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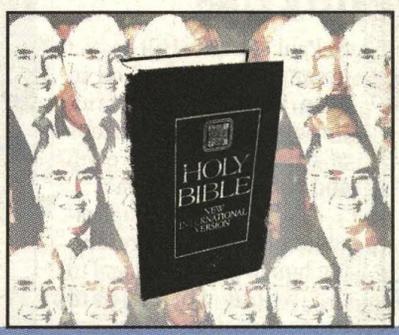
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SOUTHERN CROSS



Christians fuel India's religious tensions
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We must be politically correct
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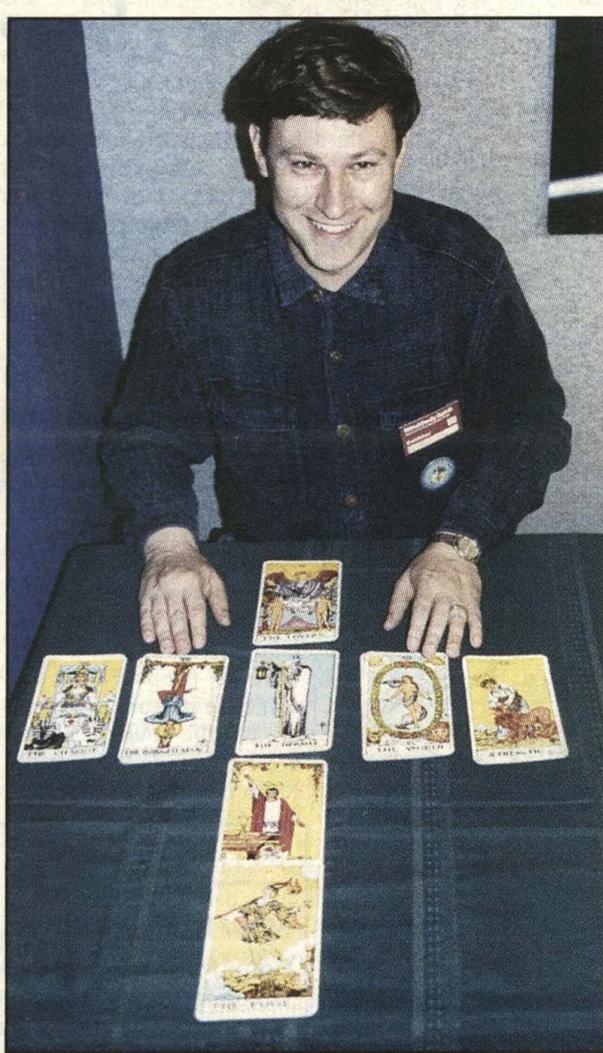
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Newspaper of the Anglican Diocese of Sydney

Future of Christianity is in the cards

Philip Johnson, who uses tarot cards to explain the message of Jesus to New Agers, says churches must be less 'institutional'

Throughout the 1990s, Philip Johnson was at the forefront of Christian ministry to the burgeoning 'New Age' movement. A leader in the establishment of New Age Mission, which placed a booth in Sydney's annual Mind Body Spirit Festival, Mr Johnson is now CEO of Global Apologetics and Mission.



As recent census figures reveal, what was once just a trend is now a growing movement. Those committed to a cluster of 'New Age' religions – including wicca (witchcraft), paganism and spiritualism – combined for a total of over 40,000 adherents.

While this might look small, Philip Johnson says it points to a vastly different attitude to spirituality among many more Australians – an attitude that must change the church's approach to mission.

"A lot of people today are not the least bit interested in coming to church. They see no compelling reason for it," Mr Johnson said. "This comes down to fundamental issues of whether we express ourselves in community or not.

"In order to be able to be able to engage these peo-

ple, it is important to go into the marketplace, just like the Apostles did, and meet people on their own terms

and in their own gatherings – and then invite people to answer the call to discipleship."

The shock from the 2001 census is that Australians are becoming less agnostic, while Anglicans decline has slowed significantly.

Philip Johnson from the Presbyterian Theological College and an expert in ministry to the 'New Age' said the results should help the church realise that people don't have a problem with the identity of Jesus.

"Atheism has not been a serious option for the bulk of the population," he said.

Continuing to target atheists would mean the church was 'casting our fishing nets into an ever-diminishing lake', he said.

"The tadpoles are now swimming in other streams."

Analysing the results, Professor Gary Bouma from Monash University, said secular postmodern society was not irreligious, but one in which 'spirituality' was less under the control of religious organisations.

"It reflects the post-modern sentiment, 'I believe but do not belong'," he said, explaining that there has been a shift from agnosticism to belief in Buddhism and the New Age.

"For the first time in Australian history, the number of people declaring no religion has decreased to 15.4 per cent, after increasing from 12.93 per cent in 1991 to 16.48 per cent in 1996," he said.

"Many people had expected this rise to continue, possibly eclipsing Angli-

2001 census

Roman Catholics	27%
Anglicans	20.7%
Uniting Church	6.6%
Presbyterian	3.3%
Orthodox	2.8%
'Protestant'/'Christian'	2.1%
Baptists	1.7%
Lutherans	1.3%
CHRISTIAN	68%
Buddhism	1.9%
Islam	1.5%
Hinduism	0.5%
Judaism	0.4%
New Age beliefs	0.2%
NON-CHRISTIAN	5.6%
NO RELIGION	15.4%
Declined to answer	9.8%

cans in 2001, but Anglicans have refused to decline as rapidly as in the past, slipping only from 21.99 per cent in 1996 to 20.68 per cent in 2001."

The percentage of Catholic Australians stayed the same at 27 per cent.

An interesting result unreported by the secular media was that 410,000 Australians merely wrote they were 'Christian' or 'Protestant'. This was a significant increase on 1996.

So is this a sign of a growing 'post-denominational' attitude among 'church-shopping' Christians who eschew denominational labels?

Professor Bouma thinks not. "The Pentecostals have gone missing. We have to account for the loss in Pentecostals from 0.9 per cent to 0.66 per cent.

"I think the 'Christian

not further defined' category has become the denominational label for Pentecostals. The census has not caught up with the Assemblies Of God name change to the Australian Christian Churches."

Professor Bouma believes the stabilising of Anglican figures suggests society is 'post-denominational' in the sense that people 'no longer have a life-long commitment to Presbyterianism' but this does not mean that they 'go to generic labels like Christian'.

"People write down a label even if they might say something different if asked that question tomorrow," he said.

Professor Bouma said the census does not give the full picture of Australia's complex spiritual marketplace. Many Australians would like to identify with more than one label, and other research suggests about 1 in 10 people say they believe in more than one 'religion'.

Further, some media reports made an error by combining those who wrote 'no religion' with those who choose not to respond to the religion question. "Other studies indicate that those who will not answer the question have higher than average participation in religious and spiritual activities, they are simply not saying so," he said.

Why people don't go to church: pages 10 and 11

Bible believing Christians may be forced out of Anglican Church

With four thriving congregations meeting each Sunday, and a rector born and bred in Sydney, the 1,800 member evangelical parish of St John's, Shaughnessy is similar to many in Sydney Diocese. But after a series of dramatic events, the people of St John's – along with several other Bible-believing parishes in Canada – might be ousted from the Anglican Church.

Last month, the Synod of the Canada's New Westminster Diocese voted in fa-

vour of blessing same-sex unions 215 votes to 129. Unlike 1998 and 2001, when a similar motion also received a majority, Bishop Michael Ingham gave his assent, making New Westminster the first Diocese in the Anglican Communion to officially approve the blessing of gay relationships.

Following the decision, 25 parish representatives walked out of the meeting. Nine parishes including St John's later released a statement saying they cannot

support the Synod's rejection of the Bible.

Bishop Ingham responded by asking the nine parishes to confirm by July 2 that they are not seeking alternative episcopal oversight and want to keep their licence to minister in his Diocese. The letter could be read as an ultimatum: acquiesce to the bishop's decision on same-sex unions, or 'you are out!'

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr George Carey has made clear his opposi-

tion to the New Westminster vote, saying, 'I do not accept that homosexual relationships can be treated on a par with the man-woman ideal portrayed in Holy Scripture'.

However Dr Carey stopped short of offering his full support to the conservatives, saying he was 'saddened' that many synod members had walked out and sought alternative episcopal oversight.

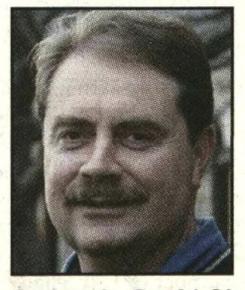
While affirming that members of the church must

'speak the truth in love to each other', he said this would happen 'by standing our ground in continuing dialogue and ongoing fellowship with each other, not by walking away.'

Both the Archbishop of Sydney, Dr Peter Jensen, and Sydney's Standing Committee released statements criticising the vote and calling on the Canadian bishops to give the conservatives 'effective' alternative oversight.

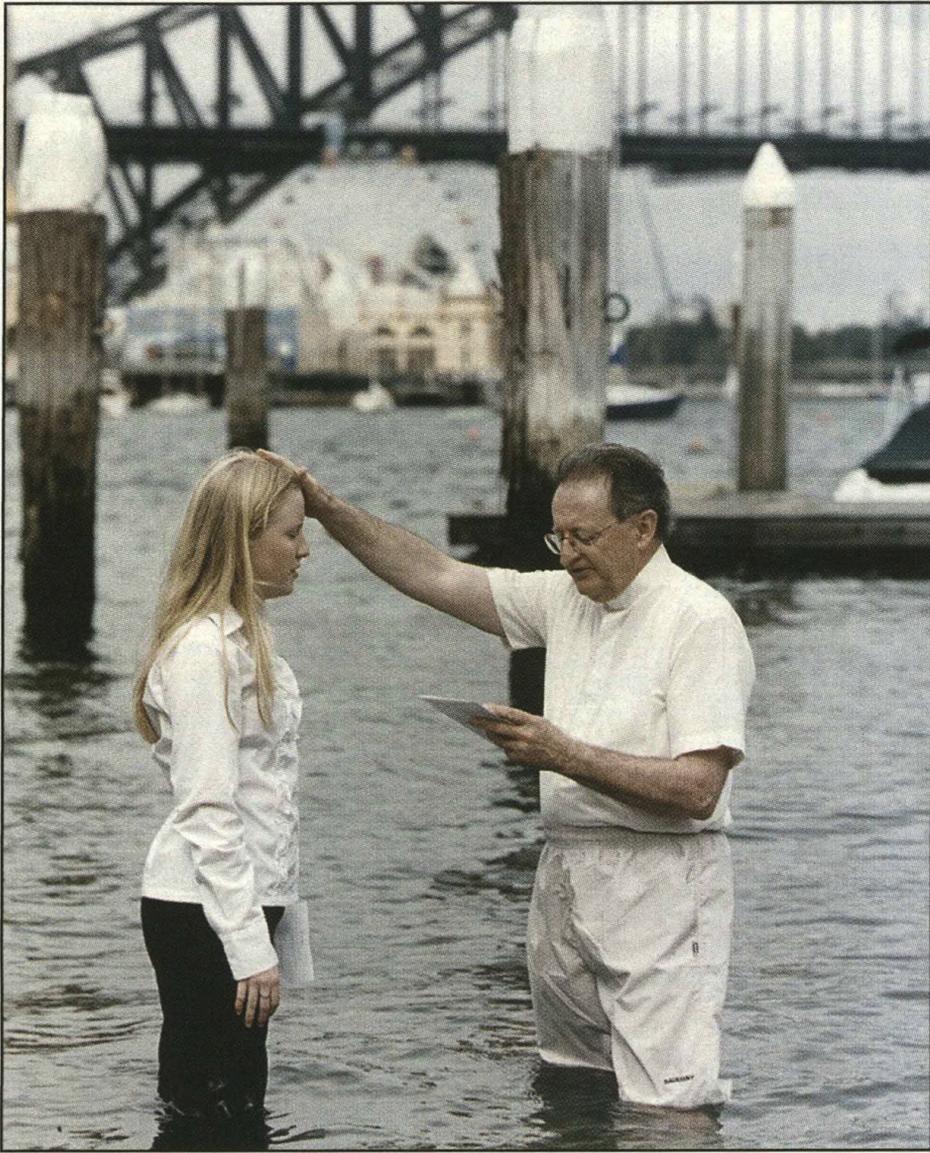
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But Sydney supports them...



Sydney's David Short is now committed to defending the Bible in Canada.

Water of life with harbour views



Archdeacon Peter Smart, rector of Christ Church, Lavender Bay baptises Heidi-Lane Jefferson, 18, in the waters of Sydney Harbour. Archdeacon Smart said that baptisms with the spectacular backdrop of the Sydney Harbour Bridge were not the norm for the waterfront parish. But Ms Jefferson, a committed Christian who was not baptised as a child, wanted her baptism to be memorable. Archdeacon Smart said the idea was enthusiastically welcomed by the congregation, who attended the special baptism after a recent Sunday morning service.

Buckle-up Sydney! Blue-collar church has you covered beyond the Bible-belt

CHURCHplant
OF THE month

Picture the time of the week when it is most difficult to attract unchurched young adults to worship services, and, common sense would probably tell you that it's Friday night.

But a newly planted church, meeting at a university campus in Sydney's west every Friday night, has found a loyal following among unchurched 18- to 25-year-olds in the area.

The Rev Craig Blacket, Anglican chaplain at the University of Western Sydney's (UWS) Nirimba campus at Blacktown, launched the new venture earlier this year. Around 25 young people now regularly attend 'The Crossing', held at UWS Blacktown.

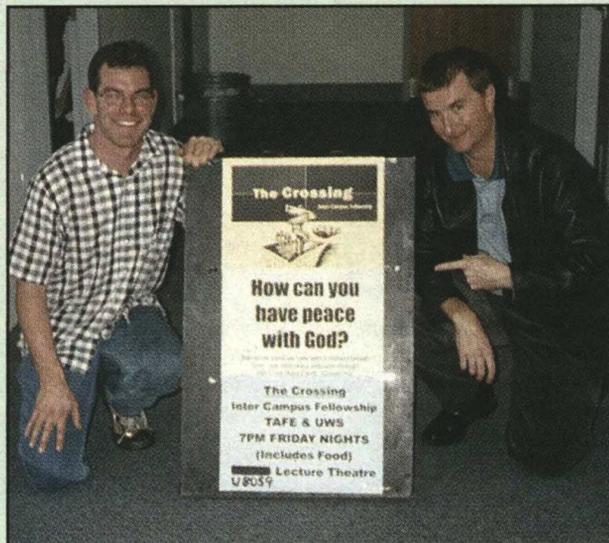
The new church is an inter-campus ministry covering a number of UWS and TAFE campuses from across Sydney. Each weekly meeting includes around an hour spent sharing a meal, followed by a church service.

Mr Blacket describes the actual meeting as being more like a workshop, with a combination of singing, teaching, testimonies, small and large group activities and games. It contains all the elements of a more traditional church service, focused towards a younger audience, with an emphasis on community life and fellowship-style meetings.

Despite the unusual timeslot, the meeting has been welcomed with open arms. Most of the Friday night congregation is made up of people from non-Christian backgrounds.

Mr Blacket believes The Crossing is helping to meet a unique need in Western Sydney. "Local churches have the resources to look after junior youth, but once kids turn 18, churches need specialist ministries," he said. "Friday night provides a fellowship for the 18 to 25 age group that local churches can't provide, due to resources."

The service alternates



Matt Miller (left) and Craig Blacket from 'The Crossing', a new church for TAFE and uni students

every two weeks between teaching through sermons and small group-based Bible study seminars. The Crossing has adopted a 'PTC-driven' strategy, utilising the correspondence Course from Moore College. Midweek Bible workshops on campus are integrated with the Friday night teaching program, with the aim of providing people an overall theological training while they study and learn their profession.

Mr Blacket says the new

Embassy for God begun in Hills

St Paul's, Castle Hill has set up an embassy for God to help young adults think through the ethical issues of being 'residents of earth and citizens of heaven'.

"We are Christ's ambassadors on earth, representing him to Castle Hill and to the whole world," said Fiona Keast, assistant coordinator of the Embassy. "We do this by viewing the world through God's eyes and seeking to respond as he would."

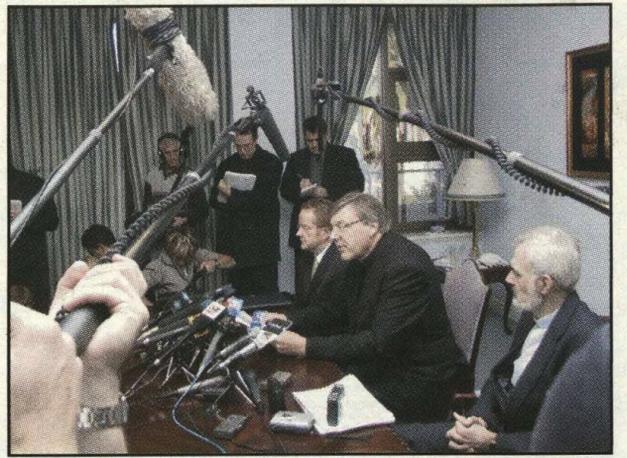
The Embassy is held every second month. Some issues to be addressed since it began last October, include world poverty, refugees and most recently stem cell research which was attended by over 100 people.

Andrew Cameron, ethics lecturer at Moore Theological College, Amy Butler, researcher for the Social Issues Executive and Rachel Jones, a PhD student in medical research each gave talks which were followed by small group discussions and questions from the floor to the panel.

Ms Keast says much positive feedback has been received from the Embassy nights. "People appreciate being introduced to the basic facts and then putting those into a Christian context," she said.

Future topics for Embassy include gender issues and the environment.

Did 60 minutes set up Pell?



The Roman Catholic Archbishop of Sydney, Dr George Pell at a media conference after Channel 9's 60 Minutes program aired allegations regarding child sexual abuse by priests in Victoria. The Anglican Media website has full coverage of this story, including analysis by Jeremy Halcrow of the media coverage, found at www.anglicanmediasydney.asn.au/2002/224.htm. Dr Pell's full statement can be read at www.anglicanmediasydney.asn.au/2002/223.htm.

Position vacant for clever atheist

An advertising sign has been placed outside Sydney church, St Barnabas', Broadway which reads, "Position vacant: intelligent atheist to try to disprove Christianity."

Senior minister, the Rev Ian Powell, said the church is organising a debate between Christianity and Atheism at Sydney Town Hall but so far has not found a suitable person to argue the case against God.

"We're engaged in an Australia-wide search for an intelligent atheist who is prepared to debate the real issues," said Mr Powell. "We're prepared to fly someone in from anywhere around the country. So far we haven't found anyone to do it."

To be held at the Town Hall on August 27, the debate will feature Dr William Craig, a philosopher who has argued for Christianity in similar debates in the US.

Dr Craig will also debate radio commentator and well-known atheist Phillip Adams at Sydney University on August 26.

"Unfortunately, Phillip was not available for the Town Hall debate," Mr Powell said. "We are genuinely asking serious candidates to apply."

"To get the best possible atheist and to keep things fair, we've asked the President of the Australian Humanists, Ian Ellis-Jones, to consult in the selection of the atheist," Mr Powell said.

SYDNEYbriefs

New horizons for Arden School

Colin May, Principal of Arden Anglican School in Beecroft, has announced that the school is about to embrace secondary co-education at their newly acquired Epping site. Progressing to year 7 in 2003, it is planned that Arden will become a complete Pre-school to Year 12 institution by 2008. The Epping site, located just 200 metres from Epping station, is already well developed and is undergoing further refurbishments. Mr May said the School would draw on its 80 years of heritage 'to ensure that a secondary school of excellence' is established.

Anglicans Together website launched

Anglicans Together has launched its new website which will include essays on current issues, newsletters and information on upcoming events. A Sydney-based ministry aiming to promote 'inclusive and diverse' expressions of Anglicanism, Anglicans Together seeks to provide a forum for discussion of issues relevant to the Diocese of Sydney and the Anglican Communion. The address of the new site is www.anglicanstogether.org.

MS research with a penny farthing

John McDermott, a former policeman and currently a university student, is riding a Penny Farthing bike from Uluru to Sydney, to raise funds for Multiple Sclerosis research. John left Sydney on Monday June 24, driving to Uluru, and left for Sydney on June 30. He plans to arrive in Sydney on Friday, August 9. For more information on MS research, contact 1800 287 367.

Church needs to reflect on family focus

BY JEREMY HALCROW

Social research findings by Hugh Mackay appear to question the emphasis among Australian churches on 'families' in outreach.

Mr Mackay said that only about a third of Australians actually live in families. The most common household type in Australia is single people, he said in an address to the NSW Council of Churches on Tuesday, June 4.

"The single person household makes up 35 per cent of Australians. The next most common is the two person household," Mr Mackay said.

"One of the outworkings of this trend will be increased loneliness. People still need to connect. They will look somewhere else – outside their domestic life – to develop their social relationships."

Mr Mackay said the increase in single adults has seen the phenomenon of book and cooking clubs as well as the increase in a café culture and dining out. This

Only one third of Australians actually live in families

is a trend churches should look at in terms of ministry, especially as Mr Mackay pointed out single-ness would increase with the rising generation. Factors such as the increasing divorce rate and the plummeting birth rate will play their part.

"There is now 1.7 babies born for every Australian woman," he said. "There is a danger the emerging generation of kids will be the 'over-indulged' generation as all parental attention is focused on one child."

The other worrying trend is increased resentment among childless couples to the presence of children. Recent developments have included the advent of 'child-free' restaurants and 'child-free' housing estates.

"Among the next generation, it is likely that one third will never marry, one third will marry two or three times, and one third will stay married once," he said.

Mr Mackay said the direction of Australian society over the next 10 years could be seen in the emerging values of under-25s that he dubs the 'options generation'.

"This is the generation which has only ever known constant and turbulent change. They are determined to keep their options open. Their favourite question is 'What else is there?'"

