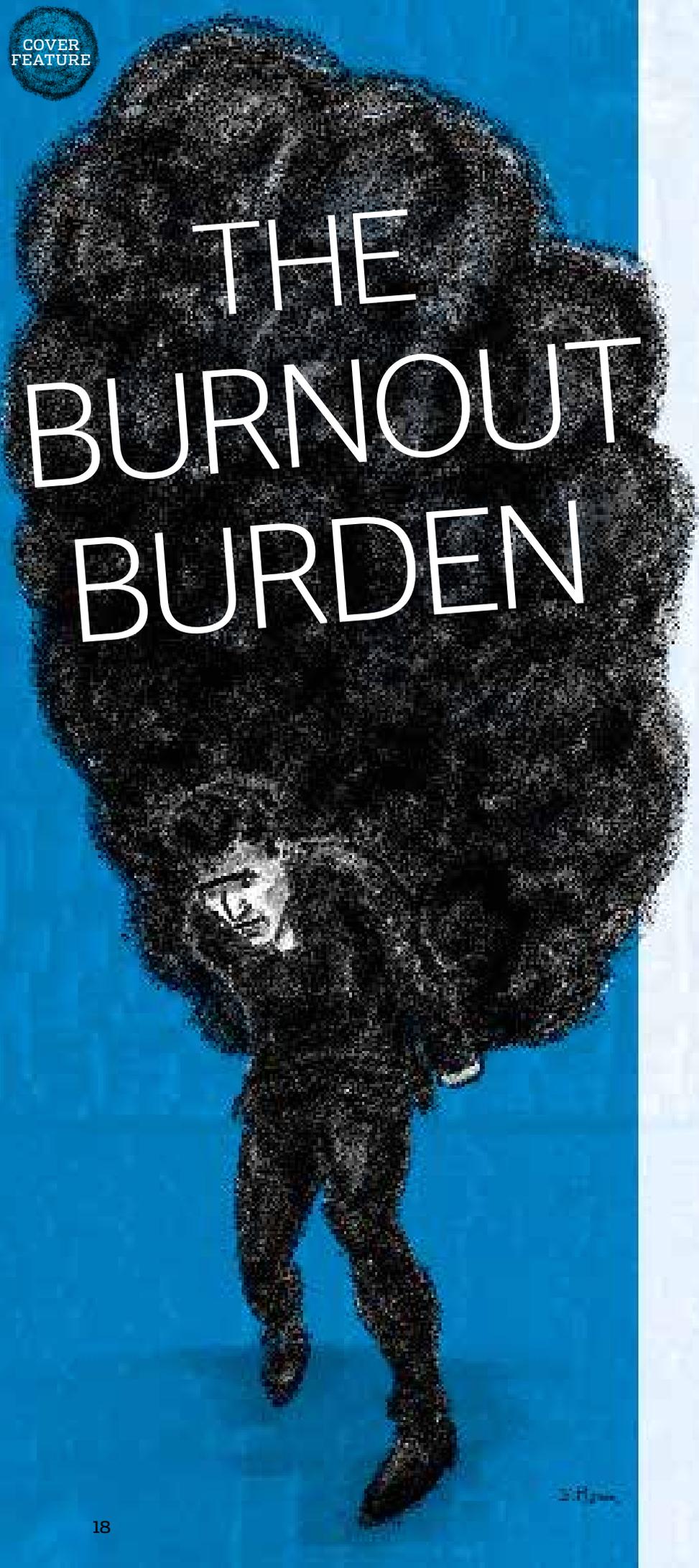


a PRAYER FOR MISSION 2020

Our heavenly Father, fill our lives with the fruit of your Spirit, so that we may walk in joyful obedience, share your love by word and deed, and see Christ honoured in every community as Lord and Saviour.

Amen

THE BURNOUT BURDEN



As burnout becomes a more common issue among clergy, we need to know what it looks like and how to combat it effectively, writes **BEN McEACHEN**.

DAVID ESDALE DESCRIBES IT AS A “perfect storm”. Not one thing in particular, but various job pressures and interpersonal difficulties that culminated last year in extreme stress and anxiety. The kind that debilitates, fuelling self-doubt and great anguish.

The senior minister at Corrimal Anglican and his wife Carol unexpectedly found themselves sharing what they soon understood to be burnout (see opposite page).

David and Carol are not alone. Burnout is a common experience in Christian ministry work. You probably know someone who has gone through it. Unlike David, they might have left their role – perhaps in a state of depression, anger, dejection or worse.

Maybe you know a minister going through burnout and are worried about where they are headed. Will their passion and

VULNERABLE BUT STRONG

David Esdale and his wife Carol have spent almost 20 years in Christian ministry, serving at Penrith and Lower Mountains Anglican churches before David became the senior minister at Corrimal. This is his personal and frank account of how they emerged from the crucible of burnout.

Having crashed with stress overload last year, I now feel vulnerably strong. I say "strong" because I think I am wiser and have dealt a little more with some of the issues. I feel like God has used this to continue his work of transformation within me.

I say "vulnerable" because this was such an awful experience – I dread ever going through something like it again. Vulnerable also because I continue to have to keep a check on some of the things that contributed to my crash.

Associated with stress was a lot of guilt and distorted thinking, so what helped me through was having the right people around me. I am thankful I knew a Christian GP who specialises in stress. She was able to say, "You are stressed and you need time out". This was said early enough for us to be able to deal with things and recover.

Through this time, we also felt loved by our church. I felt like I had let them down, and I felt guilty for that. They were so gracious and loving. It was difficult for them; people wanted to express their love for us, but also give us space. I feared people thought that they caused our breakdown, but it was purely how I allowed things to impact me. We love the people of Corrimal Anglican.

Others who helped were those of the larger community of the Diocese. People called and messaged me offering to talk, if I wanted to. I often didn't, but their contact often caused me to sob uncontrollably (I am not the crying type, but this was somehow soothing).

They often affirmed my ministry as well. This was huge because I felt like I needed to leave ministry because I wasn't cut out for it. I was told it wasn't the time to make such decisions, but you can't help thinking such thoughts in the midst of things. People's affirmation of my ministry was very helpful.



Supported: Carol and David Esdale.

The other help I received was from counselling. Some help came from a Christian organisation called Peacewise, and I also received help from a local Christian counsellor.

I learned three things about managing stress. One was that, for me, I have a tendency to want to please people. I need people to like me and think I am a good minister. This is something I have repented of and continue to repent of. Another thing is that, theologically, I need to work on believing God is in control and he is good. I can't change the way people think or behave. I just need to honour God with the decisions I make, as I shepherd the flock under the great Shepherd.

Lastly, I need to listen to my body. I need to deal with stress in a 24-hour period as much as I can. I need sleep!

So, we have experienced how awful stress overload or burnout can be. But we are thankful for the right people around us, which enabled things to be dealt with before more tragic outcomes occurred.

conviction return? Can they withstand such consuming negativity?

Or, maybe, you are that minister, in a painful place where emotions are depleted. Motivation has plummeted. You've withdrawn from the unrelenting demands of people and tasks. Anger, apathy, anxiety or depression is the norm. Theological truths, God's promises and his Spirit are making no difference. Fighting the good fight, to run the race of keeping the faith, is a draining slog. One that, frankly, is full of heartache and feels like a massive waste of time and effort.

Have you reached out for help? Do you feel you can? Who should you turn to? And what are you contributing to this unhealthy state?

While our Diocese has no up-to-date

statistics specific to the impact of burnout upon its clergy, a newly created program is a direct response to this damaging workplace issue.

