

Southern CROSS

MARCH
2016

THE NEWS MAGAZINE FOR SYDNEY ANGLICANS

Speak no religion

HOW TO RESPOND WHEN FREEDOM IS UNDER ATTACK

+ Resurrection witness

& Synod to consider Anglicare-ARV merger

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“

This life is not our own, we've been purchased for a purpose

Kanishka Raffel

”

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Missed February *Southern Cross*?

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Special Synod on merger

A SPECIAL SESSION OF SYNOD has been called for later this month to decide on the proposed merger of Anglicare and Anglican Retirement Villages.

The merger has been proposed as a way of boosting the reach and efficiency of both organisations at a time of considerable change in the aged care and community services environment.

Two years ago a sub-committee was established to "examine the desirability of an amalgamation, consider possible alternatives, and report to a future meeting of Standing Committee".

The issue was given fresh impetus when special meetings of the Anglicare and ARV boards in January voted to proceed with merger plans, to be implemented on July 1.

At its meeting last month, Standing Committee heard reports from the CEOs of ARV and Anglicare, Rob Freeman and Grant Millard.

Both CEOs told Standing Committee the merger would see "a solid foundation provided for the continuation and expansion of our ministries" and "remove duplication, reduce operating costs, and enable greater capability".

Committee members asked a series of questions and then passed several recommendations from the merger sub-committee. The sub-committee said it was possible for Standing Committee to take all necessary steps to implement the merger, but added "the significance of the matter is such that the Synod should be consulted before the necessary ordinances are passed".

Synod is scheduled to meet in October, but an extra session will now be held on the evening of March 31 solely to consider the merger.

The sub-committee felt a special session was needed to speedily consider the matter, both to reduce uncertainty for staff and

stakeholders and to ensure any approved structural alterations were in place before significant government policy changes come into effect next February.

It is understood that members of Synod will be given considerable details about the proposal, including draft ordinances and an invitation to attend a briefing before the March meeting.

Synod members will also be given ample time during the session to ask questions, and then debate and vote on the proposal.

In terms of seniors living and aged services, a merged organisation would operate 22 residential care homes serving 2100 people, 22 retirement villages serving 2600 and provide services to 1500 people in the Homecare program and 3000 in HomeHelp. It would also have 21 day and respite centres.

Under the merger proposal, the organisation would provide services

to about 50,000 people each week.

The current scope of welfare services would continue, including areas such as foster care and adoptions, migrant and refugee services, counselling, family relationships services, emergency relief, mental health programs and youth programs.

A merged organisation would augment ARV's already significant chaplaincy ministry with Anglicare's chaplaincy programs across residential aged care, hospitals, prisons, juvenile justice facilities and mental health facilities, as well as Anglicare's Social Policy Research and advocacy functions.

Both organisations have distinguished histories, with Anglicare originating in the Church Society established by Bishop Barker in 1856 and ARV growing out of Mowll Village at Castle Hill, started by Archbishop Howard Mowll and his wife Dorothy in 1959.



ABBOTSLEIGH

Abbotsleigh Head

After 12 years of outstanding service, Mrs Judith Poole will retire as Headmistress of Abbotsleigh School of 2006. The School Council invites applications for the position of Headmistress to commence at the beginning of 2012.

Abbotsleigh is one of the leading schools in Australia, located in the western suburbs of Sydney. Founded in 1859, it is a Pre-K-12 independent, Anglican school for girls, with a co-educational Early Learning Centre for 0-5 year olds. Current enrolment is approximately 1400 girls (Pre-K-12), of whom 120 are boarders.

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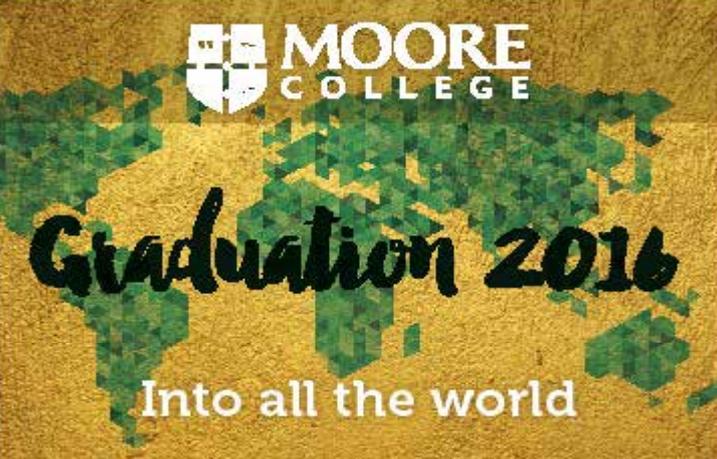
- strategic, innovative, inspiring and able to lead and manage change
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Kate Perry is managing the School Council search appointment. Further information, including an e-booklet outlining our selection criteria, may be obtained from Lisa Greenham on +61 2 9096 8458 or email abbotsleigh@anglican.org.au

Closing date for applications is 21 March 2012



MOORE COLLEGE



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Speaker
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moore.edu.au

Time
7:30pm – 9:30pm
Doors open 7:00pm
(Seated by 7:20pm)

All welcome!

Newtown crane rises

THE NEW SIX-LEVEL LEARNING and Teaching Centre is starting to take shape at Moore College's Newtown campus. A 130-tonne crane has been erected in the building's lift well and at 43 metres high it can be seen for kilometres around.

The new centre will house a world-class library and teaching facilities, with room for expansion. The facility will have five times the number of individual and group study spaces there were previously, a further eight tutorial rooms, a united faculty space and an assembly hall. The new library will also be able to store double the number of items onsite.

Basic formwork and concrete pouring has been done on three levels and the building has risen to half its final height of about 24 metres, with about 30 tonnes of steel used on each floor as reinforcement. Work has also begun on services such as water, drainage



Going up: the construction crane towers over the King Street site as the new Learning and Teaching Centre takes shape.

and electrical circuits.

Despite the inconvenience of the construction work Moore College students have begun to gain some benefits. Landscaping work has

already been done outside the building, including the creation of a refurbished College Green.

However, as the building rises so does the need to reach the

fundraising goal. The college still urgently needs another \$4.8 million in donations or it will be forced to sell property in order to finance the project.

"That is something we really can't afford to do if we are to continue to grow and serve the needs of gospel ministry in Sydney, and around the world, in the challenging years ahead," says the college's principal the Rev Dr Mark Thompson.

"The college expanded its campus to provide accommodation for married students throughout the second half of the 20th century and into our own.

"Faithful, generous men and women made this possible and have secured an increasingly unique experience of being shaped by the knowledge of God in the context of a Christian scholarly community. We certainly don't want to whittle away at that legacy in order to reach the amount needed."

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Diocese plans integrated Syrian response

SYDNEY'S DIOCESAN AGENCIES have met to plan how they can use their combined resources to assist in the future arrival of Syrian refugees.

The latest meeting, which was hosted by Anglicare, featured representatives from Youthworks, Anglican Deaconess Ministries, ARV, Moore College and the Sydney Anglican Schools Corporation. On the agenda was an update on the current humanitarian situation, plus discussion of available resources and training to help churches and organisations prepare to welcome the Government's additional intake of 12,000 Syrian refugees.

"We're really looking toward what we would call an integrated diocesan response," said Anglicare's executive officer Jim Wackett. "The plan is for all the various agencies and churches to be encouraged and equipped to develop their own initiatives, but also to bring those initiatives together to achieve a greater overall impact on the work of the Diocese."

Anglicare's Migrant and Refugee

Services department has particularly been focusing on medium-term support, developing ESL classes and auxiliary Early Learning Through Play (ELTP) programs, supplementing school and parish support for young refugee children.

"These are two areas that represent significant avenues for local parishes to be involved in the refugee response," says Anglicare's manager of Migrant and Refugee Services, Fiona McQuinn-Bird.

"We're planning to begin ELTP in parishes over the next year, and we're particularly looking at the Georges River and the Illawarra to begin with. We have many resources we can share with parishes that want to be involved in that kind of work, as well as support and training."

While the first major arrival of Syrian refugees in the specially allocated cohort was due in February, these arrivals are now expected – according to the latest available information – sometime this month. Approximately 500

refugees a month will arrive over a two-year period, and about half are expected to be settled in and around greater Sydney.

"I want to emphasise that the people who will come to us will need very sensitive and very careful and loving treatment over a consistent, long-term period," says David Goodhew, Anglicare's regional director for the Western Region.

"I don't think we, generally speaking, understand well the differences in culture and what that means for people who come here. Social norms, language, basic upbringing, are all potentially different in varied ways. And that's aside from the difficulties of coming from a place with significant conflict stretching back several years."

Other agency and college representatives present at the recent meeting also spoke about how they were planning to assist in the response, including the potential provision of facilities for short- or medium-term housing and helping to co-ordinate parishes and individuals who want to fill any gaps.

According to the latest UNHCR numbers, there are about 4.7 million registered Syrian refugees in the world today, with all but 700,000 of that number currently located in Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey.

Canada, which made a similar resettlement commitment to Australia, has resettled about 20,000 of its 25,000-person quota since November 2015.

Archbishop's term extended

STANDING COMMITTEE HAS voted overwhelmingly to extend the term of Archbishop Glenn Davies until 2020.

Without the vote, Dr Davies would have been due to retire on attaining the age of 68 on September 26, 2018. He was elected in August 2013.

Dr Robert Tong moved a motion in Standing Committee on February 15 that the Archbishop's term be extended for another two years. He told the committee that the Archbishop has shown leadership in three key areas.

"Clearly by his preaching and modelling servant leadership, he has

demonstrated spiritual leadership," Dr Tong said.

He also cited the Archbishop's leadership in Anglican organisations within and outside of the Diocese and his leadership in the "public square".

"He is across the issues, he makes a contribution and offers leadership from his own experience and learning," Dr Tong said.

The success of the motion, which was seconded by the principal of Moore College, the Rev Dr Mark Thompson, was announced to applause from the members of Standing Committee.

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A surprised, saved servant

JUDY ADAMSON

THE MORE YOU SPEAK TO Sydney's new Dean, Kanishka Raffel, the more you realise his story is a quintessentially Sydney tale.

It's not because – like so many Sydneysiders these days – he was born overseas and his parents emigrated here in search of a better life. And it's not because work has taken his family interstate for years or because Raffel spent much of his youth trying to be a good Buddhist.

His story, at its heart, is one of faith – one that has played out with Sydney as the backdrop. For this was the place where a Christian teenage friend said he was praying for Raffel; where he saw, heard and pondered the faith of school and university friends; where he became a Christian, grew in faith and studied for ministry; and where, to his great joy, his mother looked to Jesus in the final days of her life.

Despite this, he and his wife Cailey spent six months praying about the invitation for him to return to Sydney as Dean of St Andrew's Cathedral – and the 16 fruitful years they had spent in Perth were just part of their thinking.

"I felt tremendously daunted by the prospect – inadequate," he says. "I'd said to my mother [years before] that I often prayed the tax collector's prayer for mercy and I do, because I know I'm a sinner. The Dean has a certain profile and I thought, 'Well, they should get someone who's more godly'. But a good friend said to me, 'The Lord is able to keep you' and that's true, so I thought that if the Lord wants me to do this he will enable me to do it.

"It was as big a decision to decide to stay in our parish for another 10-15 years as to leave it... We wanted to see the gospel go forward in both places under God. 2 Corinthians 5:15 frequently challenges me, that Christ 'died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again'.

"This life is not our own, we've



Dean Kanishka Raffel and his wife Cailey at the installation service.

been purchased for a purpose and in the end we felt we would serve that purpose by coming."

Raffel was Buddhist by upbringing, although his paternal grandmother used to tell him Bible stories.

He arrived in Sydney as an eight-year-old boy in 1972 with his Sinhalese mother, Burgher (Sri Lankan European) father and his two sisters. Less than six months later his father died of a heart attack, and the family returned to Sri Lanka to bury him. Raffel's mother, a doctor, then had to make the hard choice between staying in Sri Lanka – where food was being rationed but she had family support – or coming back to Sydney, where she would have a good job and a brighter future for her children, but be culturally isolated.

She chose to return. The kids grew up in Carlingford and when Raffel finished school he studied arts/law at the University of Sydney, little knowing how God's plan was working itself out through this decision. In his third year he studied Buddhism as he knew so little about it, and by the end of that year he was meditating regularly and felt "very comfortable" with his religion.

Enter Andrew Shead – a firm Christian who is now a lecturer at Moore College.

He and Raffel had become good friends at school, and before fourth year uni began they and others planned to holiday down the coast. Raffel met up with Shead at the end of his beach mission and that night, Raffel says, as the pair talked, "I asked Andrew what the big deal was – what it meant for him to be a Christian. And he said, 'Being a Christian means I've lost control of my life to Jesus Christ'.

"To this day that is the most stunning description that I've ever heard anybody give of being a Christian... Here was this guy who was a friend, who I respected – but who also intrigued me because he was always so self contained – and he's telling me he's given control away to a dead guy!"

Raffel was nonplussed, but accepted the offer of something to read: the gospels of Mark and John. In Mark he recognised stories his grandmother used to tell him, but in John his attention was soon taken by the "gritty reality" of Jesus and the air of authenticity in what he read. Gradually he began to notice that at certain points John also wrote: "at this the people were divided".

"God brought this editorial assessment to my attention, and it prompted me to ask: 'Jesus divides people and you are against him

– why is that?'" Raffel recalls. "And eventually I couldn't think of any reason to be against Jesus."

Two weeks after being given the gospels, and two hours after beginning to read John, Raffel went to sleep a Christian, and woke up to a different world. But his astonishment at God's grace was just beginning.

