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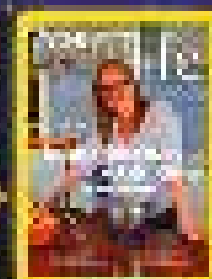
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AT LAST?

* CHRISTMAS DAY TRADING?

* WHAT PUTS AUSSIES OFF JESUS

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Now and then

DR PETER JENSEN

A FRIEND of mine recently told me that Australians are living in "the eternal now". By this he meant that we are now so well off, comparatively, that we think we have arrived at the summit of human fulfilment and there is little more to add to our security and happiness. We can sit back and enjoy the eternal now. In this we are bolstered by commentators pointing out to us how well our economy is doing compared with much of the rest of the world.

Of course, as he went on to point out, this is an eternal deception with terrible consequences. Among other things our civilisation is not nearly as resilient as we imagine. We may think we have banished sin from our Eden but in fact we live outside Eden in a world in which evil is all too evident.

The biblical gospel gives us resources to have a far clearer and realistic view of what is going on and in particular it tells us something about the times in which we are living.

Far from having arrived at a heavenly place we are, according to the Bible, in a world of trouble and woe. Every day death reaps his harvest, every day the evil one continues to deceive, every day we continue to exploit on another and pollute the earth on which we must rely for our continued existence.

Even more importantly many, many people live as though there is no God and no judgement. They have no knowledge of God and their hearts are hardened against God. Many scoff at the gospel; many more are wilfully ignorant; many more are careless. As the Bible concludes, 'there is no fear of God before their eyes'.

We are nearly at the celebration of Christmas. But, with great wisdom, the church year takes us through the season of Advent before we arrive at Christmas. The Advent we remember pre-Christmas is not the first advent of the Lord but his second, when he will come in the glory of his Father to judge the living and the dead, bring in the end of human history and the coming of the new heavens and new earth in which righteousness dwells.

Eternity is not yet. There is nothing more foolish than confusing the present moment in history with the true end of history. When we think that the eternal now is our present state, we neglect to prepare ourselves for the real future. Like the unwise bridesmaids in Jesus' parable we will be caught unprepared.

The coming of Jesus at the end of history will be *sudden*. It will catch people unprepared. Just as the people in the days of Noah scoffed and refused to heed his warnings, so in that day there will be those who are not ready to meet their judge. Materialism

has a way of dulling the spiritual senses so that we refuse to listen to the advice of Jesus himself.

The coming of Jesus will be *divisive*. Some will, in fact, have made peace with God through Jesus before he arrives. They will be like a king who makes peace with a superior adversary before war breaks out in the knowledge that he will only be defeated. Others will not have made peace — either because they are defiant or because they do not realise their predicament.

In any case, what we need to know on the sure warrant of the Bible and not least of Jesus himself, is that there is a Day of Judgement for the whole human race and that the consequences for good or bad are eternal. The Bible clearly teaches the reality of hell and destruction — the words of Jesus "I never knew you: depart from me" come to mind. It is not love but a sort of deadly sentimentality that softens such words or neglects them altogether. In particular if our pastors will not warn us of 'the wrath to come' they are doing us no service at all but are false shepherds.

The coming of Jesus will be *decisive*. It is not just another turn in the long unfolding of human history. It is the end and goal of that history and the beginning of a new age. The present age, no matter how comfortable some of us may be for a time, is called in the Bible the 'present evil age'. It is the age to come that is to be the time and place for the fulfilment of all God's good and righteous purposes.

It is only as we see that truth that we will live properly in this present age. It is not that we will so live in hope that the present age will not matter. On the contrary it will matter all the more because we know that the form of this age is passing away. It is in this time that we must prepare ourselves for the age to come through faith in Jesus Christ and it is in this age that we must work in his service and in the service of our neighbours.

In the meantime we break out of the restrictive bondage of "the eternal now" and live for Christ now while praying, 'even so, come Lord Jesus!'

SC

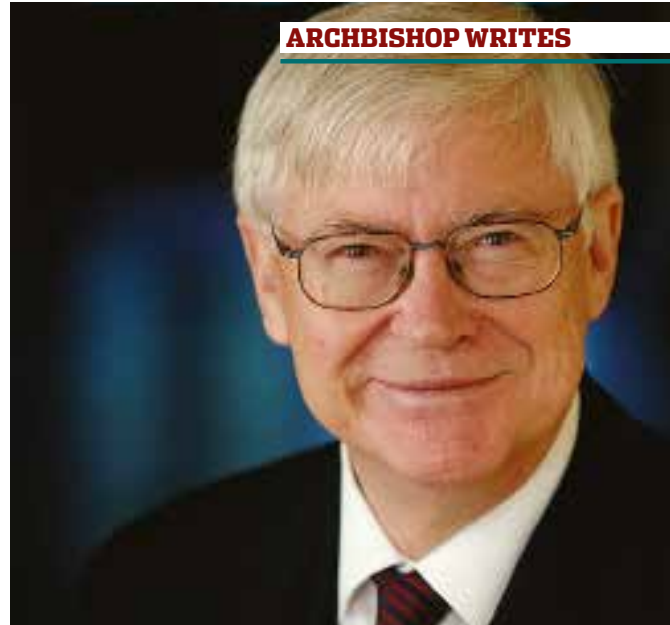
Mission Prayer

Almighty God,

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In the name of our Saviour Jesus Christ,
Amen.

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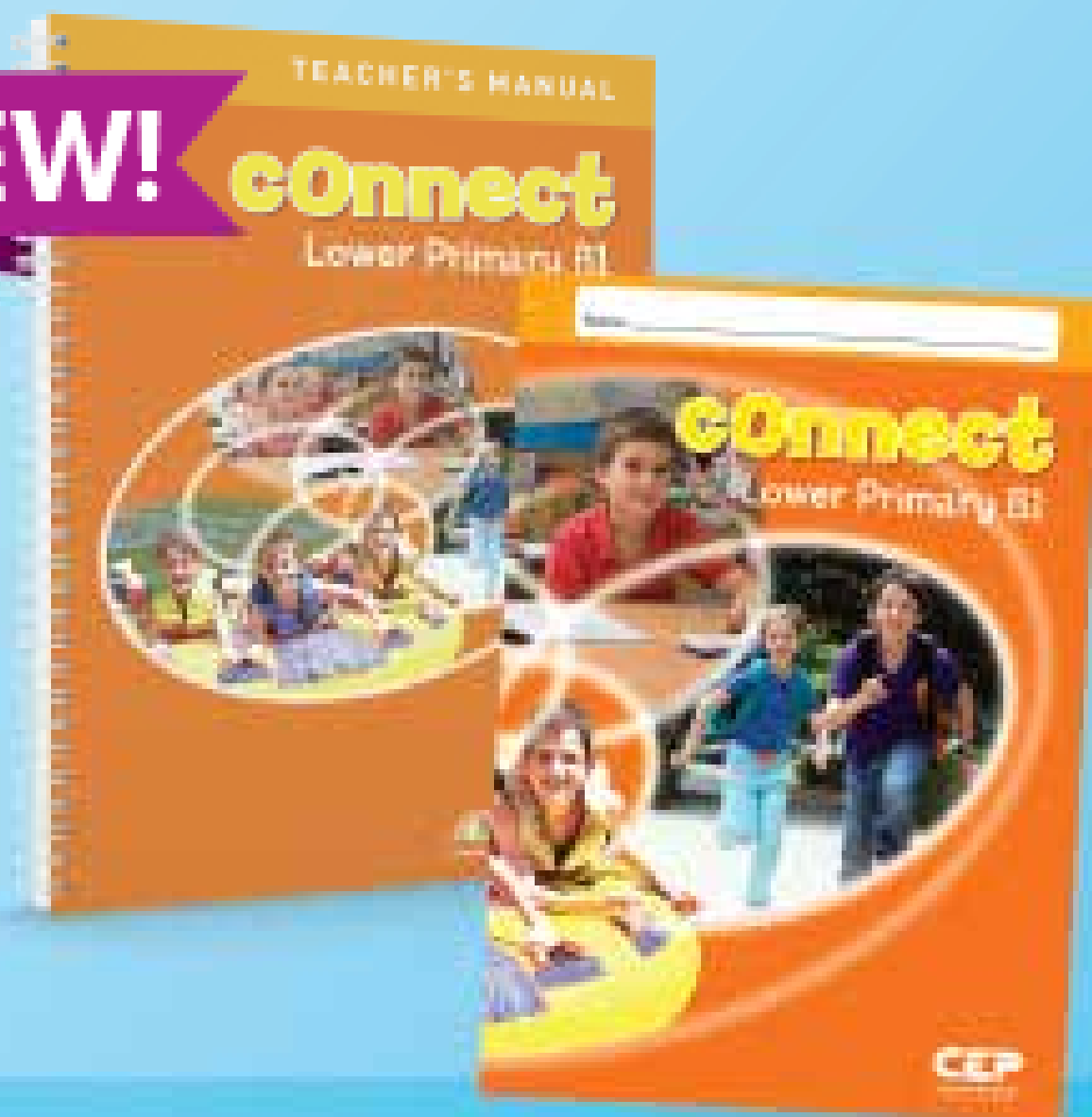
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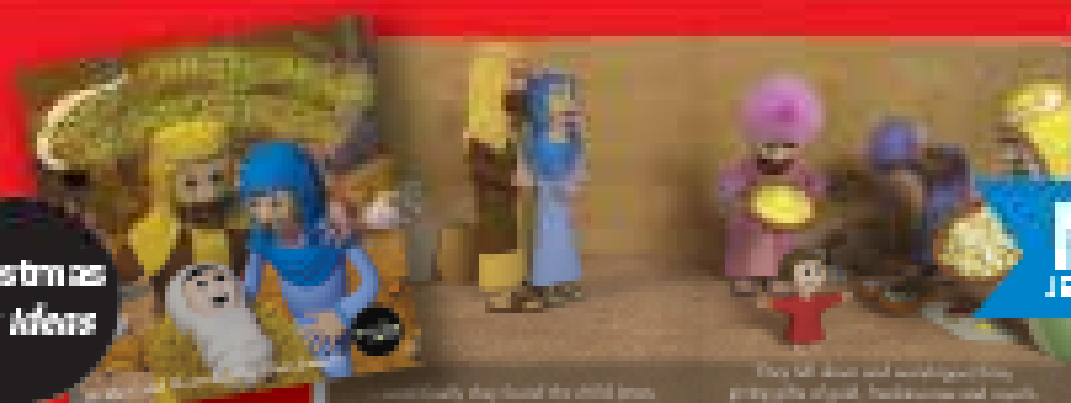
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CHRISTMAS CAROLS ON ABC1

Cathedral to host telecast

Ross Cobb conducts the choir at a previous Christmas event in St Andrew's Cathedral.

ST Andrew's Cathedral has been chosen to host the annual carols telecast on ABC1 on Christmas Eve. The national broadcast will feature Dean Phillip Jensen and the cathedral choir, along with guest musicians and orchestra.

The Dean said: "This broadcast provides a great opportunity to

express the message of the birth of our Lord in a genuinely modern and Australian fashion".

The cathedral greets thousands of visitors for Christmas services each year, with the 6pm, 8pm and 11pm Christmas Eve services especially popular. As in previous years, the cathedral will run concerts, carols,

seniors and family Christmas celebrations in the week leading up to Christmas Day. Extra musicians have been brought in and rehearsals have been going on for weeks.

The cathedral's director of music, Ross Cobb, said he was "looking forward to leading the music in

what promises to be a unique mix of traditional and modern music in a real gospel-centred broadcast. It's been great working with the ABC and I think the end result will prove to be something very special."

The time of the telecast is yet to be finalised, so viewers are encouraged to check TV guides.

TEARS AND HOPE IN DARLINGHURST

Abuse survivors gather to heal

RUSSELL POWELL

MORE than 60 people gathered at St John's, Darlinghurst on the evening of November 19 for Tears and Hope — the first of what is hoped will become an annual healing service for survivors of abuse.

The idea came from the rector of St John's, the Rev Ed Vaughan, who had seen similar services during his time pastoring a church in Dublin. "I felt the Lord laid a burden on my heart to do this — even before I came back to Sydney, in the context of things that happened in Ireland," he said. "I had a sense that this was a good and right thing to do."

Jenni Woodhouse, who works with abuse victims as chaplain for the Diocese's Professional Standards Unit, said it was important the church be proactive in reaching out to those affected by abuse. "We wanted to provide an opportunity for people to seek spiritual healing," she said.

A prayer team and a group of counsellors was on hand throughout the night. The congregation

included not just those who had been abused in church contexts but those who had suffered in other situations.

A video message from Archbishop Jensen was screened in which he said those who had been abused often found their story "hard to describe and hard to explain, the sense of guilt perhaps, the sense of isolation, the sense that even if you tell your story, no-one will believe you. All these things and many more are the consequences of such behaviour".