The Clergy Assistance Program is a counselling and support service for ordained clergy. "There seemed to be an increase in the number of clergy who were dealing with stress and mental health issues to do with their ministry life," explains Peter Hayward, the Bishop of Wollongong and one of the committee members who helped put the CAP together.

The past few years have seen greater numbers of clergy officially reporting to the Sydney Diocesan Secretariat about mental health issues such as burnout. Due to the

diocesan structure placing more authority and power with individual churches than some other denominations, diocesan records may not reflect the true extent of issues like this. Still, burnout has developed into such a threat that the CAP was created as a preventative measure (alongside other support services, guidance and wisdom).

"The aim of the whole Clergy Assistance Program is positive," Hayward says. "We want to see our clergy flourish within their ministry life."

The flourishing of clergy isn't the same as not being burned out. A common refrain among Christian leaders, psychologists and clergy is the desire for ministry workers to sustain and thrive, not just survive.

ZEAL WITHOUT BURNOUT

"I remember one day... just sitting in my study, staring out the window and thinking, 'I cannot face going to another meeting. I cannot face doing anything, really.' I just felt my battery had hit empty."

This true tale of burnout in parish ministry happened in 1997 to renowned minister and author Christopher Ash. Yes, the genteel British chap behind books such as *Married for God* and *Job: The Wisdom of the Cross*. In case you hadn't realised, higher profile Christians aren't immune to the pressures and strains of ministry work.

Ash experienced an even more intense period of burnout four years ago. He had run the Cornhill Training Course in London for eight years and then "all sorts of factors just tipped me over the edge and my morale just plummeted," he says. "It was cumulative; it was those eight years of cumulative pressure, I think. And I just crashed. I think it was exhaustion with associated depression.

"My wife saw me at my lowest. I would function okay during the day and I'd come home at 7 o'clock and go straight to bed. People who had seen me teach during the day wouldn't have been aware of it. I could function all right, publicly. But then I'd come home and there was nothing left."

Such "painful brushes with burnout" helped to inform Ash's latest book, *Zeal Without Burnout*. Rather than write an account of how he was able to bounce back, Ash wanted to provide theological foundations for others to "seven keys to a lifelong ministry of sustainable sacrifice".

"It's an attempt to spell out some pretty straightforward Bible truths that I think engage with this," he says. With a particular warning to Christian ministry workers about the risk of pride, arrogance



Sustainable, sacrificial ministry: Christopher Ash with his wife Carolyn.

and reliance on self, Ash hopes to be part of preventing "needless casualties in Christian leadership".

"There is a price for serving Jesus and we mustn't ditch that, but it's the needless burnout that we are trying to avoid."

- Battling burnout needs to be about prevention, rather than reaction. There are many ways to do this, and each part of the body of Christ is required. Endorsed throughout our Diocese and beyond, the optimal approach to lovingly care for our clergy is responsibility and care enacted across the entire fellowship of Jesus' followers.

WHAT IS BURNOUT?

A term popularised through mainstream psychology during the past few decades, burnout has a widely accepted definition. Three key components are involved: emotional exhaustion; cynicism and detachment from the job or people involved; and a sense of ineffectiveness and lack of accomplishment. The more intensely someone is experiencing these, the more likely they are experiencing burnout.

All experts and ministry leaders contacted by *Southern Cross* about burnout upheld this definition. But it belies how complicated burnout is, especially related to the unique role of Christian ministry work.

"You don't want to say, 'Woe is the clergy because they've got such a hard life and everyone else has such an easy life', because that's not true," says the Rev Gary O'Brien, director of Ministry Training & Development. "It's not only clergy who have difficult roles but ministry does have unique aspects not shared by other occupations."

20



**It's not only
clergy who have
difficult roles but
ministry does have
unique aspects not
shared by other
occupations.**



The Rev Gary O'Brien

The primary role of Ministry Training & Development is "to lay good biblical foundations for our young ministers, to help them lead God's people well for the long haul". MT&D does this in various ways, including regular training days for ordained workers during their first three years after graduating from college. Some of the topics covered relate to burnout prevention, specifically applied to the distinctive occupation of Christian ministry work.

"What makes it unique? One key factor is it's spiritual, so you are dealing with a spiritual battle – not just your own but other people's," O'Brien says. "[Clergy] are trying to advance God's kingdom, and that's a spiritual work."

That spiritual battle ranges constantly from the mundane to the urgent. From the blurry "office" hours of church staff to financial pressure on the property loan, from angry agnostics demanding answers to a mature Christian confessing their porn addiction. The trivial merges with the crucial business of souls being saved by Jesus.

Little wonder, then, that David and Carol Esdale's willingness to speak publicly about their burnout experience is in the minority. Given what is at stake, clergy can find it extremely hard to talk about burnout. This is only exacerbated by any feelings of being let down or betrayed by leadership, peers or their congregation. On the flipside, clergy may also be unable or unwilling to recognise how

their own habits or personality are cultivating burnout.

There are a number of clergy in our Diocese who have experienced burnout but didn't want to be identified. Second-hand reports of past or present cases also abound. Even though exact numbers are unknown and contributing factors vary, the reality of burnout is undeniable.

And there's more bad news: the unique nature of Christian ministry work guarantees that burnout will be "an occupational hazard", according to Peter Brain. A former Bishop of Armidale and parish minister in Sydney, Brain's helpful book *Going The Distance* was first published in 2004. This well-received handbook to stay "fit for a lifetime of ministry" observes that the threat of burnout isn't ameliorated by your surroundings or pedigree.

"These issues are the same, no matter what denomination or what kind of churchmanship, or what kind of theological flavour people might have," says Brain, who has researched and consulted various church organisations across Australia and New Zealand.

Sam Sterland is a researcher with NCLS Research, Australia's leading provider of statistics on church wellbeing, spirituality and health. Like most others contacted by *Southern Cross*, he's noticed big changes in awareness of burnout within Christian circles during the past few decades. This has informed a valuable breakthrough for combating burnout among clergy – work that is set to continue with the next National Church Life Survey later this year.

"We don't need to redefine what burnout is, using Christian terms," Sterland says. "But we do need to think about how you deal with burnout as a Christian, rather than how it's dealt with in professional circles."

TACKLING BURNOUT

Dealing with burnout as Christians is vital. Not doing so should concern us all, given the toll of burnout can be catastrophic for the individual and their network. Vast damage can be done to the Christian ministry worker, their family, relationships, church fellowship and endeavours for God's kingdom.

"When a person leaves ministry they represent years of study, training and investing in people's lives," Sterland says. "They were going on a particular trajectory and to pull out of that due to burnout is a huge waste for them – and a huge loss for the church. And it's also not glorifying to God."

Depending upon where you sit within our Diocese, your opinion about how well we tackle burnout can be very different. But from pews to diocesan offices there is a common goal – one shared by psychologist Grant Bickerton, a leading expert on wellbeing in professional ministry.

"The goal is not just to be *not* burned out," he says. "The goal is to be passionately Romans



I talk about promoting godly resilience rather than self-care because self-care can easily become self-focused, rather than focused on the work of the kingdom.



The Rev Mark Charleston

12:11: 'Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervour, serving the Lord'. The key is... how do we engage this sense of positive motivation for ministry?"

Bickerton and his peers have been celebrated for emphasising the role played by "spiritual resources" in sustainable Christian ministry work. Unlike other professions, clergy require spiritual resources – such as a secure attachment to God and ongoing faith development. Bickerton also encourages supervision, peer support, personal retreats, quality "quiet time" and other spiritual resources. His research indicates that replenishing these leads to a greater likelihood of staving off burnout.