"Another friend who had become a Christian when he was 14 [Stuart Pearson, now rector of Liverpool], told me that year in the playground that he was praying for me," Raffel recalls. "When I became a Christian I went with him to his church and his friend said, 'Oh, Kanishka, we've been praying for you for years'.

"I was a very surprised new Christian. I hadn't become a Christian in order to relieve myself of any great burden but when I became Christian I had an experience of joy in knowing God – I still have joy in knowing God, but the kind of shock of this was almost palpable at the time. So, long before I knew the word 'missionary' or 'minister' it was just there: people need to know how good God is and how wonderful Jesus is. I would be walking on the streets thinking, 'I wonder if that person knows Jesus'."

This thinking led to the choice to save money for Bible college rather than a house deposit, and to go into full-time ministry. His mother, still a Buddhist, was not thrilled but observed that, "at least you're not going to be a Buddhist monk".

She came at times to hear him preach, and would sometimes go with Cailey to other events, but more as the mother of a Christian than as a seeker after God.

Then, seven years into his tenure in Perth, the family paid a Christmas visit to Sydney, which Raffel describes now as "an extraordinary story of God's providence". It was the first time they hadn't been at their Shenton Park church for Christmas since moving there in 1999. The day they arrived, his mother went to the doctor with abdominal pains and was admitted to hospital.

"She hadn't even had tests, but she was a pathologist and the first

CATHEDRAL CELEBRATES

St Andrew's Cathedral welcomed its new Dean at an installation service last month, as the Rev Kanishka de Silva Raffel became the first non-European to hold the post.

"When we came to Australia in the 1970s, there was one spice shop in Sydney where all the Sri Lankan community would go on the weekend to buy their spices," the new Dean said. "Now, Sydney has become a very multicultural society and it would be strange if the Church didn't reflect that because we have a message of God's love for all people. Jesus is for everybody."

The Dean is appointed by the Archbishop with

the concurrence of the Cathedral chapter. Mr Raffel was presented at the service by Cathedral chapter member John Bishop and the Archdeacon for Women, Kara Hartley.

Members of the Cathedral's congregations, family, friends and a contingent from Raffel's old church in Perth were on hand, as well as the deans of eight other Cathedrals around the country, including Hobart and Perth.

In his first sermon, the new Dean struck a note of personal testimony. "The mercy of God I first encountered 30 years ago last week... didn't make me less Sri Lankan any more than it made me more Australian," he said.

"I encountered Jesus as I read Scripture. He spoke to me from the pages of the Bible; he made himself known in his Gospel. I came to the Living Stone and he made me one of his people by his mercy."

Dean Raffel also mused on the uses of a Cathedral. "Cathedrals are expensive to maintain, impossible to heat; home to rats and pigeons and, despite being affectionately referred to as a glorified rain shelter, this Cathedral leaks!" he said. "But we're glad to be here... And we are here, to proclaim to anyone and everyone the excellencies of the Saviour, and to call on them to know and trust his love."

thing she said to me the next day was, 'I wanted to see your daughters graduate,'" he recalls. "I said, 'Mum, you're just having some tests', and then she said, 'You can talk to me about God if you want to'.

"This was the first time she'd ever wanted to hear anything, and like many people she asked, 'Why isn't good, good enough?' I told her the story of the Pharisee and the tax collector at the temple and I said, 'God doesn't want us to be good, he wants us to be his!'"

His mum came home for Christmas, but before the New Year was back in hospital. Raffel wrote her a letter and included Psalm 23 with it. When he visited her again on January 2, "she thanked me for the letter and said, 'I've been thinking about my life and I need to be forgiven'.

"I just couldn't believe what I was hearing," he says. "I said, 'Jesus came into the world so that we could be forgiven – all you have to do is ask'. She said, 'You ask'. I told her I would say a prayer and if that was what

she wanted to say to God, to say 'Amen' at the end."

"I had tears streaming down my face now, so I prayed, she said 'Amen', and then she said, 'Perhaps your Jesus can be my shepherd, too'. And five days later she died." Raffel smiles. "Whoever calls out to him..." He smiles again.

He and Cailey made the choice, many years ago, to devote as much of their lives as they could to sharing the Scriptures with others. With his job as Dean of Sydney they will

never want for opportunities – in the Cathedral congregations, the Cathedral School, in diocesan events and in reaching out to the city.

"There are boundless opportunities for holding out the word of life and offering to people the hope we have in Jesus," he says. "Amid the world's sorrows and tears and evil there is a good and faithful God who has made himself known in this stunning man, and he is the hope of the world. And to have this opportunity to tell others is just fantastic."

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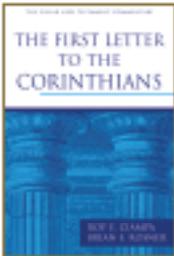
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'I am calling upon politicians all across our country not only to pray for those victims of persecution, but to step up and be prepared to do whatever is within their power to provide a warm and generous welcome, coupled with practical assistance, to ensure that those who come to find safety in Australia are afforded the best possible chance to make a new start and benefit as fully as possible from the peace, freedom and opportunity that Australia offers.' – Dr Glenn Davies

The war in Syria is destroying the lives of millions of people. Families are being forced out of their homes and subjected to unimaginable terror in the form of imprisonment, torture, rape, starvation and death. They are abandoning their homelands with nowhere to go and no hope of ever returning.

Commencing in March 2016, 12,000 additional Syrian refugees will begin arriving in Australia at the rate of 500 per month for a period of two years. Many will be settling in Greater Sydney.

As part of our mission to provide life-changing Christian care for any person of any faith, Anglicare is committed to being there for children and their families who have escaped the war in Syria.

Anglicare's trained staff and volunteers are at the ready to provide essential support to newly-arrived refugees through a range of programs designed to help these families to get the best possible start in Australia.

Early Learning Through Play

ELTP is a program developed by Anglicare to assist the pre-school aged children of migrant and refugee families prepare for school in Australia by helping them to reach a range of developmental milestones. Working alongside families to help their children learn and develop through play, the program prepares children from refugee backgrounds to get a good start at school and make transition smoother.

English as a Second Language (ESL)

Anglicare works in partnership with around 90 churches in the Sydney Diocese. ESL is a practical way to assist migrant and refugees learn English and adjust to a new culture. Trained volunteers use a specially-developed curriculum and also provide students the opportunity to attend additional bible study classes.

Hope Counselling

Hope Counselling provides vital support to refugee families from the Middle East (and elsewhere). The traumas of conflict and the difficulties that can be experienced adjusting to a new culture and a new language can place added relationship strain on newly-arrived families. Hope Counselling works toward strengthening family relationships for refugees through counselling, group work and community development activities.

Accommodation support

Sydney Anglicare are encouraged to make available self-contained premises that may be privately leased to tenants. The premises could be a granny flat or self-contained residence, an investment property or a holiday residence. Landlords would be encouraged to set affordable rent for a period of at least six months. Anglicare will compile a list of available properties across the Sydney metro area and make this list available to our settlement service contacts.



'Our ability to show love and mercy and to provide a warm welcome to anyone in distress, regardless of their faith, must serve as a counterpoint to the brutality of the. Our response needs to be immediate, generous and unquestioning regardless of race, ethnicity or religion.' – Dr Glenn Davies

PRAY. DONATE. VOLUNTEER.



Robbery and grace

A RECENT BREAK-IN AND ROBBERY at Glenquarie Anglican has left the door open to future grace and community, says the church's senior minister.

The Rev David Ould, rector of Glenquarie, says the robbery, which appears to have been targeted and resulted in the theft of a safe in the church, was discovered by one of his wardens before a meeting on a Wednesday morning.

"Ultimately it wasn't too bad," he says. "The safe didn't have anything of real value in it – we lost a couple of things like hard drives. A large proportion of the worry has really been the damage that has been done to doors getting in. One of my wardens actually said at the time, 'Let's hope we can have a chance to give them the candlesticks, too!'"

Police have conducted a forensic analysis at the site, but no meaningful results had been produced at time of writing. Mr Ould



The aftermath: a police officer scans contents of the Glenquarie office.

says he hopes to have contact with the perpetrator again in the future, adding that the break-in won't have an impact on outreach activities the church runs onsite.

"We're pretty used to having

people onsite but we're also used to being taken advantage of every so often," he says. "That'll just happen, so you just learn to be prepared for that, and to have the right attitude for when those things happen."

Mr Ould says the church's attitude of forgiveness and grace is a key part of its Break the Cycle program through which, among other things, it provides support to people who are in the criminal justice system. He says members try to model a Christian attitude to justice and mercy through that system, and the freedom it can bring.

"Forgiveness is a key principle, as well as the idea that genuine repentance accepts responsibility," Mr Ould says. "We try to model ourselves the freedom that grace brings. Grace allows our clients to be honest about themselves, because it's only knowing that what you've done won't be held against you that allows you to be honest."

"We treat people with grace and we expect people to then take responsibility in how they deal with the courts. Often courts recognise in sentencing when people are willing to live differently."



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Equipping Your Child For Life

Birth kits for Africa

ST MATTHEW'S AT WEST Pennant Hills has taken a different tack in its approach to women's ministry by organising an evening to pack birthing kits for pregnant women in Africa.

The initiative was co-ordinated by Karen Braga along with World Vision's "Vision Sisters" program. As well as raising funds directly for Vision Sisters' work in Africa, the women in attendance also got hands-on by packing 1400 kits – simple and cheap to make but lifesavers for women forced to give birth in unsanitary conditions.

"World Vision contacted us about this new initiative and I thought it looked really good," Mrs Braga says.

"My experience is that you can invite women to paint plates or make gingerbread houses – and those things have their place – but women today have a much greater awareness of people around the world in difficult situations. And they



Kitted out: some of the women at the West Pennant Hills event, with kits made on the night.

really appreciate the opportunity to do something practical to help, which makes something like this a great way to invite non-Christians into a church context."

Mrs Braga, now at Abbotsford

Anglican as a woman's minister, says she has been particularly heartened by the way some attendees have organised similar events in different contexts. One young woman who attended the event at West Pennant Hills subsequently ran a birth kit packing event at her birthday party.

"World Vision works in conjunction with the Birthing Kit Foundation of Australia, so World Vision would provide the education and instruction while the foundation would provide the materials for the kits themselves," Mrs Braga says. "It was actually really simple to do, and the beauty of it is that you can basically do it anywhere."

"After registering with World Vision, they also send you promotional material and other information, which makes it easier

to invite people and to make them aware it's happening."

The event, held late last year, was attended by about 80 women, with many non-church women invited by friends. Mrs Braga says the nature of the event is such that it is attractive to women of many ages, and creates a common cause whether you attend church or not.

"It just hits close to home for women," she says. "In Australia we have so many things that make life comfortable, but any woman who has given birth knows what an ordeal it can be."

"Just the idea of giving birth in a run-down shelter, with no running water, in a small town far from any hospital or medical care, for instance, strikes a chord with people."



PROTECTION AND CARE FOR EVERYONE



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

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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.

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

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

Abuse Report Line 1800 774 945



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Royal Commission Apology

Appeal for Fiji

ARCHBISHOP GLENN DAVIES HAS apologised on behalf of the Diocese at a hearing on abuse cases in the Church of England Boys' Society (CEBS) by the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. The commission convened a hearing in Hobart, looking at responses from the Anglican dioceses of Tasmania, Adelaide, Sydney and Brisbane to allegations of child sexual abuse against lay people and clergy involved with CEBS.

Robert Brandenburg is believed to have molested at least 80 boys before taking his life when charged by police in the late 1990s in Adelaide. In Tasmania, former clergymen Garth Hawkins and Louis Daniels served jail terms for sexual offences against teenagers at parishes across Tasmania in the 1970s and 1980s. A lay leader in Sydney, Simon Antony Jacobs, was jailed in 2010 for sexual assaults against boys in Pymble and St Ives during the 1970s and '80s.

The commission took evidence from perpetrators as well as survivors, and church leaders. On the opening day of the hearing, in a statement read to the commission by counsel for the Diocese of Sydney, Michelle England, Archbishop Davies said he "acknowledges the devastating, deep and lasting effects of abuse on these survivors, and on their families and friends.

"It is also with deep sadness that the Archbishop acknowledges the

premature death of some who were abused... The Archbishop is deeply sorry this terrible abuse of trust occurred. It should never have happened. He apologises to those survivors for this betrayal of trust. He also apologises to those who have witnessed in their loved ones the enduring pain caused by child sexual abuse."

Neither Archbishop Davies nor former Archbishop Jensen was in office when the offences occurred, but Dr Jensen met with victims early in his term as Archbishop. He was called to give evidence about the Sydney cases, and when asked about the reaction of some leaders at the time told the commission "there is an ethos in the Church of what you may call easy forgiveness without repentance, and I think that's what is expressed back then.

"One of the things we've often done in the Church is, when a person has fallen into gross public sin of some sort, we've stood them down for some years and then taken them back... I would want to say, 'No, true repentance means your willingness not to go back'. And I believe we shouldn't take them back."

Dr Jensen said he believed the ethos was different today and much had been learned about child protection as well as the lasting impact of abuse. "I always said the survivors are my chief teachers," he told the commission.

Abuse report line: 1800 774 945.



An aerial view from a Royal Australian Air Force C-17A Globemaster aircraft revealing widespread floods in Fiji caused by tropical cyclone Winston.

PHOTO: ABIS Chris Beerens

AN APPEAL HAS BEEN LAUNCHED to help the victims of one of the strongest storms ever to strike the Southern Hemisphere.