Asked by *Southern Cross* if the emphasis on 'lifestyles' among younger generations was akin to 'a Contiki tour view of relationships where the emphasis is on many superficial connections, not depth of intimacy', Mr Mackay disagreed this typified most young people.

"It is true that this can be seen in sexual relationships," he said. "However young people still place great value in loyalty. Their friendships are very important."

"Some will say flippantly – my marriage might end in 10 years but my friends will be with me for ever."

options generation

what values will under 25s bring to church?

tribal connections

While 500,000 dependant children migrate regularly between the homes of their custodial and non-custodial parents, mobiles phones and email means they feel more connected to friends than family.

worship of experience

Meaning is found through gaining as many 'experiences' as possible. This trend can be seen in everything from extreme sports to increasing overseas travel to wanting to be part of the 'experience' of reality TV.

Young women's conference grows

In its fourth year, the Young Evangelical Women's Conference continued to grow in size and diversity. On May 18, 560 women from 95 churches across NSW and the ACT gathered at the University of Western Sydney's Rydalmere campus. Speakers included Christine Jensen, Isobel Lin and Claire Smith.

YEW started in 1999 with a group of women who wanted to provide a way for their friends to receive input from the Bible.

"But every year, more and more 'older' women come along

and love it," said organiser Carmelina Read.

So how is YEW different from other women's conferences?

Like many others, it aims to teach the Bible to women and to help them grow in their faith in Jesus. However, as a one-day conference it is designed to cater for women 18 to 35 who are busy studying, working, raising children, working and being involved in ministry in their churches.

Organisers hope to attract 1000 women to next year's conference, planned for May 17.

Dan to carry off a pyramid scheme for suffering Christians

The west African nation of Nigeria is a melting pot of religious tension. The northern part of the country is under Muslim control with some areas ruled by the restrictive Sharia law.

This is hardly the environment for a young theology student to cut his teeth in his task of serving God. But for fourth year Moore College student Dan Henby, northern Nigeria offers the perfect start to his life in ministry.

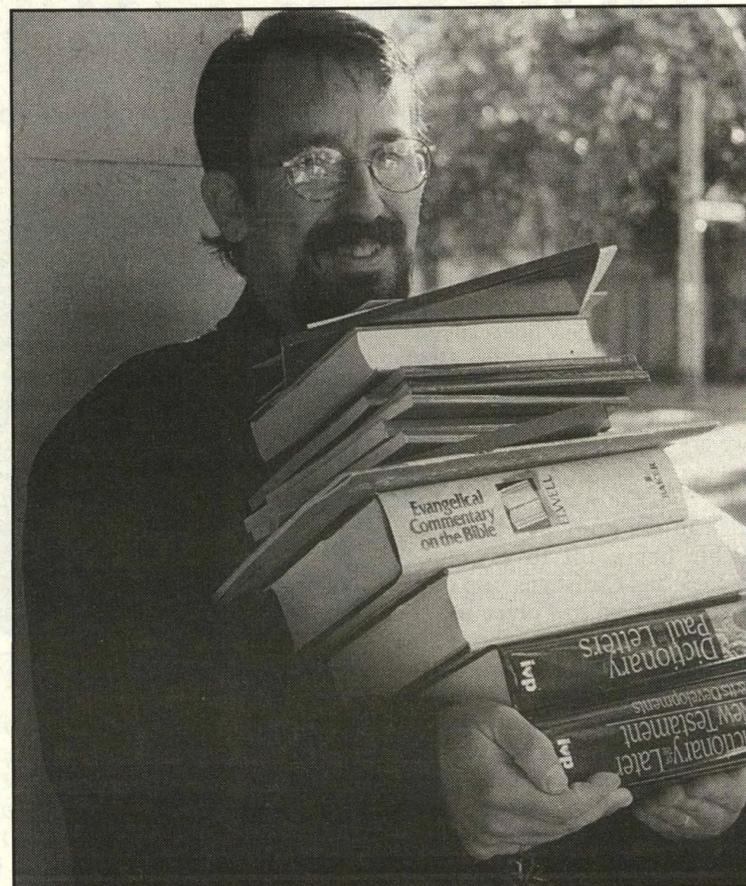
Dan is one of seven students traveling to Africa to teach theology and church leadership, as part of the Archbishop of Sydney's Overseas Ministry Fund's (AOMF) program, in partnership with Moore College.

This month Dan will spend three weeks in Kaduna Diocese, teaching Moore College's PTC course to 35 English-speaking Nigerian students. They will then use this knowledge to help them grow their own churches.

Funds raised by AOMF cover the costs for 35 local ministers to travel to the course and complete their studies, as well as provide practical support such as food and accommodation.

"God's work in Kaduna is at the cutting edge when it comes to evangelism and working within an Islamic environment. I go there as a teacher, but I will learn so much by working alongside my Christian brothers in that part of the world."

In a region where religious violence has claimed the lives of many Christians over the last three years, his challenge will be to teach Kaduna's new generation of pastors to keep their congregations' focus on the gospel in the



Dan Henby prepares to teach Nigeria's future evangelists.

face of growing violence.

"In Kaduna the challenge will not be to encourage people to find time for God amongst their busy lifestyle – quite the opposite in fact. The challenge for pastoral leaders is to maintain focus on the gospel, because when you are under persecution the temptation would be for that focus to slide."

The support provided by AOMF helps with the nuts-and-bolts. This means that when a Moore student boards a plane

destined for all corners of the globe, their focus can be on teaching the gospel and helping God's kingdom grow.

"Every dollar given to AOMF is worth 100 times its value in terms of spreading the gospel," said Dan. "For example, I will spend three weeks training preachers, who will take this knowledge as they spread God's word to at least 2,000 parishioners in each of their congregations. That has to be the greatest pyramid scheme in the world."

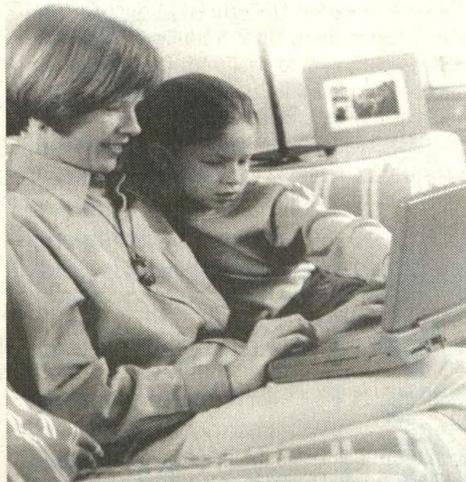


Glebe Asset Management is a subsidiary of the Glebe Administration Board, which manages over \$500 million in investments for the Anglican Church Diocese of Sydney. The Glebe group offers personal financial services, including a range of managed investment funds for both small and large investors.

With more than \$2 billion under management and advice, Glebe is the largest ethical investment entity in Australia. Any profits from Glebe's management and advisory fees contribute to Anglican Church ministry activities.

Our aim is to assist people with investment strategies; our approach is based on Christian values of seeking the best for others, as well as the notion of stewardship.

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winning people to Jesus through Christ's care

Our mission demands we address the money taboo

Glebe is to launch a new financial product to help fund the new works the Diocese needs.

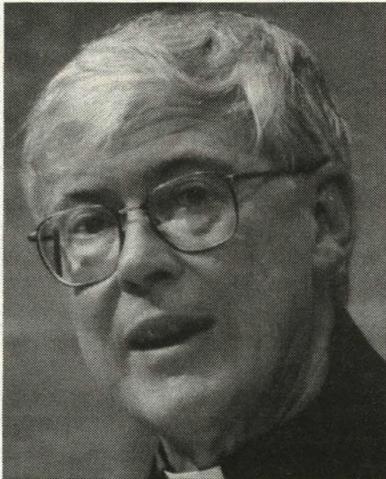
The church is often accused of always talking about money. I hope that accusation cannot be levelled at me!

However, this month I want to address that taboo subject. Later, I will mention a new financial product to be launched by the Glebe Administration Board. I am doing so in the context of the Mission we are engaged in to present the saving gospel of Jesus Christ to our Diocese and beyond, and also in the knowledge that the Bible has a lot to say about money, and Christians' use of the resources God has given us.

The same God who states through Moses, 'remember the Lord your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth', also instructs Christians 'not to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain' but 'to be generous and willing to share'.

I plan to write more about the Mission in the coming months, as we firm up our strategies. At this stage, I want to indicate that there will be a great need for us to act in that spirit of generosity which Paul commended to Timothy.

If we are to see 10 per cent of our community in Bible-based churches within 10 years, then we are talking about a huge growth in numbers. That in turn means a great rethink about how we are functioning as a Diocese. It will mean, for example, that we need to plan for churches in population growth areas. It will mean new



peter jensen

ARCHBISHOP writes

properties will need to be built, new clergy and other ministry workers will be required, and that means additional costs of training, stipends and housing.

So how do we fund all of this? Naturally, a lot will happen at the parish level. All of us will need to continually re-examine our level of giving to our own church. And those parishes which are specially blessed in this regard will need to look outside their own boundaries and see how they can help the spread of the gospel in new or financially-struggling areas. It has been wonderful to see this happening in the past - we will be looking to have more of this attitude in the future.

In the Diocese as a whole, we

are fortunate to have some investments through the Diocesan endowment and other investment portfolios. The interest on these is distributed through the Synod to many worthwhile areas of

outreach. Those who manage this part of our affairs are working hard to provide yet more funds to support our ministries, and our growth target.

As I said at the beginning of this article, this month the Glebe Administration Board will launch a new product. I am convinced it will help individuals and parishes in their financial planning. But more to the point, it will greatly add to the resources available for our Mission. Watch for more details in the weeks ahead. In the meantime, I commend the Glebe initiatives to you, on the grounds that money used wisely equals the opportunity of sharing the good news of the Kingdom.

Clergy, churchwardens and parish treasurers are invited to hear the Archbishop speak more about these plans and about Glebe's new product at a lunch at The Hilton, Sydney on July 25. Phone 1800 636 134.

mission prayer

please use regularly

Our Gracious God, we pray that you will help us to proclaim our Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, so that everyone around us will hear his call to repent, trust and serve Christ in love, and be established in the fellowship of his disciples while we await his return.

May we continue to pray, to depend on your Holy Spirit, and to glorify you.

Amen.

Home to be found for next generation

With Sydney Diocese hoping to reach ten per cent of the population within the next decade, one aspect of the mission could be easily overlooked: even if ten per cent of Sydneysiders are reached, how exactly are our churches going to fit so many new people?

But the question of where to put new churches, and how best to use existing church property, is being addressed by Sydney Diocese with the appointment of Hovel Hovhanesian as Diocesan Property Manager.

Mr Hovhanesian worked as a corporate builder for 22 years and owned his own award-winning company for 12 years. Due to the turbulent nature of the building industry, he decided to use his expertise to 'build for the Kingdom of God'.

As he sought an opportunity to do this, he received a phone call 'out of the blue' from staff in the Diocese of Sydney, who had heard about his skills and offered him the new position.

With an Armenian Orthodox background, currently attending a Catholic Church, and now being employed by the Anglican Church, Mr Hovhanesian brings a diversity to the role matched by the ever-changing city which he monitors daily. By watching trends and keeping in touch with governments, councils and private developers, he is able to predict where Sydney's growing population is likely to settle and what sites will be needed for future church plants. This work is being consolidated into the Diocese's future strategic planning.

Mr Hovhanesian is also seeking to assist parishes in the strategic use of their valuable property resources, including redevelopments.

The next five to ten years in Sydney are expected to see rapid growth, particularly in the northwest and southwest areas. With the government having released large portions of land in these areas already, Mr Hovhanesian is anticipating more significant releases in the near future.

ACTION, IMPACT, CHANGE. ACTION, IMPACT, CHANGE. ACTION, IMPACT, CHANGE

ORAF News

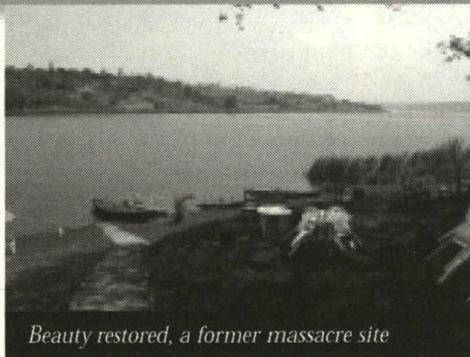
Justice Matters

Nothing can erase from my mind the piles of skulls and bones I saw at the national memorial to the genocide in Kigali, the Rwandan capital. It is too easy to not let the horror penetrate one's soul, to not let oneself think of those remnants as real people, mothers and fathers, brothers and sisters. As Gary Haugen, a team member of the UN genocide investigation team wrote in his book, "Good News About Injustice", (IVP 1999:29), "In truth, each body, now dull and limp in the mud, was actually a unique bearer of the very image of God, a unique creation of the divine Maker, individually knit within a mother's womb by the Lord of the universe....We would never number all the mother's children in these mass graves, but their Father in heaven had numbered the very hairs of their heads."

Their prematurely snuffed-out lives call out for justice. In fact, there can be no reconciliation for Rwanda without justice. For the psychological and political health of the nation, the crimes must be punished.

In 2002, now eight years after the genocide of 1994, the training has begun of almost 255,000 judges who will preside in Rwanda's gacaca courts. There are currently 120,000 males, or 5% of the adult male population, accused of genocidal crimes, in jail awaiting trial. The gacaca system has been activated as a way to unblock the log jam in the courts.

Gacaca is a form of popular or traditional justice for those accused of involvement in the 1994



Beauty restored, a former massacre site

genocide. All but the highest category of genocide crimes will be judged by these courts. A total of 781 gacaca instructors were trained between 4 February and 14 March 2002, all of them magistrates or final year law students. The trainees are known as "les integres", as they were chosen by their own communities as being people with integrity. The official budget for the gacaca system is about US \$13 million. That may seem a lot of money to deal with the past when people need food now and economic solutions to the daily grinding poverty. Nevertheless, if the past is to be dealt with, the value of lost lives must be acknowledged. This is indeed a small price for nearly one million dead.

The God we worship and serve here in Australia, is the same God of the Rwandans who died. "Seek justice" has always been his divine exhortation to all his children. We can intercede by prayer for the success of the gacaca process in Rwanda in 2002.

Kim Vanden Hengel, Program Manager



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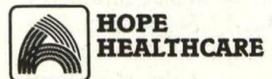
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Feminist theologian to speak in Newcastle and Sydney

Feminist biblical scholar Professor Phyllis Trible will present the 2002 Morpeth lecture 'A Mosaic for Miriam' at the University of Newcastle on July 26.

She will also be a major speaker at the National Anglican Conference to be held at the University of NSW in Sydney.

Presented by the Anglican Diocese of Newcastle, publicity material for the Morpeth Lecture says Professor Trible 'will uncover fragments of Miriam's story in the Bible to show a different picture of her from the one given in the traditions about Moses'.

"A feminist perspective will guide the search for Miriam and will show her positive presence as a prophet and poet, dancer and disciple," the publicity material says.

Professor Trible is currently lecturer in Biblical Studies at the Divinity School of Wake Forest University, North Carolina and is best known for her two books, *God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality* and *Texts of Terror - literary-feminist readings of biblical narratives*.

In *Texts of Terror*, Professor Trible looks at the

stories of Tamar, Hagar, an unnamed concubine and the daughter of Jephthah. She claims these stories are characterised by 'the silence, absence and opposition of God' and this highlights 'the misogyny of Scripture'.

Theologians have acknowledged Professor Trible's significant contribution to 'reading and listening to the Bible from a female perspective', however evangelical scholars have raised concerns.

In a review of Trible's work published in *Christianity Today* in 1999, John Stackhouse wrote, "Phyllis Trible, it should be remembered, is among the most conservative feminist scholars.... [Yet] what comes across again and again in such liberal scholarship is an absence: the absence of God as Author of Scripture. Without the unifying force of a single authorial voice holding it together, the Bible can indeed fall apart into a welter of apparent contradictions and scandals."

Recently, Professor Trible has written of the importance of 'retrieving the Bible from those who would thump or bash it.'



A tractor ready for planting at Moree in the Diocese of Armidale. (photo: AAP)

Pray for rain!

The Anglican Church coordinated people across north and north-west NSW for a day of prayer for rain on June 13.

There has been no rain for months and there are fears that the multi-million wheat crop will not even be planted because of the continuing dry conditions.

The Anglican Bishop of Armidale, Peter Brain, told ABC Radio there is deep concern in the farming community that time is quickly running out to sow wheat.

Sydney resource excluded from liturgy CD

Sydney Diocese's innovative liturgical resource *Sunday Services* will be excluded from the 'do-it-yourself' liturgical CD-ROM being designed for the Anglican Church of Australia, the church's top policy making body has decided.

Late last year *Southern Cross* reported that the publishers of the Sydney resource thought it would be included in the new *LabOra* software package. *LabOra* allows clergy to tailor

church services from ready-made alternatives.

Meeting in Melbourne last month, the General Synod Standing Committee not only decided against including the Sydney resource but is waiting for further details before the appointed directors sign a contract with the Scandinavian designers of the software.

However, the Rev Dr Charles Sherlock consultant to the General Synod Liturgical Commission is sure the

initiative will proceed.

"It's the ability to plan that really has the Commission excited," he said. "In terms of resources, the first edition will have the whole of APBA integrated into the readings and calendar for 2002 and 2003, as well as the full text of NRSV and NIV."

"The program can add anything you want, from music scores to graphics. But first, we need to establish a stable, reliable platform for the essentials."

No first strike

Australia's Defence Minister, Robert Hill has been criticised by the Anglican Bishop of Grafton, Phillip Huggins, for endorsing the US Government's 'first strike' policy.

"So much is at risk whilst nuclear and other weapons exist," he said. "Now there is talk of starting a war with Iraq."

"Our world now needs leaders with a passion to stop wars, not start them," said Bishop Huggins.

Plenty of vacancies for National Anglican Conference

Plenty of places are still available to the National Anglican Conference at the University of New South Wales from July 19 to 23.

The eclectic speaking platform includes evangelist John Stott, feminist theologian Phyllis Trible, sociologist Hugh Mackay and Olympic medallist Shane Gould.

John Stott will speak on the significance of fellowship in the Church.

Canon John L Peterson, general secretary of the An-

glican Communion will deliver a major address about relations with Muslims.

Conference Chairman, Archbishop Harry Goodhew said the workshops were 'a particularly strong and exciting feature of this conference'.

"Participants will have the opportunity to work together on such matters as initiatives for lay leadership and finding creative ways of resolving conflict, in the community and local church," he said.

Christians asked to repeat Olympic home-hosting for Rugby World Cup

It may be over a year until the Rugby World Cup comes to our shores, but Quest Australia is already planning a major ministry initiative that will rival the efforts at Sydney 2000.

The Cup, regarded as the world's third largest sporting event, will be held across Australia over six weeks in October and November 2003. The Final will be played at Stadium Australia on November 22.

Warren Searles from Quest said the ministry objectives would be similar to those used in the successful evangelistic efforts that surrounded the 2000 Olympics. However with several cities in use, and teams and fans traveling around the country, Mr Searles said that different tactics would have to be used.

Quest has already formed steering committees to direct ministry efforts in

each of the three eastern states, and will hold information days aimed at mobilising teams country-wide.

Among the Olympic strategies that Quest hopes to repeat is the Athletes' Family Hosting Program, where Christian families volunteer to serve as billets for families of competing athletes. With the Australian Rugby Union finally having its plans in place after a long delay, Mr Searles said

Quest will start approaching official organisers, 'to see how we as a Christian community can best serve the Rugby World Cup.'

The involvement of almost all of Australia's major cities would increase the chances for gospel ministry, Mr Searles said. "Post-Olympics, God has given us another window of opportunity to have an impact through sport in Australia," he said.

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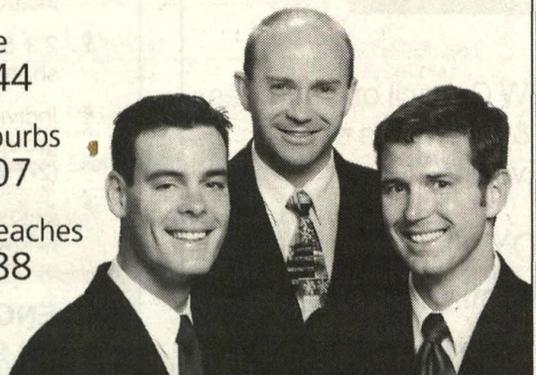
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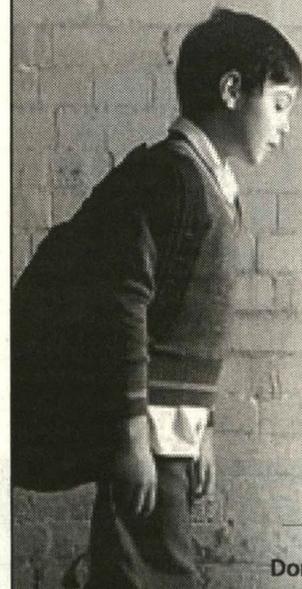
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Vote for gay unions could split Anglican Communion

BY GEOFF ROBSON

Fear, alarm and relief. Those are the mixed emotions being experienced by Bible-believing churchgoers in Canada's New Westminster Diocese, following their Synod's decision to bless same-sex unions.

David Short, a native of Sydney and rector of St John's, Shaughnessy – one of the largest parishes in Canada, with over 1000 regular members – is among the many evangelicals who have strongly opposed the motion since it was first proposed in 1998. He describes the situation as 'the biggest thing to have happened in the Anglican Church in Canada for many, many years', and says the tension is having a palpable effect on the life and faith of the average member of his church community.

"People are filled with fear and alarm," he said. "At the same time, there's a great sense of relief among many in our parish. They really want this to happen – to let the Diocese do what it wants to do – so they can get on with the ministry of the gospel that God has called us to."