Such advice falls under the umbrella of self-care, a term describing an individual's responsibility for looking after their own wellbeing. Self-care is widely used in literature and discussions about clergy burnout.

"I can understand why people use [self-care] because often we do not care for ourselves enough," says the senior minister at Sylvania, the Rev Mark Charleston, who in the early 1990s worked as a military psychologist debriefing soldiers returning from the first Gulf War. "But the focus of self-care can also conjure up pictures of locking oneself away from the demands of ministry – like someone might sit themselves in front of a fire and lock themselves in a warm cabin while the storm is raging outside.

"I think promoting ministry resilience is a different way of thinking about the subject... because you are leaning forward into the demands, rather than retreating from them. I talk about promoting godly resilience rather than self-care because self-care can easily become self-focused, rather than focused on the work of the kingdom."

All those interviewed endorse some form of self-care and resilience. And they warn against self-care being an excuse for laziness or self-indulgence. Effectively, as Charleston says, "they are two sides of the one coin". But, he adds, "We've got to try to use terms that are going to take us where we need to go. Self-care can be used but it needs to be used judiciously. We need to talk of self-care and promote godly resilience."

IN THIS TOGETHER

Supporting our ministry workers to run the race well is the aim of any program or person involved with burnout issues in our Diocese. But no one program or person is enough. "It's a challenge for our whole diocesan family," Charleston says, adding that "our theology needs to direct our psychology.

"Certainly the minister needs to take responsibility for his own growth. However, his church and the lay people within it need to care for their minister in the same way

their minister needs to care for them. And our denominational structures need to be attuned to the ongoing care of clergy and lay people.

"So it's a challenge for our whole family, if I can put it that way."

As 1 Corinthians 12 or the letter to the Ephesians indicates, the corporate responsibility of those who follow Jesus extends to supporting each other's growth in faith. It's a holistic approach, where responsibility for diagnosis, response and support is widely shared.

Bickerton agrees, saying he has noticed responsibility being acknowledged among church leadership around Australia "but a missing level is the congregational or church community. For me, something I haven't been able to do at all is get this discussion happening – not just with the minister or with the synod or diocese, but with the wardens, elders or church leadership structure."

However, as Hayward says, "we live in a realistic world where, for lots of different reasons, we don't always have it worked out perfectly".

An example is the sometimes imperfect relationship between bishops and clergy. *Southern Cross* knows of clergy who have felt unable to approach their bishop about burnout concerns. Reasons for this range from perceived busyness to employment fears and feeling as if previously raised concerns haven't been heard, understood or treated seriously.

"That's why we have got this confidential program," says Hayward about the Clergy Assistance Program. "The bishops and other diocesan people are not aware of [who is accessing it]."

"I think there is a culture of unwillingness to open yourself up at that point. I wouldn't exaggerate because there are exceptions to that, but there is a general culture."

The director of the Centre for Ministry Development at Moore College, the Rev Archie Poulos, equates this situation to "line management". As seen in other occupations, a downside is that "employees" are often reluctant to go to their immediate "boss" with issues.

"I think there is a hesitancy to let the bishop know because that will affect people's perception of you and, therefore, what job do I go to next – those sorts of things," Poulos says. "And that's in every profession, so peers and people external to the situation are really important."

While MT&D primarily supports ordained graduates during their first three years, CMD offers "lifelong reflective development support" and other considered tools and consultation to ministry workers. Along with endorsing peer support, CMD has also been encouraging the Diocese to adopt supervision for clergy as "professional development".



[Burnout] is a challenge for our whole diocesan family... our theology needs to direct our psychology.

The Rev Mark Charleston

SUSTAIN YOURSELF

Prevention of burnout in our Diocese involves all the parts of the body of Christ sharing responsibility for clergy wellbeing. But beyond programs, processes, peer support or other preventative measures, the Christian ministry worker is critical to best results because, despite an increase in discussion and awareness of burnout, Sterland says that burnout levels in clergy remain higher than he expected.

"We have helped people focus on their own survival better but that doesn't necessarily mean they are making the big picture choices better, [such as] 'I need to get better at detaching. I need to get better at boundaries. I need to get better at my supportive relationships. And I really need to get better at my own walk with God,'" he says.

While other self-care or resilience tools could be employed, Sterland offers NCLS's "Six Foundations for Sustainable Leadership" as an example of strategies and information clergy can use to help them focus on improving resilience and move towards thriving.

"They're not just about avoiding the car crash," Sterland says. "The more you work on these all the time, hopefully, the more fulfilling and rich your experience will be. If they were drawing on these, I think we would see people having lower burnout levels. And that will be glorifying to God because you will be one of those fulfilled, on-fire, magnetic people." 

BURNOUT BUSTERS

DIOCESE

Clergy Assistance Program

A joint program by Anglicare and the Sydney Diocese to provide assistance for clergy, with immediate counsel or recommendations of further support. Up to six counselling sessions are covered by the CAP for a rector and their spouse. Phone 4228 0283 or see www.anglicare.org.au/clergy-assistance-program

Ministry Training and Development

MT&D aims to establish good biblical foundations in Christian leaders, so they can guide and forge ministries through their fellowships. MT&D does this in various ways, including regular training days for ordained workers during their first three years after graduating. www.mtd.org.au

Centre for Ministry Development

CMD offers "lifelong reflective development support" and other considered tools and consultation to ministry workers. Among CMD's tools for burnout prevention are "5 Steps to Increasing Resilience", including spiritual, emotional, relational, physical and intellectual resources. www.cmd.moore.edu.au

BOOKS

Going the Distance by Peter Brain

A respected, researched and robust guide to self-care in ministry, covering topics from depression to anger, friendship to maintenance plans.

www.matthiasmedia.com.au/going-the-distance

Zeal without Burnout by Christopher Ash

Like *Going the Distance*, Ash combines theology with practical wisdom and personal experience to assist Christian ministry workers in living lives of "sustainable sacrifice".

www.thegoodbook.com.au/zeal-without-burnout

INTERNET

NCLS Research

Available through NCLS is an analytical guide to "effective and sustainable leadership", as well as "Six Personal Foundations for Sustainable Leadership" – which includes spiritual foundations, clarity of purpose, supportive relationships, and balance and boundaries. www.ncls.org.au



Justification and final judgment

How does our complete justification by grace make sense in the light of final judgment, asks **ANDREW LESLIE**.

ONE OF THE MORE PERPLEXING DILEMMAS FOR many evangelicals is the spectre of a final judgment or evaluation of our Christian faithfulness and obedience on the last day. Our present assurance of complete forgiveness, the unmerited adoption into God's family, along with every other glorious blessing encircled by the doctrine of justification by faith alone, can make a final judgment of works seem redundant at best, and baffling at worst.

How can it not corrode that precious confidence the gospel entitles us to enjoy? Why is it even necessary if we are fully acquitted in Christ? What could possibly be at stake? The very suggestion appears to jar with the full sufficiency of Christ's saving work.

The fact is, in several places the New Testament anticipates the genuine reality of judgment for believers. Famously, Jesus pictures a final separation of the righteous from the wicked, as a shepherd distinguishes

his sheep from the goats. One way or another, the Son of Man will judge people according to the way they have treated him and the "least" of his "brothers" (Matt 25:31-46). Elsewhere Jesus refers to an ultimate assessment of every "careless word" (Matt 12:36-37).