Dr Jensen said God was not only just and compassionate but the Good Shepherd. "Tonight as you have come to this special service you are turning to him," the Archbishop told the congregation. "and I can say because his word tells us, that he will never fail you or forsake you if you turn to him."

Mr Vaughan said he was pleased with the service but realistic about what could be achieved. "I hope it moves people just one step closer in a long process," he said. "Healing will never be just one shot, but tonight might be one thing in a long line of things that will help people."

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GLENQUARIE INITIATIVE

Men's Shed to break cycle

GLENQUARIE Anglican Church has officially opened the Men's Shed as part of its Break the Cycle program, aimed at men in the Macquarie Fields area who are struggling and need support.

"The Men's Shed has been set up to be a place where men can come together, share their skills and build new lasting relationships as they work shoulder to shoulder on community projects," said senior minister the Rev Stephen Swanepoel. "We've found that there are often issues of loneliness and even depression amongst some men in our community and we hope the shed will provide opportunities for men to come together and support each other."

Break the Cycle co-ordinator, Jacquie Kinsey, said the program sought

to "help people break the cycle of lifestyle choices that they are no longer happy with — whether that be poverty, financial hardships, drug or alcohol dependence or a myriad of other things."

Supported by the National Australia Bank and the Department of Fair Trading, the program offers no-interest loans that are used to buy essential items like whitegoods. It also provides vouchers for grocery and utility bills.

"We don't just pay bills for the clients — we work with them so they can learn how to ensure that it doesn't happen again," Mrs Kinsey said.

Since its inception in 2009 Break the Cycle has built a client base of more than 1000 people. "It's all God's work," Mrs Kinsey said. "It's not us, it's his plan coming to fruition."

DUNDAS CHURCH PLANT

Rebirth of Telopea church

ANDREW BUEGER

TELOPEA had an Anglican church meeting for 50 years prior to 2005. However, late that year a decision was made by the parish of Dundas-Telopea to shut down that church.

"The congregations [at Telopea] were relatively small but they were viable," says senior minister, the Rev Alan Lukabyo.

"The reason we stopped meeting there is because we had a new strategic plan. [Telopea] was in a pattern of long-term gradual decline, so we decided to consolidate and re-energise our ministry at Dundas with the view of restarting the plant at

Telopea when the time was right."

That time came this year when the church employed its former student minister Ben Hudson full time. Mr Hudson was given the job of relaunching the church plant in Telopea.

On Saturday, October 22, the new Telopea church had its first meeting with a launch team of about 25.

The decision to have the family service on a Saturday evening rather than the more common time of Sunday morning came from talking with the local community.

"Ben did a lot of research about the best time for the service," Mr Lukabyo says. "He spoke to non-churchgoers and found that Saturday nights were generally

free whereas Sunday mornings were taken up with visiting grandma and swimming training."

The Telopea church meeting begins at 5pm with a BBQ before the service starts at 5.30pm.

"We wanted people to feel welcomed and a sausage sizzle is a good way to do that," Mr Lukabyo says. "The introduction to church is then much more relaxed than walking into a formal service. It is also a good way we can serve families by providing a meal for their children."

While it may be too early to become confident of a long-term pattern, the first signs of attendance have been encouraging to the launch team.

"In the first few weeks there were heaps of

people who came that we haven't had contact with before," Mr Lukabyo says. "While it hasn't been as strong in the subsequent weeks, every week we have seen new families joining us."

The church plant has also been of benefit to the current congregation at Dundas, challenging members in how they should be acting.

"One of the advantages of a church plant is that it shows established churches what they should be doing all the time," Mr Lukabyo says. "It has shown the current congregation that every visitor is pure gold. It has also encouraged the congregation at Dundas to raise its profile in the community. It has really re-energised the congregation."

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PUMPKIN HOUR

Churches reach out at Halloween

TARA FARRUGIA

AS the popularity of Halloween grows in Australia, some Sydney churches are using it as an opportunity to engage with their neighbourhoods.

For the first time

one time of year that our culture thinks it is okay to talk about death," says Jason Partridge, the assistant minister at St Marys. "If the community does something for Halloween, it suggests there are people who are interested in the spirit

Halloween service positively by decorating the church, creating special Halloween snacks for supper and coming in costume. "We saw a range of dress-ups, from vampires to Supergirl to cats — and someone even came as Michael Jackson," Mr Partridge says.

The evening saw people from the community gather with those in the church to learn about the real spirit world.

"There were people who came who had no prior relationship with the church," Mr Partridge says, adding that he felt the service was beneficial for both Christians and non-Christians alike. "It was an open opportunity for non-Christians to come and a time to disciple people in understanding where they stand in Christ spiritually."

St Stephen's, Newtown conducted a similar outreach event last year when Halloween fell on a Sunday. "In Newtown

there is a real Halloween vibe so we figured it was the perfect opportunity to do church outside in the graveyard," says assistant minister Roger Fitzhardinge.

"When people are talking about zombies and spirits, you talk about the guy who is better than a zombie."

Due to rain the service was moved inside but church members were still able to connect with their neighbourhood both on Halloween and in the days beforehand. A team of people from the parish spent the previous evenings chalking the pavement on King Street and connecting with people.

"We did the chalking on Friday and Saturday nights knowing that's when people would be around," Mr Fitzhardinge says. "People were surprised we were doing something for Halloween. That was a great way to express that we're interested in people coming to meet Jesus in any time and place."

BILLBOARD MISSIONARY

Success in the slums

AS Year 12 graduates celebrate the end of their schooling many will be waiting on letters of acceptance from universities around the country. Achieving a degree from a tertiary institution is the goal of many and is often seen as a mark of success.

It is this idea of success that the University of New South Wales (UNSW) has tried to capitalise on in a recent billboard advertising push, featuring a number of students in a campaign entitled 'The road to success'.

One of these billboards, which was at the intersection of Victoria Road and the City West Link, featured CMS missionary Joe Radkovic who is currently studying a Masters of Business Technology while working in one of Kenya's biggest slums.

The billboard featured Mr Radkovic surrounded by patients from the maternity hospital he has helped establish.

"When Joe was approached by UNSW he was very open with them about the fact that he is a Christian and that he is doing both medical and gospel work," said CMS NSW & ACT general secretary Malcolm Richards.

The university also features a profile of Joe

on its website, which includes the fact that he is a missionary with CMS. "Joe is doing something that people would approve of," Mr Richards said. "He is seeing to the health needs of a very poor community and, in terms of secular Aussie ideas, he is doing something worthwhile."

Mr Radkovic is working in Korogocho, Nairobi, which is home to about 120,000 people earning less than \$25 a month.

Last year, he was instrumental in establishing a maternity unit at Korogocho's Outpatient Clinic. The clinic sees about 3000 people each month and helps with about 80 births a month. Since the maternity unit opened the perinatal mortality rate has dropped from 85 in each thousand births to 8.5 and the maternal mortality rate has reduced from over 1 per cent to less than 0.1 per cent.

"Joe is overtly Christian at the clinic," Mr Richards said. "He sees it as a medical ministry as well as a gospel ministry. One of his aims is that every patient who visits the clinic would have the gospel explained to them."



A graveyard tour at St Marys and (above) some Halloween snacks.

this year, the Anglican church in St Marys hosted a Halloween service on the Sunday before Halloween, aiming to connect with locals.

"Halloween is the

world. We've got a lot to say about death — we've got the truth on death through Jesus Christ, so let's talk about that."

The evening congregation at St Marys embraced the

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KATOKE TRUST

Tanzanian pastor's visit

A community leader and teacher in the Anglican Church of Tanzania, Canon Samuel Habimana, has spent five weeks in Australia based at GyMEA Anglican Church, teaching and speaking in churches, schools and Bible studies.

Mr Habimana spoke of the "wonderful oneness in Christ" experienced by Christians around the globe and the need to study the Bible, understand how Jesus wants us to live and be mission-minded.

He also thanked people for their support of the Katoke Trust for Overseas Aid, which began in Sydney in 1998 to help people in Tanzania's Katoke region. It has had a significant impact on education, health care and farming (the trust is also funded by Anglican Aid). Local

Tanzanians have said to Mr Habimana how the trust's work is a powerful example of Christian love in action — hearing the gospel and seeing God's love through practical support.

GyMEA's senior minister, the Rev Graham Crew, said Mr Habimana's visit had been an "affirmation of the importance of hands-on Christian work", adding the growth of the church despite its poverty "challenges our complacency and has refreshed our vision".

The president of the Katoke Trust, Professor Alan Watson, described Mr Habimana as "an outstanding leader who has set the standard of honesty and commitment that has enabled the program of Anglican Aid and the Katoke Trust to flourish at Katoke".

NCA JAPANESE CONGREGATION

Gospel growth

FIVE years after it began, the Japanese-speaking congregation at Naremburn-Cammeray Anglican Church is growing, reaching out into the community and helping prepare Japanese and Australians for gospel work.

When the Sydney Japanese Evangelical Church first met in 2006, it had only 10 members. For the past three years it has been pastored by returned CMS missionary Grahame Smith, who now oversees a regular group of more than 40.

"Last week there were 63!" he says. "My wife Cathy and I have been blessed with a visionary local church to accept us as local missionaries and welcome me onto the staff team. Moving

from student work to church-based ministry and having to preach weekly in Japanese has stretched me but our experience of ministry and living as a foreign family in Japan has equipped us to serve the church and reach out."

The congregation is made up of Japanese who are long-term Australian residents plus students and those on working holiday visas, as well as missionaries in training and "ministry-minded Japanese speakers".

This year Shigenori Oshima, a senior staff worker from Japan's university student ministry KGK, worked with SJEC while on sabbatical in Sydney.

"In co-operation with AFES and Moore College we have been able to



Grahame Smith and Sho Torihara celebrate Sho's baptism at Balmoral Beach.

contribute to his training while we have benefited from his evangelistic passion and training skills," Smith says.

SJEC has regular outreach opportunities and events to grow relationships with the Japanese community. A Bible study held at a language school in the city has resulted in two Japanese students coming

to Christ, and a monthly evangelistic event is also held in Newtown for university students.

"Many return [to Japan] without making any confession of faith but many seeds have been planted," Smith says. "A few like Sho [above], who became a Christian while at Sydney Uni, will go back keen to serve in a local church."

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BELIEF BLOCKERS

Aussies open but turned off by Christian celebrities

Researcher Mark McCrindle shares his findings.

RUSSELL POWELL

NEW research on key belief blockers and Australian's views on faith, Christianity and God has been launched in Sydney as a "gift to Australian churches".

Olive Tree Media, run by Gynea Baptist Pastor Karl Faase, commissioned McCrindle Research to conduct an online survey and focus groups on a national sample across Generations Y and X as well as Baby Boomers.

The findings showed that four in 10 Australians consider themselves as Christian, identifying as Catholic, Orthodox, Protestant or Evangelical. Twenty per cent indicated that

while they were spiritual, they were not religious. Furthermore, three in 10 did not identify with any religion or spiritual belief.

Overall, 50 per cent of Australians do not identify with any religion at all.

Of the religious many were not active, with more than half indicating that they did not practise their religion, never worshipping as part of a group.

GENERATIONAL BREAKDOWN

Baby Boomers were more likely to consider themselves Christian — 41 per cent compared to 30 per cent of Gen X and 24 per cent of Gen Y. Gen Ys were the most likely to have issues with Christianity — 17 per

cent, compared to 6 per cent of the Baby Boomers. Gen Y were also more likely to be passionately opposed to Christianity, with just under 8 per cent stating this, compared to 4 per cent of Gen X and only 3 per cent of Baby Boomers.

Younger Australians were more likely to be open to other religious views, with 14 per cent expressing that they were somewhat open. That is, while they were not actively looking to change their religious views, a change was certainly possible (compared with 9 per cent of Baby Boomers). Baby Boomers were much more committed to their religious beliefs, with almost three in five stating that they were not open at all to changing

their current religious view (compared to 43 per cent of Gen Y).

The figures on openness to changing belief were encouraging, because although 51 per cent of all non-Christian Australians stated they were strongly committed to their current religious worldview, a further 48 per cent were open to change. In fact, 7 per cent expressed an extreme or significant openness to exploring and investigating other religious views and practices.

BELIEF BLOCKERS

The so-called belief blockers vary, according to whether those surveyed were open or not to changing their religious views.

Among those not open, issues like the church's stand on homosexuality and the belief in the Bible were significant. Half of that group said that these two issues blocked them completely from engaging with Christianity. The same figure dropped by half when it came to non-Christians who were open to changing their religious worldviews. For that group, the issue of a good God allowing suffering in the world

was the number one belief blocker.