But while emphasising the focus on day-to-day ministry, Mr Short says evangelicals are committed to playing a role in the future of the Diocese. Dealing with the issue has taken three to four hours of his time every day for the last month. "The whole thing is a massive distraction, but we can't just ignore it. We have to make a stand," he said.

Nine conservative parishes opposing the motion have grouped together under the name 'the Anglican Communion in New Westminster', emphasising their desire to remain part of the worldwide Church. "Our view is that we stand within the global Anglican Communion and we don't want to threaten that Communion," Mr Short said. "We believe our Diocese is the one that has stepped away."

During debate at last month's Synod, the Rev Ed Hird, a leading spokesman for the conservative group 'Essentials', read a let-

the reaction



"No one is being excluded from our fellowship. We have not taken sides with one group in our church against another."

Michael Ingham, Bishop of New Westminster

"What we need is alternative episcopal oversight, with the recognition that our Bishop is out of communion with the rest of Anglicanism but we are not."

David Short, rector of St John's, Shaughnessy.



"I do not accept that homosexual relationships can be treated on a par with the man-woman ideal portrayed in Holy Scripture."

Dr George Carey, Archbishop of Canterbury

ter from five current Primates and two former Archbishops, including former Sydney Archbishop Harry Goodhew. The letter said a positive vote in New Westminster "would be viewed not only as a grave affront but will also set in motion deliberations on breaking communion" with many parts of the Anglican Church.

When contacted by *Southern Cross*, Bishop Ingham was on a two-day clergy retreat and was unavailable for comment. However, in a statement released after the Synod's decision, the Bishop asked for 'support from the wider church' as his Diocese seeks to minister in the unique social context of Canada. "We are an inclusive church in a plural, peaceful and tolerant society," he said. "We are not compromising the Christian faith nor relativising its moral teaching."

Despite Bishop Ingham's assurances that no sides had been taken and 'no one is being excluded from our fellowship', David Short claims that life for evangelicals in New Westminster has been made enormously difficult because of this issue.

"There's been a tremendous amount of bullying by our Bishop," he said. "He has threatened to withdraw all our licenses. The whole posture has been, 'unless you come along with me and allow me to push this proposal

through, you are the problem and you are the schismatics'. He has made it extraordinarily difficult for conservative clergy to come into the Diocese."

While conservatives have petitioned the Archbishop of Canterbury to provide them with alternative episcopal oversight, Bishop Ingham has offered an 'episcopal visitor', who would provide pastoral care to parishes but hold no other authority in the Diocese. David Short says the proposal is of little benefit. "The episcopal visitor gives us nothing we do not already have in exchange for allowing the Bishop to do something illegal, unscriptural and divisive," he said. "The visitor has no rights other than coming and listening to us. They cannot even confirm."

"What we need is alternative episcopal oversight, with the recognition that our Bishop is out of communion with the rest of Anglicanism but we are not."

But despite the importance of the issue at hand, Mr Short said the authority of the Bible remains the real issue. "In the Anglican Church of Canada, we have two religions but one church. There are two totally opposed ways of regarding the authority of Scripture. That is the fundamental issue. Homosexuality is not the issue – it is a symptom of a lack of understanding of the Scriptures."

WORLDbriefs

UK press say Williams will be appointed the next Archbishop of Canterbury

Is it a rumour or well-placed leak? The Archbishop of Wales, Rowan Williams, who was interviewed by *Southern Cross* last month, will be appointed as the next Archbishop of Canterbury according to *The Times*. The report said that a Church council had given the British Prime Minister a short list of two candidates from which to select the next leader of the Anglican Communion and the first choice was Archbishop Williams.

US Baptist leader under fire for Islam views

The new president of the Southern Baptist Convention caused a national furore when he defended a pastor's characterisation of Islam founder Mohammad as a 'demon-possessed paedophile'.

However, the Rev Jack Graham, named last month to a one-year term as the leader of America's largest Protestant denomination, later said Christians weren't battling Islam. "Our enemy is Satan, not any other religion," MrGraham said. "Our issue in life is not Mohammad or any other religious leader, it's Jesus Christ."

Sudanese bishop backs redeeming of slaves

While some parts of the media say the need for slave redemption in Sudan is pure fiction, the Bishop of Wau, Henry Chuir Riak, claims in a letter to the producer of US TV show *60 Minutes* that the program told lies about the actions of Christian Solidarity International (CSI) which redeemed slaves. In the heartfelt letter, full of personal examples, the Bishop said that Sudanese Government troops capture women and children during raids taking slaves after killing the men and raping the women and girls.

Islamic terror groups threaten stability of Australia's region

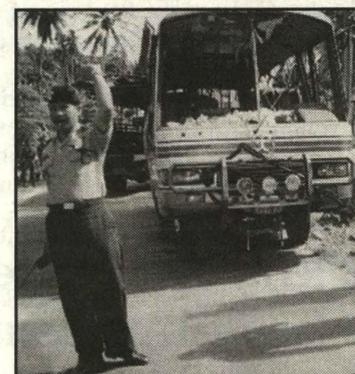
In the same week that a bus-load of Christians was bombed in Indonesia's Central Sulawesi province, Singapore's Senior Minister Lee Kwan Yew has said the region's greatest security threat is extremist Islamic groups.

Mr Lee, speaking at a regional security conference, said the agenda of these groups is to overthrow South-East Asian governments and establish an Islamic state across the region.

"Al-Qaeda-like groups in Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines and, hard to believe, also in Singapore [plan] to overthrow these governments and set up an Islamic state," he said.

Mr Lee said Indonesia was particularly vulnerable. "Whatever their personal beliefs, Indonesian Muslim leaders now vie for the support of militant Islamic groups to garner votes in the 2004 Presidential elections. At stake is the future of the new Indonesia," he said.

On June 6, a bus travelling from Palu to Tentena, Central



Bus that was bombed killing four Christians (photo AAP)

Sulawesi with about 45 Christians on board was bombed killing four. Dr Jeff Hammond, an Australian missionary in Indonesia, reports that one of the dead was a Pentecostal pastor. A second bomb under a seat at the front of the bus failed to detonate.

Extremist Islamic group, Laskar Jihad, boasts that 600 of its fighters are still active in the Poso region and Christians now fear a repeat of the terror which led to attacks on 21 Christian villages late last year.

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Gilbulla to stay in Christian hands!

Ellel Ministries Australia purchasing Gilbulla. Bringing hope and healing to God's people.

Ellel Ministries Australia Limited, in conjunction with Ellel Ministries International (England), have successfully bid for Gilbulla and contracts have been exchanged. Gilbulla will reopen for Ellel Ministries' healing retreats, training courses, conferences and schools after September 2002.

The Aboriginal name Gilbulla means "a pleasant place of learning". Originally built as a private home in 1899, for the Macarthur Onslow family, it has for the last 53 years been a much loved place for family camps, church house-parties, retreats and holidays under the stewardship of the Anglican church.

Ellel, meaning "All Hail", referring to Jesus as King of Kings and Lord of Lords, and it is the name of a village in the north of England, where Peter Horrobin began the ministry in 1986. Each Ellel Centre provides a similar programme of healing retreats, training courses and schools, church visits and teaching conferences.

Ellel Ministries is a bible based group whose mission is stated thus: "In accordance with the Great Commission of Jesus and His calling to proclaim the Kingdom of God by preaching the good news, healing the broken-hearted and setting the captives free. We are therefore committed to evangelism, healing, deliverance, discipleship



and training." Their basis of faith is that God is a Trinity. God the Father loves all people. God the Son, Jesus Christ, is Saviour, Healer, Lord and King. God the Holy Spirit indwells Christians and imparts the dynamic power by which they are enabled to continue Christ's ministry. The Bible is the divinely inspired authority in matters of faith, doctrine and conduct, and the basis for their teaching.

Gilbulla will be a centre which serves all the peoples of Australia and like all Ellel Centres will have an international outlook, especially towards the nations and indigenous peoples of the South Pacific region. Ellel Australia will be encouraging reconciliation with indigenous Australians.

This magnificent property is being purchased by Ellel Ministries Australia. Ellel is a non-denominational christian mission organisation with a vision to resource and equip the church by welcoming people, teaching them about the Kingdom of God healing those in need. (Luke 9:11)

Pastor Peter Walker of the Australian Indigenous Christian Ministries will be working along side Ellel. He says, "As an indigenous person working in social welfare, and as a chaplain in Corrective Services, I am aware of the problems facing society. I am fully supportive of the work of Ellel and see it as beneficial in helping my people and all Australians"

Other prominent Australian healthcare professionals also endorse Ellel's ministry, such

as Dr John Ouw, Consultant Psychiatrist, Melbourne, who says "I have known Peter Horrobin for six years, and found the teaching balanced, sound, and Christ-centred. Many people are healed through the ministry. I have no hesitation in recommending you to support this ministry in Australia."

Dr Ken Curry, National Director of Health Care in Christ, says "The teaching has an intensely biblical founda-

tion. It has a significant effect in people's lives and is applied in ministry with real understanding of what is happening in the spiritual realm."

Gilbulla is located at Menangle, about an hour's drive south of Sydney. Set in 54 acres of grounds, are the historic main house, conference halls, modern motel-style accommodation, chapel and extensive recreational facilities. If you want to be a part of keeping it in christian hands, you may like to donate.

Gilbulla's sale price is \$A1.9 million, and a deposit of \$A300,000 has already been paid. A final payment of **\$A1.6 million will be required by the 30th of September 2002**, and projected refurbishment costs are estimated at \$A600,000.

Ellel is inviting your prayer and financial support. This is a wonderful opportunity to participate in bringing hope and healing to those in need, and providing training for christian leaders and counsellors through the work of Ellel in Australia.

Subject to availability of time in the Ellel diary, Gilbulla will also be available for church houseparties, christian family camps, conferences and retreats. Bookings will be necessary.

For more information, or to make a donation, please fill in the coupon below.

Meet the directors



Peter Horrobin
Founder & Director of
Ellel Ministries International



Jill Southern
Director,
Ellel Pierrepont



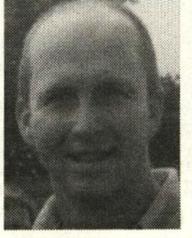
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Rector, Anglican Church
Drummoyne



Diane Watson



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QUICKmail

What does the Bible say about Israel today?

It was with amazement that I read Dr Paul Barnett's article 'What Should We Make of Israel Today?' Can someone explain to me in simple language why the Holy Land can "have no ongoing theological significance in themselves"? As I understand my Bible, God gave the land to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob's descendants, God is re-gathering His chosen people, and does promise the return of our Lord to the Mount of Olives. Or am I reading my Bible wrongly?

Kathleen Devine
Port Macquarie, NSW

Support for refugees waiting in camps

In regard to Dr Ford's reported statement that, 'after having experienced conditions in the Curtin Centre Christians should be making a stand against the government's mandatory sentencing policy' (SC, May), we must get our priorities right. In March *Southern Cross* is the story of a Cambodian girl who waited four years in a Thai refugee camp before being granted a visa to Australia. These detainees are illegal entrants into Australia, jumping the queue and expecting to get visas at the drop of a hat.

Harvey A Davidson
Gynea, NSW

Lest we forget St Peter's, Mortdale

After the splendid opening celebrations of Christ Church, Mortdale, it was extremely sad to read your articles which were so inaccurate, albeit not intentionally (SC, June). St Peter's, Mortdale had a 100 year plus history of Christian ministry as well as being the 'mother' church of many surrounding parishes. It would be remiss not to mention the outstanding ministries of Bill Siddens, Brian Dooley, and Clive Harcourt Norton and many others whose legacy ensured that St Peter's - the property on which Christ Church Mortdale now stands - spread the gospel, was debt free and held in trust for the Sydney Diocese. I had many calls from ex-St Peter's people pointing out the errors and hope that in future you would give truth and honour to the present congregations and those people who have gone to their eternal rest committed to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Anne McGowan and friends of St Peter's
Hurstville, NSW

Ed: The statement 'the amalgamation of Holy Trinity, Peakhurst with Christ Church, Mortdale' should have read 'the amalgamation of Holy Trinity, Peakhurst with St Peter's, Mortdale'. The new parish that was formed from the amalgamation took the name Christ Church, Mortdale. We apologise for any offence caused by this error.

SYDNEYdiary

Fri, 19 July, 1.10pm - 1.50pm BYO lunch: CMS City Missionary Connection - Come and meet Julie Waddy. Level 1, St James' Hall, 169-171 Phillip St, Sydney. Ph (02) 9267 3711

Fri, 26 July, 10.30am: CMS Friday Fellowship at CMS Building 4th floor, (93 Bathurst St, Sydney). Speakers: Dick and Michelle Ferguson.

Sat, 3 Aug: Prayer Book Day, St Paul's Burwood from 11am: Mattins, Holy Communion (Speaker: Mr Henry Speagle), Basket Lunch, Evensong. All welcome.

CLERGYmoves

The Rev Richard Andrew, rector, St Paul's Wahroonga retired 1.7.02.

The Rev Stephen Bligh, honorary assistant minister, Centennial Park to curate in charge, North Ryde 23.7.02

The Rev Noel Clarke, from rector, North Ryde to CMS - Nairobi, Kenya 1.6.02.

The Rev Raymond Heslehurst, from rector Newtown to Master, Richard Johnson College, University of Wollongong 6.4.02.

The Rev Ian Mears, from CEFM to rector, Blackheath

The Rev David Reay, from rector, Belrose to rector, St Paul's Wahroonga 3.10.02.

The Rev Stephen Semenchuk, from rector, Woodville Road to rector, Dapto 28.9.02.

Perry Wiles voluntarily relinquished Holy Orders 29.1.02.

The Rev John Woo, curate in charge, Strathfield retiring 4.8.02.

We need a schools strategy

It was with both interest and frustration that I read the Archbishop's thoughts regarding schools as a key opportunity for reaching the community with the message of Jesus (SC, May).

The Archbishop mentions the importance of maintaining a Christian presence in state schools. But have we stopped to think how the proliferation of Christian schools impacts on this? With far fewer Christian teachers, students and parents involved in state schools, is it any wonder that opportunities for the gospel are diminished?

Talk about the importance of reaching people in state schools sounds hollow while Christians continue to abandon them.

Has the church made a strategic blunder? Why are we cloistering our children (and Christian teachers) in the relative safety of Christian schools instead of encouraging them to be salt in their local communities through participation in state schools.

Ross Pendlebury
Dural, NSW

Congratulations Archbishop! You ask why young people have not made the transition into our churches. Bullseye! May I offer some observations?

Energetic youth may be truly converted in our schools but they perceive 'a vacuum of adventure' inside the thick walls of our churches. Institutional barriers

LETTER OF THE MONTH

As a public school teacher, it

was a relief to read that the Archbishop considers Scripture teaching in public schools to be of importance. However, before we debate the question of inflow from Scripture classes to our churches, I think that there is more urgent issue to address.

In the part of Western Sydney where I teach, the question is whether Scripture classes will survive. For a host of reasons volunteers to teach Scripture are just not there.

What can our Diocese do to meet the needs of this vast mission field? How can we put trained people into these schools?

Listening to missionary Michael Palmer last year, I realised that the school children in his part of Tanzania hear more about the gospel than the children in my part of Sydney.

At my school, Christian members of staff have been able to take three of the uncovered Scripture classes. But this is a strategy of survival - not a vision for the future.

As the Archbishop wrote, Scripture teaching is indeed 'an immense privilege'. But the first question to answer is what are we doing to respond to this immense privilege?

Greg Edwards
Mt Druiitt, NSW

Letter of the month wins a Christian book of the editor's choice. The winning letter will contribute to debate about the Diocesan strategy.

ers are real. It's hard to cross the cultural gap into the ordered world of your Christian church. You can't walk that road without close friends to lead and protect you. It's always safer to walk in a pack - especially if you're a teenager in a world of image.

For a teenager to make it in church there will be: trusted peers who are already there; parents leading by example, or; special adult mentors who work hard for relationship with young people.

The bottom line is the adult

evangelical church hasn't yet gotten it together with our unchurched young people who have responded to God. We're great at studying theology, preaching evangelically, programming efficiently ... but we haven't gotten it together relationally. Most of us don't know how. Many are scared to death of our youth. Too many have more important things to do than waste time on kids.

Philip Parker
Kangaroo Valley, NSW

Anglican Youthworks has always promoted evangelism

Perhaps some readers were given a false impression by your article which said the new CEO of Youthworks wants the organisation to be 'setting the agenda on youth evangelism' (SC, June).

Having formerly worked with Anglican Youthworks for 18 years, I can say confidently that Youthworks, and before it the Board of Education and the Anglican Youth Department, have always been organisations that promote the evangelising of young people.

That is why Youthworks has been so active in raising the quality of ministry to children and youth, supporting and resourcing parishes. In the last few years, since Archbishop Harry Goodhew's vision for a 15 per cent increase in children's church membership, many churches have had significant growth.

Youthworks led the charge, having alerted the churches to the urgent state of affairs outlined in the report *Growing up without God*, and by offering resources, training and ideas. Through Christian Education in schools, Sunday Schools and youth groups, outreach programs such as kids' clubs, camps and Youth Surges, and with teachers and leaders who are better equipped, more children are coming to Christ and are growing in Christ.

By the grace of God, with the gifts of the new CEO and all who serve through Youthworks, and the commitment of the churches, the evangelising and nurturing of young people will continue, and many will become part of the people of God.

Cathy Hewett
Cremorne, NSW

New English Bible a 'luxury'

Regarding the kerfuffle over which English Bible translation is best (SC, June). I suggest we spare a thought, prayer, and dollar for the millions of people yet to have any New Testament at all in their mother tongue. The pre-occupation with 'bigger and better' English translations is a luxury of the western world.

Matthew Toulmin
Summer Hill, NSW

While there is merit in having different Bible translations for various purposes, it is also important we have a translation like the English Standard Version which strives to be accurate, does not 'dumb down' theology, maintains the ambiguity of the text rather than interpreting it and is understandable across all English-speaking countries.

David Morrison
Springwood, NSW

JULY 2002

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CONTRIBUTIONS

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A Royal Commission is needed

If the Diocese of Sydney's vision for outreach and growth is to be realised, the widespread and developing community mistrust of clergy and church workers must be publicly demonstrated to be unfounded.



margaret
rodgers

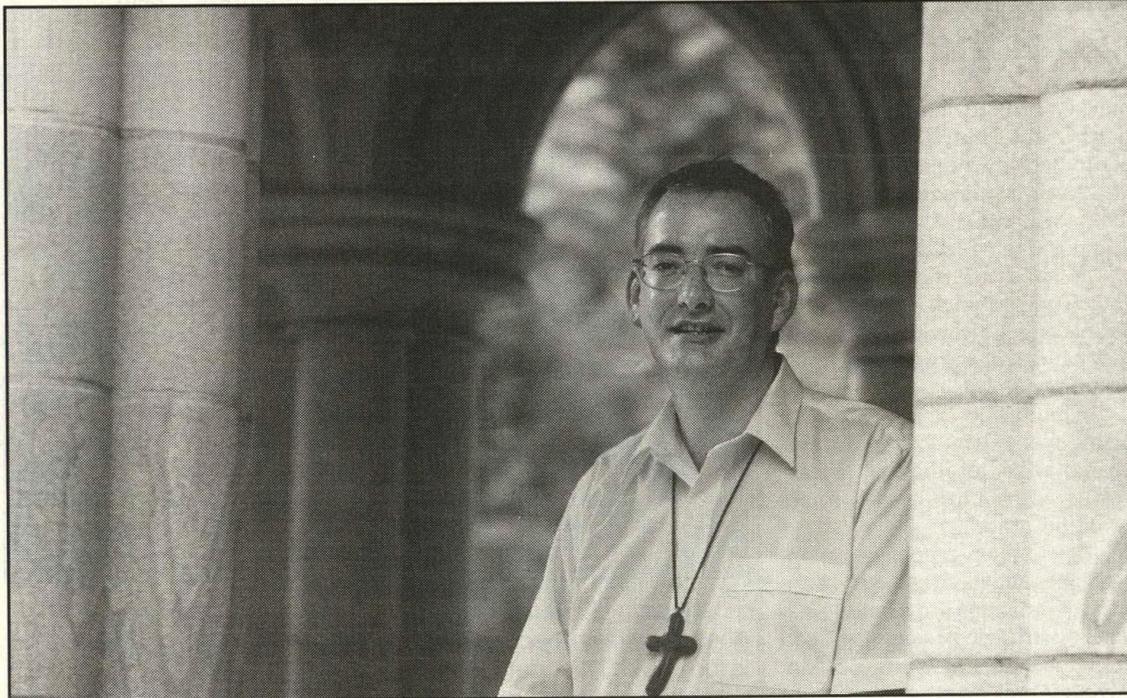
CROSScurrent

An official government enquiry into child sexual abuse? When this was initially suggested by Dr Phillip Aspinall, the Archbishop of Brisbane, I was hesitant to approve his suggestion. It seemed to me that, given the difficulties that churches have faced during the year – even though no one is above the law, including the churches and their personnel – a government enquiry might become a matter of undue state interference into church affairs.

As well as that, Royal Commissions can soon become bogged down in painstaking detail, and the publicity may become a media witch-hunt with strong McCarthyist overtones.

Yet, over the last weeks I have swung to Dr Aspinall's point of view. The media frenzy around Catholic Archbishop George Pell, following the undisputed 'ambush' of him in a *60 Minutes* interview by Richard Carlton; the constant inept interviews given by Dr Peter Hollingworth, Dr Pell and others; and the plethora of inconsistency of detail that emerges as journalists dig deeper and victims speak out, convinces me that a commission of enquiry from outside the churches is desperately needed.

As charges are publicly attributed against bishops and others in church leadership in the full



Archbishop of Brisbane, Phillip Aspinall, was stymied in his attempt to set up a church enquiry.

glare of media scrutiny, the lack of public confidence in the church as a whole and in individual clergy and church workers has rapidly developed.