Likewise, the Apostle Paul indicates that a person's ministry will be exposed and tested by fire on judgment day (1 Cor 3:12-15) and, in the most unambiguous terms of all, he declares, "we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil" (2 Cor 5:10).

Beyond these direct references to judgment, we might add Christ's warnings about fruitless branches (Matt 7:19; John 15:2), alongside his expectation that only those who "do the will" of his Father will enter the kingdom (Matt 7:21, 24-27). Not to be forgotten either is James's insistence that faith without works is "dead", together with his notoriously challenging conclusion, "a person is justified by works and not by faith alone" (Jas 2:24; cf.14-26).

Since the Reformation at least, passages like these have generated a great deal of controversy concerning the nature of salvation, and particularly the doctrine of justification. For instance, what does Paul mean when he says, "it is not the hearers of the law who are righteous before God, but the doers of the law who will be justified" (Rom 2:13)? Protestants have classically taken him to be pointing to the perfect, divine standard no sinner can attain. Christians are those who have been justified, or put right with God, not by "doing" the law, but by faith in a perfect Saviour who has stood in their place.

However, some wonder if Paul here really means to say that Christians who are now justified by faith alone will somehow finally be justified on judgment day by faith *together* with the fruit of obedience the Holy Spirit has produced. Certainly, Roman Catholicism traditionally teaches a two-stage justification, where a person's justification begins in the present through the gift of faith, but ultimately depends on a final

assessment of faith and a Christian's Spirit-produced works of charity.

There are obviously various considerations relevant to each of these passages that we cannot resolve here. Nonetheless, given these ongoing debates about a believer's judgment and justification, it is worth briefly reacquainting ourselves with the classic approach to this question forged at the Reformation. In a short piece like this, alas, we have to content ourselves with all the inadequacies of a mere outline. But an outline might at the very least help us get our bearings.

The first thing to notice is that against the traditional Roman Catholic doctrine of a two-stage justification, the Reformation consistently emphasised a single, unified justification where a sinner is completely pardoned by God and granted the legal right to every blessing of salvation through faith in Christ. Put simply, justification is a privilege enjoyed by faith alone (*sola fide*), through Christ alone and his perfect sacrificial substitution for sinners (*solo Christo*). Because faith trusts Christ to be a sufficient and exclusive saviour, it inherently renounces all confidence in itself or in any "work" of righteousness (this is what John Calvin meant when he referred to faith as something "merely passive" with regard to justification).

In other words, the sole foundation of our justification is Christ's *objective* work on our behalf. This is why the language of Christ's "imputed righteousness" needs to be reaffirmed as something that is not negotiable, fundamental to the Reformation doctrine of justification. It simply means the only reason a sinner may be forgiven and saved by God is because all Christ's perfections and sufficient saving work are legally counted as theirs by faith.

Needless to say, this formulation of justification emerged from sustained theological engagement with the New Testament, and particularly with the writings of Paul. But flowing out of this formulation there are two basic theological reasons early Protestants strongly resisted any talk of a two-stage justification.

First, such a prospect unavoidably questions the objective sufficiency of Christ's substitution for sinners. If we presently enjoy the legal right to every blessing of salvation by faith alone, why might God require works to justify us on judgment day?

Someone may fairly point out that the works Christians produce are really the "fruit" of Christ's Spirit. It is not as if we will crassly earn our future justification through our own efforts. God will simply recognise the evidence of his own work within us, and justify us accordingly.

However, the Reformers still saw a problem with this. No matter how much we stress that our works of love and obedience are really effects of Christ powerfully present within us, we cannot extract ourselves from these acts. They are still, in an important sense, ours. And therefore, if our justification ultimately depends on these works, we can no longer say that Christ's work is solely sufficient to grant us the right to salvation.

There is a second problem with a two-stage justification. If, by faith in Christ apart from works and on account of his righteousness alone, we are justified and freed from any charge of God's law in the present, why would we need to answer a further case before God to be justified on judgment day? Is it that God's law, or the gospel for that matter, somehow brings a new charge for us to answer before we are finally justified – that we prove the genuineness of our faith through the evidence of works? If so, it means God's present declaration of justification is provisional at best.

There may be no condemnation *now* for those who are in Christ Jesus, but who can be absolutely sure if there won't be *then*? The early Protestants realised this prospect cast a shadow over God's gospel promises. Two-stage justification inevitably undermines confidence in Christ's finished work and replaces it with anxiety, or worse still, complacency over his unfinished work within us. This is why the Reformation considered it to be a "gospel issue" serious enough to cause a heartbreaking rupture in fellowship.

Early Protestants were acutely conscious of the charge that justification by faith alone leads to license or lawlessness. They were

MOORE ACCESS
A stress-free taster of theological study

PTC
A flexible academic course, crafted for busy people

ITS
Academically challenging, alongside engagement with a personal coach

STUDY WHERE YOU ARE
With Moore Distance

Moore Distance gives you the flexibility to deepen your spiritual knowledge. You'll find a wide range of subjects to study and engage with – from biblical theology and doctrine, to church history, ethics and many more. Connect to a vibrant online community and discuss what you're learning. There's also a library of course notes, videos and other useful resources right at your fingertips. We have these course streams to suit your needs, lifestyle and schedule.

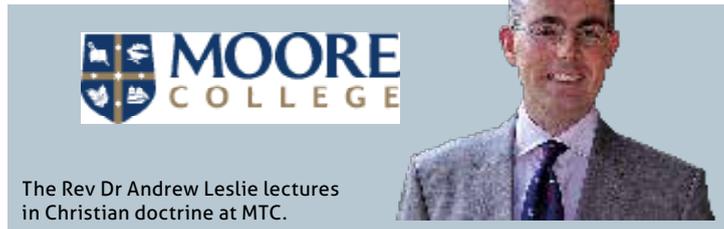
MOORE COLLEGE mooreonlinestudy.com
distance@moore.edu.au

equally concerned to uphold the New Testament teaching about the final judgment. There is no question that on judgment day Christian works of love and obedience will be summoned and evaluated as necessary signs of genuine faith, inasmuch as the Spirit unfailingly produces this fruit in all those truly ingrafted into Christ.

It is not so much that God himself will somehow need the evidence of works to confirm those whom he has already united to Christ by faith, justified and pardoned once for all. But it may be that this fruit is brought forth to silence any objection – from Satan, or even from a believer's own frail conscience – to vindicate God's glorious work in his elect. To use Augustine's oft-quoted expression, God will "crown" his own works in us.

On this basis, Calvin and others had no difficulty saying that we ordinarily come to possess eternal life through the path of good works – not at all because we earn the right to it by works, or even that we are justified before God by them – but purely in recognition that they are the necessary, Spirit-produced fruit of true faith. I say "ordinarily" because there is always the case of a genuine believer who dies before there is much real opportunity for this fruit to emerge, like the thief on the cross (Luke 23:40-43). But on judgment day, false faith will undoubtedly be exposed by its enduring lack of real fruit (cf. Matt 7:19, 21-27).

Some early Protestants were even happy to refer to a judgment-day "justification" of our faith and works – in the sense that works evidence or vindicate genuine faith (as James speaks), and in the sense that even our best Spirit-produced works are tainted by sin and need to be



pardoned by Christ. But this was never understood to be a final stage or even aspect of that justification by faith alone, through Christ alone, which grants us the blessing of salvation and eternal life both now and in the future.