Cyclone Winston hit Fiji on February 20, killing at least 30 people and leaving a trail of damage across several islands. Homes, sometimes entire villages, as well as infrastructure and communication links, were flattened.

"Some of the most severely affected communities are where Anglican Aid and the Youthworks Year 13 mission teams have been working," said the Rev David

Mansfield, CEO of Anglican Aid.

Anglican Aid is partnering with the Anglican Church of Polynesia to help people affected in the rural village of Maniava on Viti Levu. "Maniava, an isolated community of impoverished subsistence farmers originally from the Solomon Islands, is one such community which has lost virtually everything," Mr Mansfield said.

Winston is the only known Category 5 storm in the Southern Hemisphere, and therefore the most intense cyclone ever to hit Fiji.

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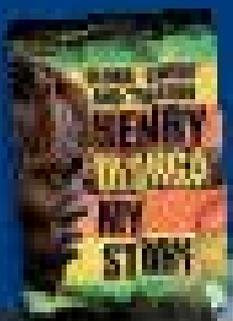
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Farewell Bishop Reid

We were so sorry to learn of John Reid's death (SC, February). He was a man with a remarkable godly gravitas, fearless and immovable where necessary, gracious and flexible where possible. His loyalties were local but his influences were global.

Three little cameos come to mind: seeing his stature and influence at the Lausanne Congress on evangelism in Manila; remembering his passing lesson on sideburns (in the long hair days) that "whether they were long, medium or short was of no consequence for the kingdom of God"; and his evening sermon at CMS Summer School on Jonah and God turning his wrath in on himself, which sent me – and all of us – from the auditorium to go home and rededicate ourselves afresh to Christ.

He was a great gift to our Diocese and beyond. To his family may God's peace, and John's faith, bless you all.

Simon Manchester
Artarmon



Pay up

I was disappointed to read "Bathurst awaits orders" (SC, February) as it seemed to imply, particularly in the final paragraph, that the Commonwealth Bank has a moral obligation to forgive the debt of the Bathurst Diocese. I am not privy to all the details of the case, described as "complex" in the article, but I'm not surprised the Supreme Court found the loan involved "legally binding obligations".

Of course borrowing money involves an obligation to repay!

Only an inept lender would not expect repayment, especially if such a lender has shareholders – including many everyday Australians (whether directly or through their super funds).

Additionally, I would imagine many churches with legitimate requests for credit would have them denied if other churches had a history of failing to accept their financial responsibilities. This would not be a good outcome, and if that diocese needs to sell assets to repay its debts, in my opinion it should simply do so without complaining and bringing disrepute and legal expenses upon the church. That the article seems to suggest the obligation rests upon the bank is disappointing.

Simon A. Collins

Parishioner, north-western
Sydney

Saving History

Regarding your December article on the Garrison Church's history, thank you to John Chandler for his memory of the Rev Geoff Bingham at the Garrison (SC, February).

In addition to his reflection, the three most recent rectors of the Garrison Church also wish to affirm that the church has indeed functioned as a parish in the past century: the Bible has been taught, the gospel preached, worship has been offered to God, the lay members have been trained in godliness and ministry, the community loved and people have been called to repentance and faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour. The church has had a rector, a parish council and has paid her way since 1840.

It has not been an easy parish to work in and grow, as the article pointed out. Like all parishes, it has unique struggles, and yet each rector and each congregation has prayerfully worked hard to proclaim the life-saving gospel. We are also excited about the future ahead for both church and parish.

Justin Moffatt (rector 2013-)

Howard Barnett (2002-2012)

Brian Seers (1984-2001)

Letters should be less than 200 words.
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MOVING



KENSINGTON CONNECTION

An assistant minister at St Alban's, Lindfield, The Rev Adam Clark, became rector of the eastern suburbs parish of Kensington-Eastlakes on January 19.

Parish nominators found out about Mr Clark in a somewhat unusual way. The senior minister at Lindfield, the Rev Michael Crichton, had served as rector of Kensington himself in the second half of the 1990s. When he heard the news that the parish was becoming vacant, he contacted the nominators and said they should have a chat to his assistant.

"I don't know if he was trying to get rid of me!" Mr Clark jokes. "No, he put in a good word for me with the nominators, so they started chatting to me on the phone.

"Every time I talked to them I became more interested. I think the thing that attracted me most was that they needed someone who was happy and comfortable to do ministry with people of all ages, as well as reaching out and building up the young families

demographic. The experience I had at Lindfield probably set me up well to do that, because my role there kept changing every year or two."

In addition, Mr Clark's wife Alison is a real enthusiast about the Junior Jivers ministry and is starting up a playgroup with help from people in the congregation.

While only one of the Clarks' five children was born in the seven years they were at Lindfield, "even the eldest one probably wouldn't remember anywhere else," Mr Clark says. "So, yes, it was hard for us to leave but much harder for them. We've got some friends from that church who will be friends forever.

"But we've had such a good welcome at Kensington-Eastlakes. It's a super-friendly church where the people know each other well and care for each other. It's a lovely church to come into with lots of people doing good things already. So we're just going to try and help them as they do that."



VAST CITY TO VILLAGE ATMOSPHERE

After three years as associate pastor of the Fellowship of the Emirates – an international, non-denominational church in Dubai – the Rev Graham Thomas has returned to Sydney as rector of the southern highlands parish of Robertson with Burrawang.

"In Dubai, more than 2500 people would come through the door of the church every Friday for one of the three services – it's the Muslim holy day so that's the day everyone gets off," he says.

"I was in charge of discipleship and training... I trained up teachers and trainers who would then work with lay people and equip them, and I was involved with the Bible study leaders as well."

Mr Thomas says he has been asked about moving from such a huge church to a village parish, but his immediate answer is, "Why not?... The gospel needs to be heard by anyone and everyone, so why not Robertson?"

"We love small communities, we

love the area, and we're keen to see God work in this place just as much as anywhere else – but we were certainly drawn to the people and the church, and we're excited to see what God can do in this place."

A former assistant minister in the parish of Nowra, Mr Thomas kept in touch with local bishop Peter Hayward while he was in Dubai, and was contacted last year by the nominators at Robertson with Burrawang.

A few Skype calls later, he flew back to Australia to meet them in person, and it soon became clear this would be the right move for the family under God.

"There have been wonderful ministries here for a long time and we feel very blessed and thankful to God that we can just jump straight in," he says. "We can follow on from all the good things that God's done here."

Mr Thomas was inducted on January 28.

SECOND CAREER a HAPPY ONE FOR STRATTON

The Rev Cliff Stratton retired from the parish of Concord and Burwood on February 7.

Mr Stratton had a successful career in business for many years before finally following the desire of his heart and going into full-time ministry.

Around the time he graduated with his first degree (science) from the University of New England in the 1960s, Mr Stratton had been a candidate for ordination in the Diocese of Grafton. However, he says the bishop at the time "thought I should get some work experience" – and so he did, just

for longer than he intended.

"While I worked I was a parishioner in Sydney, on parish councils and things like that, but the desire to serve never disappeared," he says. "I'm reasonably convinced that's God's calling is pretty constant. God doesn't go away."

Mr Stratton studied theology through St Stephen's House in Oxford from 2000, then responded to a call from then Archbishop Peter Jensen for "high" churchmen to serve in Sydney.

"He had said if there were suitable high church people in the Diocese



Archbishop Davies joins Mr Stratton at his farewell service.

who were willing to go to Moore for a year he would ordain them, as long as they had Greek," Mr Stratton says.

Happily, Mr Stratton was able to show he could pass fourth-year

Greek in his year at Moore, "so I was then able to serve out my second career for 12½ years and retired on my 70th birthday!"

He spent three years as assistant minister in Epping and another three as rector of Waverley. The past seven years have been happily spent at Concord and Burwood, with he and his wife Susan helping the parish celebrate its 150th anniversary the year they arrived, and enjoying and encouraging the church's "good spirit of community".

They have now retired to the Canberra area.

VALE

Mr Roderick West AM, teacher and educator, died on January 25.

Roderick Ian West was born on June 29, 1933 in Balmain. Considered not scholastic enough to attend Fort Street High School, he attended Drummoyne Boys Intermediate School, where a teacher instilled in him a love of language – particularly classical languages – that would remain with him throughout his life. He finished his high school education at Sydney Grammar and studied Classics at the University of Sydney, graduating with an MA and a DipEd in 1953.

His taught Latin and Ancient History in Cootamundra before spending four years teaching the same subjects at Fort Street – the school he hadn't been considered good enough to attend as a student. During this time he ran Fort Street's Inter-School Christian Fellowship group and also completed an external Bachelor of Divinity from the University of London.

From 1962-64 Mr West lived in England, where he taught at Abbey School in Sussex and was Classics master at King Edward's School in Surrey. A short stint at Fort Street followed the family's return to Australia in 1965, after which Mr West taught at Geelong Grammar's external rural campus



at Timbertop – a period that coincided with Prince Charles' time there. Mr West and his wife Janet tutored the prince in French and Latin three nights a week.

A move to The King's School in Parramatta followed, where Mr West was house master and taught Latin and Greek – his beloved Classics – until 1975, when he was appointed headmaster of Trinity Grammar School in Summer Hill. He spent 21 fruitful years at Trinity, teaching at least eight hours a week in addition to his duties as

head of the school, and endearing himself to thousands of students as well as their parents. He had the reputation for never forgetting a boy's name, and kept in touch with many following their graduation (as he had done at other schools).

Officially retiring in 1996, Mr West remained busy, spending a year reviewing Australia's higher education system at the invitation of the Howard Government, and undertaking locum stints as principal at a number of schools in Sydney and beyond.

If all this were not enough, Mr West served on the Moore College Council for decades, was a trustee of Thomas Moore's estate, and a member of many committees and groups that furthered education in general and Christian education in particular.

His faith underpinned all that he did, and his students knew it. A 2015 Anglican Education Commission booklet about spiritual leadership in Anglican schools quoted a Trinity publication that described Mr West as "delivering passionate, biblically-based orations to hushed whole-school assemblies on moral and societal issues".

Trinity's present headmaster, Mr Milton Cujes, described his predecessor as "much-loved... an outstanding teacher of the Classics, and an inspiring leader in Christian education". Other tributes spoke of Mr West's balance of Christian and academic values, Christian leadership, charisma and unstinting care for all his students in issues large and small.

Mr West received his AM in 2004 for "service to state and independent schools in Australia, particularly in the areas of curriculum development and administration, to Trinity Grammar School as headmaster, and to the community".

IN BRIEF

The senior assistant minister at Sylvania, the **Rev Benjamin Gray**, became rector of All Saints', Petersham on February 11.

The **Rev David Sandifer** became rector of St Alban's, Leura on February 2.

The rector of Chester Hill with Sefton, the **Rev Stephen Miller**, will retire on March 27.

The **Rev Canon Stanley Kurrle OBE**, former head of The King's School, Parramatta, died on January 20, aged 93.

Born Stanley Wynton Kurrle in 1922, Canon Kurrle attended Caulfield Grammar School in Melbourne, where he was head of house and a member of the senior firsts in AFL. He served in the AIF during World War II, and upon his return studied for a BA at the University of Melbourne, graduating with a DipEd in 1948.

He then travelled to England where he read theology at Oxford, graduating with honours. Undertaking a curacy in a local parish from 1952-1954 in tandem with his studies, he was ordained by the Bishop of Liverpool.

Canon Kurrle returned to Australia in 1955 to take up the post of headmaster at Caulfield Grammar, where he remained until 1964. Kurrle House was established in 1966 in his honour with the motto "Press on and you will achieve".

He arrived in Sydney as headmaster of The King's School in 1965, remaining in this



position until his retirement in 1983. He was a Canon Emeritus of St Andrew's Cathedral and a long-term member of the New Universities Colleges Council, which founded New College at the University of NSW and Robert Menzies College at Macquarie University. Canon Kurrle received his OBE in 1982 for services to education and religion in Australia. A statement from King's said

the school would be "eternally grateful for Canon Kurrle's immense contribution". The headmaster, Dr Timothy Hawkes, wrote that "during his time at King's, Canon Kurrle was greatly respected for his pastoral care and educational leadership and was loved by his boys. He had the unique capacity to know and never forget his boys, a quality that greatly endeared him to all."

VACANT PARISHES

Parishes and provisional parishes, vacant or becoming vacant, as at February 22, 2016

- Artarmon
- Barrenjoey
- Baulkham Hills
- Canterbury - Hurlstone Park*
- Caringbah
- Chester Hill - Sefton*
- Concord and Burwood
- Cremorne
- Enmore - Stanmore*
- Epping
- Fairfield - Bossley Park*
- Fairy Meadow
- Lavender Bay
- Minchinbury
- Randwick
- Sadleir*
- Turramurra
- Turramurra South
- West Pennant Hills

*Provisional parish or Archbishop's appointment

The Pope, the Pearl and the Power

DAVID MANSFIELD

I ARRIVED IN UGANDA A DAY after Pope Francis.

A day earlier the 39-kilometre journey from Entebbe Airport to Kampala had been lined with tens of thousands of enthusiastic fans. No such fanfare for me. I slipped into the country unnoticed and had a perfectly legitimate \$US100 bill challenged as I paid for my visa. I think the officer wanted a newer, crisper one, but I held my ground.

The road was back to "normal" – clogged with motorbikes and taxis held together by chicken wire and chewing gum, belching black smoke with every acceleration. The road's verges were adorned with small shops and businesses, cluttered with every conceivable household and business item.

THE POPE

The closest I ever got to a pope was when I was given a Christmas present of a pope-shaped cake of soap attached to a rope. No prizes for guessing what it was called!