On the issue of church abuse, the McCrindle report said: 'It was notable that church scandals were more of a negative influence for non-Christians not open to changing their religious views, rating it as the second highest belief blocker (compared to those open to changing their religious views rating it as the fourth belief blocker)'.

CELEBRITY CHRISTIANS

Another strong finding was that Australians said they were turned off by public figures or celebrities sharing about their faith, as indicated by 70 per cent of respondents.

was a very powerful way of speaking the gospel'.

FAMILY 'PIVOTAL'

Dr Jensen also agreed with the stress the report places on family upbringing as a source or strengthener of belief. Two in three Australians cited the strong influence of parents and family on shaping their religious beliefs.

"The transmission of faith through families is immensely significant," Archbishop Jensen told the audience at the launch. "People praying for people, teaching their children and living the Christian life is the biggest single evangelistic thing we do."

Apart from family, one quarter of respondents



Archbishop Peter Jensen at the launch.

Interestingly, one in three indicated that this strongly repelled them from investigating religion and spirituality.

Archbishop Peter Jensen, in launching the report and commenting on its findings, said this was not surprising. "I think it is cultural," he said. "I think Americans tend to go in for that kind of thing and Aussies don't — I can understand that. But yet you would also say that when we had a series of Inspiring People events in 2009, it worked well. It wasn't big-time celebrities who, during trophy presentation, come out and say 'I believe in Jesus, and thank God for giving me this trophy'. It was real people speaking and, for some people at least, this

said their beliefs were shaped by their networks and relationships and 20 per cent said their religious views and beliefs were mostly informed through books and articles — personal research and readings they have conducted about Christianity. For 25 per cent, the media, social media and the internet were pivotal in influencing religious worldviews.

Mr Faase said the research would be available "as a gift to the churches" to think and work through — but he stressed the project was not "faith by focus groups" but about finding what blocks people from the Christian message in order that churches "can be as clear as we can".

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ROCK EISTEDDFOD

Parish school wins national competition

FOR a small Sydney Anglican school just to be part of a national performance showcase is a great achievement but to win it with a distinctly Christian entry is something that still has not sunk in at St Peter's Primary School in Campbelltown.

St Peter's is Sydney's only parish Anglican School. It and Broughton Anglican College are activities of St Peter's Anglican Church, Campbelltown.

The school beat competition from across Australia to be crowned as champions of the 2011 J Rock (previously known as the Rock Eisteddfod).

The winning entry was 'The Hiding Place: The Story of Corrie Ten Boom' and told in music and dance the story of

the Dutch Christian family who helped hide Jews from the Nazi army during World War II. Most of the Ten Boom family were arrested and died in a concentration camp but Corrie, through a clerical error, was released.

St Peter's J Rock co-ordinator Mrs Laura Ralston said, "We chose this deep and moving story because it offers a message of God's hope that even in the most horrific of circumstances and conditions, God still loves us and cares deeply for us".

'The Hiding Place' was declared the national winner after a two-hour program of highlights screened across Australia on Channel Nine.

It's not the first time

St Peter's has entered the competition with a strongly Christian entry. Previously the school dramatised the story of slave trader turned Christian minister, John Newton.

St Peter's headmaster Stephen Bomford paid tribute to the 110 student performers and teachers, as well as parents and ex-students who supported them.

"For me, the most enduring benefit of J Rock is that our senior students learn to work in unison to powerfully share a compelling true story about God's unconditional love," Mr Bomford said.

"I hope the memory of this story and this achievement will never fade for those who took part."



Corrie Ten Boom was played by Year 6 student Allira Betts.

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City Thursdays	Hebrews Archaeology & the Bible	9 Feb, fortnightly 16 Feb, fortnightly
City Fridays	Old Testament Foundations: Pastoral Care	10 Feb, fortnightly 17 Feb, fortnightly
Diocesan Tuesdays	1 Corinthians The Reformation	7 Feb, fortnightly 14 Feb, monthly, full year
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Conference Anglican Church LEAGUE



Who should pay? Diocesan financial priorities — the impact on parishes

In October, the Synod discussed a draft *Statement of Funding Principles and Priorities* proposing far-reaching changes to diocesan funding. These changes would also impact parishes.

Since then, there has since been widespread discussion about the Statement. The Synod resolved to invite members to 'provide comments about the draft Statement to the Diocesan Secretary'.

To help Synod members and Parish Treasurers think through these important issues and make their own submissions, the Anglican Church League is holding a Conference in February.

When: **Saturday 18th February 2012, 10:00am – 3:00pm.**
Where: **Chapter House, St. Andrew's Cathedral, Sydney.**

Registration is free, but we ask you to register so we can send you some helpful reading material before the conference.

Register now at www.acl.asn.au/conference

TANZANIA TRIP

Sydney rectors see compassion first-hand

RUSSELL POWELL

WHILE many Sydney-siders are attending the usual string of Christmas parties, one group of Sydney Anglicans will be doing the rounds in a far different setting in the wilds of Tanzania.

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

Sixty thousand children are registered in Compassion's child sponsorship program in Tanzania, with about 4300 of those currently being sponsored by Australians. The team will visit local churches, including Tanzanian Anglican churches, which run Compassion's four programs — child survival, child sponsorship, leadership development and critical interventions.

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

Dr Campbell, whose family has held



Peter Lin and Colin Buchanan clown around before a very serious trip to visit Compassion children in Tanzania.

Compassion child sponsorships for 15 years, says, "My kids and I pray most nights for our sponsored kids. That was the selling point for us: that Compassion is a Christian organisation that is genuinely concerned about sharing

Jesus with people and not just helping them with their material needs".

All are expecting a culture shock, but are looking forward to the opportunity of seeing the work close up. Says Mr Wakeford: "I'm hoping I'll see hope. Not

just a bunch of people thinking, 'This is it; there is no chance for us'. I'm hoping to see a look of hope in people's eyes.

"I'm also expecting to see what God is doing through the generosity of his people ... I think that will change my

reason for promoting the social side of the gospel, because I'll be able to say, 'Here is why we should do it — because it works and I've seen it'."

Travelling with the irrepressible Colin Buchanan could also lead to musical adventures.

"It would be very cool to do some singing with the kids — if I can scrounge up a guitar!" Buchanan says. "My homework before the trip can be to get the song '10, 9, 8 God is Great' translated into Swahili so I can teach it and sing it with them!"

ALLEGIANCE

THE KING AFTER GOD'S OWN HEART

1 SAM 13:14

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QUAKERS HILL FIRE National spotlight on Sydney church

THE Anglican church at Quakers Hill was catapulted into the national spotlight last month as a fatal fire in a nearby nursing home saw it used as a triage centre and then a focus for mourning.

The rector, the Rev Geoff Bates (above), threw open the doors of the church to receive the residents of the home who had been rescued from the burning building. Parishioners and community members soon arrived to help comfort the elderly, many of whom were confused and in shock.

In the week that followed, the church held a community tribute

service for the victims, those injured and for the dozens of fire, police and ambulance personnel involved in the rescue.

Mr Bates told the packed auditorium and a national TV broadcast that the people had to pause and consider what had happened: "Pause on our humanity... life's fragility. We want to pause and reflect on the fact that God is the one [in whom] we can find real comfort, hope and direction in life and he has an ultimate plan to eradicate suffering, pain and death."

The church was also a base for counselling staff and others in the weeks after the tragedy.

MISSION EPISCOPATE

Adelaide consecrates missional bishop

AFTER three years serving as Dean of Bishopdale Theological College in New Zealand and an archdeacon in the Diocese of Nelson, the Ven Tim Harris (right) was consecrated last month as Bishop of Mission and Evangelism in the Diocese of Adelaide.

Bishop Harris trained at Moore College and was rector of the parish of Helensburgh with Stanwell Park before spending 13 years as rector of St Matthew's, Kensington in Adelaide. He has also spent the past seven years as a moderator for the Australian College of Theology.

In speaking of the appointment the Bishop of Nelson, Richard Ellena, said "as much



as I will miss Tim and Fiona and Jon, I know that this is the right decision and I rejoice with them".

Bishop Harris will focus on developing fresh expressions of church in the Adelaide Diocese, along with congregational planting and parish renewal. He will also lecture in New Testament at St Barnabas' Theological College in Adelaide.

PERSECUTION WATCH

Pastor under continued pressure

Reports claim imprisoned Iranian pastor Yousef Nadarkhani has been subjected to mistreatment. He has been in jail in Rasht, north of Tehran, for more than a year after a court found him guilty of apostasy (leaving Islam) and sentenced him to death. Sources in Nadarkhani's denomination, the Church of Iran, report he is in deteriorating health. Persecution watchdog Compass Direct News reports claims of physical beatings, solitary confinement and ongoing pressure to recant his Christian faith. It also reports Nadarkhani was forced to read Islamic literature aimed at discrediting the Bible. Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei is expected to rule later this month on whether the death sentence should be carried out. There are also fears more Iranian Christians may be arrested in December and January, as Christmas is the usual time authorities crack down on church gatherings.

Struggles in Asia

House churches in Vietnam have become the target of persecution launched, ironically, on the International Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Church in November. A gang seriously injured more than nine leaders of a Baptist house church network near Hanoi. In nearby Burma at least 10 people were killed and dozens injured in a grenade attack at an orphanage in a primarily Christian region in the country's north. The attack occurred while a study group was meeting in the orphanage. The area, in Kachin State, has seen increasing violence and restrictions aimed at Burma's Christian minority. Christians are forbidden to hold Bible studies and pray, or build churches.

Will you support new arrivals to Sydney through the Archbishop of Sydney's Christmas Appeal?



Christmas can be the hardest time of the year for many refugees and migrants settling into Australia.

One practical way to show our love to new settlers to Sydney and help them overcome this isolation, especially at Christmas, is through friendship, practical assistance and the opportunity to learn English. This is happening at places like St John's Campsie.

Photo: Newly arrived refugees and migrants learn to read at St John's Campsie.

Please donate at www.anglicanaid.org.au or call 1800 653 903
or send a cheque to: Anglican Aid Community Care Christmas Appeal,
PO Box Q190, QVB Post Office NSW 1230

Your tax deductible donation to the Christmas Appeal will help this and other
Anglican Aid projects to support vulnerable people in our own city.



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Letters

Cover offence

I am writing to express my offence at the photo used on the front of the November edition of *Southern Cross*.

The nature of the photo disturbs me. I find it disrespectful and it appears to be unnecessary given the content of the article it represents.

Upon seeing the photo my mind flashed back to an adolescent boy I met more than 12 years ago when I was a student social worker. I was visiting a specialised facility that cared for young people with serious developmental and physical disabilities. But the boy I met was real, not a model in a picture. He was 18 years old, six feet tall and he came loping up to me singing a song like "Incy Wincy Spider". All he was wearing was a nappy, cloth, just like the lad in the photo on the front of *Southern Cross*. His developmental age was three. I was saddened and overwhelmed by his life.

I have three children, none of whom are developmentally delayed, but my fear with a photo like the one you have used is that it could cause deep offence to parents who do have developmentally delayed children.

I have asked a few people at my church, St James', Croydon, what they think and most said they found the photo strange and disarming, in poor taste and an unwise selection.

I realise that offence was not what you would have desired or aimed for. But I would ask that you be more careful in your photo selection for your front cover.

Martha Boye

COULD you please explain the thinking behind the cover of November's *Southern Cross*? Because if there's meant to be some sort of humour involved, I think you've missed the mark.

The image is not funny, or light-hearted. It's embarrassing and awkward. I think given our society's heightened awareness of sexual misconduct, it's potentially a really dangerous image to be placing in churches.

At another level, I wonder what kind of message is being communicated about youth ministry? Is it some kind of joke, or ministry that is less serious than other ministries?

Matt Jacobs
Youth Minister,
All Saints', North Epping

Pastoral essentials

"PASTORAL course gains ground" (SC, November) – what a sad reflection on our premier theological college! It has taken 150 years to realise that pastoral skills need to be taught and the resulting course is still only an elective!

Archie Poulos says: "We expect — and it usually happens — that people develop some of the pastoral skills after they finish college". Usually? Some? If those words were used of graduates' grasp of biblical exegesis there would be outrage.

Too many ministries flounder because sound theology — dare I say it — is not enough. Communicating God's truth in a parochial situation demands that relationships first be forged in a pastoral context. For many, the minister's word will not be trusted because of his academic

achievements but because he has shown himself to care for his people — and for many clergy this is not instinctive.

A nine-week course isn't much but it is a start and should be mandatory for every ordinand.

Trevor Lucas

Getting governance right

I would much rather be talking about Jesus than governance structures and commercial risk. However sydneynglicans.net and *Southern Cross* have each misrepresented what I said at Synod this year so I must talk again about our diocesan governance structures.