The spread of the gospel and Christian witness are steadily being compromised. If the Archbishop's vision for outreach and growth is to be realised, the widespread and developing community mistrust of clergy and church workers must be publicly demonstrated to be unfounded.

A government enquiry would have powers that no church based enquiry could ever exercise. Participation could be compelled from both alleged victims and alleged perpetrators. Witnesses could be indemnified and, if necessary, protected. Files, documents and personal papers could be subpoenaed. If the com-

munity observed the enquiry proceeding with an impartial commissioner there would be few charges of cover-ups and 'acting to protect one's friends'.

Archbishop Aspinall publicly announced that he would hold an enquiry into the diocesan administration of child sexual abuse charges during Archbishop Peter Hollingworth's episcopate. However, he was stymied in his attempt to set up an immediate enquiry by his inability for a long period to find an expert to head it up. Sources close to him say that his request was turned down by a number of senior law professionals who felt they may be comprised in their own legal pursuits and hindered by the lack of indemnity in the enquiry.

Dr Aspinall said he wished to appoint a strong chairman who

would bring in well attested findings and firm recommendations that he could act upon in his own administration of the Diocese of Brisbane. Faced with his difficulties in appointing his enquiry chairman, he called on both the Prime Minister and the Queensland Premier to set up a Royal Commission. Both replied 'No', while at the same time stating firmly that they abhorred the evil of child sexual abuse.

Premier Beattie may have been looking at possible costs and future electoral consequences of an enquiry into Anglican church practice. The PM would be aware of the cost of an enquiry he couldn't limit to Queensland. But he would have had another reason. If evidence was found of inept episcopal administrative practice by Dr

Hollingworth then this may cast doubt on Mr Howard's own choice of Governor General.

Dr Aspinall said if he couldn't secure a federal or state enquiry he would still proceed with his own church enquiry. He has now announced it will go ahead to look into the handling of past child sex abuse cases. Pray for strength and God's grace upon him in the choices ahead.

Pray for all our bishops, and for the work of the two national Church committees. The Sexual Abuse Working Group, headed by Justice David Bleby from Adelaide that is 'developing a range of national proposals for victim support, and procedures, protocols and disciplinary measures for all Anglicans engaged in ministry, lay and ordained'. Also the Child Protection Committee, headed by Mr Garth Blake, the Advocate of Sydney Diocese. That committee is 'developing preventative strategies, including a Code of Ethics, education and training programs and screening procedures'. Pray too that all victims will find justice and healing.

We do still need a government enquiry into child sexual abuse. But not just into the churches. Helen Last, a victims' advocate working with both Anglican and Catholic churches, told John Gatfield in a Sky News interview that she has also worked, "with victims of psychologists and social workers, and teachers and other professionals who are involved in sexually abusing their clients".

For the sake of our children, and for former victims, we need a government enquiry into all institutions in Australia that have the duty of care of minors.

Scripture hampered by lack of a diocese-wide plan

In 1964, Archbishop Gough commissioned a report that predicted major changes that would impact on ministry to school students. The predictions were accurate and the report's recommendations excellent, but a failure of will meant the Diocese dropped the ball miserably.

We must not repeat that failure in 2002. Today, the key issue is the lack of a schools ministry strategy co-ordinated at a regional or diocesan level. Two major problems result from this lack of co-ordination.

Firstly, resources within the Diocese are not placed where the bulk of young people live. At present, 50 per cent of high schools have no SRE provision whatsoever. Those that do are mostly selective highs or schools in higher socio-economic areas.

As the 2001 census data indicates, there are huge concentrations of young people around Blacktown, Campbelltown and Liverpool. Indeed, most parishes in the the west and southwest of Sydney have nowhere near the financial and human resources needed to service the schools within their boundaries. One parish in Sydney's west has respon-



grant
maple

sibility for five high schools alone.

There needs to be a diocesan-wide strategy in place to help redistribute these resources, otherwise we are restricting gospel proclamation to the materially advantaged.

Secondly, the lack of a co-ordinated approach impacts on the ability of individual parishes to bridge the gap between SRE and church-based ministry.

For example, Anglican Youthworks provides the Christian Education component for many government schools through its outdoor education camps. However, we have many examples of youth impacted through this ministry, but when referred to their local church, the church has been ill-equipped and unprepared to build on this connection.

Our diocesan policy is to leave local parishes to develop youth ministry in isolation. Therefore it is not surprising that par-

ishes that have succeeded in integrating SRE contacts are in well-resourced Bible-belt parishes which can afford to pay a full-time schools worker.

Yet in the Shoalhaven, an area where the churches have a history of working together, every one of the region's 2,500 high school students is provided with a SRE lesson each week. This costs the churches of the district \$215,000 a year for three full-time and two half-time workers.

In Sydney, a 'mission' strategy that involved the partnering of wealthy and poorer parishes, co-ordinated across regions, could have a similar impact.

In 1964 the Diocese understood the implications of the HSC's implementation. Many students then finishing in Year 9 were going to be retained until Year 12.

One option to address this change involved harnessing a Federal government offer to fund new Anglican schools. Vested interest blocked that idea. As a result, the Anglican Church never caught up with the huge increase in retention rates in state schools.

We must not fail again.

Dr Grant Maple is director of the Anglican Education Commission.

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Church is not for 'sinners' like me

Behind the statistics about church decline are real people who feel rejected by our 'clubs for the saved'

BY JEREMY HALCROW

After five years of giving her heart and soul in service to her church, Zoe stopped going. She was just twenty years old.*

A senior person in the church exploited his power over her and she ended up in what she calls a 'wrong relationship' with him.

Wracked with guilt, she literally fled the country.

Her parents were not Christians and without wise guidance within the church, she was 'spiritually and emotionally isolated'.

"I never lost any faith but I took myself off speaking terms with God," she said.

The recent Australian Community Survey – a joint project between Edith Cowan University and the National Church Life Survey – has found that most Australians won't go to church because they find it 'unfulfilling'. Some 42 per cent of people gave this response.

But if you dig beneath the statistics, you will hear the stories of people like Zoe who feel 'disconnected' from the church believing it has nothing to say to help them through their real life issues of pain, sin, hurt and guilt.

For ten years, Zoe lived the life of the average non-Christian, all the while missing the fellowship she once had. "I enjoyed the delusion of freedom. But inside I was saying, 'What about God? There has to be more to life than going to parties and having fun'."

Indeed during that decade, Zoe made attempts to return to church. She knew 'all the right answers' and was sometimes

quickly offered leadership positions in the church. This caused her to back away and leave.

"I was so conscious of my sin that I couldn't trust myself to be in a position of leading others.

"What struck me was I was in church with a bunch of white, middle-class people who acted as if they never sin, and certainly never commit adultery."

In hindsight she now sees that many evangelical congregations do not want to 'market' themselves 'as a bunch of sinners saved by grace'.

"There is an emphasis on appearances and having the right answers. Christians are afraid to admit they struggle because they will be judged for not being perfect. We even pray from a position of superiority. We pray for non-Christians rather than with them, admitting we are all sinners who need God's forgiveness."

A turning point came when Zoe's long-term de-facto relationship ended. She felt very alone and completely powerless.

"On the surface we were the ideal double-income no kids relationship. Very materialistic but very empty. We were dealing with all this stuff that I hadn't really resolved."

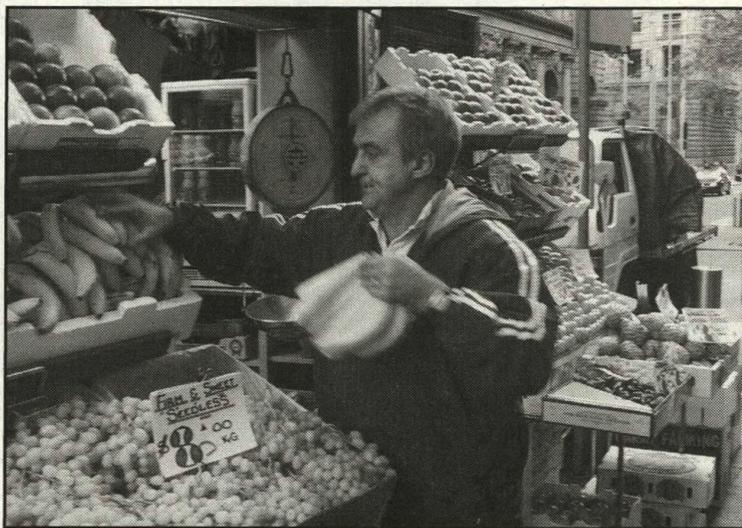
Soon after she was invited to church and had a big 're-conversion' experience. She had 'a strong sense of being utterly forgiven'.

Zoe began seeing a Christian counsellor who encouraged her to go to church regularly. She now attends a church in Sydney which is 'a real community' not just 'where people come to hear a talk'.

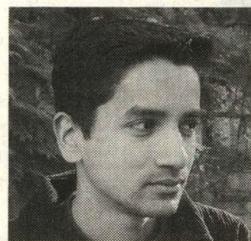
"There, I get the sense we have all suffered from the conse-

Why I don't go to church

vox pops recorded in Sydney city



Tony (above) said he never goes to church because he is too busy. "The hours I work – weekends are the only time I have off."



Shafayet has been to church a few times, mainly with family. "It depends if I get time with my family. If they are planning to go, then I will go. I have never been by myself. I went with my friend when they had some special service."



Janice doesn't go to church because she believes 'everyone's temple is in the heart'.

"I think the religions and the churches are trying too hard to do things that are not necessary. What's necessary is for people to be kind. You don't need to go to church to learn that."

"A belief in basic human kindness – does that go against Jesus or does that go against Mohammed? That doesn't go against any religion. That is the religion for now and for the future. Churches have nothing to do with it. That's my opinion."



Rachelle said she goes to a church once every couple of months, but explained she often feels 'intimidated' by church services.

"When I go to church it's never when services are on. I go there for my own self, to sit there and have a private prayer. I think that's because it's more anonymous or I don't feel pressured."

"I haven't been to a service for a while. I should go to one soon."

She said she would be more likely to go to a Sunday service, "If it wasn't so early in the morning on a Sunday."

quences of sin. The preachers share about problems in their lives and there is a real sense that we are in it together sitting under the Word of God."

Zoe says she no longer sees church 'from a consumer point of view'. "Going to church is not always going to be fun and is sometimes a struggle. But church is not about the experience. Like any other relationship worth having I want to persevere with my relationship with God."

"My non-Christian friends sometimes ask why I need the crutch of church-going. I tell them, 'When your leg's broken you need a crutch'. I look at them and their abuse of alcohol and drugs and think, 'At least my crutch won't kill me'."

* Name has been changed

We can make church more relevant and fulfilling

A report on why Australians don't attend church indicates that church leaders should be helping to build genuine, loving fellowships and preaching 'life-changing sermons' that relate to people's work and family circumstances.

There are many reasons why people don't go to church. That is why the Australian Community Survey's report on 'Why people don't attend church' is so helpful. It makes church leaders aware of the complexity of the problem.

The most instructive finding of the survey is that new contemporary approaches to worship may help church attendance, but only up to a point. In the end making church services more 'attractive' does not address the core problem – unbelief.

The raw data processed by the researchers gives us an inkling into two key sets of problems.

Firstly, clergy need to do more to make their churches less alienating. We must not dismiss the finding that some 42 per cent of Australians won't attend church because worship services are 'boring or unfulfilling'.

Whether such a view is based on fair evidence is beside the point – this is the average Australian's perception of church.



zac veron

analysis

And it will be a block to them hearing the gospel if it is not addressed.

Let's be honest. Many regulars are embarrassed by what goes on in their church; therefore, inviting someone is rarely on their agenda. Church would be both interesting and fulfilling if clergy made life-changing preaching the priority. People long to hear someone explain to them how they should live in their family, at work, with themselves. We need to ground theology in people's lives.

Likewise, because our preaching places an emphasis on per-

sonal faith, we clergy often fail to cultivate a sense of community. A high view of the individual – and low view of the corporate – cultivates an ambivalent attitude to Christian fellowship.

This leads to a second set of issues that relate to what lay people are doing.

There is a good chance outsiders will attend if someone would only ask them to come along and then bring them. The survey has found that current relationships are strongly related to church involvement. Whether a person went to church as a child is not as strongly linked to their church attendance as whether they have friends today who do. Indeed, most non-attenders (60 per cent) say they have no close friends who are church attenders.

The flip side is that the close friends of church attenders tend to be church attenders. I wonder if this is a sign that we Christians are not prepared to leave our comfort zones to befriend non-Christians. Comfortable churches with

strong friendship cliques tend not to grow – despite their internal rhetoric to the contrary. We should note the warning signs when we respond to pleas to invite non-Christians by thinking, "But I like my small, loving church (or home group)."

The report assumes that if we understand why people don't go to church and address their perceived concerns, they will then flock to a church. That is not necessarily true. If I was asked, 'Why do you not attend a Rotary club?' and if all my issues were addressed, then it is drawing a pretty long bow to assume that I would suddenly be compelled to attend! You would be assuming that deep down I really want to attend a Rotary club but there are issues that are preventing me.

It would have been much more helpful for the researchers to compare and contrast this survey result with a survey of new Christians asking 'Why do you, who

did not go to church, now attend?'

Nevertheless, what the survey makes clear is that ultimately the reason people don't go to church is because they don't believe in Christ. For example, only 26 per cent of non-attenders – as opposed to 80 per cent of churchgoers – believe that Jesus' resurrection was an actual historical event. Similarly, non-attenders are more likely to believe that different religions are simply versions of the same truth.

On their own, any 'un-boring' ideas for church – from adopting loud rock-n-roll to interactive arts – can only reinforce the subjective faith most Aussies already have. So why would they suddenly want to attend?

The greatest problem with any such approach is that it does not address the major problem all men and women face – their eternal standing before God who will send Jesus soon to judge and save.

The Rev Zac Veron is rector of St James', Carlton.

We must care for those on the fringe of church life



stuart
robinson

GAMEplan

For seventeen years Craig Segaert exported commercial glass for high rise buildings to major world centres. In 1989 Craig was living in Brussels, Belgium. He was invited to attend a new English-speaking church St Paul's, Tervuren (www.stpaulstervuren.com) in a suburb of Brussels. It was here that Craig 'reconnected with the faith of [his] childhood and came to understand that trust in Jesus is relevant to everyday living'.

Craig hadn't been going to church regularly because of a heavy work schedule. He knew about Jesus but didn't relate to him. Any free-time was used to keep physically fit, especially through his interest in rowing.

However, at St Paul's in Brussels he discovered 'a heart-felt faith in Christ' that became the priority in his life. He found out that it was still possible to pursue business, but within a different framework.

In time Craig became convicted that he should give up his career and go into full-time ministry. When he was told there was a world-class theological college in Sydney, it seemed logical to return to his home-town.

Craig's own story dramatically demonstrates the importance of ministry to those people with his-

transferable principles

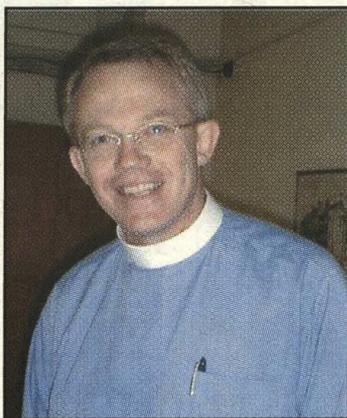
- Use of Christmas and Easter services to connect with infrequent church attenders.
- A clear integrated statement of Mission.
- Discipling through small groups.
- Goals which are realistic, measurable, 'owned' and celebrated (when reached).

torical ties to our churches. There are many people who go to church infrequently, sometimes because they simply cannot see the relevance of church-going to their life. The head knowledge about God and Jesus which they gained at Sunday School has not been allowed to connect with their day-to-day lives.

Often when we talk of 'successful' ministry we think only in terms of 'reaching the unchurched'. But many newcomers to our churches are not new 'converts' in the traditional sense, but people who have returned to church after a long period of non-attendance or infrequent church-going.

This raises many interesting questions about ministry strategy. In trying new ways to do ministry, it is important that we don't simply target the 'unchurched'. Sometimes it may be better to try new ministries or to alter our church services so we are connecting better with those people already on our door-steps. As the story of Karen Hoskin [in box] demonstrates, Easter and Christmas services are often a good place to start.

These are issues that Craig is now thinking through. After three years' study at Moore College (and marriage to Annie in Paris), Craig was invited to pastor the



The Rev Craig Segaert

congregation of St Nicolas', Coogee. In God's good grace and under Craig's leadership, St Nicolas' is getting better at bringing Christ to the community. "But we still have a long way to go," says Craig.

SR: Craig, you were a 're-entry' to church going. In your experience, what ministry issues need to be addressed for someone who hasn't been going to church regularly since childhood?

CS: For me it is a practical issue. How can we effectively make contact with a potential 're-entrant'? The answer seems to be by enabling existing members to invite these people - who they already know - to church activi-

"I realised that being an Anglican wasn't the important bit, it was being a Christian that mattered"

my story

Karen Hoskin works in the field of neuroscience at UNSW and is currently writing up her PhD thesis on the *Pathophysiology of Migraine Headaches*.

She was raised as a 'church-goer' in an Anglican environment: she was baptised, went to Sunday school, chapel, confirmation and was married in an Anglican church. Yet, Karen concedes that, 'from the time I left school until December 2001 I did not regularly attend church'.

"It was through the teaching at St Nicolas', Coogee that I began to understand what being a Christian meant," she said. "This year, Easter was a special time for me. During the outreach sermon my thoughts and feelings finally came together and I was compelled to pray the prayer accepting Christ as Lord over my life."

Karen's growing faith has been shaped by the small group ministry at St Nicolas'.

"The most important contributing factor to my becoming a

Christian - and helping me grow in my knowledge of Christ - has been through my SALT (Sharing and Living Together) group. It is here that my questions have been addressed and taken seriously."

"Jesus has now assumed a central place in my life. I take time to talk with him and listen to what he has to say. I try to live in a way that is in accordance with his teaching. I am still a beginner and accept I have a lot to learn."

ties where they can witness to them about the love of God in Christ.

SR: How is St Nicholas' trying to connect with people on the fringe of its church life?

CS: We have tried to think laterally about Christmas and Easter. Our Easter Day dawn service on



Karen Hoskin: the most important factor in her becoming a Christian has been a small discipleship group.

Coogee Beach is not only a fantastic way for the faithful to celebrate the resurrection but it is easy for them to invite their friends along. In the last two years, the kids' play on Christmas Eve has drawn around 80 people, most of whom have never come to church before.

continued page 17

Focusing on 'Why people don't go to church' can be unhelpful

Why People Don't Go to Church draws from the 1998 Australian Community Survey (ACS), in an attempt to determine, well, why people don't go to church.

The report is typical of those released by the National Church Life Survey, with its mix of research and analysis. However, this one was disappointing. Perhaps the results of these surveys are becoming predictable, or it might be that I don't really like the premise of this report.

Why do we keep asking, 'Why don't people go to church?' The Christian mission is not to fill churches, but to make disciples of Jesus. There is a real danger that by focusing on this question we will simply set out to recreate the nominalism of the 1950s.

A key factor in church decline - especially the reason why 'regular' members attend church every second week - is not sociological but theological. Churches often proclaim a highly individualistic gospel that treats the church as an afterthought. If the gospel is only about 'getting me a ticket to heaven, why would I bother spending Sunday with people at church with whom I have little in common?'

The Bible rejects the assumption behind this report that the church exists to meet each



tim
foster

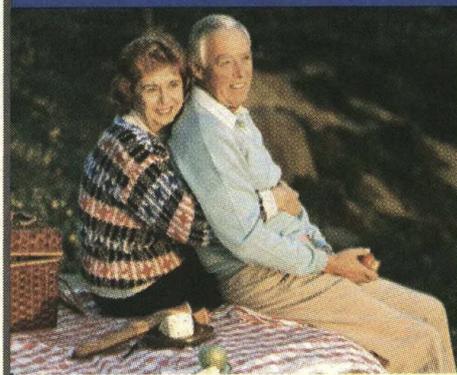
attender's needs. Christians meet together because they are the family of God's people, called by Jesus to live in love and service of each other. If this becomes our motivation for meeting then it will help clarify two unhelpful trends.

Firstly, we see that the trend among evangelicals to constantly 'dumb down' church services to make them more attractive to outsiders misses the real point. Ultimately, we are left with superficial meetings which fail to build the quality of discipleship that Jesus demands.

Likewise, liberal attempts to water down biblical teaching to make church more 'attractive' to non-believers is a hopeless strategy. Non-Christians will not be compelled to attend church if we teach doctrine and morality 'acceptable' to the average agnostic Australian.

Asking the question 'Why don't people go to church?' will not help us discover the church of the future.