The real Pope, with his "pope-star" status, is winning hearts everywhere. If there was ever a pope to like, the Argentinian is our man. He has the media on a string, or a rope; or else the media has him on one. But therein may lie Francis' problem. Is he on a rope? Not the media's, but the Vatican's?

However down-to-earth his demeanour, reformist his rhetoric or revolutionary his rallying cries for justice, he knows that he answers to the Big House back in Rome and he only has so much rope. Or have I just read too many Morris West novels?

But here he was, in Uganda: the pope of hope, the feel-good Francis, the pontiff of popularity, spreading his brand of justice and Catholic gospel.

THE PEARL

Uganda, the Pearl of Africa, is a country of great natural beauty and fertile farming land that has been ravaged by two devastating forces: Idi Amin and HIV/AIDS.

Amin's reign of terror (1971-1979) plunged the Pearl into desperate poverty. One of his decisions was to expel the 300,000 Indian residents. With them went almost the entire entrepreneurial capital of the country, crippling its economy.

Then came AIDS. At the height of the crisis more than 30 per cent of the adult population was HIV+. A significant part of a generation was wiped out. Through an aggressive educational campaign promoting abstinence, monogamy and condoms the infection rate was lowered to 7 per cent within 20 years.

Today, however, 77 per cent of Uganda's population is under 30 and, alarmingly, there is a rapid increase in HIV among those aged 15 to 22. The fight to educate a

new generation continues and aid agencies advocating patient purity ahead of protected promiscuity are being marginalised.

THE POWER

There were banners and billboards aplenty on my journey to Kampala – most advertising the papal visit and welcoming the Pope himself. But his Holiness had hard competition. Other billboards advertised the latest prosperity preachers who were poised to inflict their "gospel" on ordinary Ugandans.

Spiritual smorgasbords on super-sized billboards. Both offering power. Both destined to disappoint. Both denying the power of the gospel to justify sinners by grace through faith alone.

I had fresh in my mind a seminar on empowerment by Dr Wendy LeMarquand, from a visit I had made the week before to Gambella in south-western Ethiopia.

Wendy told us all a simple story of two brothers. One of the brothers gave his son everything he asked for and they both remained in grinding poverty. The other invited his son to partner with him in cultivating his land: sowing and harvesting, storing and sharing; shepherding, guarding and breeding. They provided for their families with ever-increasing wealth.

It was a simple lesson in social and economic development, personal and communal responsibility, and was close to my heart as I evaluated

Anglican Aid's Ugandan projects.

We partner with the local Anglican Church in health, food and income security projects. My heart sang as I met rural Ugandan families who had multiplied their income many times over through the implementation of simple agricultural principles, taking responsibility for their own welfare and development.

Rather than relying on handouts from the West, parents are able to take responsibility for family health, housing and education. The fulfilment and dignity this gives them, as they now have the financial capacity to make their own decisions about saving money for the education and health of their children, is so much better than the perpetuation of a welfare mentality associated with some models of aid delivery.

My visit also took me to the Uganda Christian University where Anglican Aid provides bursaries for Ugandan and other African students. The training of a new generation of men and women aspiring to Christian leadership, rightly handling the word of truth, is at the very core of Anglican Aid's commitment.

For Uganda needs not only economic empowerment. Above all, it needs spiritual power. It faces dangerous forces in the strident advances of Islam, the empty promises of prosperity peddlers and even in the popular rhetoric of a populist pope. It needs the true gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. It needs the message of grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone, according to God's word alone.

This gospel, the power of God, will produce its fruit as people take the magnificent message to their neighbours and take responsibility for their personal, family and community welfare. Then they will care for the most vulnerable in Ugandan society.

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

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

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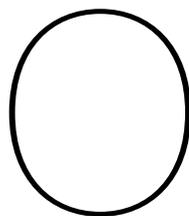
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Paschal plans

DR GLENN DAVIES



ONE OF THE SURPRISING developments from the meeting of primates of the Anglican Communion with the Archbishop of

Canterbury in January was the announcement that the Heads of Christian Churches are close to agreeing upon a fixed Sunday for Easter.

This was a welcome piece of news as the date of Easter, as every schoolchild knows, is a movable feast that either extends holidays at the end of first term or provides a blessed holiday in the middle of that term.

In the Western churches, predominantly Anglican and Roman Catholic, Easter Day can only fall on a Sunday between March 22 and April 25 inclusive, as it is calculated as the first Sunday after the full moon following the Spring equinox (or the Autumnal equinox for us in the Southern Hemisphere). This formula was decided at the Council of Nicaea in 325AD in order to distance the celebration of Easter from the Jewish calendar for Passover. Nonetheless, since the Eastern Orthodox churches use the older Julian calendar – as opposed to the Gregorian calendar – their Easter Day occurs on a different date, which adds further confusion for many.

As all Anglicans growing up with the *Book of Common Prayer* will know, one can calculate the date of Easter using the table of Golden Numbers at the beginning of the book – to which many a parent has referred a restless child to calculate the next Easter Day in order to occupy their mind during church (or was that just my experience?). However, these days googling to find out the Easter of any particular year is a far quicker solution!

The idea of having a fixed date for Easter is not new. Many attempts have been made

over the past millennium but none has been successful. Even governments have sought to legislate change. In 1929 both South Australia and Western Australia passed legislation setting Easter Day as the first Sunday after

“ Many attempts have been made over the past millennium [to fix the date of Easter] but none has been successful.”

the second Saturday in April, following a Bill passed in the United Kingdom the previous year. Yet the UK Act was never activated by official proclamation, nor was South Australia's, while the WA Act did not come into effect as it was dependent upon the activation of the legislation in the UK! South Australia's Easter Act was only officially repealed in 1994.

The latest attempt has been the initiative of the Coptic Pope, Tawadros II, whose gentle conversations over the past two years have

borne fruit with Pope Francis, Bartholomew I (the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople) and the Archbishop of Canterbury.

When I was in Cairo last year, I had the opportunity, through the invitation of Bishop Mouneer Anis of Egypt, to meet with Pope Tawadros II, who indicated that his flock are often stigmatised or marginalised because they celebrate Easter at a different time from the promulgated date in those countries using the Gregorian calendar.

I was therefore delighted that the Anglican primates could come to an agreement on working towards a fixed date for Easter, though it will arguably be some five years before it eventuates, given the need for forward planning. At this stage it is most likely to be the second or third Sunday in April.

Naturally our celebration of Easter is far more important than being too fussed by the actual date, since in one sense every Sunday is a celebration of the first day of the week – the day of resurrection. Yet I believe it will be of significant witness to the world if all Christians could unite together with a common date to celebrate the inauguration of the new aeon, the fulfilment of God's promises to save his people and the securing of our inheritance of eternal life, when Jesus rose from the dead and defeated death once and for all. Hallelujah!

Happy Easter to you all.



A PRAYER FOR MISSION 2020

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

Amen



FORCED SILENCE

Christians talking about Jesus is confronting, but we must maintain the freedom and courage to continue speaking up, writes **MICHAEL KELLAHAN**.

SYDNEY ANGLICANS, WE HAVE A PROBLEM. We're finding it harder and harder to talk about God, sex and politics. And this is far more serious than some mild social taboo.

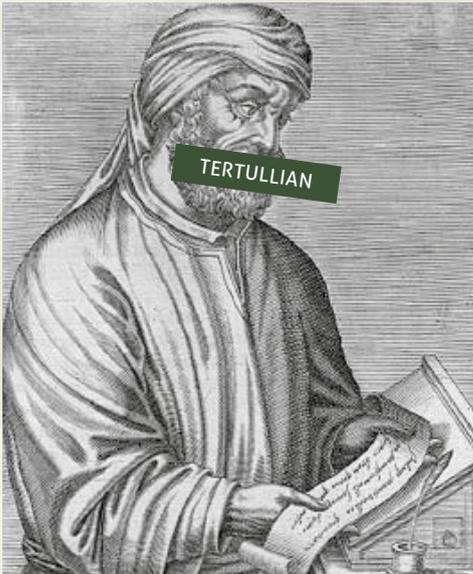
Nowadays, you raise these topics at your peril. An archbishop can't be too careful in what he does or doesn't say in any public gathering. Twitter storms of the hurt and confused can blow up over loose lips. And so we self-censor.

I heard just last week of bright young Christian teachers in the inner west choosing not to wear crosses. There isn't a ban on wearing crosses (nor are they required to, of course) – it's just they were smart enough to smell the air and realise their credibility would be blown if they were known as Christians. Or take the Christian student group that's decided not to speak about sex to students on its university campus. They haven't changed their conservative Christian beliefs. They'll teach this stuff privately off campus. But they won't risk their

university affiliation by speaking openly on what those beliefs are.

On many fronts there is pressure to be quiet, to withdraw, to retreat from public spaces. In each of these examples the law hasn't changed at all, but a cultural shift is taking place around freedom of speech.

It's not just Christians who are being told to stop speaking. In campuses around the world there are campaigns to silence speech that triggers pain. We're not talking about holocaust deniers or violent misogynists. Germaine Greer spoke against transgender rights because of her feminist convictions; Peter Tatchell, a gay activist, supported her because of his libertarian convictions. Both were blacklisted by student groups who didn't want to hear these views.



TERTULLIAN

they were seen as threatening the security of the city.

When the apostles speak we are quick to count the converted but can be slow to see the riots and anger they also produced. From the very first, Christian speech about Jesus is divisive and confronting. It is always spoken to a world with competing ideas and idols. Too often, it is spoken in a context of persecution and pressure to be silent.

We know that gospel speech saw the kingdom of God grow. What we don't always appreciate is that this same speech changed the way Romans understood freedom itself. The term "religious freedom" was first coined by Tertullian, an African lawyer and Christian

The fatal purity of this silencing leaves no one safe – what chance would conservative Christians stand? This leads to insipid, bland universities and the death of good thinking. Competing beliefs aren't cross-examined. Instead, party lines are trotted out. Plenty of time is spent speaking to the choir.

Lots of ink has been spilt over political correctness, victim politics and the way increasingly entrenched positions are disinterested in dialogue. But Christians should be particularly concerned about free speech. We are the people who worship the God who speaks. The true and living God is not mute like the idols. He speaks powerfully, bringing life into being – in the beginning was the word! He gives us a message and speaks a promise through it. Christians have always strived to speak in persuasive, gracious and winsome ways.

SPEAKING UP

Throughout Christian history there have been plenty of times when we've found ways to speak even when there has been tremendous pressure not to. Think of the apostles before the Sanhedrin, or Paul before the Roman authorities – radically claiming to be answerable to God rather than men.

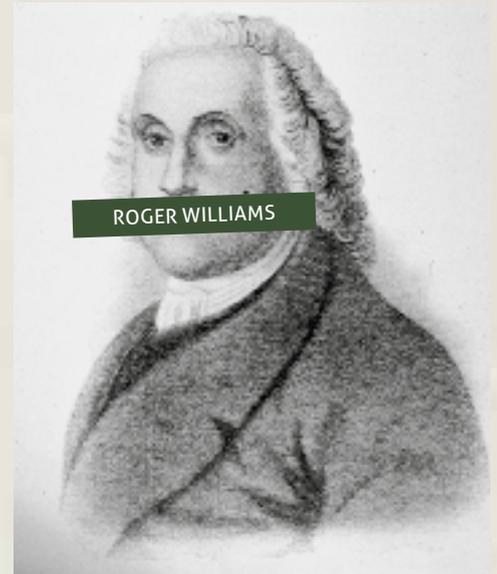
This speech wasn't a revolutionary rejection of all state power – you still must render to Caesar that which is Caesar's, and Caesar will bear the sword to enforce justice. Sometimes they paid for this speech with floggings and imprisonments. But Caesar's power over them is not absolute. Instead, it is delegated and limited. The first Christians, like the Jews before them, would not join in the worship of the empire. And when they were told to be silent they chose to obey the God who told them to speak.

When they spoke their message wasn't always welcomed. They were disparaged as atheists, impious and unbelievers. By not joining in the worship of the gods of the city

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apologist in the third century. Writing at a time of severe persecution he said to the Roman authorities: “See that you do not give a reason for impious religious practice by taking away religious freedom and prohibiting choice in divine matters, so that I may not worship as I wish, but am forced to worship what I do not wish. No one wishes to be venerated unwillingly, not even a human being”.

Notice how Tertullian's Christian faith gave him the building blocks for this radical new concept of religious freedom. The Christian religion wasn't just a matter of loyalty to city and emperor – this was a love and loyalty deeper than that of “king and country”. This new faith saw people from many nations give allegiance to a heavenly king and kingdom. It depended on the freedom to have and express



ROGER WILLIAMS

a faith that may well be at odds with the city or ruler.

The story of how “religious freedom” was developed in the centuries since is too long to tell here. The short version is that the people most passionate and principled about religious freedom were almost always the persecuted. The church's history is both prouder and more terrible than we often hear.

Long before any Enlightenment notions of liberty, equality and fraternity, persecuted Puritans were preaching about the evil conduct of the persecuting Church of England! Anglicans were locking up Baptists, Brethren and other suspicious types who wouldn't swear allegiance to God, king and country. So the persecution of people like 17th-century preacher (and emigrant to the American colony) Roger Williams, and others, would lead to a very different American settlement between church and state. To quote Williams, “forced worship stinks in the nostrils of God”.

The point is that wherever a culture has tried to work out how to get along well despite different beliefs, Christians have been at the forefront of that conversation. Deeply informed by their faith, they have made a contribution to the common good and produced answers to the question of how people with radically different views can get along without bloodshed.