To be sure, then, on the last day our actions will be judged, rewarded and even justified in a narrow and distinct sense. That should spur us on to love and good deeds, not in fear, but as adopted children of God who have been rewired to seek our Father's pleasure and approval. Indeed, there is truly no place for fear because God's final sentence of eternal life rests on an entirely separate foundation – Christ – and he will merely recognise what is true of us by faith alone, now and then. In fact, this is precisely the truth that liberates us for a life of love.

Genuine Christian faith recognises God's free mercies in Christ for what they are. And faith's very awareness of divine grace sows the seed of delight that cannot but germinate into a life of Christian love and obedience that will glorify God on the last day.

SC

CLASSIFIEDS

HOLIDAY LETTING

ACCOMMODATION KIAMA: Very comfortable 2 bedroom unit opposite beach, with beach & sea views from balcony, lift access, double garage, accommodates 4. Phone (02)9579 4573. Email keriemuir@gmail.com

AVOCA BEACH: very comfortable 2 bedroom unit, sleeps 6, just across the road from cafes and beach. Enjoy the surf, sand and sea view from the balcony. BBQ, secure parking. Ring agent 4382 2222 Prop ID DPGJZ. Discount for SC readers.

BLUE MOUNTAINS: Medlow Bath. Cosy quiet retreat. Lovely views, 5 min from Katoomba. 3 BR, 2 Bath, sleeps 6-8. Details in Stayz "Kelvin Grove". 02-85440883 for discount.

BLUE MOUNTAINS BLACKHEATH: Self cont. flat, quiet, aesthetic, walk to station, shops. 1 bdr - queen, sunny lounge plus sofa bed, piano. \$150 p/n. Ph Barbara 02 4787 5085.

CULBURRA BEACH HOLIDAY: Mod t/ house, 3 bed, 2 bath, dble garage. Fully equipped. Water views from deck with BBQ. 3 min walk to 2 stunning surf beaches. Scenic walks, dolphins, whales. Visit www.beachandbayholidays.com.au/accommodation/161 or 4862 5200. Quote "Southern Cross" for discount.

LONDON B & B: In lovely home, self-catering facilities, easy city access, reasonable rates. T: 001144 2086946538 E: rachelallen1234@gmail.com

NOOSA: Stylish two bedroom unit by river, A/C, heated pool/spa, tennis court, bbq, LCD TV, mod cons, linen. Ph for brochure 07 3289 7178

On snow Christian lodge in Kosciuszko National Park
Singles, families and groups
Phone (02) 9130 8587
southerncrossalpinelodge.com.au

WENTWORTH FALLS: 5 bed, 2 bath, 1 level, sleeps 13, no bunk beds, carpeted, fully furnished, suits families & groups. 0296271850

WENTWORTH FALLS: Alpine Retreat. Groups, families and singles. maryjones11@aol.com 99601510

WENTWORTH HAVEN: Near W. Falls. Spacious house bush setting sleeps 16, plus 8 in annexe. Discount for SC readers. Details stayz.com.au or wentworthhaven@gmail.com.

WOY WOY - WATERFRONT: Peaceful waterfront 3 bedroom house with jetty. Holidays & weekends. Ph 0410 471 504 or 4739 1504 or 9609 1479 or annabelsaccommodation@gmail.com

MISCELLANEOUS

DR AMELIA HAINES: Sexual and Relationship Therapist. Christian doctor who works with singles, couples and teenagers. Moore Park practice (next to Sydney Stadium). For appointments ring (02) 8323 6500

POSITION VACANT

St Thomas PRESCHOOL DIRECTOR

After ten wonderful years our Preschool Director is moving to new ministry.

We are seeking a Christian of clear faith and good experience in Preschool leadership and education to take the Preschool forward.

For a job description please visit the St Thomas' Preschool website and send applications to alex.orange@st-thomas.org.au or phone 9922 2878 by 16 June 2016.

Notice to all intended job applicants

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

Have you considered placing vacant jobs and classifieds on the sydneyanglicans.net website?

Contact Kylie Zahra: 8860 8850 or ads@anglicanmedia.com.au

While you sleep you are proclaiming Jesus to the world

Christianity.net.au
GOD MAKES SENSE

To advertise in SC contact: ads@anglicanmedia.com.au

DIARY

Wednesday, May 4

Centre for Christian Living Lecture

Moore College's Centre for Christian Living is hosting its next public lecture, titled "Jesus Now". This will open up the dynamic of Jesus' continued presence and absence in the post-ascension period, and reflects on how this can and should impact on how we act and live now.

The talk will be given by Dr Peter Orr, college lecturer in New Testament and Greek with a special research interest in this area.

Tickets are \$15 a person, or \$10 for online stream access. Group rates are also available. For more information, visit moore.edu.au/ccl.

LOCATION | Moore Theological College, 15 King Street, Newtown | 7.30pm - 9.30pm

Saturday, May 7

SMBC Children's Ministry Conference

This year's "Know Them Grow Them" conference is designed to get to the heart of children's ministry.

Key speakers and presenters will include Sydney Missionary and Bible College principal Stuart Colton, plus Sandy Galea and the team

from Quizworx. The speakers, and a large selection of seminars, will explore how to teach and pastor children through church ministries, and also focus on specific areas such as prayer, doubt and questions, assisting in tough times and ministry to under-fives.

The program will be held concurrently at the college's Croydon and Croydon Park campuses, with the under-five program at Croydon Park only. Registrations close soon, so please register as soon as possible. Cost is \$70 a person, with group rates available. For more information, visit smbc.com.au/events.

LOCATION | Croydon Campus, 43 Badminton Road, Croydon, and Roberts-Dale Campus, 140 Croydon Ave, Croydon Park | 9am-3.30pm

Saturday, May 14

My Source of Hope

Accomplished singer and member of St Paul's, Castle Hill, Garry Druery, will be sharing about his own story and faith at a special concert. Come and listen to how Jesus has made a difference in his life while also enjoying some great music.

Tickets are \$10, and all proceeds will go to Compassion Australia. For more information or to purchase tickets online, visit spch.org.au/hope

LOCATION | St Paul's Anglican Church, 421 Old Northern Road, Castle Hill | 3pm-5pm

Sunday, May 22

Rivers of Life Fundraiser

St Michael's, Vaucluse is taking its turn at contributing to Anglican Aid's Rivers of Justice and Mercy challenge.

On this, the final day of challenges around Sydney, the team will take to the waters of Rose Bay to kayak, paddleboard and raft so they can raise funds and awareness of Anglican Aid's work. The St Michael's team will specifically be raising money to support the work of the Diocese of Lake Rukwa in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Join in on the day to support the team or even get involved yourself, and also learn more about Anglican Aid's work.

For more information about the fundraiser, visit anglicanaid.org.au/riverschallenge2016 or contact stmichaels@bigpond.com

LOCATION | St Michael's Anglican Church, corner Vaucluse Road and Gilliver Avenue, Vaucluse

Saturday, May 28

Equip Conference for Women

This year's Equip Conference is focused on the idea of freedom in Christian living. What are we freed for? What does Christian freedom look like? Meredith Tweddell, Lesley Ramsay and Di Warren will walk attendees through these questions and more at this conference.

The program runs in two identical streams, one during the day and one in the evening. Tickets booked before May 16 are \$65 each, with group rates available. The Equip Teens conference for teenage girls will also run in the evening. For more information, visit equip.org.au.

LOCATION | Rosehill Gardens Event Centre, James Ruse Drive, Rosehill | 9am-2.30pm or 3.30pm-9pm

Saturday, June 4

Anglican Historical Society Meeting

This quarterly meeting of the Historical Society will feature a talk titled "Archbishop William Temple and his Anglican Ecumenism", which will explore the successes and failures William Temple experienced in attempting to apply his theology of church unity within Anglicanism and the broader ecumenical movement. It offers an assessment of how highly Temple's efforts in this area should be rated.