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'Creating Communities of Christian Care'

How to be politically correct

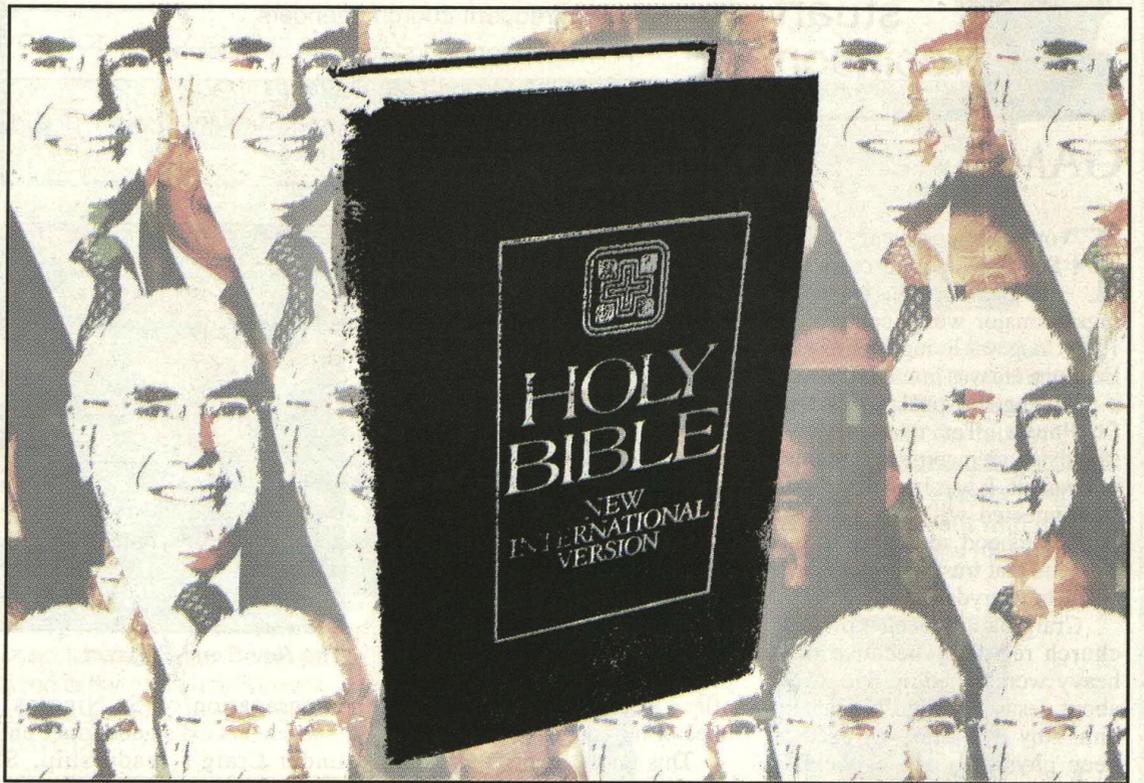
Despite public perceptions, politicians are not all the same. In fact, privately, Christianity has made a significant impact on Australian politics in recent years.

KARIN SOWADA argues that Christians should not be cynical about politics, but must see the Church has a vital role to play

The outrage from sections of the community when John Howard appointed an Archbishop as Governor-General, signalled an important shift in attitudes to the role of the church in public life. Adverse public comment following Dr Hollingworth's appointment sought to emphasise the traditional divide between church and state, even though there is no Constitutional barrier to a clergyman being Governor-General. If this argument was drawn to its

logical conclusion, any Australian citizen was potentially eligible, as long as they were not ordained ministers.

The furore opened up wider questions of defining a role for the church in Australian political life. As the church moves into the new millennium, it has cause for reflection on many issues. Falling numbers in the pews has placed pressure on the institution to examine its practices, and, in the eyes of the community, even the very relevance of its message.



Internal scandals and sexual abuse have undermined public confidence in the authority of the church. In a climate of increasing relativism the role of the church

is now greatly marginalised in the lives of many Australians, despite the fact that a majority of Australians still believe in God.

The 1999 Australian Parliamentary Fellow, Dr Marian Maddox, recently published an important study. In *For God and Country: Religious Dynamics in Australian Federal Politics*, she concluded that religion has had both a public and significant private impact on the political process in recent years, an impact that has often gone unnoticed by the media and other observers.

Despite the apparent marginalisation of the church from the public sphere, there is still a vital role for organised religion in political life. The church must continue to use and indeed build on recent gains to hold governments to account when defending the poor, the stateless and the disadvantaged. This is a solemn responsibility that has a solid biblical basis.

The biblical basis of government

The Bible expresses a consistent view about the nature and role of government. However, in both the Old and New Testaments, the people of God lived under, and participated in, a variety of arrangements. One common theme in the Bible is that the exercise of power involves service. This includes an exhortation for rulers to speak up for the rights of all who are destitute, to judge fairly and defend the rights of the poor and needy, according to the book of Proverbs 31:4-9. Justice and care for the needy is at the centre of good government, according to the book of Amos and Psalm 72. In Psalm 45:4, the ruler is called to ride forth victoriously on behalf of truth, humility and righteousness.

If one looks at passages that talk about rulers, there is no particular blueprint outlined for a given governing system. There is no model constitution, and certainly no particular support for

the notion of democracy, although the concept was well developed by the time of the New Testament. Indeed, it is impossible to find a basis to support one system of government over another anywhere in the Bible.

It can be argued that democratic systems of government are the most desirable from a Christian point of view, as they generally allow people wide religious freedoms, including the ability to openly and freely proclaim the gospel without fear of sanctions or death. But equally, as Christians, how would we feel about a system of government where there was no parliament, no free elections, but where the country was ruled by a godly Christian monarch, the champion of truth, serving the people with Christlike humility, ruling justly and dedicated to obeying God?

While the Bible is silent on the appropriateness of particular types of governing systems, it has a lot to say about the nature of government and how the authorities should rule us. In the Old Testament, God was pleased with rulers who upheld his laws and had them written on their hearts. Those who abandoned God were judged harshly by him.

But to what extent is the letter of the law of Moses applicable to the rulers of today, living in the time of the New Covenant? The Apostle Paul said that we are not under the law, but under grace. In applying this to government today, I believe the nature of good government, under whatever particular system, is rooted in the very character of God. God is fundamentally a God of order and peace, stability, fairness, compassion, mercy and justice – and the list could go on.

These qualities are the biblical qualities of good leadership. We should support systems of leaders who embody these values. We should support systems of government prepared to identify right and wrong, upholding those who do good and

continued on page 13

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Who says religion is a private matter?

Australia's welfare safety net would collapse without the massive contribution of Christians. Anglicare tin bins are just one small example and they feed 250 Sydney families a week.

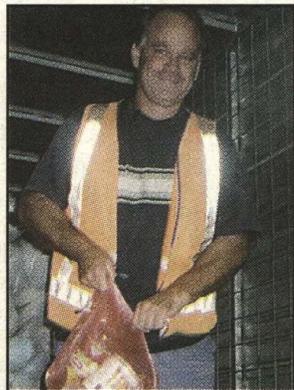
the facts

Anglicare NSW members invest around \$48.5m a year to help over 400,000 Australians within the Sydney Diocese.

Despite the myth that aid is utilised by a small number of repeat visitors, 40% of families who seek Anglicare's assistance do so for the first time.



Brett Steinwede donates tins of food at Greenacre Anglican Church.



Chris Mulholland, an Anglicare driver, picks up the tins from the church.



Chris drops off the tins to David Wilson at Anglicare's Summer Hill depot.



David sorts the food into packages to send to Anglicare relief centres.



At Campbelltown, Wendy Estell selects food for a family who asked for help.

In Anglican churches throughout the Sydney Diocese, Anglicare Tin bins are a familiar feature. Many Christians regularly place tins of non-perishable food in the bins to reach out to the needy in the community.

Ultimately, the food will be used in Anglicare's emergency relief centres and will supply families and individuals suffering from financial hardship with a hot

meal for the night. Staff and volunteers working in the emergency relief program assess each person's individual situation, to determine the type and level of support required.

Before the food reaches those in need it takes an important journey. Once a church's Tin Bin bag is full, it is bundled and placed in the Good Samaritan Bins on each church property. They are collected weekly and

taken to Anglicare's Summer Hill depot, where they are sorted and packed for distribution to Anglicare's six welfare centres across the Diocese.

Each donation of food is vital. The food is sorted into categories of meat and fish, fruit and vegetables, pasta and rice, biscuits and sweets and beverages, and each welfare centre is allocated bags of food according to demand.

Food is made into hampers that are put together at each centre to provide individual families with a balanced diet for a week. Anglicare's welfare staff provide nutritious food to offer families good examples of low-cost healthy eating. Most of these families require emergency food during a crisis, such as ill health, or retrenchment.

During the colder months, low-income fami-

lies experience greater financial strain than at any other time. Food and utility bills rise and children need warmer clothes. This winter, Anglicare has been forced to purchase food due to a drop in donations and an increase in demand, stretching funds to the limit.

Parish giving makes up the vast majority of Anglicare's food supplies and the *Your Money or Your Can Appeal* is an opportu-

nity for Anglicans to help. The annual food drive raises the majority of resources required for emergency relief during winter. In 2001 the campaign raised over \$50,000 in food donations.

This winter Anglicare needs 40,000 cans to meet the needs of families and is encouraging parishes to give generously by donating a can of food or \$2. To get your church involved call 9895 8061.

ing those who do evil, without fear or favour. We should support systems that promote justice, fairness and compassion in all its forms, in addition to defending a free environment for proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The marginalisation of the Church's voice

The church in Australia operates in a multi-faith, pluralistic society. Our Constitution is based on the Western democratic tradition of the separation of Church and State.

As the church operates in a climate where religion has been relegated to the private sphere, publicly claiming to have the truth is a very unpopular thing nowadays. This flies in the face of community views of tolerance, acceptance of other people's views and the right of people to believe and do what they like provided 'it doesn't hurt anyone'. This is the classic position of

secular humanism.

The marginalisation of the church in public debate has followed this notion of religion as a private matter and the increasing secularisation of the community. To infuse conversation or debate with a religious underpinning or rationale is somehow seen as anti-intellectual or narrow-minded. The views of the church are often quickly dismissed publicly by media commentators and privately by the political elite. In many debates the voice and moral authority of the church is swept aside as being irrelevant in a pluralistic, multicultural Australia. The privatisation of religion has resulted in many legislators choosing to ignore questions of personal and public morality as belonging to the realm of 'responsible adult decision-making'. This is particularly evident when the church involves itself in so-called 'moral questions' such as public policy on censorship, homosexual rights, reproductive technologies, family

policy and other similar areas. These are questions on which the church has a great deal to say and yet often has the least voice.

To help re-claim its influence, the church needs to get its own house in order. Claims of sexual abuse by the clergy in a number of denominations, attempts to cover up and protect the perpetrators, re-instatement or tolerance of adulterous or practising gay clergy and a failure to quickly implement open and transparent management practices has diminished the church's authority to speak on a number of moral questions. There is a community perception that the church has been slow to act, is protecting its own back, and thus sometimes speaks with a double standard.

Across the denominations or within the church, there is little unanimity over what position to adopt on some questions. On the question of stem cell research on human embryos, the Primate outlined a view that can be interpreted as actually allowing lim-

ited destructive research on embryos. Many sections of the Anglican Church disagree with the Primate and are in the process of directly voicing their concerns to legislators and bureaucrats. In the face of such disagreement, what is the community to consider the church believes?

It is hard to see how a number of views can be reconciled, given that on some issues, differences stem from fundamentally different approaches to the Bible. However, there is always room for discussion, debate and a greater degree of ecumenism where greater agreement can be reached than we have seen to date. A single, loud voice from the churches is far more persuasive in the political arena than a gaggle of differing churchmen who cannot find any common ground.

A good illustration of where cooperation can work was the euthanasia debate in support of the Andrews Bill in 1996. A coalition of forces, embracing churches, other religions such as

Muslims and Jews, disability groups, aged care organisations and other interested parties, helped create a large and persuasive campaign to stamp out fledgling euthanasia laws in the Northern Territory. From the church's perspective, the combined weight of organised religion, not only from the Christian side but from other traditions, created one of the most powerful religious coalitions seen in recent years.

The role of churches in social policy debate

Churches in Australia have been engaged in the public policy debate for some time, often much to the chagrin of those in office. The church has a more powerful voice in a climate where governments have increasingly devolved responsibility for the delivery of social welfare to non-government organisations, including church groups. Indeed, it can be argued that in

continued on page 15

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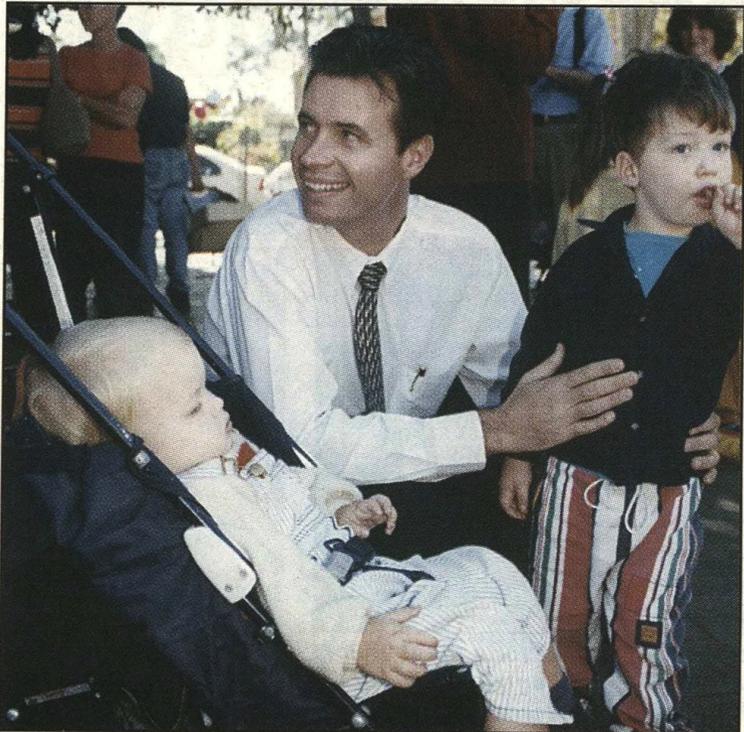
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The right way for Christian parents to raise their children



Luke Jessop-Smith and his children, who star in Anglican Media's documentary for parents called 'In our Family', attended a promotion of the series at St George Christian School's Mothers' Day Fete. Producer Robyn Powell spoke to parents about the series, which gives a Christian perspective on parenting and currently screens on the Seven Network on Sundays at 6:30am. St George Christian School is planning to run parenting seminars that include material from the Anglican Media TV series. Videos of the series can be purchased from CEP on (02) 8268 3309.

Suzie's family and Emma's family had very different ideas about child raising and education. The outcomes for the girls proved very telling.

Suzie and Emma* were very different girls from two different Christian families.

Both families were committed to their daughter's welfare, education, and protection. But they had different principles about child raising and education.

Suzie's family saw her schooling as an opportunity to experience the world as a Christian. They sent her to the local school where she would meet all sorts of fellow students – and could make a real attempt to share her faith in Jesus with others.

Emma's family had no choice except to send her to the local school. But they were concerned to protect her from the atheistic and immoral influences of the school. She was not encouraged to be involved in extracurricular activities and was not allowed to participate in the social life of the other students.

Suzie's family was committed to teaching their daughter to be a missionary in the world. Emma's family was equally committed to the principle of protecting their daughter from worldliness.

phillip
jensen



PEOPLEmatter

Sad to say, both girls suffered from their parents' principles.

Suzie was no missionary. A timid girl who sought approval from others, she found the conflict between her parents' desires for the school and her desire to be accepted by her peers overwhelming. She hated school and was frequently absent with the kind of illnesses that are difficult to diagnose. She fell behind in her schoolwork, which only compounded her distress and dislike of school. Instead of influencing her friends for Christ, they influenced her into an increasing dislike of all things Christian. Her behaviour became a major concern for her parents.

Eventually Suzie could take the pressure no longer and, much to her parents' dismay, had to be

removed from the school. They placed her in private education where she was better 'protected' from the world.

Emma externally conformed to her parents behavioural requirements. But her internal rebelliousness against her parents' strict regime led to open warfare at home. She too hated the conflict between school and home. It was not the alluring worldliness of the school that seduced her, but the constant restrictiveness of her home, her inability to join in the simple pleasures of her school friends, the claustrophobic feeling of not being allowed to grow up or take any responsibility, and the total lack of trust in her decisions or in the reality of her faith. Emma developed a constant rebellious and antagonistic spirit, which only increased her parents' concern about the bad influence of the school.

Emma finished school but left home as soon as she could. She discontinued her education and almost perversely chose whatever her parents were against.

The trouble with some principles of child raising is that they do not take sufficient account of the individual differences between children. Suzie needed the protective environment, not Emma. Emma was the born missionary, not Suzie. Reverse the roles and the parents' principles may have worked – after all they worked well for the girls' siblings.

Each family's commitment to their daughter has won out in the long run, but wise parenting is hard. Ideologies about 'the best' system are rarely a helpful guide for raising individual children.

* Names have been changed

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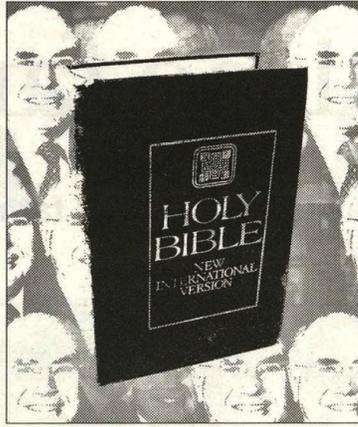
The Churches have a place in politics

continued from page 13

ing aspects of service delivery that were previously the responsibility of the state, Governments have actually helped the church develop a greater degree of authority on certain social policy issues.

The churches have a long history of delivering welfare and social support services to the community. Recent decisions by the current Coalition Government to further devolve welfare delivery has, I believe, unwittingly strengthened the position of the churches in policy debate.

The net result has drawn the churches further into a sphere that has been traditionally the funding responsibility of governments. They have, in effect, become an agent of delivering gov-



advantaged would be seriously affected by moves to have a GST on food.

The argument of church groups who campaigned against the GST, that Governments should construct tax systems that are just and fair, by imposing taxes

arising out of its growing role in the delivery of public policy outcomes, is one the churches should continue developing. They should not be embarrassed, remaining silent in the face of government attacks or feel a lack of experience or expertise – the reality is, churches have the expertise, particularly in coping with the aftermath of government policy decisions. It is a legitimate and valid part of public debate. Nor should there be any embarrassment about injecting a biblical basis for actions and opinions into public statements.

Christians and public office

Whereas Dr Hollingworth's appointment as Governor-General was greeted with controversy, clerics have found their way into parliament with nothing like the same degree of scrutiny. In the last decade, former Democrat Senator John Woodley was a Uniting Church Minister, as was the Hon. Brian Howe, a former ALP Deputy Prime Minister.

Many dedicated Christians have served in parliaments from all political parties. Their Christian worldview has influenced their attitude to public policy in various ways. Perhaps the most striking example comes from my side of politics, when the Rev John Woodley voted in favour of the Andrews Bill to outlaw euthanasia in the Northern Territory, against the majority of his Democrat colleagues.

Despite the public scorn heaped on politicians by the media and public, I believe Christians should regard involvement in public life as a worthy calling. To abandon the field of battle

leaves policy making in the hands of others whose worldview is not refined by Scripture.

It is possible to be a Christian and make a contribution to politics as a member of most parties in Australia. On many issues that come before the parliament, there is no hard and fast biblical position. That is not to say the Bible is irrelevant to legislation; occasionally there are important questions where a mind shaped by Christian values will make a different decision to one that is not. The current stem cell debate is one of those.

Conclusion

The church offers a frame of reference for public policy that is not defined by shifting values or changing definitions of human rights. Such moral absolutes are often not welcome but the church has a duty to speak up, as the prophets of old did in the face of hostility from the ruling authorities.

The authority of the church in recent times has been eroded and the problems that have led to this must be dealt with. The church as a whole must engage across denominations. In the public arena, the church speaks with a stronger voice when it is singing from the same song sheet. The church should not fear public reaction – its involvement in helping ministries gives it a sound and valid platform from which to influence public policy. The church has a responsibility to do this corporately and individually, a responsibility that is shaped by Scripture.

This is an edited extract from Dr Karin Sowada's 2002 Halifax Portal lecture. Dr Sowada is a former Democrat Senator for NSW.

The church has a duty to speak up, as the prophets of old did in the face of hostility from the ruling authorities.

ernment policy outcomes for the hot potato of unemployment. Thus the 'coalface' has become wider and deeper, offering churches greater insights into the problems of structural joblessness, job disadvantage, job training and the issues faced by older job seekers.

The deep involvement of the churches in the delivery of welfare services gives an important voice in the policy debate. Yet how often have we seen the churches told to 'butt out' of political debates that range beyond the sphere of so-called moral issues? This was particularly evident during the GST debate, when the Howard Government faced a coalition of anti-GST views from a whole range of church groups. The reaction from sections of the government was nothing short of hostile. Many members interpreted the involvement of the churches as a partisan interference in an area of economic policy where the church had no expertise. However, many church workers at 'the coalface' perceived that the poor and dis-

which do not fall too harshly on the poor, was a valid contribution to the debate.

Governments cannot have it both ways. They cannot on one hand expect churches to play an increasingly significant role in social welfare delivery, and indeed help fund that process, and expect them to stay silent on major policy questions affecting their clientele. As the groups at the coalface, churches are often in an outstanding position to understand the impact of government policy across a whole range of areas, from assistance to the unemployed, to support for those with disabilities, aged care, education and even gambling.

Indeed, on the question of gambling, the churches continue to be one of the few groups consistently pointing to the negative social affects of gambling, particularly the spread of poker machines. The discomfort that governments feel on this issue is now palpable. On these and other social policy issues, churches have a responsibility to speak out.

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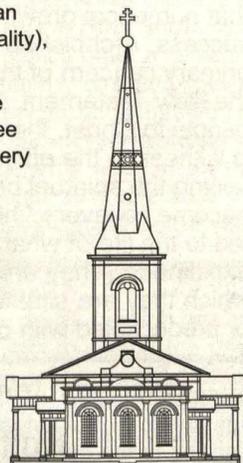
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David is graduating from Bible College to be a full-time farmer

Small churches in the bush struggle to pay clergy, so an increasing number of farmers are becoming trained to lead ministry, writes AMY BUTLER.

Do-it-yourself church is certainly the model which has operated in Hillston Baptist for the last 12 years, because of the lack of funds to pay a minister. David Burgess, who grew up on the family farm near Hillston, says it's nothing to find yourself on the preaching roster one week and the cleaning roster the next.

Hillston, with a population of 1200, is what some people describe as a 'central location' situated in the southwest of New South Wales. It's just a seven to eight hour drive to either Sydney, Melbourne or Adelaide.

