

FEBRUARY
2013

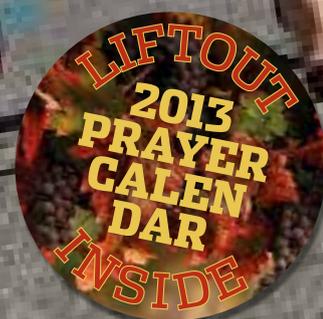
Southern CROSS

THE NEWS MAGAZINE FOR SYDNEY ANGLICANS

On the run

CAN WE SLOW DOWN OUR CRAZY, BUSY LIVES?

- + The Rules: getting social media right
- & A helping hand for Tasmania



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COVER

Too busy to think, sleep properly or take a holiday? You're not alone. This month Leigh Hatcher asks us to stop and assess what we can do to reverse the busyism epidemic.

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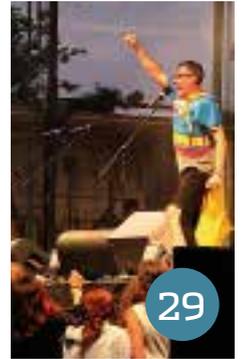
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“One day [our children] may well have responsibility to teach their own children how to navigate a world that we can barely imagine.”

Graham Stanton



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Grace To The World *Cycle Tour*

In 2013 Anglican Aid is seeking to raise 5 million dollars to help smash the cycles of poverty that cripple communities around the world.

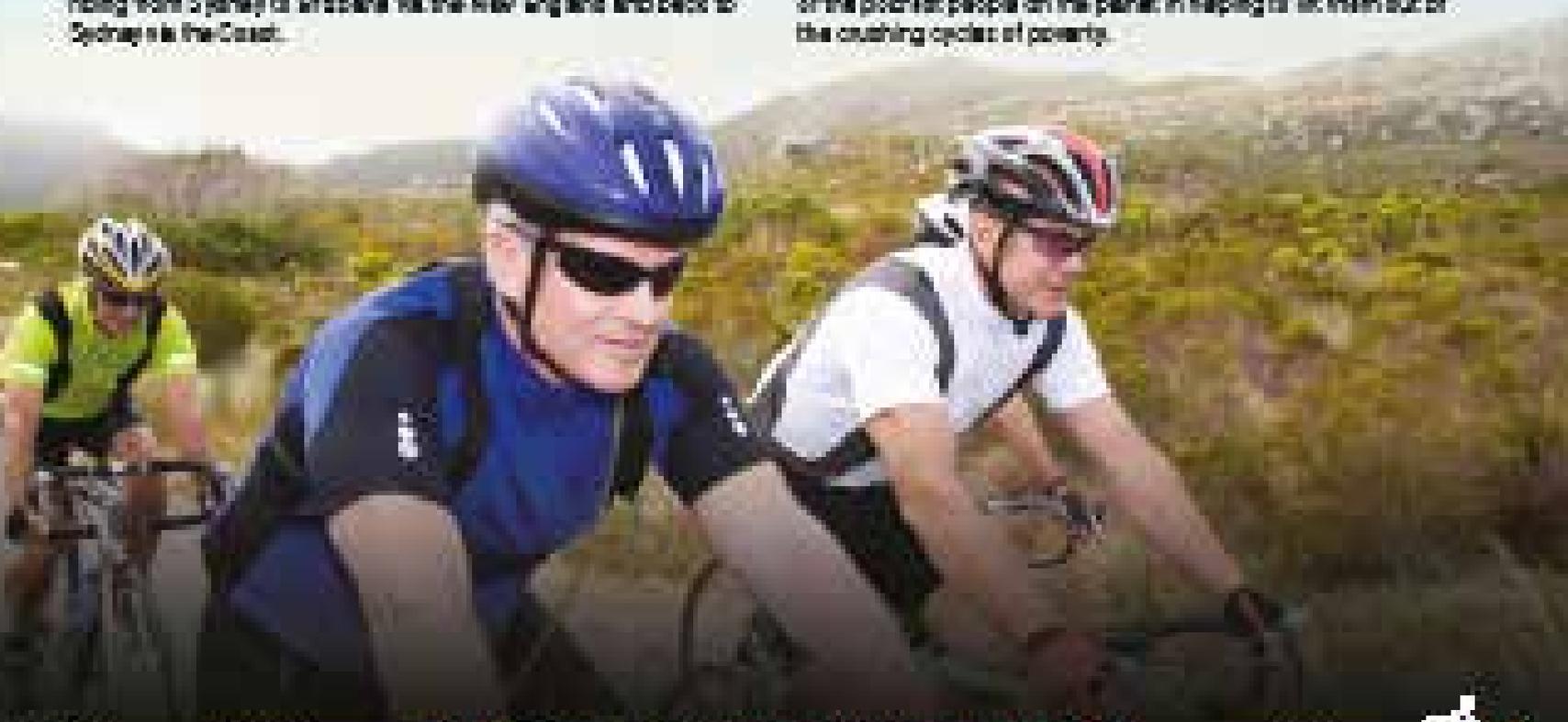
If 10,000 supporters donate a dollar a day to help people who live on less than a dollar a day, we'd be well on the way to achieving this goal.

So Anglican Aid is getting on its bike! We have a team of cyclists riding from Sydney to Brisbane via the New England and back to Sydney via the Coast.

This, the first of many Grace To The World Cycle Tours, will take place this April and be led by Anglican Aid CEO David Mansfield.

The team will be raising awareness about how Christians can respond to global poverty with Christ-like compassion and generosity. Grace To The World public forums will be held in many towns along the route.

Become one of our 10,000 Dollar A Day partners as we stand in solidarity with our Christian partners who are carrying some of the poorest people on the planet in helping to lift them out of the crushing cycles of poverty.



YES, I want to support the Grace To The World Cycle Tour

I would like to support the riding team with a gift of:

- \$2,000 (equivalent to a box of donated tinned milk)
- \$1,000 (equivalent to training for pastors in African nations)
- \$200 ('a dollar a day' for orphans and vulnerable kids in Mali as a project of your choice)
- \$200 (30 weeks of night vision for solar fishermen in Cambodia as a project of your choice)
- \$_____ (any amount you nominate)

Your project choice: _____

Please see website for complete project profile.

Please join our team online with an online donation through our Grace To The World website from the first quarter of 2013 and help us to reach our goal of raising 5 million dollars in 2013... **Let Grace Flow!**

If your project choice is unrecognised, your gift will be applied to a similar activity.

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Scripture books go digital

AS SCHOOLS MOVE INTO THE DIGITAL age, providing tablets and computers for their students, textbook suppliers are increasingly providing digital versions of their offerings. Anglican Youthworks is following suit.

From last month Youthworks Media, through one of its publishing branches, Christian Education Publications (CEP), began offering two secondary Christian Studies workbooks in digital form. Two more will follow in March.

"Many schools have migrated to using iPads for the delivery of their entire curriculum, and therefore CEP needs to be up with these technological changes," said Marshall Ballantine-Jones, executive director of Youthworks Media.

The digital workbooks are also interactive, allowing students to engage with the content on the screen.

"These new resources are excellent for harnessing cutting-edge technologies in the mediums students and schools are used to," Mr Ballantine-Jones said. "Ultimately the benefit will be more versatile and

effective Christian education."

CEP consulted with schools before it took the leap into the digital world, to ensure it was going to produce a product that would be used by staff and students.

"We have developed products they say will help them deliver their content as successfully as possible," Mr Ballantine-Jones said.

These new resources mark a shift from the traditional way of teaching a Christian Studies lesson, and while printed material is not being scrapped, Youthworks Media is embracing digital technology.

"It is not a permanent shift, but an ongoing evolution to holistic curriculum delivery," Mr Ballantine-Jones said. "We are always committed to better ways to deliver our resources, so future plans will unfold as the means and opportunities arise."

The workbooks are currently available on iPads, Amazon Kindles and tablets running Android operating systems.

Schools are encouraged to contact CEP, which can tailor a solution to meet their needs.