November's *Southern Cross* asserted I told the Synod that the proposed structure for the governance of diocesan investments would 'have the same weaknesses as the previous [that is, current] arrangement'. I did not say this. In Synod I compared the pictures of the current structure, complete with reporting lines snaking across it, with the structure proposed by the Archbishop's Commission, which omitted any reporting lines.

I spoke against the proposed structure for two reasons to do with risk. First, the proposed structure is untested and so to move to it requires us to take the chance that it will not work as intended. This is another way of saying it will have an element of risk.

Second, the concentration of investment decisions into a single place (the proposed Central Investment Management Board, CIMB) necessarily increases risk through the loss of diversification in decision-making. This risk may or may not be



Apology

Last month's cover image was published in good faith and was meant to illustrate the need for growth in children's and youth ministry. The image clearly missed the mark with some of our readers and for any offence caused, we do apologise.

Buy Buy Christmas

KARIN SOWADA

THERE is always a sense of relief in my household when the clock ticks past 5pm on Christmas Eve. By that time, the retail frenzy of Christmas is over and one's mind can relax as the holiday season truly begins.

But for some hapless workers, that may be about to change.

The NSW State Government is currently examining proposals to deregulate shop trading hours on restricted days such as Christmas Day, Boxing Day, Good Friday, Easter Sunday and the morning of Anzac Day. These are designated public holidays and under current rules, shops are required to be closed or operate on certain days under restricted trading licences (the latter allows city department stores to open on Boxing Day and after 1pm on Anzac Day, for example).

The overall result is a legal presumption of a retail shutdown across the state on key public holidays, with some automatic exemptions for small shops and the granting of other restricted exemptions. The law surrounding retail trading in

NSW is complex and each state has its own regulations.

In September, the Minister for Finance and Services, Greg Pearce, announced an inquiry into shop trading provisions and invited submissions, which closed on October 24. A key part of this inquiry involved an examination of 'a reduction in the number of restricted trading days under s. 4 of the [Retail Trading] Act'.

It is evident from reading the Inquiry Discussion Paper that there is a great openness to the possibility of further extending trading hours into what have traditionally been times of community and family rest. This is particularly true for Boxing Day and Easter Sunday. The report reveals that city retailers are big on seeking exemptions already. There is also pressure from the tourism industry to ensure that Sydney can deliver a 24/7 retail and entertainment experience for visitors.

From a Christian and broader social perspective, these are troubling developments. All in the name of creating

employment and business opportunity.

There is no question that Sydney has become a global city. Easter and Christmas are both peak holiday times for local and overseas visitors. But setting time aside for community rest is a social good and ensures that people are not pressured by employers to work. As a church we would want to ensure this time of community rest and reflection is preserved and that the Christian message of these periods is not lost in more displays of unnecessary mass consumption. Moreover, the further extension of trading is a form of bracket creep; in time there will be inevitable calls for trading on Good Friday. At that point, why bother with Easter holidays at all?

There are plenty of days for shopping and going about one's business in the rest of the year. In addition, the enthusiasm with which Australians have adopted internet shopping means that the store-based retail experience has less appeal anyway. An enforced break from this activity does everyone good, whether people believe in 'the reason for the season' or not.

SC

mitigated in various ways but because of my first concern, I cannot be sure the proposed structure will achieve a lowering of investment risk and a stabilisation of the gospel funding that will allow more people to be set aside to talk about Jesus.

I look forward to the Standing Committee-appointed working party attending to these and other concerns of the Glebe Board and the Property Trust.

Craig Roberts
Senior Minister
St Augustine's Anglican Church,
Neutral Bay

SRE 2012?

I'M all for Christian educators in schools (SC, September) but what about Scripture in schools and ensuring *that* doesn't die?

I know four absolutely wonderful ladies who between them have been doing Scripture close to 200 years — one for 59 years in the one school — and their ages range from late 70s to late 80s.

I am "young" at 65 and have been teaching Scripture for 23 years.

Our State Government allows full access to our schools to teach our Christian salvation

message yet there are so many, many schools with no Scripture — nothing.

Scripture for me is an honour and a joy beyond words. Having an impact on more than 300 children in six schools each and every term is an awesome honour from God.

Here's a challenge for 2012 — fill each and every school with Scripture and Scripture teachers.

We have the only words of eternal life. All our schoolchildren need to hear God's holy word through Scripture in our schools.

Dave Vincent
Bidwill

Letters should be less than 200 words

Email:
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Reader's essay

Reconciliation and the blame game

Christians and churches need to take care that they reflect God's love when brothers and sisters are at odds with each other, writes CATH FINNEY LAMB.

HAS your church ever found itself entangled in a blame game between two 'wronged' parties? A church community confronted with the blame game will easily become confused.

This is most clear in the case of a marriage separation. We may start out thinking that one partner was at fault because they initiated the separation but now it appears there is a justifiable reason for the separation. We now find ourselves thinking that the person who has been left 'deserves' the divorce.

This goes to the heart of our own fear of rejection. Deep inside, we know if we got what we 'deserve' in a relationship, no relationship could be sustained. We truly need God's love reflected in all of our relationships.

The blame game holds out a hope of 'reconciliation' through identifying who is 'at fault'. It suggests to us that if the guilty party were to be identified, accept responsibility, change their actions and offer restitution, reconciliation would occur. However, the blame game is unlikely to result in reconciliation because it focuses on behavioural change and conformity rather than conviction, cleansing and restoration of shalom in relationships through establishing 'rightness' in the heart and mind. It is the latter that is required to heal intimacy and trust in a relationship.

Brothers and sisters caught up in a blame dynamic of accusation and counter-accusation may be struggling intensely with accusations of the evil one. A type of work aimed at 'saving ourselves' is attached to the blame game. It is characterised by moral self-defence. For example, I may be quick to clarify what I did not do and what my partner or friend has done. I may justify my behaviour. I may blame external circumstances for what I did — 'after all, it really had to happen'. I may seek to diminish the impact of my sin by emphasising the

positives and ignoring the negatives that came from the behaviour.

I may engage in mathematics about the proportionality of harm done — if you bring my sin to me I will deem it irrelevant by pointing out your much greater sin. I will attempt to square off the harm I have done you against harm you have done me in a complex mathematical equation that seeks to demonstrate that I have come out in the red. These are essentially strategies of self-vindication. The blame game is about shifting and recalibrating the blame in order to diminish my own sense of personal discomfort over guilt. It is a strategy aimed to protect us from the pain of godly sorrow, the Holy Spirit's conviction (2 Cor 7:1, 8-13).

TRUE RECONCILIATION

At an interpersonal level, the only way to break the blame dynamic is to take it out of the realm of debate about appropriate behaviour to a place where both parties are willing to examine and confess the sin in their hearts that has contaminated motives or behaviour. True reconciliation requires right moral attribution. The light of God's 'moral truth' needs to prevail. Both parties need to see clearly their own part in a situation and not blame the other person inappropriately. False accusations create walls, resulting in unresolved tension and hindering reconciliation between estranged parties while right moral attribution is a precursor for appropriate repentance, forgiveness and change.

The dynamic of humble confession and forgiveness is completely different to the blame dynamic. Rather than a focus on the rights and wrongs of the other person's behaviour, both parties reflect on whether there is a blemish in their own conscience. They are willing to request forgiveness for their contribution to a dynamic. While they may provide feedback about how they might think they have been wronged, this is a humble process. Final judgment of rights and

wrongs and responsibility for convicting the person is handed over to God.

Deep conviction is the core of change. It is the work of the Spirit of God. It operates at the heart level and occurs in the quiet of reflection before God and his word and conversations with friends. It can also occur through negotiated talk with the other party that does not indulge in blame tactics which will seek to avoid appropriate confession of sin on my own behalf.

THE CHURCH'S ROLE

The blame game can be reinforced or enabled by a community feeding on the gossip of who is 'at fault'. Church communities which engage with the mathematics of fault can be at risk of speaking words of condemnation into a situation, either directly or through slander behind someone's back. This can be relationally harmful and is not a helpful way to encourage change.

Words of condemnation mediate a lie to a brother or sister (Romans 2:1-4; 8:1-4) and can make it even more difficult for them to find internal peace or strength to confess sins to each other. When we do not get it exactly right it can damage the reconciliation process by supporting one party to falsely blame another. While such words may appear to offer comfort to an injured party, solely focusing on the sins of the other party may not encourage them to ensure their conscience is completely clear before God for their side of the interaction. We can affirm injuries that have occurred without condemning a brother or sister for whom Christ died.

Rather, the Bible calls us to restore each other: 'Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted' (Gal 6:1); 'Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective' (James 5:16).

SC

READERS' ESSAYS

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

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



Reform or BUST

As debate continues to rage at federal and state level about problem gambling, clarity on what Christians should do and think about the issue can get lost in the rush. JUDY ADAMSON reports.

DEPENDING on your point of view, gambling is a dangerous activity or not a big deal — and the idea of curbing anyone's gambling habits has been called both a prudent measure and “un-Australian”.

Even Christians are divided about gambling. While some are passionately against it, others regard the right to have a flutter as a matter of Christian freedom.

The fact that problem gambling exists in the community, and can be severe, is undisputed. But while those in favour of the Federal Government's plan to introduce pre-commitment technology (which involves gamblers setting a limit of how much they are prepared to lose on high-intensity machines) agree it's not a problem affecting everyone, the pre-commitment plan can't be dismissed as easily as the clubs and gaming industry would have you think.

Many people gamble “recreationally” on the pokies. They lose very little money. So is it still a bad thing? Clubs also give much-needed financial support to community groups; what if these groups were in danger of going under if legislation supporting mandatory pre-commitment — or some other loss-limiting plan — was passed?

In addition, if we don't happen to agree with the politics of the ALP or the independents, is that a valid reason not to support the legislation? And if we do agree that something needs to be done, are we making our voices heard — like activist group GetUp, which has collected a 45,000-signature petition in support of reform for problem gambling?

But let's put all that to one side for a moment. Under the Government's existing plan, no pre-commitment would be required for “low-impact” poker machines with a \$1 bet limit and there will be a longer phase-in period for smaller clubs and those in regional areas.

So at this point the issue for Christians is what to do next — because the stakes, for want of a better way to put it, are pretty high. Independent Federal member Andrew Wilkie, the main driver of the legislation, has set a deadline of mid-2012 for its introduction into parliament beyond which he will no longer guarantee his support for the minority Gillard Government.

At the same time the multi-million dollar campaign by Clubs Australia, the Australian Hotels Association and their supporters has reached such a height that advertising is targeting local members in marginal seats. Even Channel Nine football commentators were primed by network management to speak against the legislation during the televised rugby league finals series — a move that may have been taken solely in support of the football teams whose games air on the network's stations. But when such a fraught issue is taken to this level without public knowledge, it's not something that should be brushed aside.

EATING MONEY

What is common knowledge is that the food served at clubs is subsidised by poker machine revenue. Representatives of clubs who appeared on a recent SBS *Insight* program told the audience how big that slice was — from 25 per cent of their revenue to a massive 80 per cent. So while it's good to have an inexpensive dinner out, it's worth asking who is really paying for it.

Canon Sandy Grant, the senior minister at St Michael's Cathedral in Wollongong, says that "years ago I used to enjoy cheap meals at my local club until I realised I was eating cheaply off the misery of gambling addicts".

Canon Grant has been vocal in Anglican circles and beyond for many years with his concerns about gambling, and says that from the research he has done club restaurants, and also sometimes club bars, "run at a deficit and they make it back on the pokies". In an open letter posted on his church's website he challenged parishioners to think about whether they, as Christians, could justify gambling at all.

Gambling is 'inconsistent with biblical virtue,' he wrote. 'It is fuelled by covetousness: wanting what belongs to another. This is forbidden in the tenth commandment. Certainly the essential foundation of the industry is greed and materialism.'

'Any gains you make in gambling *always* come at the expense of others. Even when mutual consent is implied by their participation in the wager, we all know that a significant portion of the participants cannot afford their losses. For the problem gamblers their losses impact on family, friends and workplace, who have not consented to this damage.'

It's an experience that is all too familiar to Alison.* Her marriage broke down as a direct result of her husband's gambling addiction (see page 16), which also shipwrecked his faith.

"My husband was rational and strong-willed but he fell so easily into gambling,

like a baby," she says. "It crosses cultures, religions and occupational groups... and not many of us, without prayer and faith, can avoid being easily seduced. Human greed and the love of money is the very core of the problem — but on Melbourne Cup Day people gather and bet and if you don't gamble they say something is wrong with you. So institutionally we have gambling as a fun-type thing — as normal."

Says Canon Grant: "Perhaps the best question to ask is not simply whether gambling is sin but whether gambling can ever be a form of love? For love only ever promotes the welfare of others".

WHO'S LOSING?

Gary Banks, the chairman of the Productivity Commission — which released its oft-quoted gambling report in 2010 — has criticised the "egregious" selective use of data by Clubs Australia to make a case against gambling reform.