They haven't always said the same thing. They certainly haven't always got it right. But they've been there. Right through into the 20th century and the development of the United Nations and human rights law, Christians have played a proud part.

FREEDOM AMID DISAGREEMENT

Keeping religious freedom is always a constant struggle. We shouldn't see the social reality of different beliefs as some impossible stalemate that forces our withdrawal from the public square. Instead, we should be asking how we should draw on our long history of finding freedom in the face of disagreement.

SILENCE OR DEBATE?

It's well known that in Calais, France, a refugee camp has sprung up for many thousands fleeing religious violence in Syria. On February 1 the French government bulldozed the makeshift mosque and church that had been built within the camp.

This destruction of flimsy sacred spaces by the secular state is a parable for our times. The French state was expressing its commitment to a hard secularism. No space would be given to the religious. No quarter would be spared for worship. The price paid for living in secular France would be the loss of religious freedom.

We live in a world torn apart by religious violence. Europe is struggling to know how to cope with the sheer logistics of this exodus. But deeper than logistics are the questions about how the modern Western, secular, liberal state relates to religious people. Religion was supposed to wither in the face of progressive secularism. But our race is stubbornly religious. The bulldozers may remove the buildings but they don't take away the religious impulse of the refugees – if anything, they probably hardened them.

The secular state will always be tempted to send in bulldozers. It is the simple way to exercise power. It saves the troubling question of making judgements between competing religions. It avoids tricky negotiations of religious accommodation. It makes clear that loyalty is only to be sworn to the state.

On the ABC's *Q&A* program last year Labor Senator Sam Dastyari responded this way to the claim of anti-gay-marriage campaigner Katy Faust that in America, her home country, opponents of gay marriage "felt like they could not speak up":

"The politician in me tells me that I should be saying that while I disagree with your views, I wholeheartedly respect them, but I find that very hard," Dastyari said. "I find it very hard to respect a lot of your views on what you have said because I don't think it comes from a place of love. I think it comes from a place of hate. People will have the debate but we have to have it at a higher level. The American evangelical claptrap is the last thing we need in the debate."

Here is illiberalism personified. He didn't argue with her. He didn't tolerate her beliefs. He dismissed them. And he called for their expulsion from public debate.

This movement to silence beliefs which don't conform to progressive secular orthodoxy is big at universities. Rather than debate people whose views are deemed objectionable, the new strategy is to "no-platform" speakers. This is the 21st century version of McCarthyism. Its aim is to ban speech and give no oxygen to unacceptable views.

Against bulldozers, silencing and "no-platforming" there is a better way. An old way. The way of religious freedom. This radical alternative allows people to live with deep differences.

I was privileged to see a scene that lived this out last year. Not long after the *Q&A* television program Notre Dame University held its own "QandA" evening in a packed lecture hall on Broadway. On the platform were the Catholic Archbishop of Sydney Anthony Fisher and retired High Court judge Michael Kirby – two intellectual giants who spoke about their beliefs with clarity and passion.



Anthony Fisher and Michael Kirby at the Notre Dame event. PHOTO: Patrick Lee

Even more impressive, though, was the warmth and obvious respect with which they spoke. At one point they actually turned to embrace each other and there couldn't have been a more poignant demonstration of disagreeing well. Where a national broadcaster had demonstrated the stalemate of secularism, this conservative Catholic university helped demonstrate the brilliance of freedom of speech.

How can Sydney Anglicans not just be critics of the culture and grudgingly responding to it but be helping to build and shape a better politic for all?

The social reality of different beliefs is easy to spot. Whether through immigration or travel or the internet we are constantly bumping up against people with different beliefs. We are surrounded by endless choices and lifestyles unknown to our parents. There is therefore more confusion and less agreement about what the good life should look like.

The hottest issue that exposes our different beliefs, though, is the debate over same-sex marriage. As we face a plebiscite on marriage (should the Coalition win this year's Federal election) we're being forced to talk about God, sex and politics. And clearly many people on both sides of the debate don't want that conversation to happen.

Christians are seen as out of step with much of the culture on sexuality and same-sex marriage. More than one commentator has framed this as a choice between pride and prejudice. On one side is progress and liberation and freedom and love. On the other side is prejudice and hate and hurt and the past. If you accept this framework, then claims to religious freedom wheeled out by Christians are dismissed as a cover for bigotry. Religious freedom is then seen as part of the problem.

The truth is, Christians have been out of step with the culture for a while when it comes to love, sex and marriage. Whether on contraception or abortion, sex outside marriage, same-sex attraction, cohabitation or divorce, Christian beliefs have seemed weird for a while now.

The same-sex marriage issue really is evident of much deeper differences – what it means to be human, where my identity is found, the kind of world we live in, what the problem is with people and how it might be fixed, what the good life is and how it can be found and much, much more. Christians and the gay lobby obviously have deeply held beliefs that are at odds with each other. These different beliefs are throughout the community.

But here's the thing about the same-sex marriage debate. It's not really about marriage any more. It's morphed into something much bigger. What's at stake now is free speech. Are we going to be able to face the different beliefs we have? Will there be space given for a contest of competing ideas?

Free speech is in the news at the moment because the Australian Christian Lobby asked for changes to anti-discrimination laws in the plebiscite debate. Predictably, they've been drawn as bigots and alarmists – after all, what other explanation could there possibly be?

The real answer may lie in Tasmania, where the Catholic Archbishop of Hobart, Julian Porteous, distributed a very benign

and inoffensive booklet setting out the Catholic Church's teaching on marriage to Catholic parishioners and school students. A complaint was made to the Anti-Discrimination Commissioner by the Greens' political candidate and transgender activist, Martine Delaney. So now it's lawyers at 20 paces and the entire Australian Catholic Bishops Conference has been told it has a case to answer for sexual orientation vilification.

There must be a better way for us to get on than having the state make a call on which belief is proscribed and which promoted, without denying or suppressing each other's genuinely held beliefs. Even if a plebiscite was passed and same-sex marriage enacted, these different beliefs are not going to go away.

In a healthy democracy, people of all faiths and none will debate ideas on their merits. The Christian vision of a liberal democratic state, articulated by thoughtful Christian believers from Roger Williams on, will ensure that people from all religions and none will have a seat at the table.

The alternative to this is that the state gets to enforce which views are acceptable. Its bureaucrats are charged with determining what thoughts may be spoken and which can't. This scorched-earth approach isn't concerned with dialogue but with a zero sum power gain. The law becomes the arbiter and the state the enforcer of morality, and enables you to stand in judgement over others. If this sounds Kafkaesque or like *1984* it's because the West has faced these issues before. There are lessons in history that we forget at our peril.

HOW DID WE GET HERE?

Why is religious freedom treated with such suspicion today? Why do people see it as part of the problem rather than a solution? There are four factors which, taken together, have created a perfect storm.

1. 9/11. When the twin towers fell the secular West started talking about religion as a source of evil. The New Atheists were born and while few people actually read them plenty echoed the mantra that "religion poisons everything". Ongoing terror and drawn-out conflicts in the Middle East left the West fearful of militant Islam – and perceived extremism of any kind suddenly looked suspicious. So, lunchtime prayer groups are now something the state and security services have opinions about. There is fresh tension between security and civic freedoms. In this climate of fear what government would make a choice for religious freedom that was seen to compromise security?

2. There is justifiable community anger at the institutional abuse that has taken place inside the church. Priests are no longer people you trust but people you suspect. The state is rightly no longer turning a blind eye but

a very watchful one to the activities of the church. Why should churches be trusted with freedoms? A choice between the safety of children and giving a suspect institution freedom is no choice at all.

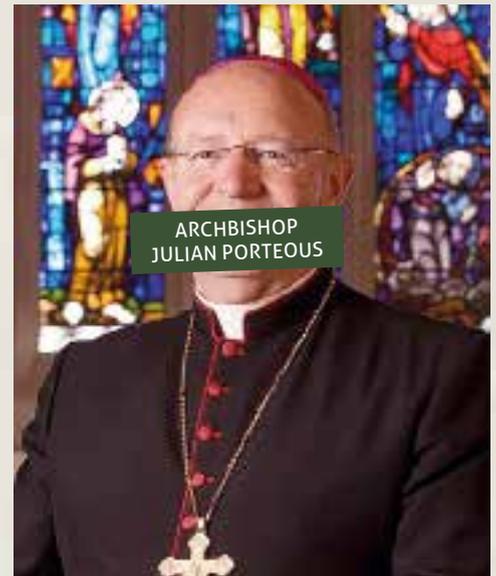
3. Australia has become more secular and less churchgoing, and fewer non-Christian people know a Christian. At the same time we are all experiencing global pluralism. Largely through the teaching on sex and marriage Christianity is no longer celebrated or tolerated but seen as a threat. Religious freedom is then seen as akin

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to allowing prejudice and hate.

4. There has been a change to equality rights and non-discrimination laws at a speed and scale that has taken even the experts by surprise. What was on the fringes of academic discourse only a few years ago is now appearing in mainstream political parties.

Anti-discrimination laws have moved far beyond their original intent of giving a level playing field to groups that historically have suffered disadvantage on racial, gender, disability or age grounds. The list of protected attributes and groups keeps extending. It is telling that Victoria has appointed Australia's



ARCHBISHOP
JULIAN PORTEOUS

first Minister for Equality – not that notions of equality weren't around before, but no one had thought we needed a dedicated cabinet post for it. The catch-cry of equality has become a Trojan horse for the state to introduce LGBTI (lesbian, gay, bi, transgender and intersex) rights to all areas of government.

This equality agenda is being put as the justice issue of our age. It is no coincidence that the same Victorian government that wants to mandate a controversial safe schools program has acted to remove religious education from the curriculum. This is zero sum gain politics where the state decides which beliefs should be protected and which proscribed.

A BETTER WAY

We shouldn't argue for the reverse. There is a better way. A robust and positive argument can be made for religious freedom.

Understood rightly, religious freedom is oxygen for the soul. This freedom to believe is the foundational freedom of a liberal democracy. From it flows:

- the freedom to speak that belief;
- the freedom to associate with others according to those beliefs;
- the freedom of religion to live out that faith;
- the freedom to change your belief.

This is not just freedom for the religious but the freedom of all worldviews. It extends to people of all faiths or none, from Anglicans to Zoroastrians, from Scientologists to sceptical atheists. Wherever there is a genuine, deeply held belief or worldview that informs a person's conscience then we are talking about religious freedom.

The *freedom* described is a freedom to act according to your conscience, independent of all outside – and especially governmental – control. As a human right recognised at law, the government's role is not to grant or deny religious freedom but to guarantee and to guard it. In an increasingly plural world religious

HOW SAME-SEX MARRIAGE MAY CHANGE FREEDOMS

The best way to protect religious freedom is to not have same-sex marriage. In countries where it has become the law of the land there have been consequences for religious freedom:

1 The workplace: Last year, new graduate employees at a major bank in Sydney were told on their first day that “we don’t do religion” – talk of faith wasn’t welcome and would be a breach of corporate policy.

Anyone involved in work relating to marriage and relationships has faced significant pressure to condone, facilitate and support same-sex marriages, despite the dictates of their conscience. Since the introduction of same-sex marriage in the US and UK marriage registrars, relationship counsellors and others have lost jobs over these kinds of claims.

In 2011, Adrian Smith, a housing manager in Manchester, was demoted and had his salary reduced by 40 per cent because he said on his personal Facebook page that same-sex marriage was “an equality too far”. His employer claimed this broke its code of conduct by expressing religious or political views that might upset co-workers.

Mr Justice Briggs, in London’s High Court, ruled that the housing trust did not have the right to demote Mr Smith as his Facebook postings did not amount to misconduct, and the comment about gays marrying in church was moderately expressed and not – viewed objectively – judgmental, disrespectful or liable to cause upset or offence.

Even without legislation, public shaming campaigns affect employment. When it was discovered that Brendan Eich, CEO and founder of web giant Mozilla, donated a small amount of his own income to Proposition 8 (a ballot measure to ban gay marriage in California) he was forced to resign. A column in *The New York Times* noted that even those who wanted Eich to stay were worried that his stance would “reduce the company’s ability to attract people to their mission”.

2 The marketplace: There is pressure to restrict freedom of religion to freedom of worship. It is argued that freedom stops at the church door. Once outside the church the believer must relate to others as a consumer in a marketplace, without a privileged religious position.

If same-sex marriage is introduced in Australia then cake makers, photographers and venue providers won’t be able to discriminate between different forms of marriage. Marriage-related businesses in jurisdictions with same-sex marriage have been sued and ultimately closed by regulation or bankruptcy.

NB. The Attorney-General George Brandis is currently drafting a revised Marriage Act, which will be voted on in the plebiscite. Last month in *The Australian* Paul Kelly wrote that religious freedom protections would only extend to not forcing a minister to marry people against his conscience, and similarly for a registrar in a Births, Deaths and Marriage office to not have to register a marriage where there was a conscientious objection.

If this is right, there is protection for the minister but not the flock. No protection of a right to dissent out of conscientious belief in marriage as between a man and a woman. No protection of speech against such a change. No protection of wedding industry providers. No protection of churches and charities for changes to tax or regulatory regimes tied to their views on marriage. No protection of the freedom of schools to employ on the basis of their beliefs and conduct. Not much protection at all, really.

3 The public square: In Britain, street preachers have been arrested for reading passages of the Bible deemed offensive to Muslims or homosexuals. The same is true on the Continent. In 2012, the Bishop of Madrid was investigated by the police for a Good Friday homily naming homosexuality among a list of sins; two years later, a Spanish cardinal suffered a similar fate. And the case of Archbishop Porteous in Hobart (see p20-21) should concern all who believe in free speech.