This is a free event but donations to the society are appreciated. A bistro meal is available from 12pm at own expense. For more information, contact the society's secretary Wesley Fairhall at wesleyfairhall7@gmail.com.

LOCATION | Level 4, Shamrock Lounge, City of Sydney RSL, 565 George Street, Sydney | 1pm

Saturday, June 18

Safe Ministry Training Day

This is a day promoted by Youthworks with a particular focus on providing Safe Ministry Training at a range of locations across Sydney for those who otherwise have difficulty accessing that training.

Three locations at Roseville, North Parramatta and Wollongong Anglican churches will all provide Essentials training for those with no previous Safe Ministry Training, and Refreshers for those who need to update their training. A fourth location is yet to be confirmed.

The cost for Essentials courses is \$50 a person, and \$25 a person for a Refresher course.

Youthworks Ministry Support is committed to seeing every church receive the training it needs. Please contact them if the cost of training is prohibitive. To register or for more information, visit youthworks.net/events/SMEvent.

LOCATION | Various | 9am

Join us on

Saturday 7 May

Open Day | 10.30am - 3.00pm

Information booth and school tour led by students. Talk to staff and students. Entertainment on the outdoor stage, classroom displays and more.

Autumn Fair | 9.00am - 4.00pm

Foreign Market, Stalls, Cakes, Gifts, Books, International food stalls, Children's activities, Animal Farm, Raffles, Silent Auction and more. All are Welcome



DANEBANK

An Anglican School for Girls

111-117 Park Road Hurlville NSW
Phone 461 2 9620 1414
www.danebank.warrawee.nsw.edu.au

What is a Human Being?
Personal identity and the Bible
Dr Brian Rosner, Principal of Kidley College, Melbourne

The 2016 Warrawee Lecture

Register at: www.warraweeanglican.org.au
Wednesday 10th May, 7:30pm
Warrawee Public School Assembly Hall
Off Pacific Highway & Tinkary Road

KYCK COMMENDS JESUS ABOVE ALL

THE Katoomba convention for teens, KYCK, has wrapped up another year, with more than 5500 youth and youth leaders in attendance.

The theme of convention this year was "Above All", and was designed to bring Jesus into sharper focus against the backdrop of today's culture, particularly youth culture.

"One of the things that has been happening in our culture, and particularly for our teenagers, is that there's all this stuff out there about sexuality, about gender,

about marriage and a host of other things as well, and we figured it would be helpful to really focus on the fact that Jesus is above all that," says the chairman of KYCK and rector of St Cuthbert's, South Carlton, the Rev Steve Wakeford.

"So, since Jesus is above everything, how does that shape everything about our culture, from the big issues to the kinds of TV shows they watch [and] what they do online? We want teens of this generation to be shaped by what Jesus says to them, not what their culture says to them."

Each of the three weekends saw about 1800 attendees gather in Katoomba Christian Convention's eponymous tin shed for singing, prayer and Bible talks given by Dave Jensen – Moore College student and son of former Archbishop Peter Jensen – and Sam Chan, lecturer in evangelism at Sydney Missionary and Bible College.

This year, as always, the high point of each weekend was the Saturday night, when there was an evangelistic talk and a clear call to respond, with many teens taking

the opportunity to affirm their faith, old or new, in Christ.

"I think over the five years I've been heading up KYCK, we've averaged somewhere around 700 or 800 kids a year responding to the gospel – either as a first response or as a recommittal to the gospel," Mr Wakeford says.

"It's great to see that on the weekend, but even more important that our youth groups do the hard work afterwards and help those kids who made commitments to keep going."

ZIMBABWE SUPPORT

HENRY Olonga was the guest of Anglican Aid for a series of fundraising events highlighting the plight of many people in Zimbabwe, who need a generation of men and women that will faithfully teach the Bible, and who are caught in the grip of famine and poverty.

Olonga was the first black Zimbabwean to play cricket for his country and its youngest-ever national player at the age of 19. He also represented Zimbabwe in schoolboy rugby and athletics as well as cricket, and once ran the 100-metre sprint in 10.6 seconds. He is also an accomplished singer, painter and photographer.

In 2003 in Harare, at the first match of the One Day Cricket World Cup hosted by South Africa and Zimbabwe, Olonga and his captain, Andy Flower, wore black armbands to mourn the death of democracy



Henry Olonga (centre) with organisers of the West Pennant Hills dinner, Marc Simons and Nigel Woolley, who are also deeply committed to ministry in Zimbabwe.

in their country.

Olonga went into hiding after Zimbabwe's final match at East London in South Africa and has remained in exile ever since. He

and his Australian wife and their two daughters have now settled in Australia.

The main feature of Olonga's visit to Sydney as a guest of Anglican

Aid was to speak and sing at a fundraising dinner in the parish of West Pennant Hills. He shared the story of his early life in Zimbabwe, his coming to faith in Jesus and his social/political protest against the regime in Zimbabwe and subsequent exile, challenging all those present to live their lives for the kingdom of God.

Anglican Aid, West Pennant Hills parish and other groups of Sydney Anglicans are supporting the training of Zimbabwean students at Moore College, George Whitefield College and Johannesburg Bible College, as well as supporting early childhood development, skills training and food security projects in Zimbabwe.

Olonga also sang the South African national anthem "Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika" and closed the evening by singing "The Lord's Prayer".

MOSS VALE'S NEW FONT



River baptism: Moss Vale member Joshua is immersed in the Wingecarribee River. PHOTO: John Hibberd

IT was a different family service at Moss Vale on Easter Day. Rather than gathering at 10am at St John's Church, the congregation spent the morning beside the Wingecarribee River in Berrima.

"It's traditional in the Anglican Church to baptise in the church

building and sprinkle water over the forehead of the individual," said the parish's senior minister, the Rev Dean Reilly, "but this year myself and warden Matt Mitchell stood chest deep in the river that runs past the camping ground in Berrima and, before our

church family and friends, we fully immersed [congregation members] Joshua and then David in the water."

Mr Reilly described it as "a great morning of singing, praying, hearing the Bible taught and listening to David and Joshua share

their stories of how Jesus has changed their lives". The service was followed by an Easter egg hunt and a barbecue lunch by the river.

"I've had the joy of 42 Easter Sundays but none have been more enjoyable or more inspiring than the one this year," Mr Reilly said.

NORTH WEST REUNION

MORE than 40 people who have served in the Diocese of North West Australia over the past 50 years took part in a reunion and celebration recently, organised and hosted by the immediate past bishop of the diocese, Bishop David Mulready, and his wife Maureen.

The gathering was held at Gerringong on the south coast, with people travelling from as far away as Kempsey and Newcastle to catch up, share experiences and listen to teaching – and news – from the diocese's present bishop, Gary Nelson.

Bishop Mulready said when he and Maureen decided to try and gather a group together, they discovered that about 70 people who had served in North West Australia since the 1960s lived in NSW. Those who came loved spending the day together and felt they needed more time to catch up. "People really enjoyed the day and



Catching up: Bishop Gary Nelson (fourth from left) shares news over lunch. PHOTO: Graeme Begbie

want to know when we're going to do it again!" Bishop Mulready said.

"I asked Gary [Bishop Nelson] to give us a Bible study... and people also had the opportunity to chat with him and ask questions. It was

a very informative time.