In a speech earlier this year Mr Banks said that, contrary to the industry argument that harm minimisation measures would discourage recreational gamblers and hurt the bottom line, most of the industry's gaming revenue came from "a small group of spending 'regulars' — a large proportion of which are likely to be experiencing significant problems".

He added that while the proportion of those who had severe or moderate problems with their gambling appeared small (see box, right), this did not mean it was a small problem for society: "We do not regard mountaineering or drug-taking as safe pursuits on these grounds, for example... and pokie players are estimated to account for 75-80 per cent of all problem gamblers".

Peter Davidson sees the harm caused by gambling every day in his work at Inner City Gambling Counselling (part of the Baptist group HopeStreet Urban Compassion).

He says the two main reasons people start playing pokies is "either to escape from relationship problems... or they have false beliefs that they're going to win money and get themselves out of financial stress. And if they win they put their winnings back into the machines... thinking they're going to win more".

Mr Davidson says those in the helping industry are divided about the best solution but he is personally in favour of the pre-commitment scheme, believing "anything that is going to assist somebody to limit the amount of money they are going to lose would be a good thing".

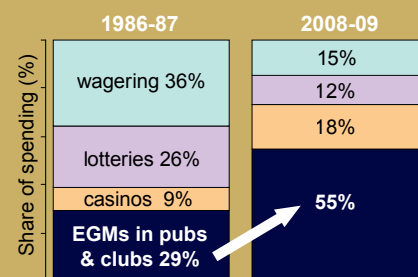
"I've got clients who get their pension one day and it's gone by lunchtime the next, so they've got no money for food or anything else," he says. "I have a gambling group at Matthew Talbot Hostel and a lot of those people are homeless because of gambling. This strategy could be of assistance to them... they predetermine before they're in front of the poker machine that "This is how much I'm willing to lose".

The cost of implementing the pre-commitment legislation is a sore point with

GAMBLING FACTS

- The Productivity Commission (a national independent research and advisory body) estimated about 40 per cent of pokie profits come from problem gamblers and 'a further significant share' from moderate-risk gamblers. It urged a focus on pokies because the potential for rapid, high-intensity play creates a greater risk than other forms of gambling.
- In one of its findings the commission estimated 'there are between 80,000 and 160,000 Australian adults suffering severe problems from their gambling (0.5 to 1.0 per cent of adults). In addition, there are between 230,000 and 350,000 people at moderate risk, who experience lower levels of harm and who may progress to problem gambling (1.4 to 2.1 per cent of adults).
- The commission recommended each state and territory implement a locally based full pre-commitment system for gaming machines by 2016 (or 2018 for venues with fewer than 10 machines), with partial pre-commitment in place by 2013.
- A national poll in April showed 66 per cent of people in favour of the mandatory pre-commitment scheme proposed by Andrew Wilkie and supported by the Gillard Government. After months of negative campaigning by clubs and others, that figure has dropped to 61 per cent — and it's even lower in NSW.
- It is possible to lose \$1500 an hour or more on some poker machines.
- While clubs do give money to the community most donate less than 5 per cent of their pokie profits to community groups.
- The only pokies in Western Australia are at the Burswood Casino. They are not in local clubs, pubs or other venues.
- While Australia ranked 54th in the world in terms of population numbers in 2008, that same year we ranked 7th in the world for our numbers of casino-style, or poker, machines.

Share of gambling revenue by activity



*EGMs are electronic gaming machines

SOURCE: Australian Gaming Statistics: 25th edition, Commission estimates.

the clubs lobby and figures about what it could cost per machine have been bandied about on both sides. Mr Davidson says that while the Productivity Commission report agreed there would be costs, there would still be enough of a benefit to make it worthwhile for the community — "although," he adds, "perhaps not to the gaming industry".

Yet, he continues, "Whatever the cost of modifying the gaming machines to minimise problem gambling it's going to be less than the cost to the community at the moment to provide support and emergency relief to gamblers — and their families — as a result of the gambling."

CHRISTIANS NOT IMMUNE

One truth Mr Davidson is keen to underscore is that Christians have been, and still are, sucked into gambling. He believes Christians who struggle with gambling addiction are more isolated than those from

continued next page »



Clubs Australia website

CASE STUDY

Faith lost

A keen Christian since childhood, Alison* was impressed by Peter's* enthusiasm for the Lord when they met at university. He was committed, mature and always had bibles on hand to give people.

The pair married, continued on to higher study and then began to work in their fields. Peter was keen on computer games and, soon after their arrival in a new city he entered a black jack competition at the local casino, winning several thousand dollars. Alison was surprised but assumed he must have been playing the game on the computer.

What she didn't know was that Peter was a regular at the casino — but she found out after a friend came to visit and Peter suggested taking him there. Despite being personally against gambling, Alison accompanied them and was shocked to see them placing bets of \$10,000 and more.

"I thought, 'Where is the money coming from? How can they last?'" she recalls. "So that night I asked him... he said he was drawing money from our joint savings account to gamble and I asked, 'Did you lose?'. And he said no. I thought that was odd, because nobody wins against a big casino."

Peter dealt with all their financial statements and refused to let Alison see them, so she eventually went to the bank to check and found there were withdrawals of many thousands of dollars but no deposits.



"I confronted him and he denied it... even with all the withdrawals he denied he was losing," she says. "He really did not think gambling was a problem [for him] or a sin... he said my attitude to gambling was too rigid and *that* was the problem. I got the truth [about his losses] during the divorce settlement... and he told me just before the divorce that he was no longer a Christian and did not believe in God."

*names have been changed

« from previous page

a non-Christian background because "it's not something they can talk about in their Bible studies or with their minister. It's often something that is really secretive and yet it certainly exists among Christians.

"We often need to go through as much processing and therapy with Christians as with non-believers regarding addictions but this is something that is not really talked about in our churches. There is a perception that once you're a believer you're healed... so they think they will be rejected by the Christian community.

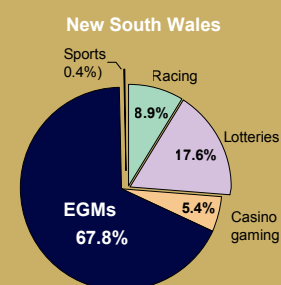
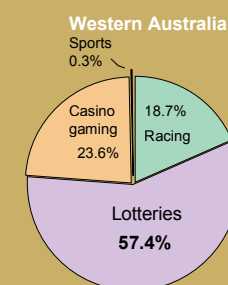
"Yet we have a very forgiving God and that's not really taken advantage of with Christians and addiction as much as it should be... they do have a strong faith position that provides them with inner strength and an inner source to draw on, which unbelievers don't have."

COMMUNITY SUPPORT

And what about the issue of support for community groups? The CEO of the St George Leagues Club, Danny Robinson, told *Insight* his club gave more than \$300,000 a year to hospitals and children with special needs in addition to \$650,000 given annually to support a range of community programs.

That's a lot of money. But the club gains \$35 million a year from its 416 poker machines, so that comes out at only 2.7 per cent of its gaming revenue, never mind what it receives from other sources.

So would many community groups fold if there were less pokie revenue to share around? Well, that depends. As former Western Australian premier Geoff Gallop pointed out in a *Herald* opinion piece, there are no poker machines in pubs and clubs in his home state 'and the world hasn't fallen in'.



Tax revenue share for different forms of gambling by state 2006-2007

*EGMs are electronic gaming machines

SOURCE: Office of Economic and Statistical Research (2008).

Even at the one place in WA where you can find gaming machines — at the Burswood Casino — he writes that only machines including 'some patron decision-making and intervention' are allowed.

The result? Western Australians spend far less per head on gambling than any other state, and community groups are still flourishing.

Dependency on gambling revenue is what Andrew Wilkie, on *Insight*, called a "flawed" business model. He agreed that clubs did a good job of reinvesting in the community but believed they could do better — and with only 1-3 per cent of pokie revenue given to the community he believed that even with gambling reforms in place clubs could still do as much, or more, for local groups as they do now.

Mr Wilkie was unapologetic about effects the legislation could have, observing to *Insight* host Jenny Brockie that "if there is a venue out there in Australia that is so reliant on problem gamblers that these reforms send that venue broke... then it doesn't deserve to be in business because no business should be in business off the misery of problem gamblers".



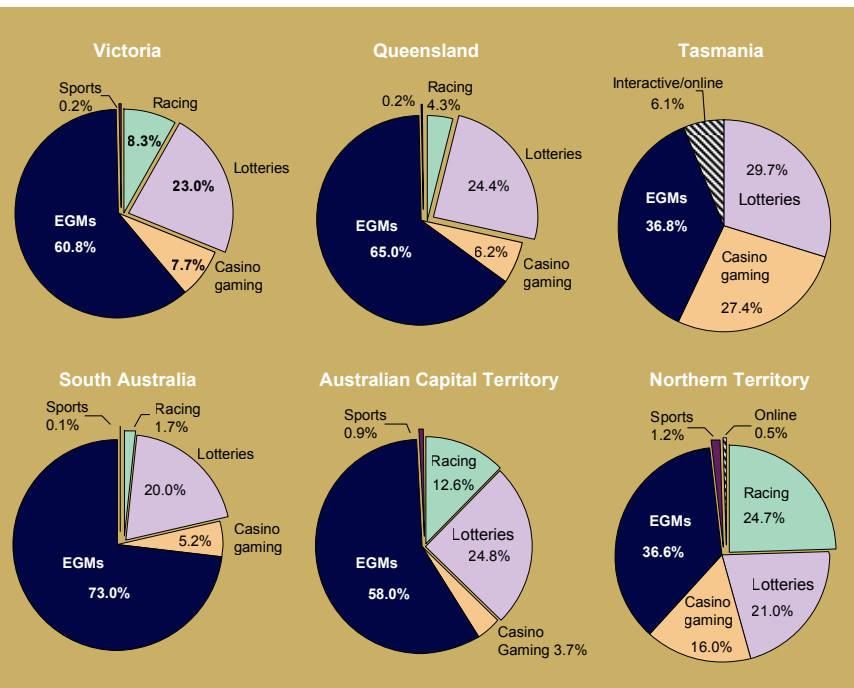
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THE NEXT STEP

Canon Grant says the most useful thing Christians can do is make sure their opinions about gambling are heard.

"We should make the most of this unusual window of opportunity and let the Federal pollies know this really matters to us and we want them to seize the chance to take some decisive harm-minimisation action," he says.

"That means lots of Christians writing to

their MPs — on both sides — to ask them to support mandatory pre-commitment on the pokies. Lots of letters tell them the issue matters enough for people to write. This helps counteract the clubs' marginal seat campaign... politicians need to know it is strong support, not casual support.

"We also need to be prepared that Wilkie's deal may fall over so we need to be using the publicity his deal generates now to ensure maximum momentum for action on other effective measures to reduce harm from pokies and other forms of gambling. There is more than one step that could be taken to reduce harm... [you could have] a \$1 maximum bet limit on all pokies — a good idea which the clubs hate. Other steps could be explored like compulsory pokie shutdowns every hour, removal of ATMs further away and getting all gambling ads off TV, especially in sport and viewing hours where children watch."

Mr Davidson agrees, adding that Christians should talk about the issues in their community “because the clubs industry has a very strong campaign and sometimes the alternate view is not heard... the gaming industry shouldn’t be receiving taxation benefits [as happened recently in NSW] and governments do need to be tightening up laws to assist people who have problems with gambling”.

Adds Canon Grant: "One other thing Christians who are members of clubs could do is to be brave and stand up at their

club's AGM and ask what independently recommended measures they are taking to reduce problem gambling levels on their poker machines".

A final possibility is for Christians to vote with their feet — by withdrawing support and dollars from businesses that benefit from problem gambling. And this doesn't just mean clubs and pubs — Woolworths already owns more than 300 hotels globally and many thousands of poker machines. Last month the *Daily Telegraph* reported another 30 hotels and 1000 machines were coming into the Woolworths fold.

Says Canon Grant: "My wife and I, where possible, are choosing to buy our groceries and petrol elsewhere than Woolworths because of their very heavy investment in poker machine profits via their ownership of hotels with the licences. That's another action concerned Christians can take. Apply an ethical investment screen: sell your Woolworths shares and shop elsewhere." **SC**

For those seeking assistance

- Overcomers Outreach
www.overcomersoutreach.net
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Community transformation



PHOTO: Elspeth Carr

Christians play a vital role in changing the communities in which they live — but it needs to be done God's way, writes ROBERT DOYLE.

AS I entered St John's University of Tanzania, the initials in the old wrought-iron gates had a certain frisson for this Australian and member of CMS Australia — A.S. for Bishop Alfred Stanway. What was at first planned by Alf Stanway as a high school run by the Anglican Church of Tanzania continued its educational work under nationalisation, and recently returned to Anglican control as the church started a new university under the banner "to learn to serve".