When Mr Burgess decided to study at Sydney Missionary and Bible College (SMBC) his aim was to return home better equipped to play an active role in his church and to evangelise his friends.

"My mates are non-Christian, so our conversations were limited to sport, the weather and the farm," Mr Burgess explains. "When the city makes me feel down, I just think about my mates and how much they need to hear the gospel."

Alana McSeveny, on the other hand, did not expect that her days at SMBC would lead her to the bush.

Ms McSeveny grew up in Blacktown and has always been involved with what she describes as well-resourced ministries such as Campus Bible Study at the University of New South Wales.

"I had never been beyond Bathurst. I knew Australia was a big country, but you don't realise how much is out there until you see it," she said.

Alana and David met at SMBC. They recently married and will settle in Hillston when they complete their studies at the end of this year.

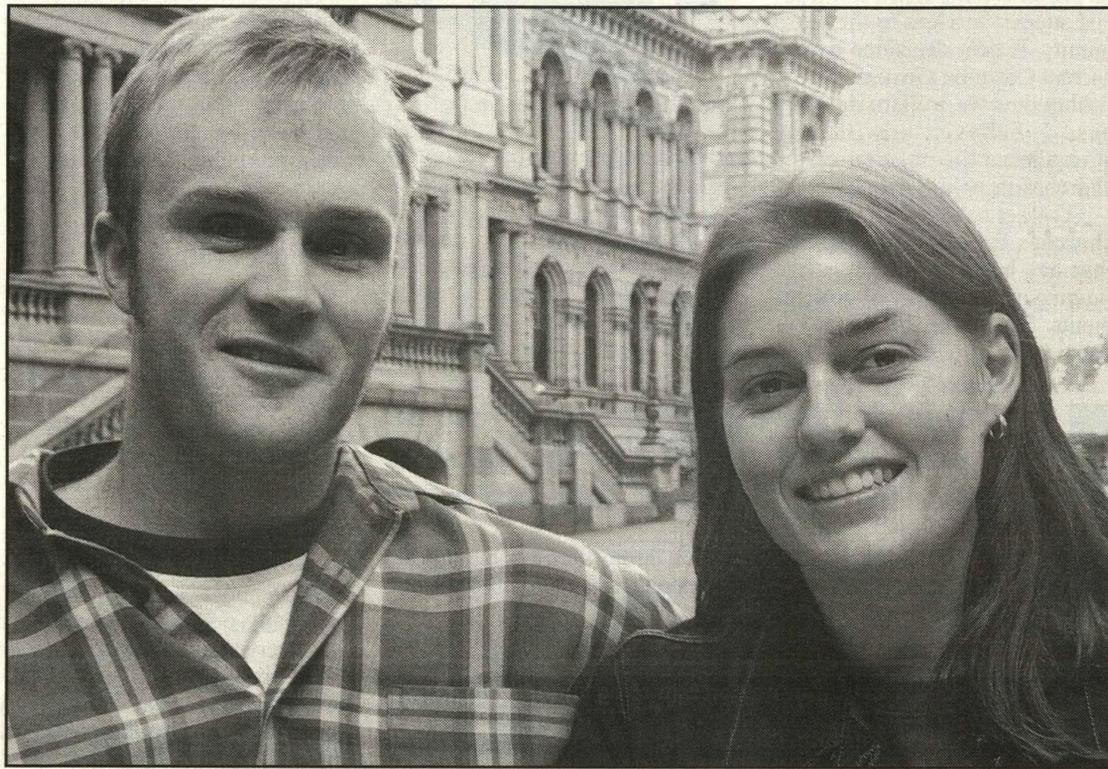
David says one of the challenges of evangelism in the country is the fierce independence of people fostered by the harsh conditions in which they have to make their living.

"If people succeed in the bush they think it's because of what they've done. This creates a barrier in their understanding that it's God who created the world and sustains it," he said.

Alana says she sees moving to Hillston as an opportunity to use the teaching she has received in Sydney. She is hoping to start a youth group and an ISCF.

"In some ways moving to the country won't be so new because ministry is about relationships and investing in friendships. We know we will be there long-term because of the nature of small communities," she said.

Both David and Alana encourage people to consider the bush as a mission field. When they settle into their home at Hillston they will extend the offer of country-style hospitality to any one who would like to visit and observe what outback ministry entails.



David and Alana will settle in the remote town of Hillston, population 1200, when they complete their Bible College studies. "We will be there long-term because of the nature of small communities."

The Year of the Outback helps highlight some pioneering strategies for ministry in remote Australia

With the absence of funds for stipendiary ministers in the Country Goldfields region of the Diocese of Perth, the Rev Bruce Hyde is a living example of a decade old initiative of training lay people for ministry.

Mr Hyde has lived and worked his whole life on the land at Dalwallinu, 300 kilometres northeast of Perth, with a population of 800 people.

In his early 30s he undertook training to become a minister and was ordained last March. He now continues his 'day job' as a farmer while fulfilling his ministry duties outside of work hours.

Bruce admits that juggling work and ministry responsibilities is extremely difficult in an outback environment that offers its own unique trials and difficulties. He believes that, in order for this model of ministry to be sustained, effective support structures are needed, such as the opportunity to meet up with like-minded Christians from other denominations.

"It's a challenge, in this small church of less than 50 people, to not revert into maintenance mode rather than being in mission mode. I only have limited time to be able to energise people but I try to help people focus on their calling and their mission."

Despite the struggles, Bruce points out many benefits in being a life-long member of the church community in a permanent ministry role.

"I've lived here all my life, people know me and so the faith becomes more approachable for those on the fringe," he said.

However, he acknowledges that the future of the church is in the conversion of those who are

Ministry blooms in Broome

Broome is the winter holiday destination for up to 30,000 Australians. With BCA Society support and with two Moore College graduates – David O'Mara and Andrew Ford – 'released' from Sydney Diocese to do their training in Broome, the parish has taken a giant step forward. Realising past outreach programs were heavily focused on the huge holiday influx of retirees every year, a decision was made to build new congregations that would be attractive to the under 35s who comprise the expanding suburbs of this outback regional center.

Web opens new gate for outback ministry

BCA has initiated a unique internet ministry to boost the effectiveness of traditional farm gate visiting in the far west of the state. Using its Broken Hill facilities as a base, BCA is casting a web of hospitality across western NSW. The new initiative offers great opportunities for developing high quality gospel ministry to the people of remote areas west of the Darling River. The recent improvement to telecommunications facilities in this part of the Outback has provided many with daily contact. Frequent contact enables relationships to develop in ways that were not possible when the minister was only able to call at a property two or three times each year.

Is numerical growth the indicator of success?

In the annual Bush Church Aid Society address, former Archbishop of Sydney, Harry Goodhew dispelled the idea that numerical growth is the major indicator of a church's success. Archbishop Goodhew said size was not the primary concern of the writers who addressed churches in the New Testament. "After preaching the gospel and calling people to Christ, the correspondence of the New Testament is witness to the efforts expended in developing and maintaining the spiritual health and vitality of those who had become believers," he said. "Supporters of BCA are committed to the life of what are inevitably small churches," he explained. "[They are] small because the communities in which they are situated are either small, isolated, unstable, or preoccupied with other things."

not currently part of the faith community. His concern is that ministers in the outback struggle to do the bare minimum when

they have full-time secular work to complete and lack the 'critical mass' in their congregations to share ministry responsibilities.

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Christians are fueling India's religious tensions

A leading Indian evangelist says large crusades give the impression the Church wants to create a 'Christian state'. He says there are better ways to spread the gospel.

The world took notice of recent reports that three million Hindus may be preparing to convert to Christianity. But the vast nation may be experiencing a less spectacular and more significant change of heart, writes GEOFF ROBSON.

From a distance, India seems to be a country in perpetual turmoil. Along with a growing climate of violence among religious extremists and a seemingly unending cycle of poverty and various injustices, there is also the ever-present spectre of deadly war with neighbouring Pakistan. Amid this turmoil, though, opportunities for Christian ministry throughout India are many and varied, and may even be on the rise in the 21st century.

But one of India's leading evangelical ministers believes Christians must re-think their approach in the vast nation, or risk making the problem worse.

The Rev Samuel Stephens, President of the India Gospel League (IGL) visited Sydney last month, and warned that despite the evangelistic zeal being exhibited by some Christians, their efforts may actually be adding to tensions across the country.

Attempting to 'win India for Christ', many large crusades have visited the country which accounts for one sixth of the world's population. In a climate dominated by Hinduism, with the effects of Islamic fundamentalism being felt, and with Christianity so closely associated with the West, talk of conversion is often perceived as an attempt to build a political 'Christian state', according to Mr Stephens. He believes that, while it may be well-intentioned, such talk often provokes violence and aggression towards Christians.

"We're presenting our cause in a way that can easily be misunderstood," Mr Stephens says. "[Other religions] are thinking of political transformation and political change. They vehemently react to that kind of situation.

"In many ways, the church has brought things upon itself by not adequately or properly conveying what the Christian faith is about, and what conversion is about. When we talk about building God's Kingdom in India, it's a kingdom of peace, love, justice and civil society. It's not about numbers. We have inadequately conveyed that message to the rest of India."

Coming from a family of four generations of ordained ministers, it may seem like no surprise that Samuel Stephens finds himself at the forefront of taking the gospel to India. The family tradi-

tion started when his great-grandfather became a Christian through Salvation Army missionaries. Because of his change of faith, he was chased away from home by Hindu relatives. "His family thought that he had rejected them and their traditions by accepting a new faith and a new God. They tried to kill him by poisoning him, so he had to run away from home," Samuel says.

Making his own Christian commitment around the age of six, it may have seemed inevitable for Samuel to follow in the family footsteps. But it was not until after completing college that he felt the call to full-time ministry. While attending Bible seminary he met his wife, Prati, and together they now have nine children – seven of them adopted.

Joining IGL, where he was mentored by his father, Samuel started work as a 'barefoot pastor', going from village to village to preach and plant churches. During this time his passion grew for seeing the grass roots change brought by the gospel. "My heart was touched and broken by the physical and the material, but more so by the spiritual needs of the people," he says. "I was also touched by the openness and receptivity of the people to the gospel, when it was presented in the proper way so that they could meaningfully understand and accept the message."

This philosophy has stayed with him, and with IGL, ever



Supporters of the Indian Nationalist Party break police barriers during a protest against Christian conversions. (photo: AAP)



Evangelist Samuel Stephens

since. "Our primary thrust is evangelism and church planting," he says. "The next level after that is to train and equip believers to reach out to their community."

Faced with an enormous list of seemingly ingrained problems – social, religious, gender and class issues, to name a few – the

challenge may seem overwhelming. But the IGL has been experiencing great success by starting with evangelism among local villages. It is through local converts reaching out to their community, rather than an external aid agency, that change and compassion are brought to the people.

As Mr Stephens explains, the IGL makes no distinction between direct evangelism and dealing with the range of social and religious issues confronting Indian society. "No amount of development work will have a long-lasting, generational effect that is sustained over a period of time in a whole community, unless the framework of people's thinking is changed. We see that the gospel does that. Presenting Christ to

them really brings about change.

"The community doesn't look at our church planting activity or the group of new believers as a group of people who has given up their traditions and gone after a foreign god. They are able to see the new faith those people have accepted. They see Christianity as a living, vibrant way of life, filled with love and compassion for other people."

The Diocese of Sydney has developed a close relationship with the India Gospel League, with the Archbishop of Sydney's Overseas Relief and Aid Fund (ORAF) funding various aspects of the IGL's work among local villages and communities.

Recent reports from India suggested that millions of lower-caste Dalits were preparing to convert *en masse* to Christianity. But while this move never eventuated, Mr Stephens believes it would have been more of a political than a spiritual move, a change to nominal Christianity to avoid oppression from higher-caste Hindus.

Meanwhile, through the work of IGL and other similar ministries, real change has been happening among the Dalits for many years.

"The fact is that it's taking place every day. A silent revolution is taking place that the rest of the world doesn't recognise," Mr Stephens says. "As much as we try to explain the fact that the church is growing among the same group of people, no one wants to listen to that. They want the spectacular, the dramatic, the immediate results."

"In the last ten years I would estimate three or four million people have come to know the Lord with a real, spiritual transformation."

Ministering to people on the fringe

continued from page 11

SR: Craig, what is the stated Mission of St Nicolas'?

CS: We seek to be *passionate* about the Lord Jesus Christ, *empowered* by the Holy Spirit, *ministering* to each other and the local community, enabling growth in God's people and Kingdom. In addition, the eleven members of the group who worked on the Mission plan also worked a series of strategic goals for this year.

SR: Can you give some examples of these goals?

CS: One goal (which we've reached) was to establish a team to coordinate existing and future ministry. This was achieved with the guidance of the staff at Evangelism Ministries. Another goal

was to create a music team. We've appointed a team leader and the new work is having a real impact in our morning services.

SR: What still needs attention?

CS: We need to expand the number and style of services in order to attract different groups of people. And the elusive bridge between local scripture classes – which has a great team of teachers – and our church remains.

SR: Can our readers help you?

CS: We really believe that the Mission of St Nicolas' is in fact God's direction for this church, in this suburb, in these times. Do please pray that we'll be a passionate church, empowered by the Holy Spirit to minister to the people of Coogee.

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email lithgowmedical@bigpond.com

Church Business Manager Holy Trinity Adelaide

Holy Trinity Adelaide is a 1000-member church with congregations meeting at its City North Terrace site and at Aldgate in the Adelaide Hills. It has a strong evangelical tradition and a vision to develop new evangelistic ministries including an ongoing programme of church planting. It currently has a staff team of 14. The Church Business Manager is responsible for coordinating a range of ministries with a specific responsibility for an efficient and helpful administrative and clerical support for the life of the Church.

The successful applicant will need to develop a broad knowledge of the Trinity community, its vision and leadership structure. The person should have a demonstrated Christian commitment, working understanding of information technology and finance. Managerial experience with demonstrated ability in leadership, communication, team work, project management, leading small groups and committees and recruiting and training of volunteers are important.

A detailed job description is available by contacting the Church Office at 97 North Terrace, Adelaide SA 5000, phone 08 8213-7300, fax 08 8212-3611, or email ibartlett@trinity.asn.au. Remuneration is negotiable based on expertise and experience. Enquiries can be directed to Ian Bartlett. Application including a resume and names of three referees should be sent to the Church Office, marked Attn Ian Bartlett - Confidential.

Closing date for applications is 9th August 2002.

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 - 'Mums and Bubs' bible study
 - Pastoral visiting and discipleship.
 - Training women at church.

For more details please phone
Andrew Burr on 9809-3598
At St Chad's Anglican Church - Putney

Assistant Pastor

Georges River
Congregational Church
(Panania NSW)

Part time - 3 days per week

Enquiries:
Rev Graeme Best
(02) 9525-1283



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- Small Group Coordination
- Sunday Services

Applicants: contact Tony Galea to arrange an interview.

Phone 02 4655 1675.

Regional Translations Coordinator

Having published topical and thematic Scripture resources in almost 1,000 languages worldwide Scripture Gift Mission has now planned an exponential growth in the development and publication of both new titles and translations. As part of this initiative we need a new person to fill the role of Regional Translations Coordinator for our Asia-Pacific region (which for us excludes the Indian subcontinent).

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We expect this position to be filled in July. Further enquiries, and requests for a detailed job description, may be directed to:

Greg Cooper, International Translations Director
Scripture Gift Mission
PO Box 688, CASTLE HILL NSW 1765
Phone: (02) 9899 3773
Fax: (02) 9680 1977
Email: greg@sgm.org



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and/or

BIBLE

and

German

Block (4th term 2002)

Applications are invited from enthusiastic and committed Christian teachers of reformed persuasion, for the above full time position(s) which are available from the beginning of first term 2003 (except for German). The Teaching of TAS involves both wood and metal Technics. Both TAS and Bible subjects are taught throughout the junior and senior secondary sections of the school. There is three other full time teachers in the TAS area and one other full time teacher in the Bible area and the curriculum is well developed. Preference would be for one applicant to combine both subjects but combinations with other subjects may be considered.

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The Business Manager
Sutherland Shire Christian School
P.O. Box 390
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Enquiries are welcome by phone on 02 9543 2133 or by e-mail sscs@sscs.nsw.edu.au or visit our web site www.sscs.nsw.edu.au.

The Anglican Diocese of Perth



DEAN

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- Provide and design professional development for clergy and stipended lay ministries
- Develop a team ethos with all in academic and formation positions accountable to the Dean
- Offer support to Christian Educator in the development of Christian Education in the diocese
- Design and oversee conferences for the Australian Anglican Church stimulating growth in Christian Education and ministry development

An application package can be obtained from:

The Rt Revd Brian Farran
Tel 08 9300 0833
Fax 08 9300 0893
Email nrbishop@nw.com.au

Closing date for applications is 19 August 2002

Expressions of Interest

are invited for a full time placement from ministers of the word, lay pastors or pastoral assistants in the beautiful Far South Coast region of the Bega Valley.

The congregations of Bega and Tathra Uniting Church have flourished under 30 years of evangelical ministry and we look forward to the continuation of this. Teaching the Bible, making disciples and pastoral care are priorities of the congregations.

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Full applications should be sent to the Parochial Nominators, St Margaret's Anglican Church, PO Box 75W, Westcourt Qld 4870

The Anglican Parish of ST STEPHEN'S BELROSE

16 Lockwood Avenue, Belrose NSW 2085

is seeking a Rector who has demonstrated teaching, pastoral and leadership skills, able to lead a dedicated staff and ministry team.

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A Parish profile and information pack are available from:

The Nominators: ph. 02 9452 4220
email: richardgee@bigpond.com.au

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 people.

Relevant checks of criminal history, apprehended violence orders and previous disciplinary proceedings will be conducted on recommended applicants to such positions.

Celebrating 200 years of gospel ministry in Sydney

The first two parishes in Australia are 200 years old this month.

St John's, Parramatta

Christian outreach to Parramatta followed soon after the proclamation of the Colony of NSW by Governor Phillip in 1788. It is not known precisely when the first church service was held in the early settlement of Parramatta, but it is thought to have been in 1789.

For some time services for a largely convict congregation were held monthly under the branches of a tree on the riverside with the colony's chaplain the Rev Richard Johnson travelling to Parramatta from Sydney and returning on the same day.

The first church service in a building is believed to have been held in a carpenter's shop near Governor Phillip's residence in Parramatta in 1791.

With the arrival of assistant chaplain Samuel Marsden in March 1794, the growth of Christian ministry centred on the Parramatta settlement.

For nearly a decade Marsden held services in a lean to. The laying of the foundations of the first St John's in November 1798 was the first step towards the establishment of the St John's parish. The first church building, opened by Marsden on Easter Sunday of 1803, nearly a year after the proclamation of the parish, was said to be the most impressive building in NSW.

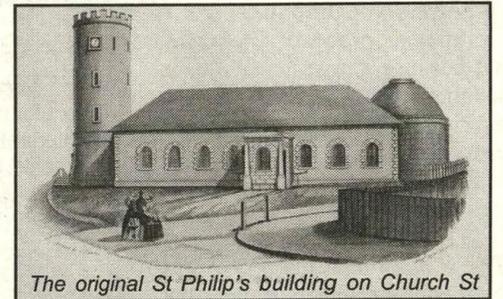
Today St John's provides extensive ministries - for children, adults and seniors - in the heart of the bustling, business district of Parramatta. Under the leadership of Canon David Mulready, it serves a very diverse and cosmopolitan community.

St John's very active outreach to the local ethnic Chinese community began in 1997 as an initiative of Canon Peter Kemp with the assistance of the Rev Irene Mok as a church planter.

Proclamation by Governor King

July 23, 1802.

"His Excellency is pleased to direct that in all spiritual, judicial and parochial proceedings, deeds, instruments and registers that the districts of Sydney, Petersham, Bulanaming, Concord, and Liberty Plains be comprised with a parish to be henceforth named 'Saint Phillip', in honour of the first Governor of this territory; and that the districts of Parramatta, Banks' Town, Prospect Hill, Toongabbie, Seven Hills, Castle Hill, Eastern Farms, Field of Mars, Northern Boundaries, Ponds and Kissing Point, be comprised with a parish to be henceforward named 'St John', in honour of the late Governor, Captain John Hunter; and the churches now building at Sydney and Parramatta be respectively named St Phillip and St John."



The original St Phillip's building on Church St

St Philip's, Sydney

Sydney's first church building erected by First Fleet chaplain Richard Johnson, stood for only five years. A new one, St Philip's, was built on Church Hill.

The long ministry of William Cowper, first incumbent of St Philip's, laid an excellent foundation for the future. A steadfast evangelical, he shrugged off discouragements in circumstances where discouragements were plentiful. For 49 years he worked hard in the growing town of Sydney, winning great respect and affection.

One of his sons wrote: "He taught them that a faith that is real purifies the heart, and works by love both to God and man, and that those only can claim to be Christ's followers who walk in newness of life. By such preaching souls were converted, comforted and edified."

The parish has an unbroken tradition of using the Book of Common Prayer at all Sunday services. Successive rectors have endeavoured to maintain the character and priorities established by William Cowper.

St Philip's has been strongly linked with Moore College. William Macquarie Cowper, who succeeded his father at St Philip's from 1858, acted as the college's principal for a short time when the college opened. T C Hammond was rector of St Philip's and principal of Moore College for 25 years.

Over the years the area enclosed by St Philip's parish boundaries has been greatly reduced. Once centrally placed in relation to Sydney's residential population, it now finds itself on the edge of the CBD.

This year the parish has initiated meetings every Wednesday at 6.30pm called Citynorth Interchange. This provides clear Bible teaching by gifted speakers, reaching out to the City of Sydney, as St Philip's has always done, with the message of Christ.

As part of the celebrations Archbishop Peter Jensen will speak at a dinner on July 19 and a Thanksgiving Service on Sunday, July 21 at 10am.

For information ph (02) 9247-1071.

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Application forms are available to interested applicants by phoning the School on 9484 1146.