Thompson: a "great privilege" to head Moore

RUSSELL POWELL

MOORE COLLEGE IS PREPARING FOR A new principal, Dr Mark Thompson (right), who will take over as its 13th head when Dr John Woodhouse retires on May 12 2013.

In announcing the move last December the Archbishop, as president of the governing board of the college, said. "I greet the appointment of Dr Mark Thompson as the next principal with great enthusiasm. Mark is thoroughly committed to Christ as Lord, and is a fine teacher and a caring pastor".

Dr Thompson has lectured at the college since 1991. He currently lectures in Christian doctrine, is head of Moore's department of theology, philosophy and ethics and has served variously as academic dean and as acting principal.

"His gifts as a speaker, theological educator, author and theologian have been recognised internationally as well as locally," Dr Jensen said, referring to Dr Thompson's membership of the GAFCON Theological Resource Group and his efforts to strengthen Moore's international links and build its profile overseas.

The Archbishop spoke of the challenges ahead. "The campus requires development and a new building is planned. The educational opportunities are new and they offer



the possibilities of extending the teaching of the college and attracting even more students. With the help of the faculty and staff, Mark is well equipped both to maintain the theological stance of the College and to oversee the developments we need to best serve Christ and his people."

Dr Thompson described it as "a great privilege to be invited to serve the college in this way. I'm enormously excited because I believe that Moore College is on the cusp of a range of opportunities for providing strong, clear, biblical, theological education in a rapidly changing world."

Welcoming a new principal will cap off a busy start to 2013. The graduation ceremony will be held on March 12 and the college has also announced the establishment of the Centre for Ministry Development (CMD).

The Rev Archie Poulos, who will lead the new initiative, said his prayer for the CMD is that it would be "a one-stop shop for churches and ministers who want to keep getting better".

Digital workbooks for the next generation of learning

cepstore.com.au

From Sydney to Amman

EXPLAINING CHRISTIANITY TO Muslim women in the Georges River region for the past five years has been a great joy to Margaret – developing relationships, having good conversations and dispelling myths about Christianity.

But she wanted to do more. So late last year she flew to Amman in Jordan to spend three months beginning to learn Arabic in order to speak to people in their heart language.

She says that while most Arabic-speaking Muslims were born in Australia, “there are a significant number who are more comfortable speaking Arabic – certainly the older ones but others as well. And so to be able to have a simple conversation with them in their own language is a very welcoming thing.

“I remember a couple of years ago I greeted some Muslim women on a beach on Arabic. They started talking to me back in Arabic and I had to say that was all I knew, but they were so delighted I said ‘Hello’ to them in their own language that I was able to spend

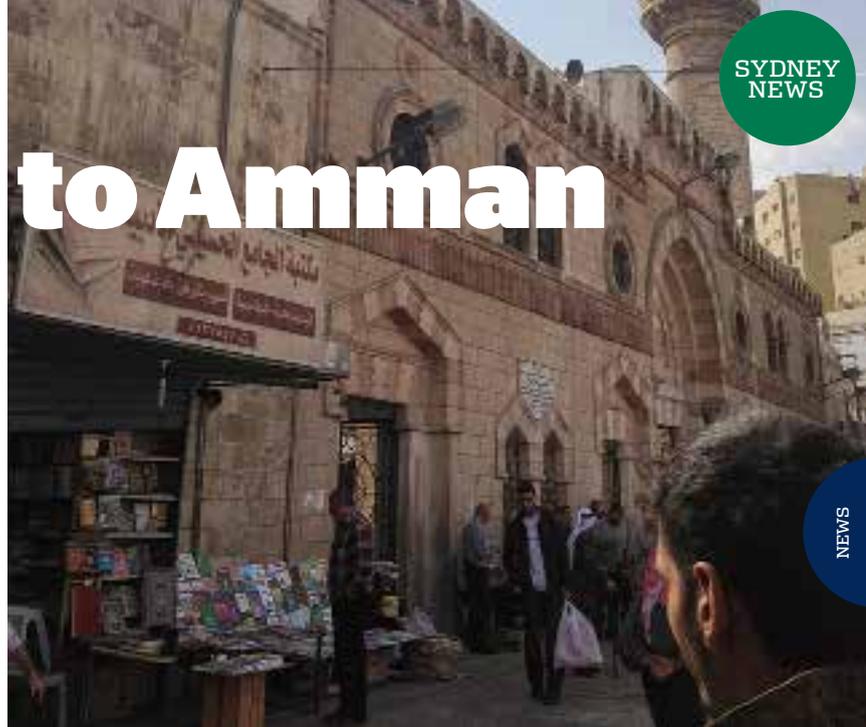
a couple of hours talking to them. So it’s a door-opener for meaningful conversations.”

Margaret says that even for her Muslim friends who aren’t Arabic speakers, the fact that she is learning the language of the Qu’ran “shows them that I’m sincerely trying to understand the Muslim mindset”.

The months in Amman were the first Margaret had spent living in a Muslim country. She says she felt quite at home in the old town of Amman, which to her seemed like a bigger version of the main street in Lakemba.

“It helped explain things I was seeing day by day in Lakemba and Greenacre,” she says. “You have shops side by side there that are similar, that sell everything.

“Corner shops... are dying in other parts of Sydney but they’re maintained [in the Georges River region] because it’s a member of the family who has the shop. So the family or the community and network that person has developed will go to



The Al-Hussein Mosque in Amman.

that shop. And the shop next door will have their own community.”

Margaret is gradually linking up again with her own network of Muslim women and their families – with whom chats “always get onto significant topics” as they delve into the beliefs of her faith or theirs.

“The interest levels vary, I guess, but in every case they’re getting a picture of who Jesus, Lord and

Saviour is for Christian people,” she says. “So they’re able to get rid of the myths that they’ve been taught and understand what real Christians believe, which is a huge step forward.

“My personal dream – my hope and prayer – is that every Muslim in Sydney and Australia knows an authentic follower of Jesus. Because with my friends once they do, they’re impressed by the Jesus we follow.”

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SRE conference expands

AFTER RUNNING FOR MORE THAN A decade, Anglican Youthworks' Schools Ministry Conference is again expanding its reach to cope with demand.

On February 2, the conference was held for the first time in the northern region of the Sydney Diocese, at Christ Church St Ives.



"We have been running out of space in the city and in the west, and we haven't been connecting that well with teachers in the north," says the Rev Jon Thorpe (above), head of ministry support at Anglican Youthworks.

The Schools Ministry Conference is held annually before the start of the

school year to equip and encourage the more than 2000 primary Anglican SRE teachers in the Sydney Diocese.

"Teaching SRE can be daunting," Mr Thorpe says. "Equipping people can help overcome that."

From January 31 to February 9, three other conferences were also held across the Diocese: in the city, the west and the Shoalhaven. Over the past four years the number of attendees has grown from 250 to an expected 800 in 2013.

"This reflects that people see the value of the conference," Mr Thorpe says. "We love that people are keen to do SRE well and see it as a way of equipping themselves for the ministry. We want to offer support to people where they need it."

Mr Thorpe believes one of the biggest challenges facing SRE in Sydney is the introduction of ethics classes. While the coverage of SRE and ethics in the media has led to an increase of SRE teachers, it has also put a spotlight on SRE.