What might this enterprise, and similar Christian enterprises, expect to achieve? 'Community transformation' has been a mark of evangelical discussions about missions since the 1960s. Christian education at all levels in Africa is marked by a concern to promote civic virtue. It is also wired into the curriculum of theological colleges. Closer to home, such transformation is embraced by the new writers and practitioners of church planting — Tim Chester and Steve Timmis, Tim Keller and Mark Driscoll. In *Vintage Church* Mark Driscoll and Gary Breshears devote a chapter to the question 'How could the church help transform the world?'.

But what may we actually expect?

BIBLICAL SOURCES

Part of the impetus for Christian education's promotion of civic virtue comes from a series of observations about the New Testament's interest in community transformation:

1 It is a goal that God is moving us toward. In its depiction of the consummation, community transformation is held out before us as the end point of God's missionary

activities (Revelation 21-22).

2 The Christian community that is the church is to be characterised by a move from the distinctive disorder and selfishness of the kingdom of darkness ('put off') to the operation in all relationships of the fruit of the Spirit ('put on') — Ephesians 4:17-5:21; Galatians 5:15-26; 'in honour, preferring one another' (Romans 12:10 RV).

3 We are commanded: 'So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith' (Galatians 6:10).

This is further supported by the command to the exiles in Babylon, not without some cachet for we who are also exiles (1 Peter 1:1):

"Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, to all the exiles whom I have sent into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon: build houses and live in them; plant gardens and eat their produce. Take wives and have sons and daughters; take wives for your sons, and give your daughters in marriage, that they may bear sons and daughters; multiply there, and do not decrease. But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the LORD on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare' (Jer 29:4-7 ESV).

The discussion about transformation continues to be high on the agenda of the Lausanne Movement. A number of crucial questions are posed that concern expectations:

1 Ought community transformation, of both the church and secular society, be given equal priority with evangelism?

2 If evangelism is to have priority, how do we conceive of that priority?

3 With respect to transformation of community outside the church (ie secular society), are churches and missionaries to affirm that an indispensable, core part of the gospel of the kingdom and its proclamation is 'addressing the oppressive powers and authorities', to which the existence and exacerbation of so many social ills can be traced?

4 To put it another way, what is the relationship between 'social justice' evangelism and the kingdom of God?

By their very nature these questions are not superfluous to ordinary church life. So how may we reply?

THE EXAMPLE OF PAUL

First, a close examination delivers a shock. There is not a single example in Acts, the epistles of Paul or any other of the apostles during their missionary journeys and preaching, addressing the secular powers with respect to unjust social institutions: abortion, infanticide, slavery, the legislative toleration of fornication and adultery, the status of women, bellicose imperial expansion and the like.

With Governor Felix and his wife Drusilla, Paul spoke about 'faith in Jesus Christ' and 'righteousness and self-control and the coming judgment' (Acts 24:24-27). At the Areopagus in Athens (Acts 17:16-34) he spoke about their superstition and idolatry, their altar to the unknown God and proclaimed to them 'the Lord of heaven and earth', his ways in the world, the coming judgment by

the appointed man whom this Lord God has raised from the dead and the need for repentance. That is, Paul evangelised them. In line with his commission (Acts 9:15; Gal. 1:11-24), evangelism was his priority.

However, in his address to the community of the church, Paul is very concerned for transformation. His teaching radically overturns several key socially accepted behaviours. No longer are they to 'walk as the Gentiles do in the futility of their minds', 'alienated from the life of God', of callous hearts, given up to sensuality, greedy (Eph 4:17-20). Once they 'were darkness', now they are to 'walk as children of light' (Eph 5:3-11). The coming of the kingdom of God among them has made them a new creation. They are to allow its renewal to touch every aspect of personal and community life.

Inevitably, because we are to love our neighbours as ourselves, these changes within the Christian community spill over into wider society — for example, in the institution of marriage. In the Roman world of the New Testament a man had no legal or social obligation to restrict sexual activity to marriage and the wife had no sexual rights over her husband's body.

In the following centuries, including the Reformation period, four things changed at law and in custom: sexual expression for both men and women was to be restricted to marriage, the wife came to have mutual sexual rights — and the same right to divorce or separation — and marriage became companionate. Husband and wife came to expect that they would also be friends.

With respect to the wider, secular community the New Testament teaches 'as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith' (Gal. 6:10). Jesus' teaching about 'the law of the nearest neighbour' in the parable of the Good Samaritan lies at the foundation of a Christian's commitment to social justice and social change.

We are to give priority to assisting those whom God has placed in our way, however inconvenient it may be at the time to concerns about our religious duties. Of course, it is our Christian brothers and sisters worldwide whom God has most put in our way but he also puts in our way the beggar, the inconvenient outsider and the excluded refugee.

Returning to our questions, and in reverse order:

The relationship between 'social justice', evangelism and the kingdom of God

The kingdom expectation for 'social transformation' is focused on the churches, where the power of the resurrection and the ministry of the Spirit operate. The renewal of all society and creation awaits the return of the Lord Jesus, the general resurrection and the final judgment. So, the term 'social transformation' ought not be univocally used to describe Christian commitment and

expectations for both church and secular society. 'Harm minimisation', or Augustine's 'restraint of evil', may be a better reflection of the New Testament teaching on expectations and engagement with social justice issues in wider society (Romans 13:1-4).

Where we have seen Christian influence bring about transformation in the host society which remains consciously, even defiantly non-Christian, it is more accurate to New Testament expectations to view that transformation as a reflection of what has occurred in the church that Christ has purchased with his blood (Acts 20:28), not as equivalent to ecclesial transformation.

Addressing the oppressive powers and authorities

As we saw in the example of Paul, New Testament teaching does not make 'addressing the oppressive powers and authorities' a core part of the gospel of the kingdom and its proclamation.

The priority of evangelism

Here, two points of clarification are needed.

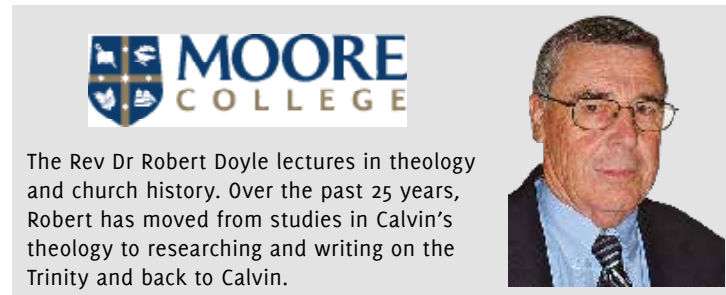
First, in the New Testament evangelism is determined not by its audience but by its content. There is only one gospel, the gospel of the kingdom of God and Christ (Mark 1: 1, 15; Acts 20: 24-25; Acts 28: 23, 31). The church continues to be fed and live by just that gospel (Romans 1:16). Whether addressed to the outsider or churchgoer, 'evangelism' as a term covers all teaching and preaching which is properly biblical.

Second, the New Testament depicts gospel proclamation and the new behaviours resulting from its work as that which builds kingdom communities. Although distinguishable, gospel proclamation and personal and community transformation go together. To speak of one is to imply the other.

The announcement or preaching of the kingdom of God produces followers of the king — disciples. Proclamation and discipleship are distinguishable but they are inseparable and interdependent. By giving 'priority' to gospel proclamation we are identifying from the New Testament pattern the primary means God uses to do his work of creation and new creation (Genesis 1:1-3; Revelation 14:6; Colossians 1:1-23). But priority does not divide gospel from transformation. They are inextricably linked (James 2:18).

EXPECTATIONS FOR TRANSFORMATION

This New Testament pattern, then, and its promise that



The Rev Dr Robert Doyle lectures in theology and church history. Over the past 25 years, Robert has moved from studies in Calvin's theology to researching and writing on the Trinity and back to Calvin.

God will finally transform all of human culture, gives priority to transforming the community of the church. But, of course, the Bible does not allow us to restrict the pursuit of social equity to our Christian friends.

So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith (Galatians 6:10 ESV).

What may we expect, then, as we enter the gates of a place devoted to Christian service such as St John's University of Tanzania?

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Daily — adults \$40, concession \$25.

Adults and Gen:Mission attendees can register onsite but youth and children can only be registered online — deadline is December 23.

FOR more information and to book, visit www.nswsummerschool.org.au

LOCATION | KCC, Cliff Drive, Katoomba

SUNDAY, January 15, 2012

GYMEA CHURCH ANNIVERSARY

GYMEA Anglican is celebrating 85 years since the church's first service under a tree at GyMEA Bay. There will be events throughout the year, starting with a thanksgiving service and afternoon tea to be held at the site of the original St Barnabas' church, which is now a council children's resource centre. Friends past and present are invited to attend.

FOR more information about this or other anniversary events, contact the church office on 9524 6225.

LOCATION | GyMEA Bay Resource Centre, 276 GyMEA Bay Road, GyMEA | 4pm

SUNDAY, January 22 – Thursday, January 26

LEADERS IN TRAINING CONFERENCE

LIT is about empowering and equipping young leaders with the biblical understanding and practical skills of leadership to serve Jesus now and for the future.

OPEN to keen Christian youth in years 9-12 in 2011

COST Early Bird \$279 (closes Dec 16)

FOR more information visit www.lit.youthworks.net

LOCATION | Port Hacking Conference Centres

MONDAY, February 6

PRISCILLA & AQUILA CENTRE CONFERENCE

SIDE by Side, the Priscilla & Aquila Centre Conference 2012, will focus on the letters of 1 and 2 Timothy. For more

information about speakers, sessions or to book visit paa.moore.edu.au

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

MONDAY, February 20

CENTRE FOR CHRISTIAN LIVING OPEN NIGHT

FOR more information visit ccl.moore.edu.au/opennights

LOCATION | 1 King St, Newtown | 7.30pm

SATURDAY, March 3

PRAYER BOOK SOCIETY EVENTS

THE Prayer Book Society NSW Branch invites you to the following events:

10.30am | Organ recital by Miss Sophie Gerber

11.00am | Holy Communion BCP 1662. Bishop Rob Forsyth will also preach on the topic 'The Book of Common Prayer 1662: A primary source'.

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

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

FRIDAY, April 6 – Monday, April 9

KATOOMBA EASTER CONVENTION

THE Right Stuff: Christian Character in an Age of Image. To celebrate 50 years of Katoomba Easter Convention, or kec, we're looking at Christian character (or what we're calling 'the right stuff').

ENJOY a long weekend away with your family and friends and be spiritually refreshed at kec.

Bryan Chapell, who wrote the popular books *Christ-Centered Preaching* and *Christ-Centered Worship* will be coming from Covenant Theological Seminary in mid-west USA. Jonny Gibson, who spoke at kec in 2009, will return from Northern Ireland. They will be joined by Justin Moffatt, the senior minister at St Philip's, York St.

AS always there'll be a great children's and youth program run by our enthusiastic team of Christian volunteers. These programs are very popular — last year we were booked out! So make sure you register early to avoid disappointment.

Registration and accommodation bookings are now open.

FOR more information please visit www.kec.kcc.org.au

LOCATION | Katoomba Convention Centre



Jesus for wogs

MORE than 120 'wogs and people who love them' gathered for the first annual Wogs for Christ conference.

The conference was run by Wogs for Christ, a non-denominational ministry linked to MBM Anglican Rooty Hill. It was designed as a vehicle to bring together not just wogs but people from many different cultures to hear the Bible in a culturally relevant way.

"People from about 20 cultures gathered to hear God's word, celebrate diversity in unity, eat really well, praise God and laugh a lot," said MBM senior minister the Rev Ray Galea.

He adds that the group has four main goals: "We want to help strengthen the faith of wogs and connect them with others of a similar background; we also want to share Christ with wogs who may have experienced religion but not relationship with the Lord Jesus. We want to help wogs identify their unique sins and struggles and address them with the word of God and we

want to encourage church plants which will reach out to wogs and those who love them."

The conference, held at the Rooty Hill, church included seminars and talks from "respected wog preachers" on a variety of issues including 'Superstitions and Wogs' and 'Living in a mixed marriage'.

"This conference functions to reach out to Mediterranean and Middle Eastern people, as well as South Americans," Mr Galea said. "We want it to be the base of growing ethnic ministries in Aussie churches. Most churches usually have three or four wogs but they often find it hard to bring their relatives to church and they don't connect culturally.

"Wogs for Christ functions as a place to bring friends and family as a first step which can be followed by a Bible study in their own church."

Mr Galea points out that the term 'wog' can actually be helpful for ministry.



"It's a useful and provocative term to draw a circle around many cultures," he said. "What was once a painful word to many of us becomes a tool to bring us together in Christ."

Despite its name Wogs for Christ is not an exclusive ministry, aiming to be as inclusive as possible.