"One of the fantastic things is that, as of a month ago, every parish in North West Australia that can have a minister is filled – for the first time in 13 years. There will

be vacancies next year but at the moment it's a full diocese, which is fantastic."

Bishop Mulready said that just before the reunion he found out that a young couple from the parish of Bulli, Matthew and Naomi Warth, were about to leave for Wickham in North West Australia with their two boys so Matthew could take up a school chaplaincy position.

"We invited them to come, and it was fantastic to meet this young couple and their kids and pray for them," he said.

With all the concern of a former bishop he added that all the chaplains in the diocese's Seafarers centres would be retiring or moving on in the next 12 months. "It's very hard to get chaplains for the Seafarers centres – it's hard to get anyone to go for any ministry across Australia! But if there are people who want to serve, the opportunities are there."

CULTURAL ALIENS

The Gospel, Freedom, and the Sacraments: Did the Reformers Go Far Enough?

by Barry Newman

Resource publications, 2015

I was sitting on the floor of a room attached to the theology faculty of Sydney University. The room was packed. It was early 1975 and then Bishop Donald Robinson was presenting a paper: "Towards a definition of baptism". It was the first time that I remember realising that many of the uses of "baptism" language in the New Testament are metaphorical.

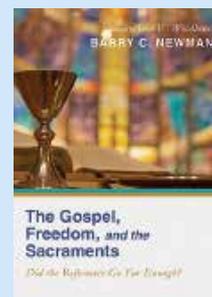
Barry Newman interacts with Donald Robinson and many others in his book *The Gospel, Freedom, and the Sacraments*. The book follows a conversation between GB, a relatively new believer who has come to faith in the Lord Jesus from a complicated background, and TS – a kind and generous older Christian who has given considerable thought and exploration to the kind of questions that are puzzling GB. I have found this book of great interest and help in answering these questions: Are the two ceremonies that Protestants regularly celebrate – baptism and the Lord's Supper – obligatory for the believer; and did the 16th-century Reformers go far enough when examining the Scriptures to see what they said about such ceremonies?

I read Barry's book with more than an academic interest in a topic that I've mulled over for many years, because it has particular bearing

on evangelism in cross-cultural contexts. We now experience these contexts in the changing demography of Australia (and many Western countries). Sydney and Melbourne in particular have an increasing number of people from Muslim, Hindu and Buddhist backgrounds.

When we present Jesus to such people, are we asking them to follow Jesus just as we do, or can they be followers of Jesus and remain culturally connected with their own communities? Must they leave their communities to be Christian, or should we expect the gospel to bring "church" into being *within* those cultural settings? Where do baptism and the Lord's Supper fit into this?

People from such backgrounds often understand that a person has become a "Christian" when they are baptised, join a church and participate in the Lord's Supper. This usually involves leaving their culture and community of origin and turning their backs on their family, and the family's culture. The ceremonies themselves (rather than their faith in Jesus) usually make them "aliens" in their own culture. Is this necessary? And so the question has serious importance for mission: "Are the two ceremonies we celebrate, baptism and the Lord's Supper, obligatory for believers?"



BOOK REVIEW

Misunderstandings of the gospel and the Christian life were present in New Testament time and in the centuries that followed. The dialogue between GB and TS begins with a very informative exploration of baptism inside and outside the New Testament. It becomes clear that the "baptism" words in the New Testament can carry a metaphorical, rather than literal, meaning. For example, Matthew 28:19 is probably not about a literal, physical water immersing but a metaphorical immersing. In the second half of the book TS and GB discuss the Lord's Supper, looking at all the relevant passages in the New Testament and the early centuries of the church and – in the light of these – discussing whether participation in the Lord's Supper is (or should be) mandatory. This book is courageous, carefully researched and clearly explained. The dialogue approach is entertaining and easy to read. I think it is a great contribution to rethinking some of our long-held beliefs and perspectives in the light of a fresh examination of what the Bible actually teaches.

Bruce Hall

Lifestyle and Dementia Research Symposium 2016

Thursday 12 May, ARV Castle Hill

Join us for an exciting presentation from Prof Ken Nosaka, who has worked in Japan for over 20 years and is now based in WA, where he specialises in the field of Exercise and Sports Science Research, along with keynote speakers Prof Ralph Martins, Dr Alex Knopman and A/Prof Kathryn Gozale.



Prof Ken Nosaka

RSVP ESSENTIAL by Thursday 5 May*
Call 8820 2928 to purchase your tickets.

| | |
|--|---|
| <p>Date: Thursday 12th May, 2016</p> <p>Venue: Barton Hall Hopetoun Village, Castle Hill (Parking on David Road)</p> | <p>Time: 9:30am – 1:00pm. Registrations from 9:15am</p> <p>Cost: \$15 per ticket. Morning tea included.</p> |
|--|---|



Hosted by ARV's KNOWH Research Centre. The Dementia Prevention Study is proudly supported by the ARV Foundation for Ageed Care.

*Early online pre-booking will be limited to ensure availability. © Angton Business Village 2016

Open Day
May 30



Come and see how Youthworks College can prepare you for a life of purpose and impact.

Visit our website for more details.



VISI
YOUTHWORKSCOLLEGE.EDU.AU
TODAY

Learning about Islam

.....
RICHARD SCHUMACK

Answering Jihad: A Better Way Forward

Dr Nabeel Qureshi
 HarperCollins

**Understanding Jesus and Muhammad:
 What the Ancient Texts say About Them**

Dr Bernie Power
 Acorn Press

IT IS NO EXAGGERATION TO SAY THAT Islam provides the contemporary global church's greatest missional and socio-political challenge. If I am right about this, then properly understanding and engaging with Islam is one of our most urgent needs. The bad news is that until very recently, we here in Australia were badly underequipped to do so. Few Christians knew much about Islam, and even fewer had any interest in reaching out to the Muslim world.

This is understandable. Conservative forms of Islam were very distant from most of our ordinary lives, and our mission efforts were historically focused on overseas people groups following other traditional religions, or local people who followed little or no religion.

But the world has changed and Islam is on the move. Nearly all of us know Muslim neighbours, Muslim work/playmates or, at the very least, Muslim taxi drivers! Stories related

to Islam dominate our media, and our national security forces are heavily focused on Muslim refugees, Islamic terrorism and the Islamist agenda in the Middle East.

The good news is that the church is also responding. Refugee ministries are booming, mission organisations are redeploying toward the Muslim world and Christian scholars are developing a deep understanding of Islam. Finally, too, we are seeing the emergence of high-quality literature that is aimed at helping the average Aussie Christian meaningfully engage with their Muslim neighbours.

Two new offerings are hot off the press: *Understanding Jesus and Muhammad: What the Ancient Texts say About Them* by Dr Bernie Power from the Melbourne School of Theology; and *Answering Jihad: A Better Way Forward* by Dr Nabeel Qureshi from Ravi Zacharias International Ministries.

Both authors are unusually qualified to contribute to the field. Qureshi, a former committed Muslim with a Masters degree in studies of religion, is a full-time apologist in regular dialogue and debate with Muslims. Power lived and worked in the Muslim world for many years and, uniquely among Christians, pursued doctoral research into the historical traditions to do with Muhammad – the so-called *hadith*.

Despite tackling mostly different topics, there are two striking similarities between these books. First, both are built upon the crucial idea that Islam cannot be properly understood without reference to its foundational texts. These texts are the Qur'an, the *hadith* and (less well-known) the authoritative biography of Muhammad by 8th-century Arab historian Ibn Ishaq.