"For a while we were worried about

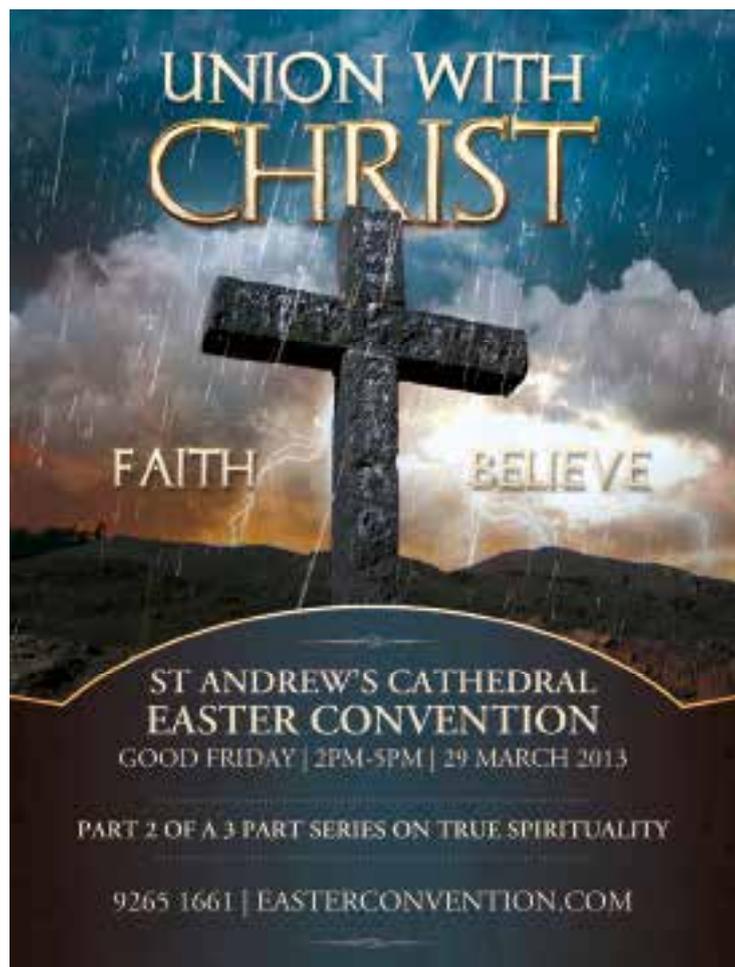


Great ideas: a workshop at the 2012 SRE conference.

who would pick up the baton [when the current generation of teachers retire]," Mr Thorpe says. "[But] if we don't do SRE, and do it well, we're going to lose a great opportunity."

The Schools Ministry Conference not only equips teachers, it also serves as a way of encouraging them.

"This is the one big opportunity for everyone to get together and be encouraged by the sheer number of people [involved in SRE]," Mr Thorpe says. "I know that the more senior teachers are greatly encouraged seeing the next generation come through."



A life remembered

STEPHEN BOMFORD, THE PRINCIPAL OF St Peter's Anglican Primary School in Campbelltown, died on January 6, aged 58.

Mr Bomford, right, who had been principal of the school for 15 years, passed away after complications from surgery he received in December last year.

"Mr Bomford was a caring, empowering and focused leader who was respected and loved by the entire school community," said the Rev Nigel Fortescue, chairman of Campbelltown Anglican Schools Council.

"He believed that all children were precious to God and had gifts and abilities that deserved to be nurtured."

A thanksgiving service was held at the school on January 14. Thousands of people, including current and former students, filled the school's main hall as well as a neighbouring playground to pay tribute to Mr Bomford's life.

Several classrooms were also filled with people who watched the service via a video link.

The deputy headmaster of St



Peter's, Robbert Alderden, property manager Jon Ponsonby and 2009 school captain Katherine Trotman all delivered eulogies while Mr Bomford's stepdaughters shared stories about him and recited a poem by one of his favourite authors, J.R.R. Tolkien.

"Every decision he made he made not for his own ego but for the improvement of the school," Mr Alderden said.

Mr Bomford is survived by his wife Michele, sons Christopher and Justin, daughter Jennifer and stepdaughters Catherine and Samantha.

"[Stephen's] passion and understanding of God's love can be exemplified from Romans 8:38-39," Mr Fortescue said.

CMS shifts focus

A NEW VISION FOR CMS AUSTRALIA, will see the organisation seek to increase its presence in South East Asia.



Announced at CMS NSW & ACT's Summer School on January 6 in Katoomba, the Towards 2020 vision praises God for the growth of his kingdom, particularly in East Africa, but acknowledges the people groups still in need of the gospel. The catchphrase for the organisation's vision is "A world that knows Jesus".

"The gospel never changes but the

world is changing rapidly," said CMS Australia's general secretary, Peter Rodgers (left). "We need to ensure the work that our missionaries are doing is strategic. We are conscious that many gospel-poor peoples live in our 'near-neighbour' region. We will therefore develop a greater focus on our near neighbours in the South-East Asia and Pacific region."

In the past CMS has had a small presence in South-East Asia and the Pacific, but the organisation plans to increase the number of missionaries serving in the region, as well as expanding the type of work done.

"There are still millions of people who don't know Christ," Mr Rodgers said. "The need is huge there and CMS Australia should be taking more responsibility for its own region."

One of the challenges of increasing its presence in South-East Asia is

that CMS must adapt to the people and cultures of the region, to most effectively minister to them. "We will develop our expertise in outreach to people from a Buddhist background to a similar level as our engagement with Islam," Mr Rodgers said.

This shift in focus leads to the second part of the new vision. Instead of withdrawing from places like East Africa and South America, because of the work that has already been done in growing God's kingdom CMS's role in these places will shift. "Our role is now equipping church leaders instead of reaching gospel-poor people," Mr Rodgers said. "Our partners in these places are asking us to work with them in developing Christian leaders."

This will mean a greater emphasis on groups like CEP in Chile, a CMS-run Bible school training the next generation of Chilean church

leaders. CMS will seek to develop relationships with Bible colleges and theological seminaries around the world to offer support and assistance in equipping the next generation of Christian leaders.

"It is not only about teaching pastors," Mr Rodgers said. "We also want to train up leaders in all fields to think biblically. We want to work with universities and hospitals, as well as offering mentoring. The emphasis is on Christian leadership."

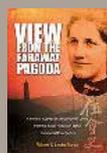
The final part of the Towards 2020 vision is to engage churches across Australia in cross-cultural mission and to develop CMS across the country.

"The great challenge for churches in Australia is to develop passion to reach their neighbours from other cultures because the world has come to us," Mr Rodgers said.

Far and away, for Jesus

View from the Faraway Pagoda: A Pioneer Australian Missionary in China from the Boxer Rebellion to the Communist Insurgency

By Robert and Linda Banks



Jesus", something with which Sophie would have heartily agreed.

Robert Banks (Sophie's great-nephew) and his wife Linda have written a tale of Sophie's life that is compelling, edifying and inspiring.

It is compelling in that Sophie's gospel-centred focus – and her passion to meet the needs of women and children in particular – make for gripping reading. She sought to challenge the thinking that led to foot binding, the opium trade and the infanticide of baby girls. It is true that we can hardly begin to imagine what it was like and the cost involved – the travel, the isolation and the huge unknowns – but the book opens these subjects in a way that certainly gives us some insights.

At the same time the book is an edifying read as it helps us to trust God more. The lessons from Sophie's life show a model of commitment and perseverance in the face of many challenges. For example, the massacre of 12 missionaries in 1895 in Kucheng, rather than discouraging Sophie, had a strong personal impact on her decision to go to China. For her, the news was of life-changing significance as she entrusted herself to her Lord.

Life was not easy. We read of her



Minna, Sophie (centre) and Amy with a women's school class, 1899.

PHOTO: Courtesy of Acorn Press

personal struggles, particularly the battle with severe migraines. But such struggles taught Sophie much about the Lord. She saw them as her 'thorn in the flesh' and recognised that God's grace was sufficient for her at her time of weakness.

And finally the book is inspiring, as we see what the Lord has done and is doing in China. Even though the work was slow and met with huge opposition, Robert and Linda Banks discovered during a recent trip to China that there is still fruit of Sophie's service.

Yet for me one of the key features of *View from the Faraway Pagoda* is that it helps us look at our own history in Sydney and see what God was doing 120 years ago. I was struck

by Sophie's work at St Barnabas', Broadway, where she was involved in Sunday school, evangelistic visiting and pastoral work. Later she worked as a deaconess in Pymont after being commissioned as the fourth deaconess in the Diocese.

As Christians we have an obligation not to forget the past. Sophie's story enables us to remember with joy the great things God has done and the events and people who form part of the evangelical succession that brings us to this day.

Right to the end Sophie was keen to talk to people about Jesus. So while the book is the story of Sophie Sackville Newton, it is more importantly the story of God at work in Sydney and in China.