In addition, the Australian Labor Party has resolved that from 2019 onwards, any of its parliamentarians who do not vote for same-sex marriage will be expelled from the party.

4 Access to services: In 2012 several organisations attempted to host a conference on the legal definition of marriage at the Law Society in London. The conference was entitled “One Man, One Woman”, which was the legal definition of marriage at the time. The Law Society cancelled the booking, saying the conference breached its diversity policy.

Last year ABC’s *Media Watch* exposed the way TV stations refused to run advertisements for a conservative understanding of marriage. It will be interesting to see if this changes for the plebiscite debate. And what future will conservative churches without property face when they come to hire meeting venues? A landlord might fairly ask whether they taught doctrines that might constitute “hate” speech or not conform with Australian law.

5 Churches and charities: In Victoria last year a Catholic adoption agency that had operated since 1940 faced closure. The government attempted to remove its right to refuse to place children with same-sex couples. Other providers would adopt on this basis but the government wanted to close a provider that would not conform.

Church institutions and charities are now preparing for a future where any receipt of public funding or tax benefit will be conditional on not opposing same-sex marriage.

If the law embraces a view of marriage which is at odds with the Bible then there are two groups with competing and irreconcilable visions of what marriage should be. Will Christians have freedom to speak against same-sex marriage should it become the law of the land? Should same-sex marriage be introduced, Christians must be free to dissent.

freedom allows us to live with deep differences and mutual respect.

Arguments for religious freedom and free speech are unlikely to win over those wanting to shut down those freedoms. This must not stop us. But let us make the case for religious freedom as persuasively and graciously as it can be made. And let’s do everything that can be done to stop the state from going down the route of controlling people’s consciences.

This is an argument for political engagement, for saying Christians mustn’t retreat and be bystanders but instead be engaged as culture builders. While there are a thousand ways that might happen the way it must start is with Christians speaking. We need to speak in ways that give an account for our beliefs – what would the common good look like? What does true humanity and human flourishing look like? How should life be lived? How do we live our lives as individuals and in community? Where do Christian ideas overlap with the beliefs of others and where are they in conflict? This will take listening and dialogue.

As we speak, a clear intention to listen and a free open discussion make for wider acceptance – even of controversial points of view.

Communications strategist Dee Allsop, in his Q presentation *Finding Common Ground*, showed that the way you oppose same-sex marriage vastly affects how well your point of view is received. He found that simply saying, “Gay marriage is wrong” would mean 25 per cent of hearers would simply want the conversation to end, while 37 per cent would be open to hearing more. But the number of people open to hearing jumps to nearly half – 47 per cent – when the statement is put like this: “I try to do and say what I believe is right, and I believe gay marriage is wrong. But I am interested in learning why you disagree”.

Too often our political engagement is too little and too late: “This is in Parliament next month so please write to your MP or sign this online petition”. Letters like this may be a balm to our troubled conscience, but are unlikely to change the law.

What is needed are the right people in the right places doing the right thing. So let’s engage five years earlier when the university is running the conference that informs the policy position of the political party. Or two years earlier when the party policy is debated.

Who could have swung that debate? Have they not seen what they should have? Or could the sympathetic or Christian MPs have a political strategy to change the presentation of the bill? Can the right lobby group speak before the legislation is drafted? What about when the draft legislation was out for comment – could the problem have been averted by the right feedback to exposure legislation?

Let’s push it back even further. Where are

the Christians who will join the political parties, be staffers for the local MP, produce the multimedia "civics for high schoolers" course, be the policy setting academics, or legislative drafters, or human rights lawyers? If they aren't there then who will recruit them for the next generation?

I'm worried that a university student group teaching hard things off campus is teaching the next generation to be safe citizens: don't rock the boat, be a Christian in private, don't engage with things that might threaten our standing.

I want to suggest the opposite course. It would be better to boldly speak on campus until you are kicked off. At the same time, encourage students to be students of history, gender, law, politics and much more. And the law students shouldn't give themselves to a comfortable life of minimising the onshore tax earnings of multinationals. Instead, enrol in the progressive human rights law course that isn't that friendly to Christians, understand what is being said and top the course.

If all this sounds like a call to an elitist withdrawal from simple gospel proclamation, let me offer a quick defence to that charge.

First, ministries of simple gospel proclamation and prayer are built on platforms of gospel freedom. If it's worth praying for that freedom it is worth acting to protect it. Think about how different university student ministry is in Australia and France. It is great to be able to meet on campuses here and hand out materials on Jesus. Second, this strategy isn't elitist even if some of the examples above are. Politics happens in the local school Parents and Citizens Association. Do the hard yards there over a few years and when the debate comes up about Scripture in schools you will have earned the right to be listened to. SC

The Rev Michael Kellahan is executive director of Freedom For Faith and the rector of the parish of Roseville East.

Freedom to speak, and to write, and...

Freedom For Faith is a think tank with a sharp focus on the preservation and promotion of religious freedom in Australia.

It exists to ensure there is always space for faith in Australia's public life. It is Christian but believes that religious freedom must be there for people of all faiths and none. The foundational freedom of a liberal democracy is the freedom to believe. When people have freedom to live out their beliefs they have freedom to contribute to the common good.

The organisation aims to bring the best thinking to politics, law, the academy, media and the church.

Freedom For Faith is holding a conference on August 12 at St Andrew's Cathedral. The main speaker will be Dr Michael Ovey.



What did Thomas Cranmer think he, and we, are doing in the Lord's Supper, asks

MARK D. THOMPSON.

ON MARCH 21 IT WILL BE 460 YEARS SINCE THOMAS CRANMER WAS burnt at the stake just outside the North Gate of the city of Oxford. The architect of Protestant Anglicanism was silenced by Queen Mary and her Catholic establishment for a range of reasons –not least because of his convictions about the Lord's Supper. The record of the mock trial in the Church of St Mary the Virgin witnesses to the pandemonium that broke out after Cranmer broached that subject.

Undoubtedly the most well-known line of Cranmer's last speech was "And as for the Pope, I refuse him, as Christ's enemy, and Antichrist, with all his false doctrine". He was stopped by the officers present and led out to execution after he continued "and as for the sacrament, I believe as I have taught in my book against the Bishop of Winchester [Stephen Gardiner]".

Thomas Cranmer never questioned the legitimacy of the Lord's Supper as an important element in Christian congregational life. He believed it was a gift of Christ to his disciples and something that brought genuine benefit. His disagreement with Bishop Gardiner had been about *how* Christ was present as the Lord's Supper was shared by faithful Christian men and women, and the relationship of the supper to the once-for-all saving work of Christ upon the cross. For this, as much as anything else, he was burned at the stake as a heretic.

Today, debates about the Lord's Supper continue and it is certainly a good thing that we don't execute people for their views on this subject any more! Many might wonder what all the fuss was actually about. For some evangelicals, this symbolic meal is really not all that important. What matters is faith in Christ as he is presented to us in his word.

We recoil at an overemphasis on the sacraments in some circles. We recognise some practices associated with the celebration of the supper in the church's history as dangerously compromising the sufficiency of Christ's death on the cross, and the great truth that we are justified by faith apart from works (that is, faith alone). ▶

The burning of Doctor Thomas Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury, in the Tower ditch at Oxford with his hand first thrust into the fire, where with he subscribed before.

Surprisingly, given the evidence, some have even suggested that the Lord's Supper – as something Christ expected would be shared regularly by his followers – does not appear at all in the New Testament. It is said the supper is an invention of the early church and we need the humility to cast aside millennia of tradition and return to the simple faith of the New Testament.

In response, others have insisted that this humility must extend to a willingness to learn from those who have gone before us, subjecting our own context and idiosyncratic readings of Scripture to the same critical scrutiny to which we subject "the Christian tradition". *Sola scriptura* means that Scripture has the final authority in matters of faith and life, not that we refuse to listen to those before us who have sought to read and live under the authority of that same Scripture with humility and faith. Perhaps they might have seen things we have missed in our anti-authoritarian, anti-institutional age.

Sadly this meal has been, and continues to be, a storm centre for debate inside and outside the churches. So what is it all about and, more particularly given the significant anniversary I've mentioned, what did Thomas Cranmer think we were doing when we shared in the Lord's Supper and how did he come to that opinion?

From the outset it is important to realise that Cranmer was convinced of the supernatural power of God to transform human hearts and minds by the means he had appointed. He got that from the New Testament, of course. "I am not ashamed of the gospel", Paul wrote, "for it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes" (Rom 1:16); "For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and spirit" (Heb 4:12).

Contemporary Cranmer scholar Dr Ashley Null describes Cranmer as an "affective theologian". He understood God captured the heart and, from the renewed affections, energised the believer's will and transformed his or her thinking. God takes ordinary realities – human words, water, bread and wine – to stimulate faith in this fullest sense by, in each case, drawing our focus back to Christ.

So Cranmer insisted that something supernatural happened at the supper, alongside the very natural activity of eating and drinking. God was at work in the supper. In his *Defence of the True and Catholic Doctrine of the Sacrament*, after a brief discussion of a parallel in the tangible and sensible quality of baptismal water, he wrote:

"And in like manner Christ ordained the sacrament of his body and blood in bread and wine, to preach unto us, that as our bodies be fed, nourished, and preserved with meat and drink, so (as touching our spiritual life towards God) we be fed, nourished, and preserved by the body and blood of our Saviour Christ [...] as surely as we see the bread and wine with our eyes, smell them with our noses, touch them with our hands, and taste them with our mouths; so assuredly ought we to believe, that Christ is our spiritual life and sustenance of our souls, like as the said bread and wine is the food and sustenance of our bodies [...] Thus our Saviour Christ knowing us to be in this world, as it were, but babes and weaklings in faith, hath ordained sensible signs and tokens, whereby to allure and draw us to more strength and more constant faith in him."

The point was made repeatedly for emphasis. The supper is not a new law or a burdensome obligation. To even frame the question in those categories is to miss the point. It is a gift from the God who knows our condition intimately and has provided for those who trust in him in the midst of a broken yet still compelling world of unbelief. What is remarkable is the way Cranmer's accent is on the work of God throughout. Christ through these signs preaches to us, he feeds, nourishes and preserves our spiritual life, he allures us and draws us to more strength and more constant faith in him. What matters is faith in Christ as he is presented to us in this his visible, tangible word to us.

This is a far cry from a work that gains us merit either through our participation or by the activity of the one who presides at the supper. But it is a far cry also from the suggestion that nothing special is

happening, that this meal is a hangover from a more formal, ceremonial age and we should feel free to dispense with it if it seems odd to us in a more enlightened time. The alluring work of God, the preaching of God in this visible and tangible form, which evokes and strengthens faith, is not so lightly dismissed. This is God's gift. God is at work here.

A great deal more could be said about Cranmer's doctrine of the Lord's Supper. Books and theses have appeared over the years exploring its many aspects: his rejection of transubstantiation and the sacrifice of the mass; his insistence on Christ's spiritual presence, not in the bread and wine but in the heart of believers; his distinguishing of two types of eating by believers that take place at the same time (physical eating with the mouth and spiritual eating as Christ dwells in us and we dwell in him); his emphasis on the word which drives away superstition; and this wonderfully evocative concept of God's alluring work, drawing us to himself and to faith in him. But we have seen enough, I hope, to realise that Cranmer did not see this as a ceremony to be preserved simply because it had been a part of church life for centuries. Here is something good that brings real benefit to God's people, not least by bringing them from all the other good and even Christian things they might be preoccupied with back to the centre: our empty-handed dependence upon Christ and what he has done.

There is one more question worth asking. How did Cranmer come to his understanding of the supper? Thomas Cranmer was first and foremost determined to be biblical. He scoured the Scriptures. His *Defence* examined in detail each of the Gospel accounts of the Last Supper and Paul's recounting of what happened that night to the Corinthians. His notebooks used in preparing this treatise reveal just how concerned he was to affirm only what is taught in Scripture. Interestingly, he went beyond those specific passages to examine others where the believer's participation in Christ was explored with the language of eating and drinking. He looked at John 6, not because it was about the supper per se, but because it was about our dependence upon Christ for nourishment and sustenance. It spoke of the same reality of which the supper spoke. Cranmer was both exegetical and theological in his approach to the teaching of Scripture.

But then Cranmer went through the teaching of the Church fathers in detail. In recent years, hundreds of pages of his notes on passages from the early church dealing with the supper have been discovered. He spent a great deal of time searching for confirmation of his discoveries in Scripture in the writings of those who went before him, much as Luther had done when he first understood the Bible's teaching on the righteousness of God.