"What I loved the most was having one Aussie lady in my church say she 'loved it so much' — this meant that no-one was excluded," Mr Galea says.

At the 2011 Synod held in October churches heard about the need for cross-cultural ministry as Sydney becomes more and more multicultural.

And at the recent *Oxygen* conference Mr Galea said he believed "the reason why God has brought the nations into our backyard is so they can reach out to him and find him. We get the opportunity to introduce Jesus to people from cultures [where he is off limits]. This is the mindset we need to focus on and allow the congregation to look differently at the people around them."

Windsor blokes become Iron Chefs



THE BBQ is a man's domain — it's where blokes congregate and perhaps the only time many men will willingly do the cooking.

With summer fast approaching,

Windsor Anglican Church decided to increase the BBQ repertoire of its men as well as teach the gospel to their non-Christian mates.

On Saturday, October 29, 40 guys

attended the 'Iron Chef' event at the north-west Sydney church.

The event was run by local accountant James Leva, who wants to use his passion for barbequing to share the gospel.

"I really enjoy sharing my skills with other blokes," he said "It's a great way for men to bond, it's non-confrontational and guys love eating good food. It's also a non-threatening way to talk to blokes about Jesus."

The men spent the evening learning how to use their BBQs to cook more than just sausages and steaks. The menu included marinated lamb shoulder as well as fish with a brown sugar crust and baked apples with maple syrup for dessert.

"There are so many different things you can cook on the BBQ," Mr Leva said. "And it is so easy. The dishes that I teach can be done on any BBQ. I think it also helps the guys become a bit

more confident in their ability."

After the meal Andrew Mahaffey from the Department of Evangelism and New Churches gave a gospel presentation, challenging the men to think about why we plan so meticulously for almost every area of our lives apart from our deaths.

Windsor senior minister the Rev Aleks Pinter was very encouraged by the event. "This event was great because it gave the guys an opportunity to hone their BBQ skills," he said. "It also gave us a platform from which to challenge them with the Gospel of the Lord Jesus. We had several non-Christians come and it's been encouraging to hear of the follow-up conversations taking place."

According to Mr Pinter, one of the non-Christians who attended was given a Bible and a semi-regular church member has come along to church every week since the event.

Working together for local youth



WITH a small youth group it can be difficult to run big events like camps but two churches in Sydney's north have come up with a way to overcome this.

St Anne's, Ryde and West Ryde Anglican Church both have small youth programs — which made holding a camp on their own not feasible. So they decided to join forces and hold their camp together.

Angela Cook, assistant minister at St Anne's, and Amy Stephens, children's and youth minister at West Ryde, got the idea from other churches doing a similar thing.

"Amy and I were at a Northern Region conference when we got chatting to a guy from Balgowlah," Angela said. "He told us about how he had done it and how successful it had been so we thought we'd give it a go."

The camp was held at the Anglican Youthworks site at Port Hacking from October 14-16.

The camp was attended by 11 boys aged between nine and 13 from the two groups, with at least one non-Christian. The boys were taught from the book of James, challenging them on how they should be living out their Christian faith.

"There were some really practical

applications," Amy said, "particularly in regards to dealing with anger and putting your faith into works."

The partnership between the two churches is something Angela believes will have a positive effect on the group at St Anne's.

"We don't have a dedicated youth ministry," she said, "so I have been thinking about how we keep the kids. Being able to offer the camp shows the kids and their parents that we can offer them something and that the church is for them."

Both Amy and Angela believe the benefits of combining forces wasn't just limited to making the camp possible.

"The kids can see that there is unity, it's not an us and them thing," Amy said. "It is really encouraging for them to meet other Christian kids who are just like them. It teaches them that as Christians, even though we might not know each other we can still spend time in fellowship."

Due to the response from the boys who attended as well as the benefits of the camp, it is hoped the joint camp will be held again next year.

"It was really exciting to see the change in the kids after the camp," Angela said. "They all had such a great time."

EVENTS

New start at West Ryde

THE church facilities at West Ryde Anglican Church have long proved inadequate for parishioners and visitors. However, with the help of a government grant that is in the process of changing.

The current amenities at the church require people to walk across a car park to reach the back of the old church building.

"This is a potential hazard to children, the elderly and the disabled," said senior minister the Rev Mal York.

In the original plan for the current church building, toilet facilities were to be attached, but due to a lack of finance during construction this did not happen. However, thanks to a government grant of \$40,000 as well as donations from the congregation and church savings, a new \$95,000 amenities block is being connected to the church building.

Construction began on October 4

and it is due to be completed before Christmas.

"This is going to be a great benefit for people who visit our church," Mr York said. "We have members of the West Ryde community come through the church for weddings and funerals as well as Christmas and Easter services and we hope that people will see we are serious about welcoming everybody to our church and making them feel comfortable here."

When construction is complete the church is planning to celebrate by inviting local politicians to open the new amenities block.

"We have been holding on long enough," Mr York said.

In the future the church is planning a number of other building projects to better serve the people of West Ryde, including renovations to the kitchen as well as construction of a children's play area.

St Andrew's Cathedral Choir's Christmas Concert

HARK THE HERALD ANGELS SING!

Saturday 17th Dec 5.30pm

St Andrew's Cathedral Choir
Cathedral Brass Consort
Ross Cobb: Conductor

Includes
Christmas Music,
Readings &
Audience Carols

Tickets: \$35/20/10
www.sydneycathedral.com
02 9265 1661



CHRISTMAS SERVICES

MIDWINTER LESSONS AND CAROLS
Wednesday 14 December, 11.15pm & 6.30pm
Wednesday 21 December, 6.30pm

NINE LESSONS AND CAROLS
Sunday 18 December, 7.30pm

CHRISTMAS EUCHARISTS
Midnight Saturday 24 December, 11.30pm
Soft Sunday 25 December, 7.45am
Choral Sunday 25 December, 11.00am

Telephone: 8227 1300

THE JAMES COWAN CHURCH

CHRISTINGLE

A unique Christmas service for kids and families. Saturday 24 December, 6.00pm

Visit our website at:
www.jamescowan.org.au for
all details of ministries
at St James.

St Luke's goes flexible

ST Luke's Grammar School in Dee Why has opened a new state-of-the-art learning facility which has increased the school's useable space by 25 per cent.

On October 27 the Bishop of North Sydney, Glenn Davies, opened the \$2.7 million dollar Centre for Challenge and Creativity, which features a flexible classroom arrangement as well as rooftop multipurpose courts.

"The exciting new centre will serve us well, with the flexible learning spaces that provide an optimal environment for creativity and

challenge in learning," said Mrs Jann Robinson, principal of St Luke's.

The four-storey building, which also includes a permanent outdoor stage, soft play area and a large visual arts space and computer lab, was designed to be environmentally friendly.

"In the centre's design we specified that it needed to be sustainable and environmentally sensitive and that it use environmentally compatible and recycled building materials wherever practicable. This has been successfully achieved with, for example, optimal building insulation, passive solar design and the external shading of west-facing windows," Mrs Robinson said.

At the opening, Bishop Davies spoke about how the new building will benefit students.

"I am honoured to open the new Centre of Challenge and Creativity as an integral part of the education of the whole person — that students at the school might deepen their understanding of God's world, meet the challenges that it presents to the human mind and develop the creativity of the human spirit to enjoy, foster and explore the richness and variety of all that God has made," he said.



MOVES

Lewers heads for Armidale



The rector of Engadine, the **Rev Rick Lewers**, will be the next Bishop of Armidale.

A special election Synod of the Armidale Diocese convened in Moree last month to decide on a successor to Bishop Peter Brain, who has led the northern NSW diocese for the past 11 years. In accordance with the retirement age ordinance, Bishop Brain is due to step down from the role in April next year.

The Dean of Armidale, Stephen Williams, presided over the special Synod of about 120 members. It is understood that three names were considered before the Synod finally voted to call Mr Lewers.

After a curacy in Liverpool in the late '80s, Mr Lewers began a ministry in Canberra as rector of St Matthew's, Wanniasa. He returned to Sydney to work for the Department of Evangelism and became rector of Engadine in 2005.

Mr Lewers said he was humbled to have been chosen as Armidale's new bishop. "It's all the more humbling when you consider the quality of the other two men whose names went forward. I'm also apprehensive because I know the importance of the position and the significant responsibility I will undertake."

At its meeting on November 14, Sydney's Standing Committee unanimously agreed to send its congratulations to Mr Lewers and assure him and his wife Janene of their prayers and good wishes for his new role.

Bishop Brain told *The Armidale Express* newspaper he had enjoyed his 11 years in the diocese and was grateful for the support of his clergy and a large number of dedicated and courageous Christians in the parishes.

ATWOOD TO WESTERN SYDNEY



ONE of the assistant ministers at Springwood, the **Rev Neil Atwood**, became the part-time executive assistant to the Bishop of Western Sydney, Ivan Lee, on December 1.

"I am sad to leave the relationships here... but it was time for a different challenge," he says. "This gives me the opportunity to draw on all the contacts and people that I know from a good number of years in ministry — mainly in the Western region. I have a real heart for the Western region so this kind of role was a natural thing."

Mr Atwood is looking forward to the pastoral opportunities the new role will create. He also has skills in IT and hopes to streamline the region's

efficient use of technology to help Bishop Lee in administration and other areas.

"Social media is terribly underutilised in our diocesan structures and I've got a few ideas percolating away for how we can make that work more in the Western region," he says.

FROM BEECROFT TO MOOREBANK

THE **Rev Stephen Cook** has accepted the position of rector of Moorebank. Mr Cook has been an assistant minister in the parish of Beecroft since last year — and prior to that spent three years as the assistant minister at St Stephen's, Willoughby.

Mr Cook will be made a presbyter this month in a service at Beecroft and starts his new role in February.

Vacant Parishes

LIST OF PARISHES AND PROVISIONAL PARISHES, VACANT OR BECOMING VACANT AS AT NOVEMBER 23, 2011

- | | |
|--------------------------------|--------------|
| • Auburn (St Philip's) | • Lithgow |
| • Croydon | • Lugarno |
| • Killara | • Oak Flats |
| • Lalor Park and Kings Langley | • St Marys |
| | • Sutherland |

*Provisional parish or Archbishop's appointment

VALE



Mr Alan Höhne went to be with the Lord on November 9, after a short illness.

Born in 1942, Mr Höhne worked as a high school teacher before studying at Moore College for a year in the mid-1960s prior to being sent by CMS to Tanzania with his wife Julie.

The family returned to Australia after three years and Mr Höhne began working for the Bank of New South Wales (now Westpac) in 1971. As computers began to take hold in the banking system he was heavily involved in the implementation of ATMs, EFTPOS and many other strategic changes to the bank's technology and eventually became the corporation's chief information officer.

From the late 1970s Mr Höhne was also the chairman of CMS NSW & ACT. He became deputy chairman in the mid-1990s, continuing in that role until 2004. Speaking at Mr Höhne's thanksgiving service, Bishop Peter Tasker — a former NSW general secretary of CMS — recalled his "commitment of prayer, personal knowledge of and commitment to every one of these [missionaries]" and his "enormous love and care in Christ's name" for them all.

In 1995 Mr Höhne became the registrar of Moore College and in 2007 its dean of quality and planning. In addition to the pastoral care shown to students and his involvement in a range of projects he helped formalise college practices and processes and was instrumental in guiding the college through the rigorous state and federal reviews required for it to achieve self-accrediting authority.

Gavin Poole, the minister of Cherrybrook Anglican — a church which Mr Höhne helped plant 13 years ago — said, "People like Alan are gifts to the church, [providing] an important lesson of wholehearted devotion to God".

The principal of Moore College, Dr John Woodhouse, said "We owe him an enormous debt for helping to keep our eyes up and outward to keep our hearts missional. The gap left in our fellowship by the departure of Alan Höhne is huge. We thank God for him and pray that the Lord he served will comfort and strengthen us all."

Sing unto the Lord lots of songs

A MIGHTY SHOUT
(QUIZ WORX)
AT YOUR FEET
(SIMPLY SING)

REBECCA HOLT

Breath of Life

This Emu Music release is likely to divide opinion, given that it's subtitled 'Historic Hymns for Contemporary Christians'.

Updating the music of old hymns is always a fraught business, because although it can work tremendously well (think Ruth Buchanan's music for "Rock of Ages"), it's just as likely to annoy younger and older members of a church alike. The elder will miss the original music, especially if it was memorable and well loved, while the young might wonder why on earth this new song has such weird old words.

Putting their heads into the proverbial lion's den on this CD are Australian Christian songwriters such as Philip Percival, Nicky Chiswell, Rob Smith, Trevor Hodge and Luke and Vicki Woodhouse. They have tackled hymns from the 16th century to the 20th, written by the likes of Martin Luther, Isaac Watts and John Newton.