Closing date - Friday July 19th

University Student Ministry

CS, a non-denominational christian student group at UTS Kuring-gai, is looking for a mature christian woman to join their student ministry team.

The position is part time and will involve spending time nurturing young christian women and working with the established student ministries.

For all enquiries please contact us at:

christianstudents@yahoo.com or
 call Scott on 0414-569-982

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Applications for this full-time position should be submitted in writing (marked confidential) to the General Secretary, CMS NSW, Level 3, 93 Bathurst Street, Sydney 2000.

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at St Philip's Church Hill, cnr York, Jamison and Clarence Streets

Enquiries 9247-1071

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Don't have a sacred cow, man

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO THE SIMPSONS
BY MARK I PINSKY
WESTMINSTER JOHN KNOX PRESS, 2001
ISBN 0 6642 2419 9

I really wish I had written this book. Not because it's a timeless piece of literature, but because it would have been so much fun to write. Any project that involves watching over 150 episodes of *The Simpsons*, as Mark Pinsky did for this book, must be as good as it gets.

The Gospel According to The Simpsons chronicles the portrayal of religion in the show, which has just finished its record-breaking 13th season.

Since coming on air in 1989, *The Simpsons* has consistently provoked the type of strong, passionate reaction which most shows can only dream about. Over the last decade, US politicians have gone from denouncing the show as a sign of moral decay to riding its coattails by claiming to be fans.

Pinsky is not heavy-handed with his analysis. What he provides is more a collection of quotes, themes and ideas that have appeared on the show over the years, which is probably the best approach with an eclectic bunch like the residents of Springfield.

His overall thesis – that *The Simpsons* is actually extremely positive in its portrayal of God, faith and the place of religion – may be controversial. But, all things considered, it is right on the money.

Admittedly, faith within the Simpson household is fairly haphazard, if not downright blasphemous. Asked what is the family religion, Homer replies, "You know, the one with all the

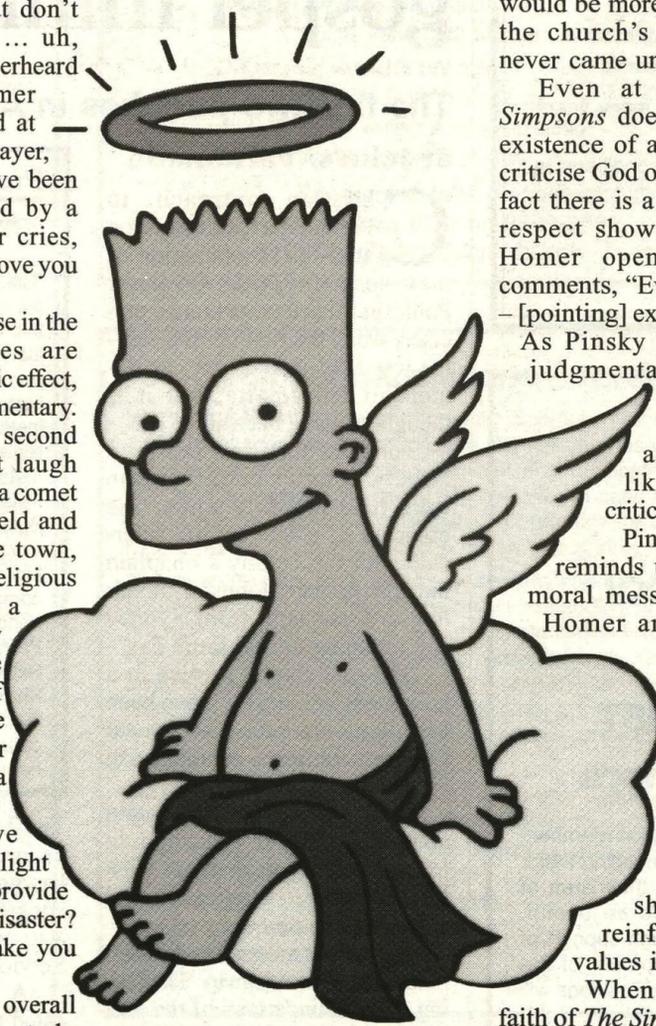
well-meaning rules that don't work out in real life ... uh, Christianity!" Bart is overheard praying to Santa; Homer prays to Superman, and at another point starts a prayer, "Dear God, the gods have been good to me..." Chased by a runaway Rhino, Homer cries, "Jesus, Allah, Buddha, I love you all!"

But like everything else in the show, these references are worked for maximum comic effect, not maximum social commentary. Analysis always comes second to winning the biggest laugh possible. For example, as a comet hurtles towards Springfield and threatens to destroy the town, Homer wishes he was a religious man. Immediately, a hysterical Rev Timothy Lovejoy, pastor of the First Church of Springfield, runs down the street shouting, "It's over people! We don't have a prayer!"

Is this a subversive reference meant to highlight the church's inability to provide answers in the face of disaster? Or is it just meant to make you laugh?

Consider the show's overall portrayal of faith. One study found that religion was mentioned in 58 per cent of episodes and was the main 'context' of 11 per cent of episodes. What other prime time show offers that? As Harry Shearer, one of the voices behind the show, said, "No other program even tries to satirise religion. They're afraid of it and would much rather proffer half a dozen sex jokes."

It is the Simpsons' next door neighbour, Ned Flanders – the outreach-focused, Bible-quoting, Evangelical – who is the most upstanding character on the



show. Most Springfielders attend church regularly and often turn to God in times of crisis. In fact, the men, women and children of *The Simpsons* may be yellow-skinned, three-fingered, two-dimensional characters who haven't aged in 13 years, but their faith is more realistic than that of anyone else on prime time.

While it does treat religion with great irreverence, *The Simpsons* has consistently attacked all of society's sacred cows, such as politics, the media and big business, without discrimination. If anything, it

would be more of a comment on the church's irrelevance if it never came under the spotlight.

Even at its worst, *The Simpsons* doesn't question the existence of a higher power or criticise God or Jesus directly. In fact there is a certain irreverent respect shown, such as when Homer opens a Bible and comments, "Everyone's a sinner – [pointing] except for this guy!" As Pinsky says, hypocrisy, judgmentalism and exploitation within the church are much more likely to cop the criticism.

Pinsky also helpfully reminds us of the positive moral message delivered by Homer and friends. That might have seemed almost unthinkable during the early 90s, when anti-*Simpsons* hype was everywhere, but over the years the show has actually reinforced traditional values in many ways.

When considering the faith of *The Simpsons*, we should ask ourselves, what portrayal would we rather see on TV?

Most programs convey spirituality as belonging to either the outmoded traditionalist (see Grams from *Dawson's Creek*) or the quirky, New Age oddball (see Phoebe from *Friends*). But in *The Simpsons*' world, faith is not a taboo subject. It's a vital, significant part of daily life.

Geoff Robson

This is an edited version of the review. The complete review can be found at www.anglicanmediasydney.asn.au/cul/simpsons.htm

Sing again to the glory of God

HYMNS FROM THE HEART
FIFTY HYMNS AND SONGS FOR WELL-KNOWN TUNES
BY JOHN SEDDON

Hymns are, of course, the outward manifestation of a deep human need to reach out, to join with others to praise God. The 1933 Preface to the Methodist Hymn Book rightly states that "to praise God is the high calling of man. A hymn is only a hymn if in it men speak to the Most High and He to them. May every hymn in this book be sung always and only to the glory of God!"

I write as one who is required to search through thousands of texts to offer hymns to people through which they offer their praise to God.

It is refreshing to find in Seddon's offering of *50 Hymns and Songs* a strength; a simplicity and a non-sentimental approach to hymn writing.

I often find myself cringing from the saccharine piety of much that is passed off as contemporary hymn writing with its monotonous 'I'- and 'Me'-centred rumination.

In this collection, instead, I found appropriate weekly hymn selections enhanced by fresh views, sincere and simple texts which encapsulate the concerns of 21st century Christians and the very tenets of Christian faith. Liturgically appropriate and scripturally based, Seddon has provided hymns covering important events in the Christian calendar, significant biblical narratives, hymns for families, marriage, baptism, children and even a poignant and heartfelt hymn dealing with the trauma of marriage ending in divorce – set, most appropriately, to the tune of 'The Carnival is Over'.

The urge to sing through the hymns in this collection, to see how they worked with the 'old' tunes, was irresistible. The scanning of the lines of the poetry is strong and rhythmical; congregations will enjoy the combination of new texts with old and favourite tunes. I am reminded of the way in which Martin Luther reintroduced the singing of hymns by congregations, by setting the new hymn-texts to pre-existing, popular tunes.

There are many unusual and useful additions; a third verse for 'Advance, Australia Fair'; hymns for the Gospel Procession; a moving hymn based on Holman Hunt's painting, 'The Light of the World'; songs for children and many others.

This is a welcome addition to the music liturgist's library; it combines relevant, dignified hymns set to familiar tunes which will be welcomed by congregations of all ages and denominations.

Garry M Rodgers

Garry M Rodgers is director of music as St Stephen's, Newtown.

To order a copy of this book, contact John Seddon on 9969 6910.

Faith and race lies at heart of this war novel

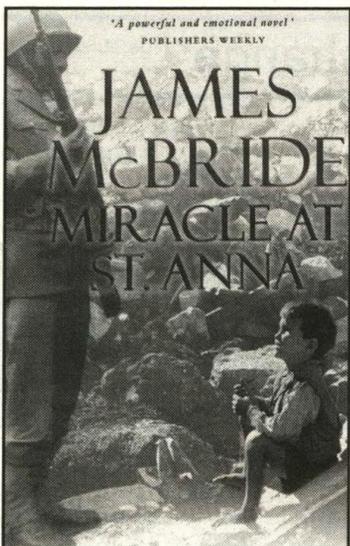
MIRACLE AT ST ANNA
BY JAMES MCBRIDE
SCEPTRE, 2002
ISBN 0 7336 1480 9

It is a bitter irony that at the same time black Americans were being denied civil rights and were enduring extreme racial hatred at the hands of their countrymen, they were compelled to fight and die for their country.

Popular perception of America's involvement in WWII envisages white soldiers / marines / pilots fighting in Europe and the Pacific. However African-Americans were among the thousands of military personnel embroiled in the conflict. With the exception of the commanding officers, the 92nd Infantry Division, which fought in Italy, was almost exclusively black. Like their predecessors in WWI, they were known as the Buffalo Soldiers.

James McBride's novel, *Miracle at St Anna*, focuses on four soldiers from the 92nd division during the dying days of WWII.

After rescuing an injured Italian boy, Private Sam Train – cut off from his own division – takes off into enemy territory to look



for help. Reluctantly following are the remnants of his unit: Bishop, the sleazy, on-the-take preacher; Stamps, the lighter skinned Lieutenant; and Negrón, the Puerto Rican.

The four men take refuge in the Serchio Valley near the site of a recent massacre. In the village of St Anna, hundreds of civilians – women, children and the elderly – were butchered by German soldiers. To make matters worse, it seems they were betrayed by one of their own.

As the Americans wait for orders or rescue, they become involved with the local Italians, who offer them the sort of acceptance they've never experienced from white people. While Train focuses on caring for the young boy, his colleagues, together with a group of partisans, investigate whether there's a traitor among them.

Miracle at St Anna is James McBride's first novel but his second book. His first, *The Color of Water*, spent more than two years on the *New York Times* bestseller list. McBride is the son of a white Jewish woman and a black clergyman. *The Color of Water* is a biography of his mother Ruth's extraordinary life, including her Christian faith. McBride himself is a believer and his books resonate with the strength of his conviction.

McBride's faith imbues the story with a sense of hope and a confidence in the power of God. The love of God seems to rest in the least likely of people. The preacher Bishop has no insight into God's character. A shiftless womaniser who uses his gifts for speaking to fleece the vulnerable, he loves and trusts no one. It's the illiterate Sam Train who loves sacrificially and powerfully, and

who demonstrates an understanding of God.

At times McBride is didactic when he should be reserved, however ultimately, this doesn't undermine the story.

With a background in journalism – he wrote for *The Washington Post* and *Boston Globe* – McBride writes with the insistence of a newspaperman. Based on historical details surrounding the massacre in the village of St Anna di Stazzema in Tuscany and on the experiences of the soldiers of the 92nd Division in Italy during World War II, *Miracle at St Anna* is grounded in history. McBride's extensive research is woven neatly into the narrative's thread.

While the title might suggest an upbeat, happy-ending sort of novel, this is, fundamentally, a tale of combat and devastation.

The novel raises issues of race and identity in the midst of war. The descriptions of battle and the impact of war on individuals makes for some gritty reading.

There's an urgency about the story that leaves little time for McBride to develop his characters. But it's the story he's interested in telling and he tells it very well.

Sarah Barnett

Zeal alone will not bring real revival

FIRESTORM OF THE LORD
BY STUART PIGGIN
PATERNOSTER, 2000
ISBN 1 84227 031 1

Stuart Piggin has given us another reflection on the subject of revival. It has been a special concern of his for many years, and his particular brand of historical and personal reflection on the subject has both strengths and weaknesses.

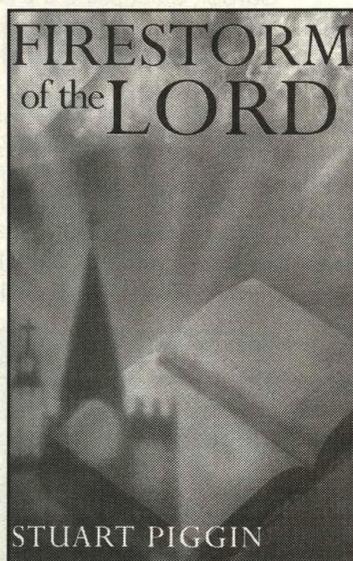
This latest study appears more systematic than many of its predecessors. It begins with chapters on definitions of revival and revival in the Bible, continues with two historical chapters, and includes chapters on revival in the charismatic movement and in the Anglican and Catholic denominations. The last four chapters take a very practical turn, examining preaching, prayer, planning, and paying for revival. The clear goal of the book is to stimulate us to long for, to pray for and to work towards revival.

There can be no doubt about the sincerity of Dr Piggin's longing for a great work of God in our land. That longing is written deep into every page of this book. What's more, he repeatedly insists that revival is a work of God rather than something human beings can manipulate or accomplish through a particular set of techniques. This is a very helpful corrective to much writing on the subject. Nevertheless, he remains convinced that while these phenomena are sovereign works of God, this does not mean there is nothing we can do to prepare the ground.

Early on he insists, "We cannot work it up. We can only pray it down." (p. 14) At the other end of the book he spells out his own strategy for revival: "start with yourself, pray up the generals, get a committed nucleus, and then train up the troops." (p. 203) Surely such an exhortation with the goal of seeing the name of the Lord Jesus honoured throughout the land is something every Christian would want to endorse. There is much that is good in these pages.

Yet some of the great weaknesses of Dr Piggin's earlier work resurface in this latest volume. His use of the Bible is idiosyncratic, at points irresponsible, and largely unconvincing. The chapter entitled 'Revival in the Bible' is particularly disappointing. One gets the impression that Dr Piggin is driving his agenda through the Bible with little regard for what the particular passages are actually saying.

There is some cause for concern in the way stories and quotations from other writers are pressed into the service of Dr Piggin's agenda. Stories are often introduced with descriptions such as 'the revival in New South Wales in 1902/3', 'the Aboriginal Revival of 1979', and 'the Wheaton Revival of 1995'. Acknowledgement of these as 'revivals' is the presupposition rather than the conclusion of Dr



Piggin's argument.

There are also a number of sweeping generalisations and caricatures, especially when it comes to describing those who have reservations about his general approach. For example, he asserts 'Evangelical Anglican clergy are trained to have an academic relationship with God rather than a personal one' (p. 125). The quote from Jim Packer which follows Dr Piggin's assertion says nothing of the sort and so the generalisation remains unsupported. Having taught in three different evangelical Anglican theological colleges in the world, I have found no evidence of this at all. A vital personal relationship with the Lord Jesus ought to be, and invariably is, the concern of teacher and student alike.

Firestorm of the Lord is an easy to read exhortation to pursue revival. It is written by a man who loves the Lord Jesus and longs to see him honoured in our land and in the world. But as Dr Piggin himself would admit, zeal that is not anchored in truth will mislead people. We need rigour in our study and passion in our living in the service of the Lord Jesus. In the end, the weaknesses of this book make recommending it difficult.

Mark D Thompson

The full version of this review is available in the culture@home section of the Anglican Media website.

I'm no sinner – ask my lawyer

PETER DOWNEY recounts his history of ministry mishaps, which could be worth millions in a world of public liability.

Well, so much for taking my kids on a pony trail-ride at the end of the year. If you've been reading the papers lately you'll know that the horse riding industry in Australia is on the verge of collapse, thanks to impossibly high public liability insurance premiums. One of the biggest horse riding businesses in this state may soon go under. A rider is suing them because they fell off a horse and broke their finger.

Seems to me that anyone can get sued for anything at anytime these days. A Sydney council and surf club just lost a case to a man who sued them because he dived into a sandbank in the surf and received spinal injuries. And I'm sure by now you've heard the case of the Sydney high school, just done over for a quarter of a million bucks, which was sued by a student who got hit in the head with a rock. The fact that he was wagging school at the time and participating in a voluntary rock-fight with a mate, seemed to have little bearing on the verdict at all.

Yes folks, welcome to the brave new world of the 21st Century, where a chainsaw manufacturer can get sued by a bloke who cuts his fingers off because their chainsaw didn't have a sticker on it saying, "Warning; do not cut off your fingers."

I don't know about you, but I think this whole litigation thing is outa' control and bad news.

It is causing leaders and schools and churches to think twice about doing any activity or camp or trip or... well, pretty much anything. Everything has become too risky. "Liability" and "compensation" have become round-table catch-phrases thanks to the "no-win, no-fee" compo lawyers who have recently proliferated their mucky brand of legalese on FM radio.

All I can say is, thank goodness I didn't have any of this hanging over my head when I was running a fellowship group in the eighties. I wouldn't have lasted one month in today's climate.

I ran a wide-game one night on a dark oval and Dave lost two



front teeth when he ran into Julia's forehead. Half my group got sun-burnt on a picnic because I didn't tell them to bring their hats. Brett got a bleeding nose during a game of 'smack each other as hard as possible with rolled up newspapers' one night. Susan broke her ankle while we were running around the suburbs on a chalk chase. Phil put his back out loading a piano onto a trailer for our Christmas Eve carol tour around the streets. James scalded himself with an urn of boiling water at a sleep-over. Louise busted her coccyx on a hike through the Blue Mountains, and not one of us had any first-aid training. Duncan fell off the trampoline and broke his wrist on a houseparty. Karla had an asthma attack after we all had a rumble in the hall and stirred up the dust.

All up, I reckon I'd be gone for well over five million dollars.

Then there's the social suffering and emotional damage I've caused in embarrassing people at fellowship concerts and running games of "Honey if you love me, smile" and making my peers feel awkward and guilty by preaching about hell and sin... I'd probably be up for over ten million.

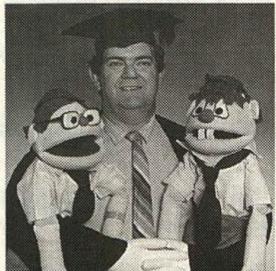
But the main problem with a litigious society is that it breeds a culture which says "I am not responsible. Someone else is to blame for my problems. I have no accountability."

And the problem there is that without a concept of personal responsibility, it is impossible for a person to have a concept of sin, grace or forgiveness. Because someone else is always to blame.

Anyway, that's enough. I have to go now. I'm suing a keyboard manufacturer because I have blisters on my fingers from typing.

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Resurrection a mathematical certainty

Make what you will of this, but Richard Swinburne, Professor of philosophy at Oxford University, has produced a new study on the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. Focusing on factors such as the probability that there is a God, the nature of Jesus' behavior during his lifetime and the quality of witness testimony after his death, Professor Swinburne calculates that there is a 97 per cent chance that Jesus was resurrected from the dead.

Christian home schooling a help to win quiz

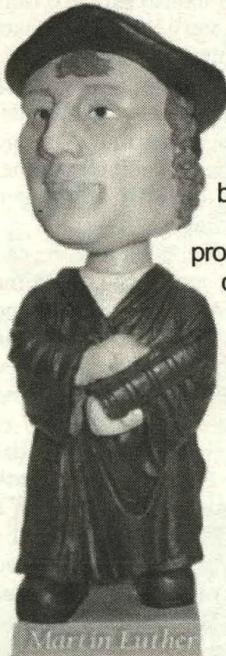
Washington Times – Calvin McCarter, a 10 year-old schooled at home in 'reformed Christian' style correctly identified China as home of the Lop Nor nuclear test sites to become the youngest ever winner of the National Geographic Bee. Four home-schoolers were among the top ten finalists. Home-school advocates said this was a 'tangible' sign of its potential to tailor schooling to individual needs ... hmmm, to win obscure trivia competitions??

Christians hit by TV censorship

Have Americans become so sensitive that thanking your Saviour is considered offensive? On the US talk show *The View*, host Joy Behar, in response to being told she could end her diet, said, "Yes, and thank you, thank you Jesus, is all I have to say!" Guess which part of Behar's comment got bleeped? On Tuesday's show, Behar's co-host Star Jones complained. "I think it was stupid to beep that. They let us say all kinds of things on TV, but they beep Jesus?" Behar added that that the Afro-American Jones was allowed to refer to *Jesus* all the time. "How come the black girl can say it and the white girl can't? I protest! ... Jesus and I are pals, okay? Get with the program!"

Crazy Christian gift no.3

In recent months we have brought you silly, tacky consumer items aimed at Christians. But the Martin Luther bobble-head doll has to take the cake. It comes from website oldlutheran.com 'The centre for Lutheran pride – but not too proud'. Old Lutheran also produce a micro-beer called 'Sin Boldly' a reference to Luther's famous dictum.