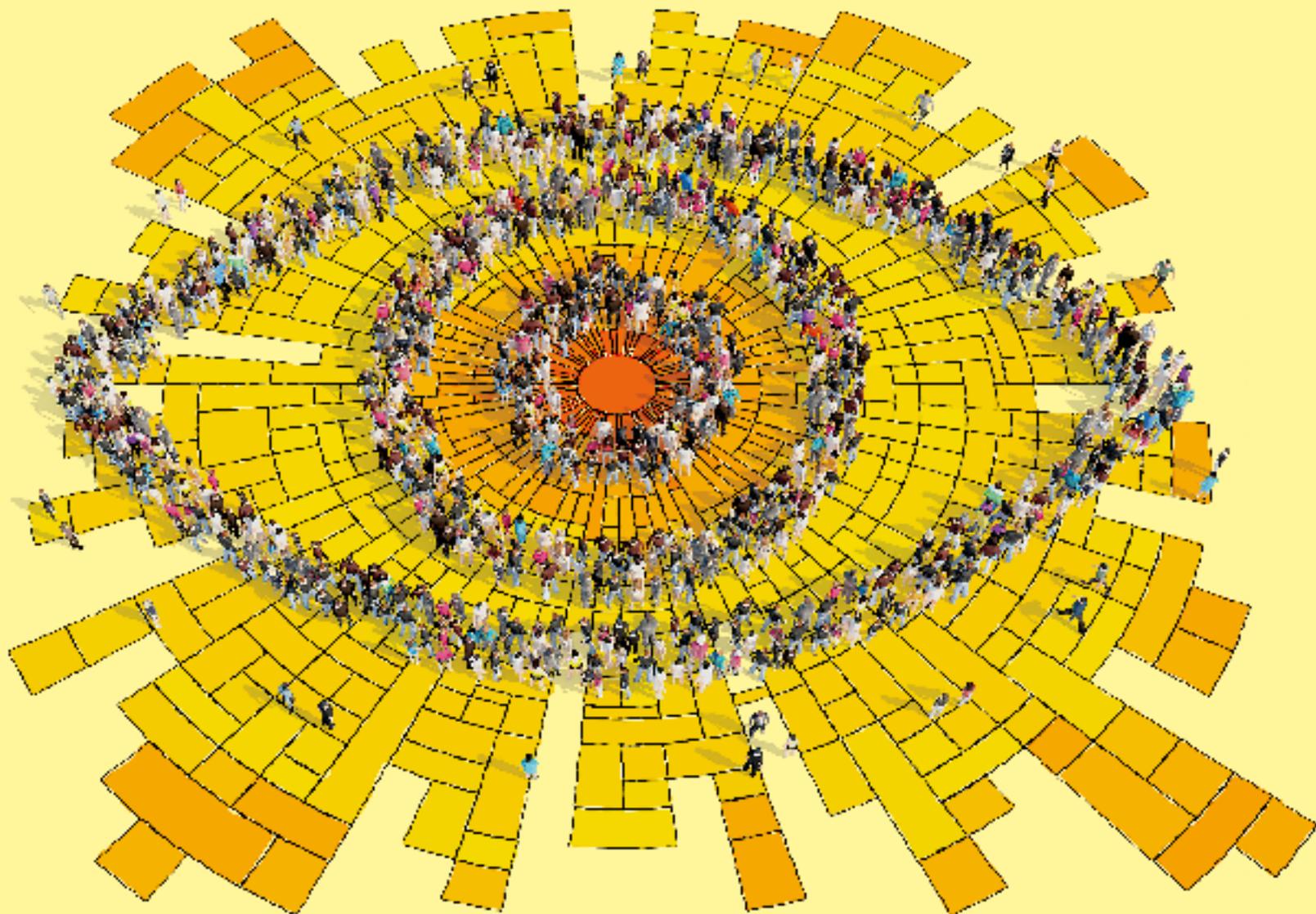
This was not because the fathers somehow shared authority with the Scriptures. They had an authority, yes, but it was always subservient to the plain meaning of a biblical text. But Cranmer knew the deceitfulness of the human heart and was determined not to fall into the trap of elevating his own reason, albeit reason applied to the text of Scripture, over the Scripture itself. Novelty and innovative exegesis were things he was keen to avoid. That was the playground of heretics. Instead he sought to see if anyone in the early church had understood these texts the way he had come to understand them. Again and again he found confirmation that he had in fact understood what they were saying.

In the romantic stories of the Reformation martyrs the great doctrines of justification, the priesthood of all believers and the final authority of Scripture resound as the reasons their lives were snatched away. That is undoubtedly right (think of William Tyndale!). Yet in more cases than you might imagine, and certainly in the case of Thomas Cranmer, it was a Reformed understanding of the teaching of Scripture on the Lord's Supper that was a pivotal factor.

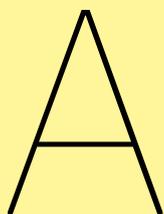
We might not think it is a burning issue (in either sense). But for Cranmer the "one oblation of himself once offered" to which this meal points, and the participation in Christ by faith and so eating and drinking his body and blood, meant he could never consider it incidental. SC

Mark Thompson is the principal of Moore Theological College.

Resurrection witness



The sureness of Christ's rising at Easter changes everything for those who believe, writes **ED LOANE**.



AS THE SEASON OF EASTER APPROACHES WE MAY OFTEN FEEL disappointed and overwhelmed by the crass commercialism and blatant trivialisation of this sacred Christian celebration. How and when did Easter bunnies begin to dominate the discourse in Australia?

Sometimes it seems as though the Christian message of Christ's death and resurrection is being successfully drowned out by a secular agenda and its propaganda. I wonder if you are sometimes tempted to feel that the great gospel news is destined to go the way of the dodo. Yet although we may at times be tempted to despair, it is worth reflecting on the first witnesses to the resurrection of Christ and seeing the dramatic implications it has for us and for our world. Reflecting on their testimony and what it entails will embolden us to also be witnesses of the resurrection.

Being sure of this, of course, is no mere triviality. The resurrection of Christ is central to Christianity. In 2 Timothy 2:8 Paul summarises the gospel for his young protégé as "Jesus Christ, *raised from the dead*, a descendent of David". In Romans he makes the point that belief in Jesus' resurrection is a salvation issue. He states, "if you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved" (10:9).

On the flipside, in 1 Corinthians 15 the apostle points out some of the implications of denying the resurrection. He says without it Christian faith is worthless (v14), the apostles

- would be false apostles (v15), there would be no forgiveness of sins (v17) and Christians are to be pitied more than anyone else (v19). Needless to say, the resurrection is of foundational significance to Christianity, but what witnesses are there to this event?

THE WITNESSES

The first witness I want to highlight may be surprising. It is the Old Testament. In 1 Corinthians 15:3-4 Paul claims that one of the key truths "of first importance" in his gospel was that "Christ was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures". He is speaking specifically of the Jewish Scripture. Likewise, Jesus himself had been adamant both before the resurrection (e.g. Luke 18:31-33) and afterwards (e.g. Luke 24:44-45) that it "must" happen in accordance with the teaching of the Old Testament (the Law of Moses, the prophets and the psalms).

Unfortunately, we don't have space here to survey all the Old Testament passages that deal with the resurrection. Nevertheless, the fact that this event had been promised centuries before it took place was a tremendous affirmation for those first disciples, just as it ought to be for us.

Second, we should note Jesus' witness to his resurrection. Throughout his ministry, Jesus repeatedly predicted that he would rise from the dead. Matthew, for example, records no less than six explicit predictions (12:38-40; 16:21; 17:9; 17:22-23; 20:19; and 26:31-32). Indeed, when Jesus was challenged to give the Jews a sign of his authority at the beginning of his ministry he answered "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up" (John 2:19). John notes that this statement was recalled by the disciples after Jesus had been raised and "they believed the Scripture and the words that Jesus had spoken" (John 2:22). Jesus testified about his own resurrection.

After Jesus' ascension, being a witness of his resurrection became a qualification for apostolicity and a cornerstone of apostolic preaching.

When the disciples were seeking to replace Judas, Peter made it clear that the one chosen must be "a witness with us to his resurrection" (Acts 1:22). The first witnesses were women. Considering the status of women in the culture of antiquity this was a remarkably counter-cultural development, yet it is unashamedly recorded by each Gospel writer.

The resurrected Christ went on to interact with the other apostles and "gave many convincing proofs that he was alive" (Acts 1:3). Indeed, Paul wrote that he appeared to more than 500 people at the same time, most of whom were still living at the time of writing (1 Corinthians 15:6). Suffice to say, this remarkable event shaped the message the apostles proclaimed.

Numerous times in Acts we read the refrain "God raised him... we are witnesses" (Acts 2:24, 32; 3:15; 4:10; 5:30, 32; 10:39-40; 13:30-31 etc.). The apostles were witnesses (because they saw the event) and they witnessed (by testifying to what they had seen). In other words, Jesus' resurrection was central to the apostolic proclamation and it remains the ground for evangelism.

But why was the resurrection so central? What were the implications of this event?

THE IMPLICATIONS

The first implication to note is that history changed in this event. When Jesus was raised from the dead, history entered into what the Bible calls "the last days". Christ is the firstfruits of harvest. Indeed, when Martha expresses her expectation about the eschatological resurrection, Jesus declares that *he* is the resurrection and the life (John 11:25).

This event transforms history in the sense that the new age has broken in at last. In the person of the resurrected Christ the present age and the age to come meet and begin to overlap. Right now the resurrection seems like a big deal because only one person has been raised with an eschatological body. At the final resurrection, the full harvest of resurrection will be realised. What we now consider remarkable and unique will become the regular experience of humanity.

Second, the resurrection of Christ vindicates his claims about himself and provides God's verdict on his Son. Jesus staked the claim of his authority on his resurrection (John 2:19) and Paul says this event powerfully declares his nature as "Son of God" (Romans 1:3-4).

The resurrection is God's endorsement of the death of Christ. Without Jesus' resurrection there would be no guarantee that his death had accomplished the atonement for our sins. Paul says without it "we would still be in our sins" (1 Corinthians 15:17) and that Christ was "raised for our justification" (Romans 4:25). There is a profoundly prophetic element in Jesus' resurrection. God "gave proof" of who Jesus was "by raising him from the dead" (Acts 17:31).

The prophetic office is clearly displayed in the resurrection, but also we obviously see his kingly office. Jesus conquered death and its consequences. He reigned over the great enemy of humanity. He triumphed over the punishment for sin. The realm of death had no authority over him. In fact, he reigned over it and he continues to reign over it.

In Revelation 1:18 Jesus says, "I am the Living One; I was dead, and now look, I am alive for ever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades". Similarly, in 1 Timothy 1:10, we are told that Christ Jesus has "destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel".

There are several reasons why humans fear death: its apparent finality; the severing of relationships; the mystery surrounding what is beyond. It is the resurrection of Jesus and its entailments for those who belong to him that is the only antidote to this fear.

The fact that Christ was also raised *bodily* is very important. Some theologians and church leaders have downplayed Jesus' historical bodily resurrection, arguing instead for a spiritual resurrection or an experience of Christ "coming alive" in the life of the believer. But the apostolic witness is that Jesus continued to do things humans do. He ate. He asked

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Thomas to touch him. He carried the scars of his crucifixion. He spoke. He was recognisable.

The *physical* resurrection of Christ is important. A spiritual resurrection would mean only half a victory. Jesus' death was physical, therefore complete victory over death required a physical resurrection. The resurrection of human nature in Christ Jesus means that there is a real reconciliation, a real sharing of humanity in the divine nature.

Extending this point we can also see the resurrection as God's affirmation of humanity more generally. Christ did not shed his humanity when he rose. The risen Lord continues to possess full humanity.

An implicit corollary of this is God's endorsement of the material world. God redeems creation in the resurrection of Jesus. The heresy of Gnosticism hoped for redemption *from* creation, but the resurrection demonstrates God's redemption *of* creation. This fact will shape the way we view our own bodies and creation more generally.

In addition, the resurrection is a source of new life for the believer right now. In Romans 6:1-11 Paul links Christ's resurrection with the sanctified life of Christians. There has been a death to sin and now there is a new life to God. Likewise in Philippians Paul talks about the transforming power of the resurrection for living the Christian life when he states "I want to know Christ – yes, to know the power of his resurrection" (Philippians 3:10).

It has been the knowledge and experience of Christ's resurrection that has allowed Christians to face suffering for the cause of Christ. The



The Rev Dr Ed Loane lectures in theology and church history at Moore College.

Apostle Paul said it was the resurrection that put things in perspective and enabled him to "face death every day" (1 Corinthians 15:31-32). In the last hundred years more Christians have been martyred than in the rest of Church history combined. It is the power of the resurrection that allows Christians to face suffering, persecution and even death with a sure and steadfast hope.

Finally, we see in the Bible that the natural reaction for those who come into contact with the risen Christ is to worship him. Think of Thomas' response when he touches the risen Christ. He declares Jesus to be "My Lord and my God" (John 20:28). Likewise the women as they met Jesus on their way from the empty tomb "came to him, clasped his feet and worshipped him" (Matthew 28:9).

This was, and still is, the only appropriate response of sinful humans who meet the one who conquered death on their behalf. I pray this will be our response as we witness (and witness to) Jesus' resurrection this Easter.



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DIARY

Thursday, March 10

Parenting After Separation

This five-week parenting program run by Anglicare offers education and strategies for separated parents. The course focuses on building a secure emotional base for children after a marriage separation using co-operative co-parenting practices. Bookings are essential. For more information call Anglicare on 9798 1400 or visit anglicare.org.au

LOCATION | Anglicare, 1 Sloane Street, Summer Hill | 6pm-8pm

Saturday, March 12

Prayer Book Day service

Come and join in this service by the Anglican Historical Society to celebrate Prayer Book Day. A BCP Morning Prayer and Holy Communion service will be held in the morning, and an evensong BCP service will be held in the afternoon. Former Archbishop Harry Goodhew will preach. Attendees are advised to bring their own lunch.

For more information, please contact John at bunyanj@tpg.com.au or phone 4627 2586.

LOCATION | St David's Church, 3 Roxburgh Avenue, Thirroul | 11.15am and 1.30pm

Thursday, March 17

Speaking "Christian" in an Online World

Come and join in with this, the first Centre for Christian Living (CCL) event held this year, and think through how to foster productive conversation online.

On the one hand, there are more opportunities to make our voices heard. On the other, there's more talk than ever before, more noise, more blather and less thoughtful or reasonable conversation. How can Paul's letter to the Ephesians help us speak distinctly as Christians?