CHRISTINE JENSEN

THIS BOOK RECOUNTS THE REMARKABLE story of an ordinary woman, Sophie Sackville Newton, who was used by God to do great things for him in China.

Sophie was born in the UK but grew up in country NSW where she came to know the Lord. After coming to Sydney in 1891 she became one of the early pioneers of Christian work by women in Sydney's inner city. She travelled to China on January 7, 1897 and spent the next 35 years as a single missionary in the fellowship of the Church Missionary Society.

The book was launched last month during CMS Summer School in Katoomba – very appropriate given that the stated new vision of the society is for "a world that knows

Vengeful God to loving Father

TARA SING

IT TOOK 18 YEARS FOR HUBERT TRUONG to see God as anything other than an irrelevant tyrant. "I pictured God as the best bloke I could think of," he says. "The God Christians described was not that God – he seemed very vengeful: therefore it couldn't be right."

The 36-year-old father from Crossway Anglican's North Rocks congregation wrestled with key questions about God's identity such as, "If there is a God, why is there so much cruelty in the world?" Being of a Buddhist background, Hubert struggled to understand how God could condemn good people. The idea of "someone who dedicated their life to others but wasn't a Christian [ending] up in hell didn't seem fair".

Despite his unanswered questions, he kept investigating. He took part in the *Simply Christianity* study series and, by the time it was finished, he viewed the Bible as "a historical artefact. I couldn't discard the information in there. This led to me reading the Bible more and attending church. I read of Saul persecuting Christians and being converted. If I believed the Bible was true, this was an amazing turnaround."

Hubert's own turning point came as his wife was about to have their first child in 2007. "For the first time in my life I couldn't control the outcome but I really cared about it," he says. "I was thinking about the miracle of birth and how something so perfect could be created. I couldn't believe this



Turnaround: Hubert Truong with his wife Denise, daughter Naomi and son Callum.

happened through a freak of nature. It had to be design. At that point, I put my life into God's hands."

For someone brought up to believe in fate and karma, handing over control of his life was a huge change. "Buddhism says it's all about you and it's in your control," he says. "I was never in a position where I couldn't accept the outcome. Part of Buddhism was... believing you can only control what is in your control, such as how you act.

"When I finally accepted Christ it was a big shift because for the first time if I get in trouble, I can't just sit there and take it on the chin and say 'That's life'. Now it's about praying to God and trusting in him that there is a plan and, whatever the outcome is, I know it is God's plan. That was a

big change for me mentally. I had to hand my life over rather than being in control."

Hubert's Christian friends, who had been praying for him to accept Jesus for 18 years, were overjoyed at the news. "There was a lot of excitement and amazement from them that God had finally worked his will and got the message into my head after all these years," he says.

On the other hand, Hubert's family were not as excited. "My family weren't against me following Christ because they know I'm quite strong-willed," he says. "They are Buddhist, so they would just talk to me, asking 'Why are you doing this? Does this make sense?'. They tried to relate Buddhism and Christ. Buddhism doesn't say there isn't a God, but

they believe to a large extent there are many gods, so they were saying Christ is another Buddha, saying 'You're believing in Christ, which is the same as Buddha'. There were some interesting conversations had then, and we still have those now."

Six years on, Hubert no longer sees God as an irrelevant, unloving tyrant but as a merciful and just Father. "He is our creator and we turned away from him, so he has every right as our creator to do what he does," he says.

"It's like a parent-child relationship. The love is always there, but sometimes God has to discipline his children or take action to protect them. Ultimately, for everything we've done he has got this amazing love for us and we can't take that for granted."

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Supporting Tasmanian churches

Dean of Hobart, the Very Rev Richard Humphrey (left), visits an emergency relief centre in Dunalley after bushfires devastated the small community.

ANDREW BUERGER

ON JANUARY 4 A NUMBER OF BUSHFIRES ignited across Tasmania, leading to the one of the worst natural disasters in the state's history, destroying more than 110,000 hectares of land and over 130 homes.

The small fishing town of Dunalley, east of Hobart, was the hardest hit, with more than half the town's buildings, including a primary school, being destroyed.

One of the buildings left standing was St Martin's Anglican Church, which has become a symbol of hope and strength for the community.

"Amongst the devastation the regular church service was held at St. Martin's [on January 13]," said the Dean of Hobart, the Very Rev Richard Humphrey.

"The normal congregation of eight swelled to 35 with people from all denominations and from the emergency response teams gathering around God's word."

The Diocese of Tasmania is working

with the local church in Dunalley to help the community come to terms with the disaster and start to rebuild their lives.

"What is needed is not an emergency response but a long-term commitment to those devastated



The community of Dunalley comes together at St Martin's Anglican Church.

communities and to bring hope among the ashes," Dean Humphrey said. "Already the parish [of St Martin's] has been giving care and support to those who have lost their

homes and also providing a bit of normalcy."

For a number of years the Archbishop of Sydney's Anglican Aid has partnered with Anglican dioceses around the country and the world affected by natural disasters. To

assist the Diocese of Tasmania in supporting affected communities, Anglican Aid has committed \$10,000 to the relief effort.

The director of Anglican Aid, the

Rev David Mansfield, says that "As Christians in Sydney we want to stand in solidarity with our brothers and sisters in Christ as they care for those in the community who have been affected by natural disasters."

According to Mr Mansfield, the Diocese of Tasmania will use the funds for emergency accommodation as well as to begin rebuilding infrastructure in Dunalley.

"While there were some homes that were spared, all the water and electricity services were destroyed," Mr Mansfield said. "So some people have been able to return to their homes but they have to bring in their own water."

As well as an initial contribution of \$10,000, Anglican Aid is appealing to Anglicans in Sydney to financially support the Diocese of Tasmania.

"We're asking for Sydney Anglicans to respond generously to this," Mr Mansfield said. "We would like to be able to send more money as well as to cover the emergency fund so that [in the future] we can respond immediately when funds are needed."

More: www.anglicanaid.org.au



Tanzanian training

Learning: Mike Taylor spends time with his student pastoral care group and, below, Katie Taylor and a friend celebrate graduation day.

JUDY ADAMSON

WHILE CHURCH GROWTH IN AFRICA has been tremendous, Christians in other countries know well the oft-repeated phrase that the church on the African continent is a mile wide but only an inch deep.

A little over three years ago CMS missionary Mike Taylor and his wife Katie moved to Tanzania in order for Taylor to take up the position of lecturer at Munguishi Bible College in the city of Arusha. Eighteen months later he was asked to become college principal.

When the family arrived they

expected low education levels, as many Tanzanians do not progress past primary school. However, Taylor says, they also expected "mature Christian men and women keen to do ministry" whom they would guide in reading the Bible for themselves and give confidence in teaching it to others.

What they didn't expect is that many of their students wouldn't actually know the gospel. "They couldn't tell you how someone was saved," Taylor says. "They're committed to being Christian – they identify as being Christian and they love Jesus – but they don't rely on his grace in faith, they rely on [their own] obedience."

That being the case, Taylor began

to run separate programs working through Bible passages such as Ephesians 2, Romans 5 and 1 Peter 3 to help students understand what it meant to be a Christian. He read the Bible in all his classes to help teach basic truths and Bible reading skills, saying third-year students found the process of working through 2 Timothy "revolutionary" because they weren't used to one-to-one Bible study and working out how to apply the Bible to their lives.

A practical training program has been set up that is part hands-on ministry and part college classes, and Taylor has also started a program that aims to teach students how to preach and teach from the Bible.

A new development he is particularly excited about is the chance to invite some student wives and children to the college. "We don't have much accommodation but we invited four wives for one semester and it's been really positive," he says. "Typically in Tanzania a man will leave his wife and children at home and come to college. And promiscuity is a big problem in Tanzania among Christians and clergy, so taking a man away from his wife for four months... is not good."

"We started a wives' course so the wives also learn what it means to be in ministry as a minister's wife. Katie's been teaching it and they've been

really thankful for the opportunity. One of the women doesn't know how to read or write and another doesn't know much, but the other two have helped and they have also gone to more classes, lapping up everything they could get their hands on. They had a real desire to learn."