So, what to make of their efforts? It's a very subjective matter — I, for example, can't imagine effectively singing "A mighty fortress is our God" in any other than its original form — but for the generation or two that have grown up with fewer hymns or none at all, some of these songs may be a revelation. The words are poetic yet strong, filled with the gospel, trust in God and recognition of our need of him. And if this is what it takes to keep these songs alive, so be it.

Some will certainly be easier to sing in church than others — Nicky Chiswell's take on "Praise my soul the King of Heaven" is a real winner, and after a few listens I've also become a fan of Rob Smith's "O for a thousand tongues" (although I'd miss the original) plus Philip Percival's version of "My Shepherd will supply my need". Others — well, maybe. But time will tell which ones churches will choose to sing and love.

Judy Adamson

MUSIC is a key element of our Christian lives, from singing praises to God in church to listening to worship music through the privacy of our own mp3 players. To this end, two new musical resources have recently been released to assist God's people in praising him and sharing the message of salvation. Both of these CDs contain catchy songs with meaningful, theologically sound lyrics and both have very practical applications to a ministry environment.

The first is the latest release from Quiz Worx, "A Mighty Shout". This kids' ministry CD is aimed specifically at eight- to 12-year-old boys, although that's not to say the girls won't love it, too. It's filled with a variety of songs relating to Bible stories and aspects of the Christian life with a rock vibe that's sure to please even the preteens who think they're just a little too cool to sing along. Think Colin Buchanan with attitude.

There has previously been a bit of a shortage of music that appeals to this age group, but "A Mighty Shout" definitely fits the bill. It includes short songs with simple words that kids should be able to get a handle on very quickly, such as "The Greatest Party" and "The Good Shepherd". Other songs are a little longer and would require more

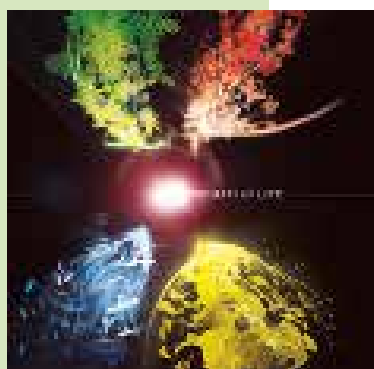
effort in teaching — Quiz Worx generally teaches these over a few days at conventions. Then there are the memory verse songs, an excellent way of learning verses and suitable for even the most forgetful of leaders!

All the lyrics are included with the CD, as well as helpful verses relating to each song. 'Puppet Antics' segments feature throughout the CD, creating a cohesive story throughout, although these may be considered a little lame — depending on the self-perceived coolness of the kids listening.

The other new release is Simply Sing's "At Your Feet". This is an excellent CD to listen to but its strength lies in the fact that the songs are well suited for congregational singing in church or other gatherings. The main focus is on the lyrics, which are full of praise and sound theology with very clear messages and a general avoidance of Christian jargon.

It's a short CD — five tracks only — and contains two hymns set to new music

continued next page »



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

Dr Peter Jensen
Archbishop Of Sydney

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

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other support to victims of misconduct or abuse.

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

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« from previous page
in “Hail the Day” and “There is a Green Hill”, as well as three original songs

by Matt Mulready (one co-written by John McClean). The instrumental arrangements are relatively simple and sheet music is available on the Simply Sing website. The tunes are catchy and interesting while still being fairly

easy for a congregation to pick up and the accompaniment could easily be rearranged to suit whatever combination of instruments is available.

SC

Rebecca Holt is a musician who took part in the 2011 Year 13 program at Youthworks.



The Bethlehem Road The Songs of Rob Smith 1990-2000



Has Rob Smith really been writing congregational songs since the mid-1980s? There are tracks on this double CD he wrote as early as 1986 and if, like me, you've been around the block a few times, there will be many familiar songs on this release.

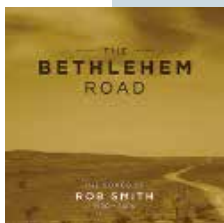
The “Bethlehem project”, as Smith calls it, resulted in Windwood Studios in the Blue Mountains recording four albums of his music — the first being *Our God Reigns*, released in 1990, with such tracks as “Behold the Lamb of God”, “I have been justified”, “Glory of glories”, “We have the words” and “The king has conquered my heart”. Perhaps those sound familiar?

However, with numerous congregations taking the option of mainly singing tracks written in the past five to 10 years (with the exception of the traditional services that have held fast to original hymns) these older songs of Smith's aren't being heard as often in our churches — and, apparently, his early albums are pretty much out of print now as well, hence the idea of reissuing the songs in this format.

I enjoyed hearing them again, particularly favourites such as “In Jesus' name we trust”. Some of the recordings haven't aged as well as others in terms of the backing or arrangement style but there are plenty of good songs on this release — and by “good” I mean musical, and with godly content.

In addition, from the point of view of a regular church song leader they're easy to sing — with a congregation or even a Sunday school class.

JA



Humility learnt at the feet of the master

HUMILITAS: A LOST KEY TO LIFE, LOVE, AND LEADERSHIP
BY JOHN DICKSON

ROB FORSYTH

IT is important to be clear what kind of book this is. Although SC is reviewing the latest publication from the well-known Christian author, John Dickson, this is not in any ordinary sense a Christian book. It belongs in the business or self-improvement section of a regular bookstore. In that sense it is a secular book written for a secular audience, even though it does touch powerfully on the place of Jesus Christ in world history.

As the title suggests the book discusses the virtue of humility and, somewhat paradoxically, how it can work for you. Dickson's basic thesis is that humility is logical, attractive and beneficial for life and especially leadership in business.

Humility is defined as “the noble choice to forgo your status, deploy your resources or use your influence for the good of others before yourself” (p24). Humility is important for leadership because it enhances persuasiveness, partly because it is a compelling character trait in leaders (p47).

John Dickson's method of argument draws much from his own experiences as well as many interesting examples of people who show attractive humility — and also those who fall sadly below the standard. We find ourselves engaging with everyone from Bill Gates to Albert Schweitzer, Cassius Clay, Martin Hengel, Bono, the Australian netball team, Steve Jobs, the emperor Augustus and Mrs Wilden, an important teacher in John Dickson's own life and journey to faith.

In short chapters, Dickson outlines his case that humility is common sense for us because each of us is so limited and the universe we live in is profoundly awe-inspiring; that humility is attractive because humble people are in some ways admirable and beautiful; that humility has benefits because it enables people to learn and generate abilities. It gives people the power to influence others. It can inspire those around us and, in particular, humility is better for creating harmony than a tolerance that only works by denying real difference in convictions.

Humilitas ends with a number of suggestions of steps to take to become more humble, including the insight of C. S. Lewis (which may be thought to call in question the whole enterprise) that humility is best attained when we forget about humility.

But the heart of the book is something



very different. The chapters on “*Philotimia*: Why the ancient world didn't like humility” (chapter 5) and “Cruciform: How a Jew from Nazareth redefined greatness” (chapter 6) are for me the centre and most powerful part of the book. John Dickson shows how before Christ humility — ‘being low’ — was not a virtue at all but despised in a culture in which the love of honour was valued and it was perfectly appropriate to

openly draw attention to your abilities and achievements.

That all changed with Jesus of Nazareth. It wasn't so much what he said as his execution, and how that came to be understood by his followers, which changed Western culture for ever. Dickson draws attention to the remarkable claims of the second chapter of Philippians that to ascribe as equal with God someone who had died what was in any sense a most shameful death is “nothing less than a humility revolution. Honour and shame are turned on their heads” (p109). It was worth reading just for this.

I finished the book with a question hanging. Is *Humilitas* what it presents itself to be, a simple essay in practical secular wisdom, or is it also something of ‘an under the radar’ form of evangelism? I can say that despite Dickson's frequent protestations of neutrality, he has written a book that introduces the reader to some of the attractive aspects of the Christian faith.

If I have a quibble it is that, in his anxiety not to offend or seem to be pushing a Christian view, John Dickson pulls his punches when it is not necessary and in places appears a little too eager to please. For example, I couldn't understand why, when the historical section of the book is indeed the most attractive and well-written on any terms, he quite openly says it is a section which readers “should feel free to skip over” (p19). There were also a number of times when I felt the chatty personal style detracted from the strong flow of the argument.

However, *Humilitas: A Lost Key to Life, Love, and Leadership* is a very welcome book. I'd love to see more and more Christian writers putting their works not just in Christian bookshops but in the place where ordinary people who may not have faith may still find themselves coming across attractive Christian points of view. The author has good things to say. Let them be said humbly but with conviction.

SC



Jolly holiday adventure

THE ADVENTURES
OF TINTIN — THE
SECRET OF THE
UNICORN
PG

JUDY ADAMSON

IT'S impossible to make a film of a beloved piece of literature without annoying some fans of the original. And it's even harder when there are multiple works, written for children and all remembered with affection and joy by thousands across the globe.

As such, when Steven Spielberg and Peter Jackson teamed up to direct and produce (respectively) *The Adventures of Tintin* they would have done so knowing they couldn't please everyone. Certainly Peter Jackson would have been very familiar with the ire of book fans, having experienced the pointy end of their disapproval many times during the years he spent converting J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord Of The Rings* into a blockbuster cinema trilogy.

Spielberg was first introduced to Tintin 30 years ago, while promoting *Raiders Of The Lost Ark*, when a French critic kept referring to Hergé's cartoon adventurer. However, for a range of reasons the film he wanted to make has not come about until now, with the help of the Weta Digital team in New Zealand that created the special effects for *The Lord Of The Rings*.

A particular element of Weta's expertise is "motion-capture" technology, in which a real actor creates a performance that is subsequently digitised and turned into animated form. In *The Lord Of The Rings* the technology was used for one character — in *Tintin*, it's used for everyone. So, in addition to the voices of actors such as Jamie Bell (Tintin), Andy Serkis (Captain Haddock) and Daniel Craig (Sakharine), you also get to see their movements and facial expressions — after a fashion.

Let me say from the outset that I didn't read *Tintin* as a child — I was far too

involved with Asterix and his adventures — so I went to the film with no prior expectations or real knowledge of the stories. I'd read the complaints of some disgruntled fans, but wanted to see if I could enjoy the film for itself. I also took a secret weapon in the form of my nine-year-old daughter.

The Adventures of Tintin — The Secret Of The Unicorn contains elements of three Tintin books, but most particularly the one named in the film title. The film begins with a nod to Hergé who (in animated form) is drawing people's portraits at an outdoor market. He finishes one of Tintin — recreating the cartoon character — and then the "real-life" young reporter hops up from his chair and the story really gets under way.

For Tintin has seen, at a nearby stall, a three-masted model man-o'-war — the *Unicorn* — and is entranced. He happily buys it, and suddenly finds himself the centre of attention. Others want to buy the ship from him, offering much more money.

Not only does Tintin like the ship for itself, his curiosity is piqued by the apparent mystery. He researches the history of the ship in the library and its connection to 17th-century adventurer Sir Francis Haddock. This takes him to Marlinspike Hall, the Haddock ancestral home — where he not only meets Sakharine but discovers there is a second model *Unicorn* in the house identical to his own.

What Tintin doesn't know is that inside each ship is a small piece of parchment, hidden there centuries before by Sir Francis, in order to lead one of his descendants to the famous treasure of the original *Unicorn*, sunk in battle hundreds of years earlier.

From then on it's no-holds-barred

adventure as Tintin is abducted and uses his wits, the help of his white terrier Snowy and a new-found friend — the perpetually drunk Captain Haddock — to escape, survive and continue the hunt for the ship's treasure.

Some fans of the books have mocked *The Adventures of Tintin — The Secret Of The Unicorn* as being over the top, too action-heavy and crushing the inventiveness of Hergé. The characters are also all wrong, they insist.

Yet others have remarked on how well the filmmakers have captured the spirit of the books and how accurately the characters have been drawn. Tintin, for example, is not someone with complex motives or a troubled past, like Indiana Jones — he is simply a clever young man with courage in a crisis and a knack for getting into adventures. We get to see the gamut of humanity in other people — in the drunkenness and self-doubt of Captain Haddock, the foolishness of bowler-hatted detectives Thompson and Thompson and the greed and revenge of Sakharine.

Without question some of the film's action sequences do stretch the bounds of reason but no more than the average you-must-be-kidding-me opening sequence from a Bond film. And after all, this is meant to be an adventure — and what's the point of bringing a series like this to the screen if it lacks punch? It's a jolly, rollicking tale that doesn't give you much time to draw breath, which is absolutely what the filmmakers intended.

Pre-schoolers and early school-age children may find some of the fights a bit scary but my junior critic was enthusiastic, calling it "the best movie I've seen ever". You may not agree with that but as a piece of Sunday matinee-style entertainment it is bound to be a holiday hit.

SC

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