The speakers on the night will be Dr Tony Payne, director of the CCL, and Dr Lionel Windsor, a member of the

faculty at Moore College.

Tickets are \$15 a head. The event will also be available through internet livestream for a discounted price. To register, visit moore.edu.au/ccl/tickets.

LOCATION | Moore College, 15 King Street, Newtown | 7.30pm

Saturday, March 19

Dural School Fair

You are welcome to join in the fun at our school fair – with rides, all types of food, BBQs, South African and Asian cuisine, hot dogs, hot chips, Krispy Kreme doughnuts, fairy floss, cakes, coffee and Devonshire tea, white elephant stalls, and student performances throughout the day.

For more information email schoolfair@pacifichills.net

LOCATION | Pacific Hills Christian School, 9 Quarry Road, Dural | 9am-3pm

Wednesday, April 6

SMBC Hot Topic – Generation Z

SMBC Hot Topics is a series of 12 talks open to the public and covering a wide variety of social, moral and theological topics aimed at everyone.

This talk, on the topic of "Generation Z, social networking, culture and the gospel", is aimed at looking at the way the first generation born into an online world engages with the world around it and how the gospel is both lived and shared in this context.

The talk will be given by Ms Claire Madden, director of research for McCrindle Research, who has a particular interest in the communication gaps between emerging generations and earlier generations.

Tickets are \$10 a person. To register or for more information, visit smbc.com.au/events.

LOCATION | Sydney Missionary and Bible College, 43 Badminton Road, Croydon | 7pm-9pm

Deacons Day



TWENTY-SEVEN candidates from a variety of backgrounds were ordained as deacons on February 13 at St Andrew's Cathedral.

Led into the Cathedral by the director of Ministry, Training and Development, the Rev Gary O'Brien, the group was told, "You are entrusted with a wonderful message".

Preaching from 1 Thessalonians 2, Mr O'Brien exhorted the group of

ordinands: "Make your motivation to please God, make your manner to be gentle like a nursing mother, make your teaching to be challenging like a godly father and make your message to be the gospel of God.

"My friends, you will be called in your ministry to do many good things but never forget the central thing. The central thing is to share the good news of the gospel, the good news of Jesus."



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Thursday 7 April 2016

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Speakers: Field Staff Brian and Ali Chapman

Light lunch available – small donation

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Susan An Neutral Bay	Steve Mackenzie Mittagong
Meagan Bartlett Lane Cove	Scott Millar Naremburn- Cammeray
Mark Boyley Rooty Hill	Craig Mills Lindfield
Michael Bullen Campbelltown	Margery Mills Mary Andrews College
Travis Cook Glenmore Park	Matthew Moffitt Ashfield, Five Dock and Haberfield
Rhys Duggan Centennial Park	Ben Molyneux Narrabeen
Myles Elton Figtree	Scott Petty Manly
Rod Farraway Cranbrook School	Morgan Renew Gladesville
James Gowing Malabar	Josh Russell Northmead
Michael Hanbury East Roseville	Ron Sanchez Greenacre
Blake Hatton Bondi	Ruth Schroeter Moorebank
Michael Kinsey Rosemeadow	James Sneddon Panania
Alan Lam Summer Hill	David Traill Albion Park
Mike Leite Engadine	

The group includes a former missionary, a school chaplain, a college lecturer and a veteran youth worker. Most of the candidates will work in parishes throughout Sydney and Wollongong.

Some already have extensive life and ministry experience such as the Rev Margery Mills, who lectures at Mary Andrews College, and former youth worker the Rev Scott Petty, who has also

authored several books.

"I've been working in general ministry at St Matthew's, Manly for the past 18 months to two years," Mr Petty says.

"Ordination is a recognition of the ministry that I have been doing and it just opens up availabilities to serve people in more ways in the future."

Five more candidates will be ordained later in the year.

Above: The ordinands pose for the official photo on the steps of St Andrew's Cathedral with Archbishop Davies (centre), bishops Ivan Lee, Chris Edwards and Michael Stead (top left) the Rev Gary O'Brien (top right) Archdeacon Kara Hartley (far right, third row) and the new Dean, Kanishka Raffel (bottom right).


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Maundy Thursday 7:30pm - Commemoration of the Last Supper.
Good Friday 7:45am - Holy Communion (BCP) & 10:15am - Holy Communion (Choir).
Easter Day 7:45am - Holy Communion (BCP) & 10:15am - Choral Communion (AAPB).

www.stjames.info/easter

YOUTHWORKS AT UGANDA CONFERENCE

YOUTHWORKS members have recently visited Uganda, attending a youth conference with thousands of delegates and sounding out a potential pilot of Sydney SRE material in local Anglican schools.

Youthworks CEO the Rev Zac Veron, and one of Youthworks' primary school SRE advisors Tim Beilharz, recently headed over to the East African country at the invitation of Ugandan Archbishop Stanley Ntagali. The conference, located about five hours outside the capital Kampala, was host to about 10,000 youth and young adults, as well as many clergy and youth workers.

"There are amazing scenes in youth ministry in Uganda," Mr Veron says. "It's wonderful to see in the eyes of the delegates a thirst for teaching and for growing in Christ. These young people are in their teens and twenties – and



God's word, or spending time in workshops, or sharing mealtimes and breaks together. It's amazing to see."

attend, along with other speakers from outside the country. It has also led to greater connections between the Diocese of Sydney through Youthworks and the Province of Uganda.

"Last year Archbishop Stanley came and visited us here," Mr Veron says. "He suggested to us that we also invite their youth ministry co-ordinator, the Rev Onesimus Asiimwe, to see for himself what we do but we'd already been planning to do that. Onesimus will be here in Sydney this month to see how we do things and whether there are things that can rub off and work in their context."

Youthworks is also considering whether its Connect curriculum for primary-aged SRE would be useful in Ugandan Anglican schools.

"We sent two of our trainers over

to train 25 of their teachers, who will pilot the Connect curriculum in about a dozen of their Anglican schools," Mr Veron says. "If it works in that context and is useful for them, the plan is that perhaps we can help roll it out to the 100 or so Anglican schools throughout the country."

After arriving home, Mr Veron says he found the chief benefit of the trip was simply being able to experience the vibrant and growing community of faith that is Christianity in Uganda.

"It's just refreshing and striking to seeing so many people hungry to hear the gospel, and that's such a contrast to what can often be apathy to the gospel being preached in the West," he says. "The Lord is moving in many parts of the world. Often those parts are invisible to us in Sydney, but it is happening."



some people a little older – as well as half the clergy in the diocese. They're all there from 8.30 in the morning to sometimes 11 o'clock at night for five days, hearing from

This particular conference has been running for about 10 years, and this year was the third occasion Mr Veron and others from Youthworks have been invited to

BLESSING and BLESSED

THE Dementia and Faith 2016 Symposium, hosted by Anglican Retirement Villages in conjunction with the ARV Foundation and the Centre for Ministry Development, was "somewhat surprisingly, an unqualified success!" said conference organiser the Rev Andrew Nixon.

Mr Nixon, who is director of mission at ARV, said, "What began as a tentative 'testing of the waters' – gathering together those with an interest in thinking deliberately about a Christian response to the challenge of dementia – quickly turned into a tidal wave of interest".



Christine Bryden with her husband Paul at the dementia symposium. She was diagnosed with early-onset dementia at the age of 46.

A special fire brigade review of the venue was needed to ensure it could safely accommodate the 600-strong audience.

Mr Nixon said this interest can be turned into action as churches include those with dementia and cognitive decline in their services and activities. "We can bless the person with dementia enormously [and] can demonstrate the love of Jesus to their carers," he said. "By including those with dementia in our church life as much as we possibly can, we – both as individuals and the community of God's people – will learn from them and be blessed by them."



He is risen indeed

MOVIE REVIEW

JUDY ADAMSON

Risen

Rated M

AFTER HAM-FISTED BLOCKBUSTERS that turned Noah and Moses into nutters – and the call of God and his saving power into delirium and delusion – it is a profound relief to see a film that takes the Bible, and Jesus, seriously.

We see a risen Lord. We see changed lives. We see miracles that aren't explained away by a bump to the head. Thank God.

Apart from choosing an excellent cast the makers of *Risen* have done two very smart things; first, the story is told from the perspective of an outsider – a Roman tribune named Clavius (Joseph Fiennes); and second, the kick-off point for the action is the day of Jesus' crucifixion. The real focus is on what happens after Jesus' death, not before it.

Those familiar with the somewhat melodramatic 1950s Richard Burton film *The Robe* need not be concerned that *Risen* will take the same route. Yes, it also tells its story through an unbelieving Roman tribune who is present at the crucifixion, and yes, it does change the course of his life. However, there is no hackneyed love story and no "magic" robe that does weird things to those who touch it, although the (apparently 14th century) Shroud of Turin does get a look-in, presumably for its visual appeal.

The timeline for the story is also much shorter. Whereas *The Robe* ranged over a number of years, and had its main character setting off on a missionary journey with the Apostle Peter, the focus of *Risen* is from the crucifixion to the ascension.

Clavius is a battle-hardened leader with a

rising reputation. He has become the go-to man for Pontius Pilate (Peter Firth), who puts him in charge of ensuring the crucified Jesus is dead, then buried and guarded so his disciples can't claim the resurrection he promised.

When Sunday arrives, the seals on the tomb have burst and the guards have rushed to the High Priest for protection. Pilate gives Clavius and his assistant Lucius (Tom Felton) the task of finding out what happened, retrieving Jesus' body and restoring order before the emperor visits Jerusalem.

Naturally, Clavius's inquiries soon take an unexpected turn. The more he speaks to those close to Jesus the more perplexed he becomes – until he rushes into a room to make an arrest and gets more than he bargained for.

Some tweaks have been given to the late chapters of the gospel narrative so Clavius can be part of the experience, and there are a few directorial decisions that I shrugged my shoulders over (a blue-eyed, overly jolly Bartholomew being one of them), but these are small issues.

After all, the film actually tells the biblical story of the resurrection with all its pain, doubt, wonder and joy. Some scenes are violent and would be frightening to younger children (particularly an early battle scene and some images around the crucifixion), but this is our faith, properly presented on the big screen for the first time in goodness knows how long.

Go, watch and rejoice. And take as many non-Christian inquirers as you can, because it's the perfect entrée to a gospel conversation. Those hands were pierced for us.

from page 32

air or conspiracy theories, her staunch Catholic faith or unexplained fears, she inhabits Miss Shepherd from top to toe.

Only Maggie Smith, you feel sure, could transform a filthy, messy van into a throneroom – a place of pilgrimage where visitors, once received, are sent off with the brusque comment, "I'm a busy woman!" Mixed with this is a desperate desire for forgiveness we only half understand; her haunted eyes in moments of sorrow are something to behold.

Amid poignancy, frustration and genuine laughs, regularly at his own expense, Bennett – who also wrote the screenplay – takes us on the awkward journey of his many years with Miss Shepherd. It's bumps and surprises all the way, as he becomes her protector despite himself, and gradually begins to peel away the layers of her history.

Bennett's homosexuality is incidental to the story, always acknowledged but never specifically stated, because the film really isn't



about him. It's about Miss Shepherd. His life and those of his long-suffering neighbours are parentheses to the main action: the extraordinarily odd and fascinatingly impossible lady in the van.

Such a story will likely never happen again. Police or social services would be called with business-like speed and modern Miss Shepherds would be promptly moved on so we no longer have to see them. Are we now less willing to care for the outcast, or just quicker to speak up and say so? Either way, our attitude to the homeless and unlovely is something to consider. Not to mention that without people's care – particularly Alan Bennett's – what a tale we would have missed.



Stranger than fiction

JUDY ADAMSON

The Lady in the Van

Rated M

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HEN THE WORDS "A mostly true story" appear at the beginning of this film two things are

immediately apparent: the essence of the humour will be very English, and the truth of the story will be so remarkable that knowing its authenticity will be essential.

For if you weren't aware this tale was real, who would believe that a homeless old woman could set up her van in a street in London's Camden Town, be tolerated by the locals and eventually invited to park in the drive of someone's home? For 15 years?

Playwright Alan Bennett was the man in whose driveway the imperious Miss Shepherd lived from the mid-1970s until her death in 1989. He (played by Alex Jennings) narrates the film with self-deprecating awareness of his own shortcomings and his neighbours' guilty liberal consciences. Concern and care for the never-grateful lady in the van are mixed with distaste and irritation at her habits, her abominable smell and her haughty attitude.

Watching and writing from his window, Bennett observes that whenever a kindness was dispensed "it was not without thoughts of strangulation". Yet he is kind – unfailingly

so – and rushes to her rescue when louts shake her van, strangers appear, or new council rules mean she must find off-street parking or leave.

Perhaps Bennett's care is partly due to guilt over his own ailing mother, who isn't close enough to visit regularly. Perhaps, as he suggests later, it's laziness or not being firm enough. But, over time, an odd sort of friendship springs up between the two. Bennett gives Miss Shepherd access to electricity to power her little television, and (less happily) occasional access to his toilet, which he meticulously cleans afterwards.

Miss Shepherd herself is a mystery. We are given a hint of the reason for her homelessness at the outset, but the rest is guesswork, shrouded by references to guidance from the Virgin Mary and an evident desire for privacy.

Was she a nun, as she says? Did she drive ambulances during the war? Why does she seem to hate music so much? And how is it she can speak fluent French?

When Alan Bennett first created a play from his experiences in the late 1990s it was Maggie Smith who played Miss Shepherd. There really wasn't anyone else considered for the role, and when you see her reprise the character onscreen it's clear why. Whether it be her regal

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