Second, both books were forged in the context of real-life conversations between Muslims and Christians. This means that the ideas you find in each are not abstract

theological concepts, but the ideas you will commonly run into when you speak to Muslims, or try to understand why Muslim groups, like ISIS, behave the way they do. It also means the discussions are framed in everyday language, as well as having been road tested for facilitating helpful conversations.

In *Answering Jihad* Qureshi tackles 18 important questions surrounding the Muslim idea of *jihad* – that is fighting for, or struggling for, the Muslim faith. He divides these questions into three groups.

The first group helps us understand the Muslim mindset – asking, for example, "Is Islam a religion of peace?" and "Is *jihad* in the Qur'an?"

The second group addresses the nature of *jihadi* Islamist groups, like ISIS, that are operating today. Here Qureshi asks things like "Why are Muslims being radicalised?" and whether groups like ISIS and Boko Haram are genuinely Islamic.

A third group of questions compares and contrasts the Islamic take on violence to that of Christianity. Here he tackles thorny issues like how *jihad* compares to warfare in the Old Testament and the Crusades. Qureshi's answers to the questions are concise, but carefully researched and nuanced. They are genuine attempts, from a former (and not bitter) true believer, to present a traditional Muslim position on its own terms. In each case he appeals to the Muslim texts, or the Bible, to support his view that violent *jihad* is authentically mandated in the Qur'an, and evident in the life of Muhammad, as well as historical Islam.

Pointing out the very real presence of violent *jihad* in Islam is no cold hatchet job for Qureshi. As a former devout Muslim it is personal. So, he beautifully weaves into his argument his personal testimony of how,

while still a Muslim, he painfully came to realise the inherent violence in Islam through carefully reading what his revered texts actually said. Like most Muslims, he had grown up reading very little of them.

Ultimately, though, there is one question Qureshi is most interested in: How should Christians respond to the reality of Muslim terrorism in the world today? His answer is clear, if challenging. Fight *jihad* not with violence or fearful rejection of Muslims, but with truth and grace. By this he means having tough conversations with Muslims about what the Islamic texts really say about violence, as well offering them a different way of doing religion. That is, the way of grace found in following Christ.

Understanding Jesus and Muhammad is aimed at precisely that. It hopes to equip the average Christian – and Muslim – to openly and honestly discuss the truth about Muhammad and Jesus. All the usual beliefs that come up in discussions between Christians and Muslims are here: the trinity, the incarnation, religious violence, human rights in Islam, scriptural reliability and so on.

As the title suggests, each belief is evaluated by examining what each faith's key texts have to say and then seeing if it stands up to theological or historical scrutiny. The book is unusual in its style of going about this. Most chapters begin with a brief story to introduce the topic. From that point on there are lots of dot points, lists of references, diagrams and summaries.

This is not a weakness; rather, it is a strength. That's because this is designed

as a book to be used, rather than read. It is, in short, a handbook for discussion that summarises the key things you need to know about each topic, including what responses you will likely get to different points. It is worth the price for the volume of information packed into the summary charts and diagrams alone.

As a handbook, *Understanding Jesus and Muhammad* is a great resource for any Christian who is speaking about faith with Muslims. In my experience, most traditional Muslims have a very high degree of confidence that Muhammad is the perfect model of a faithful person, and that Christian beliefs about Jesus are weak fabrications. Usually, though, this confidence is misplaced since it is not grounded in actual knowledge of either Jesus or Muhammad.

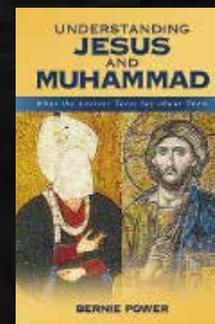
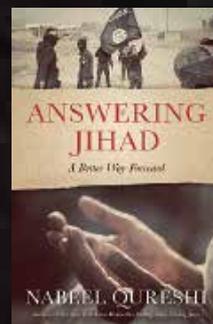
Very few Muslims are familiar with the *hadith*, and it is extraordinarily rare to meet a Muslim who has read Muhammad's biography. Instead, Muslim knowledge of both Muhammad and Jesus is generally very patchy and unreliably based on what others tell them (this is precisely the testimony of Qureshi in *Answering Jihad*). The material that

Power places in our hands here offers a great way to move past the initial bluster and on to conversations of substance.

Obviously neither of these short books will complete your library on Islam. They are too brief for that. Indeed, their brevity makes some of their discussions unsatisfying. So, for example, some of Power's illustrations of complex Christian doctrines are oversimplified, and Qureshi's quick sweep over Old Testament violence might not be entirely convincing for some. But this is a small quibble. They are both excellent books worth having on your shelf – and, in the case of *Understanding Jesus and Muhammad*, in your backpack, ready to pull out at university or on the bus.

As Australia comes to terms with Islam, and especially radical Islamism, Christians should be leading the way. We are among the few left in our rapidly secularising society who can genuinely understand people who are motivated by theological conviction. More importantly, we are the only ones who can respond to Islam's theo-political ideology with a theological alternative in the gospel that can properly satisfy the misplaced zeal of Muslims for God. These two books will equip you better to do just that. SC

Dr Richard Schumack is a research fellow at the Centre for Public Christianity.





Home truths

JUDY ADAMSON

A Month of Sundays

Rated PG

REAL ESTATE AGENT FRANK Mollard (Anthony LaPaglia) is in a "mood". He's been in a mood for about a year, following the death of his mother and the breakdown of his marriage. He's morosely indifferent about his job, has monosyllabic conversations with his teenage son, is confused that he gets on better with his ex-wife now they're no longer together, and basically spends his life looking as miserable as he feels.

What's even worse is that Frank has been in real estate for such a long time that he writes a mental sales pitch for every home he visits – whether it's work or not. We're in his head and it's a pretty sad and sorry place to be.

This might not sound like a very promising beginning, and certainly *A Month of Sundays* is not the type of flick that will appeal to those with a fondness for fast-paced action and gratuitous explosions. No bombs here. What it does have is an observant script littered with one-liners plus a terrific Australian cast to deliver them (LaPaglia, Justine Clarke, Julia Blake and comedian John Clarke).

For Frank, trying to navigate every day's human minefield can only be managed on autopilot, whether it's family, friends or potential clients. Then one night a phone call at home finally grabs his attention. It's his mum, and not surprisingly he's taken aback. She is, after all, dead. However, he's quite willing to chat, and even puts out the cigarette that she

somehow knows he's smoking.

Frank is well warmed up into their conversation by the time he realises it's a wrong number. But he doesn't let the moment drop because he found the voice so similar to his mum's that he tracks down the caller – Sarah (Julia Blake) – and a sweet, slightly odd friendship develops. Sarah is someone kind, hospitable and serene who doesn't take his mother's place but whose gentle, undemanding presence in Frank's life begins to lift his spirits.

Is it as simple as that? Yes, and no. Human relationships are never simple, and maybe that's the point. Real life is always complicated and messy, with joy in sorrow and laughter amid grief. It's not always clear how to navigate each day, and each battle, but there is real power in having someone you can talk to who will always listen, always hear you without prejudice, and who will love you just as you are. That may be a mother, or it may be someone else, but the importance of it can't be denied, and it's a strong theme here.

A Month of Sundays doesn't make strong intellectual demands of the viewer and the pace can drag a little, but the cast breathes life into their simple story – particularly Blake and LaPaglia, who are able to convey a complex range of emotions with a simple look or gesture.

It is funny, sad, and very familiar – from the Australian love affair with real estate to the wrangles, regrets, joys and stuff-ups that form part of everyday life. If you'll let them. 