Sydneysider lower than a snake's belly

Um, which direction *is* the Anglican Church going? Philip Gerber, discussing the strategy for the Diocese of Sydney at Standing Committee last month, said the Diocese 'needs leadership from the bottom down'.

Then again, if you live in Sydney you are lower than a snakesbelly, according to US-based website Anglicans Online. In an online survey of readers, they asked about 'liturgical preferences'. The options from the drop-down menu, in order, read: "maximum high church; some spike is good; middle of the road; vaguely liturgical; snakesbelly; I live in Sydney." (see below)

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Sydney Diocese has established formal procedures to deal with sexual misconduct.

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This will cause these formal procedures to be activated. What happens next is set out in the Sexual Protocol documents. For a free copy, ring Carol Newton or Philip Gerber, Professional Standards Unit (02) 9265 1514.

To make a report, ring or write (marked 'confidential') to one of the appointed Contact Persons. They are:

Sue – psychologist, Northern Suburbs
(02) 9874 9043

Richard – social worker, Blue Mountains
(02) 4751 6457

Margaret – social worker, Wollongong region
(02) 4228 1007

Nicola – counsellor, Northern Beaches
(02) 9970 8392

Jenni – social worker, Eastern Suburbs
(02) 9326 3172

Postal Address:
C/O Professional Standards Unit, PO Box Q412
QVB Post Office NSW 1230

cryptic crossword no 4

by bill senior

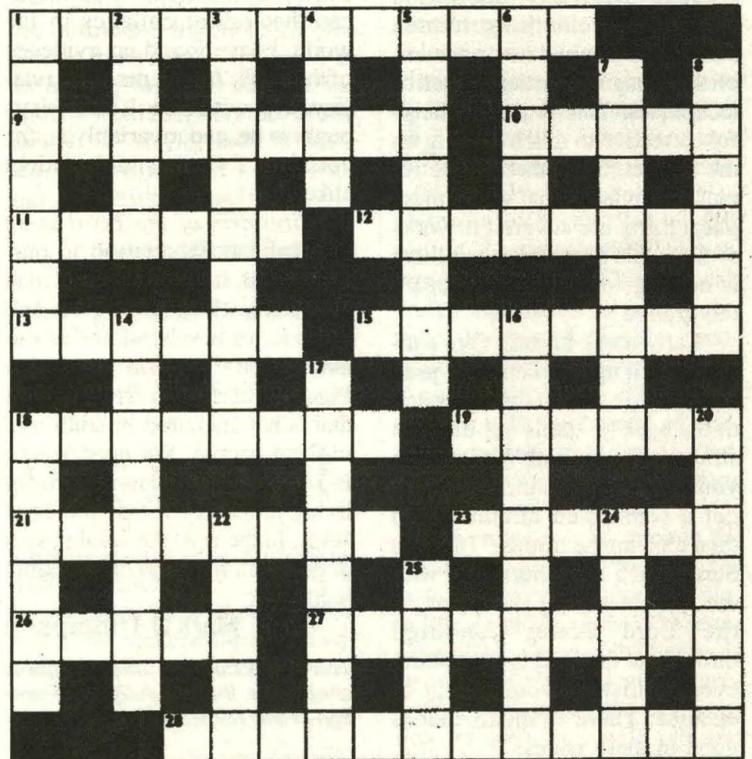
references KJV.

Across

- Worker boss with king and queen between gives a wiper. (Acts 19) [12]
9. Curtain head obscurity of vision. (Eph. 4) [9]
10. Debtor born within has it known by ox. (Isa. 1) [5]
11. Don't look - was between in Deut 34. [3,3]
12. Shrink on changes the pigment containers. (Ezek 9) [8]
13. Southern education of a type in Matt. 23. [6]
15. Faults as that of Isa. 15 within note. [8]
- 18,23. Asked in John 3. "Art thou a"? [6,2,6]
19. Donates from five and eight mixed in Jn. 14. [6]
21. Might God donate it in Ps. 68? [8]
23. See 18.
26. Slain wrongly by finger tips in Dan. 4. [5]
27. Ungodly! "- That I am-". (Gen. 44.) [3,6]
28. Not steady change, retint mitten. (Not in A.V.) [12]

Down

- Husband making tea? Mentioned in Gen. 14. [7]
- Racket. Lord mightier in Ps. 93. [5]
- Do make tin into a man from the east in Gen. 15. [9]
4. Stag upended flag battered in 2 Ki. 18. [4]
5. Cheers! Kids songs of Matt. 21. [8]
6. Wasn't walking with God. (Gen. 5) [5]
7. Incoming to bewitch kept in 2 Chron. 12. [8]
8. Sounds like ship trips but unfailling in 1 Ki. 17. [6]
14. Filter it again or keep back in Job 15. [8]
16. Lions fell before mixed grit wrapped up in Eph. 6. [5,4]
17. Prompt around not in but go on in Isa. 5. [8]
18. Mother and offspring were builders in Ezra 3. [6]
20. The Spanish in the crane.



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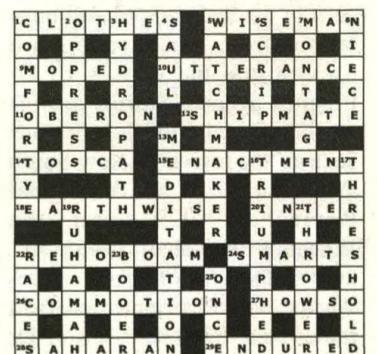
Most sacred in Heb. 9. [7]

22. What a flowery month, a northern sin in Neh. 2. [5]

24. Agag not dead taken in 1 Sam. 15. [5]

25. Stop David coming in Isa. 11. [4]

last month



On any given Sunday

It is time Christians critiqued the role of sport in their kids' lives, writes GEOFF ROBSON.

Drive through the suburbs of Sydney on any given weekend, and if you're not careful you just might get lost in the sea of children playing their favourite sport. Everywhere you go – across the parks, courts and playgrounds of this, and almost any other, city – weekend sport is part of what it means to be a kid for so many Australians.

Recent figures from the Australian Bureau of Statistics show that 59 per cent of children aged 5 to 14 participated outside of school hours in sport organised by a school, club or association. Compare that with 29 per cent participating in 'organised cultural activities' such as learning a musical instrument, singing, dancing or drama, and (depending on which survey you read) between 2 and 5 per cent involved in after-school church-based activities. It's just more evidence that sport is very much a way of life in our country.

But even with so many kids involved at all levels, the junior sport experience may not be a totally positive one. There is much that goes on under the surface for that sea of children, with the attitudes formed and the values learnt in the sporting arena often lasting a lifetime. It is a phenomenon that should not escape the church's attention, as this weekly sporting extravaganza of kids, cars and colour will have a real effect on the next generation of Christians.

Jim Dayhew is NSW and International coordinator for SU Sportz, a ministry of Scripture Union. A large part of his role is currently helping to facilitate KidsGames, an innovative global ministry that aims to share the

message of the Bible with kids, through the medium of sports.

With a degree in Physical Education and having played several sports competitively, Jim has spent plenty of time observing the attitudes that Australians have towards their sporting involvement. He advises Christian parents, and others close to the world of kids' sport, to be aware of the potential dangers.

"It's important that we don't just take sport as it presents itself," he said. "We need to critique it, and in some sense we need to be open to change it. A lot of Christians don't think like that; they don't put the sporting experience through a Christian worldview. They just take it as it presents itself."

Fundamental problems like violence, intense pressure to win, sledging and even cheating are endemic throughout much of the professional sporting world, and most young would-be athletes naturally seek to emulate their heroes. In the face of these challenges, Jim believes adults are responsible for helping children navigate the potential minefield of negative sporting values. Mature Christians must lead the way in helping children evaluate the attitudes on display in elite sport and the messages conveyed by the media, he says. "If you say, 'no, that's not what the sporting experience is going to be about for our children', then things will be very different."

While he warns of the dangers, Jim is quick to affirm his belief that the positives of kids' sport can greatly outweigh the negatives. Aside from the more obvious physical gains, he believes that children are able to benefit in a range of areas as they grow up playing sport. Socially, he says children learn relationship skills and gain a sense of living in community. Emotionally, they learn to deal with others and develop self-discipline and self-



control, while intellectually they learn to develop strategies and choose between a range of options that arise in sports.

But the biggest advantage is the chance for spiritual development to take place amid other areas of growth.

"I prefer not to see spirituality as separate from these other domains. It really infiltrates all those other areas," he says. "Through sport, a child can come to learn values and principles about life. They can come to learn the basics that we see in the Sermon on the Mount – Kingdom of God principles."

"Sport is an environment to develop life skills, but moreso, it's a place to help children develop an appreciation of God who has given them the ability to compete within that environment."

This holistic approach is one being used by KidsGames and SU Sportz.

KidsGames is a multi-day, multi-event holiday program where kids compete in a variety of sports, while also learning the gospel story and biblical values. Each day features sports competition, experiential learning activities and Bible discovery. Involving several denominations, the program is being officially launched across Australia this month and has already been held with great success in several countries around the world.

Rather than seeing sport as simply a 'hook' to get kids in the door, KidsGames will seek to integrate children's sporting experiences with what they learn about God, the Bible and themselves.

Structured ministry events can play a vital part, but Jim believes parents, as well as coaches

and other officials, can enhance these positive effects by developing relationships, serving within the club, and modeling and sharing their faith in Jesus. In turn, this will help to change the culture and openness to the gospel of a sporting club through long-term involvement.

"If you're a coach of a junior sports club, you have an enormous opportunity to model your faith, and to basically have a ministry with those 12 or 15 kids. Beyond those kids, it's 12 or 15 families," he said.

"As a coach, you will have the chance to give motivational talks. It's not that hard to take the principles of the Kingdom and to use that in a way that develops the team. As you're throwing that seed out there, perhaps in team discussions or at a later stage, you'll be able to refer back to those principles."

For parents, Jim says that even the simplest things, like being present for games and making sure kids are actually having fun, can be very helpful. But there are many more opportunities to reinforce the positive aspects of sport for kids.

"Parents should express unconditional love towards their children, not base it on performance," he says. "It's not as though, 'if you win we'll take you to McDonald's, but if you lose we'll have you in the backyard practicing for an hour'. You should show love, regardless of how your children perform."

Jim believes that a key factor is to appreciate what motivates children to play sport, and not to try and enforce the expectations or desires of adults onto the children.

"While some adults may think

that beating the opposition and winning trophies is most important, research reveals that kids are more interested in learning and applying new skills and having a good relationship with the coach," he says.

"As a parent, the obvious additional thing is to ensure that God isn't left out of the picture. It doesn't need to be 'sport or God'. Sometimes churches put up that dichotomy for kids. I think it's more subtle and more complex than that.

"No matter how good a kid is at sport, they need Christ in their lives, and parents need to encourage kids to pursue a relationship with Christ."

As any competitor knows, the sporting arena is a place where it's almost impossible to hide from your real self. It reveals character at the same time as developing character. The passions and urgency of competition quickly bring to the surface what is really in the heart, for adults and kids alike. For this reason, Jim sees sport as a 'spiritual laboratory' that can help kids to know themselves and develop Christian values and a relationship with God.

"You will see Christians who can do all the religious things, but if they haven't come to understand the principles, then they'll be a poor witness and won't maximise the gospel opportunities that are available," he says. "That's one of the real, inherent values of involvement in sport for Christians. You can certainly overcome those things."

For more information about KidsGames or SU Sportz, contact Jim Dayhew: JimD@nsw.su.org.au

WEBwatch

with geoff robson

www.probe.org

It's a nice problem to have, but looking for a comprehensive and reliable Christian apologetics website can leave you feeling a little overwhelmed. With such an abundance of sites available, the question is, Where do I start, and once I get started can I be sure that the things I read will actually be helpful?

While no site could claim to be the best, one very good place to start is www.probe.org, the website of Probe Ministries.

Probe is based in the USA and was launched in 1973, aiming to "bridge the frontier between the agonising questions man asks and the profound answers the gospel offers." Thanks to the Internet, that aim has taken on a new dimension.

The information on the Probe website – and there's plenty of it – is clear, relevant, challenging and biblical. There is just so much to choose from, including information on cults and other religions and answers to all the usual tough questions about the Christian faith.

There's also essays on an eclectic range of topics such as 'Yoga and Christianity: are they compatible?', Harry Potter, September 11, stem cell research and cyberporn. That is, literally, just to name a few.

Design of the site is clearly not a priority. It's not hard to navigate, but you have to scan some text-heavy pages to find exactly what you want. The feel of the site means it probably won't capture the casual visitor. But this is a teaching site aimed at the serious enquirer or Christians looking to grow in the knowledge of God. Overall, Probe is a site worthy of some serious time invested.



With this report Spielberg makes the grade

Minority Report, rated M

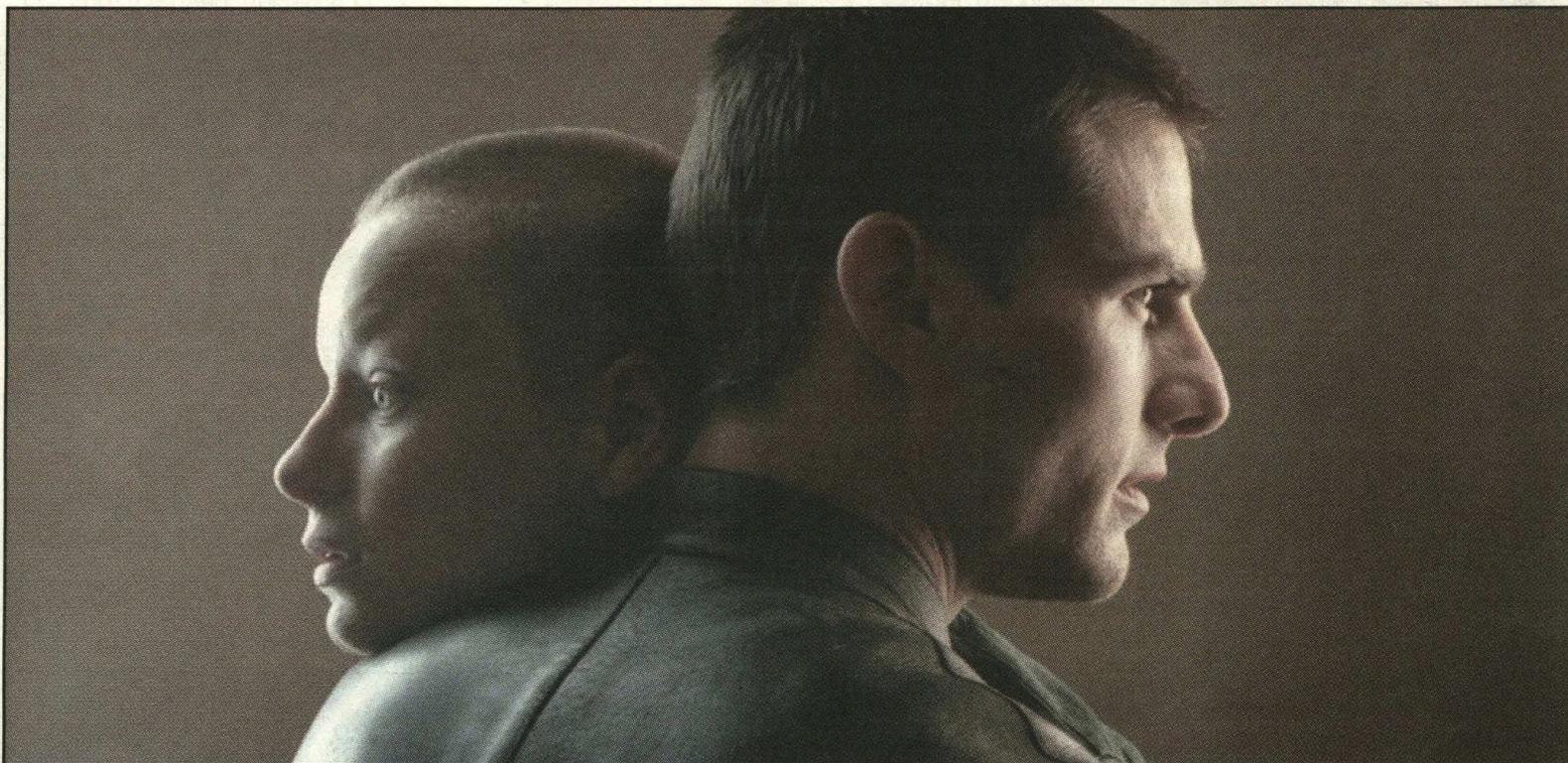
Delving into moral dilemmas and ethical conundrums is an essential part of cinema for many filmmakers. US director Steven Spielberg is no exception. *AI* asked what makes one human. The epic war film *Saving Private Ryan* considered the value of individual life.

Minority Report looks at the ancient predicament of destiny versus choice. Set in Washington, DC in 2054, the film depicts a city which has been free of murder for the last six years.

An experimental law enforcement body, known as the Department of Pre-Crime, has eradicated homicide by arresting perpetrators before they can commit their crime. It seems like the perfect system – except perhaps for those who are arrested and incarcerated for the rest of their lives without actually having done anything.

Spielberg has been quite restrained with his vision of the future. There are plenty of gadgets and nifty inventions but there's also credible depictions of life in the future. Antique buildings stand alongside futuristic architecture. The best thing for watering a garden is still an old-fashioned sprinkler. But there are a few significant changes. Surveillance cameras dominate the cityscape. There are cameras performing retina scans in buildings, on trains, in shopping centres and on the streets. It's a world where you can run but you can't hide.

Tom Cruise stars as Pre-Crime chief John Anderton. After the loss of his young son some years ago,



Do you see what I see? John Anderton (Tom Cruise) wants answers from pre-cog Agatha (Samantha Morton).



sarah
barnett

FILMreview

Anderton became a passionate advocate of crime prevention. He wants to ensure that what happened to him happens to no one else.

Pre-crime is dependent upon a trio of seers called pre-cogs. These psychic beings are scarcely human and they're certainly not treated like people.

The pre-cogs are human beings, children of junkies who have developed strange psychic powers.

Kept in an enclosed room known as the temple, they subsist in water in a perpetually drugged-out state.

And they dream of murder. Murder fills their days and nights. It is a nightmare that they live in order to save others. The details of the murders they see are downloaded like puzzle pieces as the detectives try to determine where the crime will be committed.

It's the ideal system, Anderton thinks – until a crime is predestined where he is the killer. The victim, a man he has never met.

Based on a short story written by Philip K Dick in the 1950s (he also wrote the story which inspired *Blade*

Runner), *Minority Report* is a futuristic morality tale.

While the film is tremendously creative and imaginative, essentially it's a story of an innocent man wrongly accused. All the ingredients of a classic thriller are here – palm-sweating action, dazzling special effects, moments of light relief and a dose of sentimentality for good measure. Yet despite a sense of predictability, it works.

A tense and violent thriller, *Minority Report* raises an array of moral questions. The ethical issue of subjecting three people to constant visions of violent death seems clear-cut to us. But perhaps there are practices of our world and our time that those from outside would rightly find abhorrent.

The film also raises

questions of individual culpability. Can we be condemned for things we haven't done? At least not yet. Can our thoughts convict us? Can we choose good over evil?

Spielberg's film is layered with biblical and religious allusions. Hymns play in the background and sometimes the foreground. Some of the Pre-Crime officers see themselves more as "clergy than cops". They are acting on behalf of the all-seeing pre-cogs who suffer with the visions of death so that people won't have to endure the real thing.

One of the most interesting allusions is a visual metaphor. John Anderton has his eyes removed to avoid detection and thus arrest. He loses a part of himself to preserve the whole.

PICKflick

A Walk to Remember
Rated PG

Cinema does faith badly. And Christians on film are usually narrow-minded. *A Walk to Remember* differs in its sympathy for the main character. When tough guy Landon falls in love with Jamie – a daggy Christian – everyone is surprised. But unlike the scenario for most mismatched couples, it's Landon who changes.

Undeniably hokey, there's something appealing about the film. It's certainly better than most of the teen fare coming out of Hollywood.

Unfortunately, the depiction of Christianity is a 'God wants me to be happy' kind of belief interested in romance. But I'm just being picky.

Is soccer really the global religion?

I'm a bit reluctant to write this article as it could conceivably be classified as sports journalism, which is not really my forte. But my husband tells me

that I'm the only person in the world who is not interested in some soccer thing that's been clogging up the TV guide and displacing perfectly good programming, so I suppose I'd bet-

ter throw a bone to the sports lovers.

The advantage of feeling a total lack of involvement in the What's-it-called Cup is the resulting ability to sit back and observe the action dispassionately. And the most remarkable trait on display so far has been 'soccer as religion'.

Soccer has (arguably) more adherents than Islam, more cash than the Roman Catholic Church and generates more fervour than an evening with Benny Hinn (okay, I concede the last point might be a stretch).

As I write this, Senegal just beat Sweden and the sports editor of the Senegalese newspaper *Le Soliel* said: "People here are very poor. When we win it is very



michelle
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important for the people. It shows you cannot have a meal but you can beat a developed country."

Pardon? Some guy kicks a ball into a net and starving people forget their stomachs and cheer? There are not a lot of conditions that have this transcendent effect, but victory is one of them. I would be willing to bet that in Sweden no one was dancing in the street. As we know, defeat – especially for the soccer fanatic – can be a trigger to acts of

terrible despair and savagery.

So I guess the perfect soccer team would always win, ensuring their fans a certain state of unshakable joy. Their star player would never sledge on the field, never fake an injury and always score the winning goal, making him a hero worth imitating. The fans would unite together to urge victory, and go home thrilled by the game to prac-

tice their own goal-kicking skills.

Hmmm, sounds like a good sermon analogy.

PS: When you read this, the *World Cup* will be over and history will already have recorded the winner. But for the record, I'm going to publicly tip Spain to win, because my husband says so. But remember, he's a rugby player.



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