Taylor asks for prayer for good, godly staff for the college – including a Tanzanian national who will be able to lead the college in another three years from now. He also asks for prayer that fundraising will be sufficient to support the college and, importantly, that the right kind of men and women will be raised up to study there.

"We want to create a culture that will continue, even after we're gone, of godliness and a desire to learn from God in his word," he says.



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UK General Synod continues controversy on bishops

A SPECIAL SESSION OF THE HOUSE OF Laity of the Church of England's General Synod has expressed, by vote, its confidence in the chairman, Dr Philip Giddings.

Some members of the house claimed Dr Giddings had unduly influenced last year's vote on women bishops. That measure fell short of the required two-thirds majority in the Laity by six votes. Observers say the move failed because it did not provide adequate safeguards for the conscience of conservative Anglo-Catholics and evangelicals, if women became bishops.

In a separate move, the Church of

England's House of Bishops lifted a ban on gay people in civil partnerships becoming bishops, as long as they promised to be celibate.

GAFCON/FCA chairman Eliud Wabukala said such a provision was "unworkable" and "will create further confusion about Anglican moral teaching and make restoring unity to the Communion an even greater challenge".

The move came days before the Chapter of Canterbury Cathedral officially elected Justin Welby, the Bishop of Durham, as the 105th Archbishop of Canterbury. He will be enthroned in March.

Mixed messages to British Christians



Sacked relationship counsellor Gary Macfarlane. PHOTO: Christian Institute.

THE EUROPEAN COURT OF HUMAN Rights has upheld a British woman's right to wear a cross at work, in what is seen as a landmark ruling. The judge ruled British Airways breached the human rights of 60-year-old London woman Nadia Eweida when they prevented her from wearing a crucifix.

However the judges also said a hospital could force nurse Shirley Chaplin to remove her cross on "health and safety" grounds.

The European Court also ruled against relationship therapist Gary McFarlane, who was sacked by the charity Relate when he said he would object to being forced to give sex counselling to homosexual couples, and North Islington Council registrar

Lillian Ladele who was disciplined after she refused to conduct same-sex civil partnership ceremonies. Two judges dissented, calling the Ladele case "obsessive political correctness".

Andrea Williams, director of the Christian Legal Centre, said she was not disheartened by the rulings. "Our domestic courts were beginning to develop impossible tests on what constitutes manifestation of Christian faith," she said. "They did not even accept the cross as a Christian symbol or the belief in sexual purity as a conscience issue for Christians. The European Court has stated categorically that such beliefs flow from Christian faith and are worthy of protection."

Dubious title for North Korea

FOR THE ELEVENTH YEAR RUNNING North Korea has been named the most difficult place on earth to be a Christian.

According to the Top 50 annual World Watch List, published by the anti-persecution ministry Open Doors, "Nowhere else in the world is the persecution of Christians so intense. Even the possession of the Bible is enough to be killed or sent to a labour camp for life with your family".

The communist North Korean regime classifies Christians as 'hostile' and believers face arrest, detention, torture – even public execution. In just one labour camp, the notorious No. 15, there are said to be 6000 Christians imprisoned. Despite severe oppression, Open



North Koreans at prayer. PHOTO: Open Doors

Doors says there are about 400,000 Christians in the underground church movement.

Also on the list of countries where persecution is worst is Mali (from unranked to No. 7). Tanzania (No. 24), Kenya (No. 40), Uganda (47) and Niger (No. 50) also have moved onto the list.

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Thank you



Haddon to serve overseas

The Rev Gary Haddon (pictured above with his wife Julie) and family left the provisional parish of St Clair and Erskine Park at the end of last month, moving to St Andrew's Hall in Melbourne for six months prior to serving as CMS missionaries in Chile from early 2014.

Mr Haddon was rector of St Clair from 2006, and says that serving in Chile has been something he and Julie – who lived in the country for four years as a teenager – have been thinking about for 20 years, yet the timing had never been right. Now, despite the fact that their eldest child is about to begin Year 10, the pieces have fallen into place for the family to start preparing to go.

"We're planning to do some theological education but we're not exactly sure where in Chile – it just depends where Bishop Tito thinks we're needed most," Mr Haddon says.

He adds that the congregation was "very excited for us until the penny dropped that this meant we were leaving, and then they were sad. But it's been a fantastic place to be – the people are very outward focused so they'll be ready for the next person to take the parish to the next level."

From Crossway to Northmead

Last month the Rev Adrian Russell (right) moved from his position as senior assistant minister at



NORTHBRIDGE CHANGEOVER

It isn't usual that a new rector is found already in the parish, but that's what has happened at Northbridge where the rector since 2004, the Rev Adam Street, swapped jobs last month with his assistant minister, the Rev Simon Flinders.

Both men are of similar ages and have been out of college for about the same number of years, which makes the situation fairly unique. "I don't know if it's been done anywhere else," Mr Street says. "Simon may be the best minister I've worked with and I think it will be great for him to have the opportunity to lead the parish. There was no good reason for him not to do it and it's also good after eight years for Northbridge to have a bit of a change."

Mr Flinders, who brought a

congregational plant over to Northbridge in 2010 from St Thomas', North Sydney, has also enjoyed working with Mr Street over the past two and a half years. He says that as the two of them talked over what was best for the future of the parish with the Bishop of North Sydney, Glenn Davies, gradually it became clear that this change "seemed to be it, but Glenn was very clear that we needed to involve the nominators... he met with them to talk it through and they've been very supportive.

"It's an unusual step in any industry and an incredibly humble step for Adam to take to hand the reins over to somebody else... but we've got a great working relationship and we're hoping this [change] will be an exciting new step for Northbridge."



Simon Flinders (left) with Adam Street.

Crossway Anglican Churches to become rector of Northmead with Winston Hills.

Mr Russell had been part of the Crossway team since 2007 and was happily in charge of the parish's ministries at North Rocks Public School so he says that, "When nominators came to visit, I wasn't looking to leave. I really love the Crossway team and I especially love the people at Crossway North Rocks".

However, he could also see the opportunities at Northmead with Winston Hills for leading in terms of future evangelism outside and encouragement within. "I also understood that it was kind of time for me to step up, having been an assistant for quite a while – and I've been prepared well at Crossway for this next step," Mr Russell says.

"I asked lots of people what I should do and the impression was that the move was the right thing to do... so we thought and prayed about it and decided it would be a good place to serve.

"I'm really looking forward to getting to know the people at

Northmead and Winston Hills and excited about the challenge of growing the gospel together."



Macken moves on

After 23 years as rector of the parish of Northmead and Winston Hills, the Rev Neil Macken (above) has now become the parish relations manager at Youthworks.

Mr Macken, who turns 65 in August, says he didn't want to retire and leave the parish with "a lengthy period without a senior minister. So we have worked at a plan to help the parish have real continuity of ministry".

Over the years he and his wife Robyn have witnessed Northmead grow in many ways and they are particularly impressed with the way

parishioners have worked towards ensuring there is specialised ministry to all age groups. "Our catch phrase has been 'cradle-to-grave ministry'," he says. "In 2013 the parish will have specialist ministers for the elderly, trained ministers for each congregation, and a full-time youth minister and children's minister. These people will help the parishioners to develop their own ministries so that growth continues."

He says the decision to leave the parish was "a significant moment... it's the place where our four children grew up and learned to follow Jesus, to serve his people and to care about the lost."

In his new role Mr Macken looks forward to helping parishes develop children's and youth ministries. "Northmead found Youthworks a great help over the years so it's a natural fit," he says. "Imagine every parish in the Diocese having specialist cradle-to-grave ministries? That's something worth helping with."

From South Coast to Middle East

The Rev Graham Thomas became senior associate pastor at the Fellowship of the Emirates church in Dubai last month, with particular responsibilities in discipleship and training.

After three years as assistant minister at All Saints', Nowra, Mr Thomas said he and his wife Michelle felt God could use them at the Dubai church, which was planted in 2006 and has a large and growing ministry to expats from 180 different countries.

"Many are separated from family and friends and hunger for community and meaning in life," he says. [The church] aims to reach unreached people with the good news of the risen Jesus, grow a community dependent on God and his word and equip people to serve in the love of Christ."

IN BRIEF

After six years as community care director for Anglicare in Sydney Dr Ian Jackson has become NSW director of Mission Australia. Anglicare CEO Grant Millard said Dr Jackson had a "profound impact" at Anglicare and that Mission Australia would "benefit from Ian's insight, wisdom and commitment to serving the needs of the excluded and disadvantaged".

The Rev Gary Koo becomes rector of Crossway this month. More in a future edition.

The Rev Beth Ann Spence died on December 22, 2012. More in a future edition.

Robert Leslie Powell has voluntarily relinquished holy orders.

CHRISTMAS IGNORANCE

The cover story in December's *Southern Cross* ("Jesus Who? Christmas in the age of ignorance") reminded me of a conversation I had with a lady several years ago at our Carols by the Sea at Coogee Beach.

During the event we promoted the Christmas services of the churches involved and after I came off mic this lady said to me: "I can't believe you churches. Now you're even trying to get in on Christmas carols!"

I explained that the carols we'd been singing were about the message we proclaim in our churches each week. She'd never really thought before about the words she was singing and, because she'd only ever been to carols events presented by non-church groups, she'd never been challenged to understand that Christmas was a life-changing event. She genuinely thought the Christmas message was about being kind to one another – a sort of break from the real world of relationships, which would then revert to normal once gifts were returned and holidays completed.

She went away perplexed, and was not keen to accept an invitation to chat further. I'm assuming that if she'd only heard carols at a council event or in a shopping centre, she would never have been challenged. I'm trusting God will again challenge her before it's too late and am



keen to continue our church's involvement in Carols by the Sea for a 21st year this December.

The Rev Steve Bainbridge
South Coogee

Who has lapsed?

Regarding Jodie McNeill's article "The return of the lapsed Anglican" (SC, December)

I was struck by the comments he quoted from Louise George, who had visited an Anglican church "that had become far more informal than what she had experienced when she attended a child". She lamented "the loss of the traditional forms of worship she found familiar and comfortable" and thus concluded there was a loss of "the sense of importance and occasion".

I would like to suggest that there may be many regular members in our churches, not just lapsed ones like Ms George, who feel the same way and no longer feel at home.

Since there is an ever-increasing aged population are their needs really being met in Sydney Anglican churches? Are they being told that the ways they have always valued no longer matter?

Maybe this is a helpful analogy. If roast lamb was your favourite meal, wouldn't you miss it if it went totally off the menu?

Helen Potter

Unlovable Bond

The November cover of SC carried the line, "The real reason we love Bond". The article by David Hohne refers to 23 Bond films having "developed a trademark formula".

Having neither read a Bond book nor seen a film I cannot speak with the authority of an aficionado but some years ago I heard one suggestion for Bond's popularity. George Duncan, former minister of Glasgow's Tron church and international speaker, told a CMS convention that when he sought the reason for Bond's popularity he found it within the opening pages of three Ian Fleming novels: "A detailed and sexually explicit account of an adulterous act". I won't be watching or reading a Bond anytime soon.

Donald Howard
Elderslie

Letters should be less than 200 words long. Email: newspaper@anglicanmedia.com.au

COMMUNITY

Towards 2050: ROCKET SCIENCE, SAUERKRAUT AND COMMON SENSE

PETER LOGAN

WHAT IS REQUIRED FOR church growth? We are often told it is not rocket science but what is it? A few years ago the Diocese had a "rock" model for church growth that compared the shape of the graphs of church growth to Uluru. A recent innovation in South Sydney calls itself Sauerkraut and challenges clergy to grow their churches.

The Towards 2050 report to the 2011 Sydney Synod found that only 45 per cent of parishes in the Diocese are growing at the same rate, or faster, than the local community. We were also told that holding our own is very good compared to other similar organisations but we only have 1.6 per cent of the local community coming to our churches each week.

So is church growth as important as many say it is? And what is it all about? Following a comment he made at a Synod I caught up with the Rev Andrew Katay and found

we had areas of mutual interest with regard to church growth. Andrew is the senior minister of Christ Church Inner West. Since then we have met occasionally to discuss church growth.

Books on church growth abound – they are the self-help books for clergy. One book that caught our attention was Thom Rainer's *Breakout Churches*, providing the characteristics of growing churches in the US. His methodology was interesting – looking at churches that have grown without replacing their minister, so the title "breakout"

READER'S ESSAY

VACANT PARISHES

Parishes and provisional parishes, vacant or becoming vacant, as at January 22, 2013:

- Darling
- St Clair & Erskine Park
- Glenquarie
- South Hurstville
- Lakemba*

*denotes Archbishop's appointment

is quite apt. The churches were declining or had plateaued before “breaking out” under the same minister.

Rainer first lists those aspects that were *not* required for a growing church:

- the minister didn’t need to be a charismatic leader or have a very conservative theology;
- the church didn’t need to adopt the latest methodologies and technologies;
- the church didn’t need a vision statement or need to develop a strategic plan; and
- the location and the name of the church weren’t important.

Some of the factors he found *were* important included persistence, the minister’s concern for the future of the church beyond their own tenure, significant resources spent on small groups, a culture of serious fun, encouraging congregation members to pursue ministries according to their own passion and gifts, the minister’s long tenure, moving into a community ministry with no thought of reciprocation and pursuing only a few areas in which they can excel.

A similar study of the characteristics of growing Anglican churches in Sydney would be very interesting and could be very helpful to all, but without access to the church attendance data such a study would not be possible.

Tim Sims developed a research project that sought to understand the current state of Anglican churches in Sydney. His report found that for the Diocese as a whole in a congregation of 100, during the next year 2.4 newcomers will join the church and 5.8 people will switch to your church from another church. However you will lose 5.0 people to another church, 1.0 will drift away and 0.8 will die. This results in an increase of 1.4 each year (1.4 per cent), while the surrounding population grows at 0.9 per cent.

When the age profile is included it seems that even this modest growth is unlikely to continue into the future unless something changes. The report concluded that strong youth ministries must continue and ministry to non-attending adults must be strengthened. Concern was expressed that the follow-up in most churches was inadequate.

ROCKET SCIENCE?

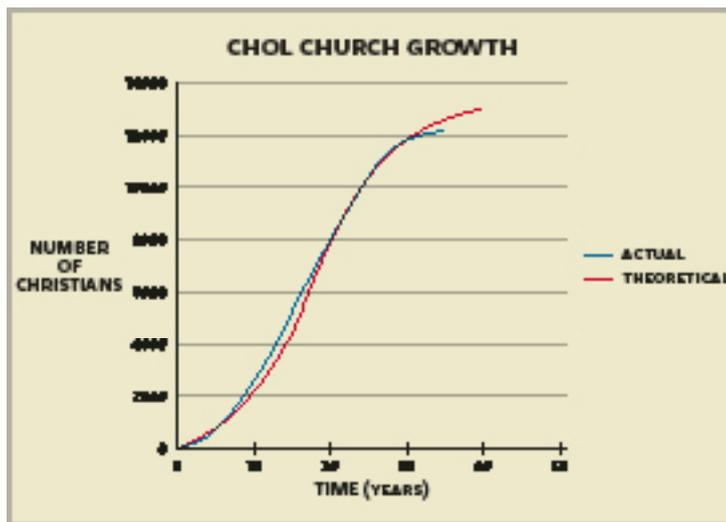
Does rocket science have something to say about church growth? I could possibly be regarded as a rocket scientist, having done a PhD in aerospace physics. Furthermore, I helped develop a mathematical model for a study on church growth that was used by a Wycliffe Bible translator in his doctorate investigating growth in five communities around the world where Wycliffe was working. This was “real” growth, which started off at zero and built up to thousands as the Bible was being translated. This was not just keeping up with the population growth of the local community.

What was needed for the Wycliffe thesis was to describe what happens in a church. An evangelist/translator enters a village and some villagers are converted by the message (through the Holy Spirit). These new Christians in turn tell others and more are converted (personal evangelism). Unfortunately some of these believers are “choked by life’s worries, riches and pleasures” and give up (backsliding).

There was data collected in the five communities that made it possible for the whole analysis to be presented in a numerical way. From the data collected one can change the factors (evangelist conversion rate, person evangelism conversion rate, backsliding rate, birth and death rates) and match the actual church growth behaviour. It was then possible to predict the future if nothing was changed.

The graph above shows growth in the Chol church of Southern Mexico over a 40-year period. A saturation level is seen as the gospel has been preached to the whole community and there are few left who have not been confronted with the gospel. The blue line is the actual church growth and the red line is the predicted church growth from the model.

One can also change the parameters such as a second evangelist, a mission, better training in personal evangelism, less backsliding by better teaching, pastoral care and small group ministries and then see the effect. The model can be made



Wycliffe data comparing predicted and actual growth in the Chol church, Mexico.

more sophisticated by dividing the congregation into age groups with different incomes and giving patterns, or including a group for those who are active in small group ministries (i.e. breaking the church into unbelievers, believers and small group attendees who are less likely to backslide).

There is much to learn from the whole process and the collection of the data, even if the numbers are not graphed or put into a mathematical model. Each of us needs to consider in what ways our churches can grow. Maybe rocket science can help but you don't need rocket science to tell you that if your death and backsliding rate is greater than the rate of the new people joining your congregation, then your congregation is going to decline.

Preliminary church attendance data for Sydney that Andrew Katay and I were able to obtain showed plateauing or gentle decline was evident in many parishes. It was clear something needed to be done to encourage church growth. To help address this issue in the South Sydney region the Sauerkraut program was begun in 2008 by Bishop Rob Forsyth and Andrew Katay. It consists of regular meetings of clergy over a year, learning together in a small group of peers. It is hoped that a formal evaluation will be done in the near future but responses so far from the clergy have been very encouraging.

COMMON SENSE

Many of you may feel like a cartoon I saw in *Christianity Today* in which Jesus tells his disciples they have to forgive 70 x 7 times and one disciple complains that not only do they have to forgive but they also have to do mathematics! But in many respects you don't need a mathematical model, rocket science or even a diet of sauerkraut as, often, church growth is common sense.

There are some general guidelines gleaned from Thom Rainer and other sources on church growth:

- keep a close watch on your congregation, note those who have not attended for a while and follow them up;
- follow up newcomers very quickly (within 48 hours);
- encourage the congregation to use their gifts in ministry;
- encourage as many as possible to be in small groups;
- encourage feedback and change things that are not working as long as it doesn't compromise the gospel;
- maintain a good relationship with the local community as that is where growth will come from.

So, church growth may not be rocket science but investigating the different parameters that affect your church, even without a full numerical analysis, could be a very valuable exercise and assist our churches to grow towards 2050. **SC**

Peter Logan is an adjunct professor at the University of Technology, Sydney and a parishioner at St Chad's, Putney.

We encourage well-considered essays in response to issues raised by SC. Please email your (700-word maximum) submission to newspaper@anglicanmedia.com.au

Our rights

DR PETER JENSEN

IN MY LOCAL CHAIN STORE THERE IS A LARGE and attractive sign which says:

'Every Australian has the right to look good and feel good about the way they dress and live'.

The store then makes the commitment: 'We aim to make this achievable with stylish, fashionable clothing and homewares accessible to everyone.'

I was so struck by this bold claim and commitment that I took a photo of it and I inspect it from time to time to make sure that I was not dreaming.

Now, I have no quarrel at all with the store. As far as I know they are an excellent chain and if they choose to make such claims and commitments, that is their business.

What bowled me over was the evidence that the inflation of 'rights' language has reached such proportions. What began with a small but powerful list of human rights – the right to life, to free speech, to political association, to the exercise of religion, has now, it appears, come to include 'the right to look good and feel good' about the way we dress and live.

Of course, these words may be regarded as tongue-in-cheek retailing hype but advertisers are adept at picking up trends and using them. They reflect a reality which is both indicative and troubling.

It is indicative of a lack of knowledge of God's law and troubling because it can damage the quality of community life in the interests of a perceived good.

The use of the words by the store is a recognition that even in common speech the best way to establish a position is to claim it as a right, and therefore to make others recognise the justice of your right and to make sure that you receive the treatment that your right deserves.

The store has accepted its duty, given the claim that all Australians have the right to look and feel good. To fail in that duty would be an injustice.

You see, a right establishes a duty by others to

observe your right, even at a cost to themselves. It becomes a matter of justice or fairness that you give me my rights. Faced with the rights of others we are called upon to exercise restraint. On the other hand, the more rights we can claim the more territory we can establish for our lives and lifestyle. If our rights are backed up by the law of the land, they impinge on the freedom of others. That is why any legal extension of rights ought to be made with great caution and a recognition of possible unintended consequences.

Now, fortunately, the law as yet does not recognise the right of all Australians to look and feel good. But the language used by the advertisers is an indication of the popularity of the rights idea and its expansion by governments and by those who feel they should look after community standards. The present debate in the US about the 'right to bear arms' also illustrates some of the difficulties of rushing too quickly to the category of rights as a justification for behaviour.

How have we got to this point?

In a relativistic world where God's law is disregarded, claims that we have certain rights have become a sort of substitute for the old absolutes. Much morality has been collapsed into the language of rights and alleged injustices stemming from infringement of these legal rights.

Who says we have rights? Where does such language come from?

What are the limits and definition of our rights?

What happens when my alleged rights conflict with your alleged rights?

Don't get me wrong. I think that the language of human rights has much to commend it. But it is not a substitute for the law of God. Indeed, properly understood, it stems from God's law and finds its proper context there. Thus to divorce 'rights' from the law of love is deadly.

I was reminded of this the other day when I

went to help a physiotherapist lift a patient in hospital from a chair. She refused my help on the grounds that I could hurt my back and have a case against the hospital.

I grieve for a society which has got to this point. The obsession with our rights is part of that which has landed us here. There is an individualistic and self-serving spirit at work here which is alien to the nation I grew up in, the community which I remember. We did not need the government to create and enforce rights which stop us helping each other.

The exercise of our faith is going to be more difficult in such a world. Christians believe in community, in working together to accomplish good. We have always enjoyed the freedom of religion in doing this. But now that the idea of individual rights has become so pervasive and now that governments wish to extend and enforce the list of rights, the freedom of groups of people to conduct their affairs in their own way has begun to be threatened and the loving fabric of community is torn. This is not the path of wisdom.

As the Bible says, the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. SC

MISSION PRAYER

Almighty God,

We call upon you for such an outpouring of your Holy Spirit upon us that we as your people may be assured of your love through your word, seek to please the saviour in all things, manifest the godly life and be filled with prayerful and sacrificial compassion for the lost in all the world.

In the name of our saviour Jesus Christ,
Amen.



2013

Prayer C

DAY 1

For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness", made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of God's glory displayed in the face of Christ. 2 Corinthians 4:6
Give thanks to God because he has shone into our hearts the good news of the Lord Jesus. Pray for a growing obedience to his word.

DAY 2

THE ARCHBISHOP

The Most Rev Dr Peter and Mrs Christine Jensen

P.A. Mrs Blossom Vickers

"Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. 1 Timothy 1:15

Give thanks to the Lord for the wise leadership of our Archbishop and continue to pray for him and Mrs Jensen in their many speaking engagements that they will faithfully proclaim Jesus as Lord.

Over the next 19 days we will be praying for the Mission Area leaders in the Diocese

DAY 3

BLACKTOWN-PENRITH

Mission Area leaders: Michael Robinson & David Mears

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing. Ephesians 1:3

Praise the Lord for the many people from other nations who are joining congregations in this area and pray for their increase in the knowledge of God.

DAY 4

BLUE MOUNTAINS

Mission Area leader: Ray Robinson

In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins in accordance with the riches of God's grace. Ephesians 1:7

Give thanks for the preparations for the Moore College mission in the Upper Mountains in 2013. Give thanks for the Christian workers in this area and pray for great opportunities.

DAY 5

CAMPBELLTOWN

Mission Area leader: Nigel Fortescue

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God. Ephesians 2:8

Praise the Lord for the many activities happening in the parishes in this south-western area. Pray for the ministers and congregations as they consider and plan to plant churches.

DAY 6

CANTERBURY-BANKSTOWN

Mission Area leader: Gary Bennetts

In him and through faith in him we may approach God with freedom and confidence. Ephesians 3:12

Give thanks for the work of youth leaders as they meet together for planning and encouragement. Pray for an increase in SRE teacher numbers in high schools in the face of increased Muslim evangelism.

DAY 7

EASTERN SUBURBS

Mission Area leader: Warwick de Jersey

Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. Ephesians 4:3

Give thanks to the Lord for the growing camaraderie between rectors as they spend time praying for each other in this area. Pray for the rectors who are planning strategies for welcoming and integrating newcomers into the congregation.

DAY 8

HILLS & HAWKESBURY

Mission Area leaders: Geoff Bates and Greg Peisley

Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children and live a life of love. Ephesians 5:1

Give thanks to the Lord for the 20 parishes in this area and for their desire to work together. Pray that ministry programs in the schools, through children's programs and playgroups will see young families coming to churches.

DAY 9

ST GEORGE

Mission Area Leader: Matt Yeo

And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. Ephesians 6:18

Praise the Lord for the many growing multicultural congregations in this area.

Pray for local churches in this diverse region with its mix of cultures, languages and socio-economic differences.

DAY 10

INNER WEST

Mission Area leader: Antony Barraclough

I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now. Philippians 1: 4-5

Give thanks to the Lord for the renewed energy and enthusiasm of gospel ministry in this area. Pray that the Lord will give to his people a compassionate concern for the lost.

DAY 11

LIVERPOOL

Mission Area leader: Stuart Milne

I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest. John 4:35

Give thanks to God our heavenly Father for the goodwill between all the ministers in this area and for their desire to work together. Pray to the Lord that he will continue to bring young people under the influence of the gospel.

DAY 12

LOWER NORTH SHORE

Mission Area leader: Michael Kellahan

For the Son of Man came to seek and save what was lost. Luke 19:10

Praise our heavenly Father for the growing contacts with young families in this area.

Pray that the Lord will give to the ministers in this area wisdom to rethink their practices and to have joy in their work in ministry.

DAY 13

PARRAMATTA

Mission Area leader: Raj Gupta

Jesus said, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry and he who believes in me will never be thirsty". John 6:35

Thank God for the co-operation between the clergy in this area and for wisdom as they review their NCLS results. Give thanks that the Lord has brought many different cultures into this area and for wisdom to connect with them.

DAY 14

RYDE

Mission Area leader: Phil Wheeler

"Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him." John 7:38

Praise God for his goodness in sending the Lord Jesus to pay for our sins, to reconcile us to God and the giving of his Holy Spirit. Ask the Lord to give his people a compassion for the lost and new people welcomed into the church family.

DAY 15

SHOALHAVEN

Mission Area leader: Marty Davis

I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes. Romans 1:16

Pray that the Lord will give sensitive and effective ministry opportunities to the many seniors in this area. Pray for the Lord that parish councils will work together in helping each other reach the communities with the good news of Jesus.

DAY 16

SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS

Mission Area leader: Richard Mills

Blessed are they whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. Romans 4:7

Give thanks to the Lord for the parish partnerships with ARV and Anglicare and for evangelistic opportunities through these ministries. Bring to our God and heavenly Father the work among young people that he will raise up leaders.

DAY 17

SUTHERLAND

Mission Area leader: Neil Fitzpatrick

Therefore since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Romans 5:1

Give thanks to the Lord for peace through justification and the opportunity to connect with the 220,000 people in the Shire with the message of peace.

Pray that the Lord will help congregations connect with people living in the high-density areas along the railway.

Calendar

2013

DAY 18

SYDNEY CITY

Mission Area leader: Justin Moffatt

But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Romans 5:8

We praise the Lord for the many churches in the city and for their diversity. Pray to our heavenly Father for an outpouring of his grace on his people who work and worship in the city.

DAY 19

UPPER NORTH SHORE

Mission Area leader: Bruce Stanley

And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight. Philippians 1:9

Praise our God and heavenly Father for the unity, trust and partnership that the churches have among each other. Ask the Lord to assist churches to work together so that people contacted will hear about the Lord Jesus Christ.

DAY 20

WARRINGAH

Mission Area leader: Kerry Nagel

Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. Then, whether I come and see you or only hear about you in my absence, I will know that you stand firm in one spirit, contending as one man for the faith of the gospel. Philippians 1:27

Thank God for the local ministers working together in this area and pray that they will continue to encourage one another. Ask the Lord to give wisdom and energy to church leaders as they pastor their congregations and suburbs.

DAY 21

WOLLONGONG

Mission Area leaders: Peter Hutchinson and Michael Williamson

Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Philippians 2:3
Thank God for the recent appointments of Peter and Michael. Pray that the churches will work together to reach this diverse socioeconomic area with the gospel. Praise God for the many opportunities to connect with the community. Pray for wisdom as churches plan and plant new churches in new and old suburbs.

DAY 22

THE NORTHERN REGION

It is my prayer that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless until the Day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God. Philippians 1:9-10

The Rt Rev Dr Glenn and Dianne Davies

P.A. Ms Jane Mathieson
Give thanks for the opportunities Bishop Davies has to teach God's word week by week and to encourage the many ministries taking place across the region.

DAY 23

THE SOUTH SYDNEY REGION

Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Philippians 4:4

The Rt Rev Robert and Margaret Forsyth

E.A. The Rev Hugh Cox
P.A. Ms Jane Mathieson
Pray for focus and wisdom in the task of lovingly supporting, advising and mentoring the clergy in the region.

DAY 24

THE WESTERN SYDNEY REGION

And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. Colossians 3:17

The Rt Rev Ivan and Virginia Lee

E.A. The Rev Neil Atwood
P.A. Ms Kirsty Grugan
Thank God that the ministers and churches have a heart for the lost. Pray for Bishop Lee in his responsibilities in the region, as well as in the wider diocese with Mission Areas, Mission Property Committee and cross-cultural ministry.

DAY 25

THE GEORGES RIVER REGION

We continually remember before our God and Father your work produced by faith, your labour prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ. 1 Thessalonians 1:3

Archdeacon Ian and Bronwen Cox

P.A. Mrs Pamela Dean
Give thanks that many local congregations are reflecting the multicultural diversity of their suburbs and pray for an increase in faith, love and hope.

DAY 26

THE WOLLONGONG REGION

And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ. Colossians 4:3

The Rt Rev Peter and Julie Hayward

E.A. Mr Tony Willis
Give thanks for the diversity of ministry in the region and pray that God will indeed open the door for the message of the Lord Jesus.

DAY 27

ARCHDEACON OF WOMEN'S MINISTRY

I can do everything through him who gives me strength. Philippians 4:13

Archdeacon Kara Gilbert

Give thanks to God for the many women serving in a variety of ways throughout the Diocese and the privilege of supporting and encouraging them in their work. Please pray that many women in our city will hear the gospel in the coming year and put their faith in Jesus Christ for eternal life.

DAY 28

MOORE THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE

And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others. 2 Timothy 2:2

Principal: The Rev Dr John Woodhouse

Principal-elect: The Rev Dr Mark Thompson

For the governing board as they work with the new principal in enabling men and women of the college to grow in their knowledge of God.

DAY 29

ANGLICAN YOUTHWORKS AND THE PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS UNIT

He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God. Micah 6:8

Pray for protection and strength for director Lachlan Bryant, Kerrie Newmarch and Annelie Singh from the Professional Standards Unit as they tackle their challenging but vital work throughout the Diocese in 2013.

Praise the Lord for the increase of young believers who will serve him and his people through the ministry of Youthworks. Pray that CEO the Rev Zac Veron will continue to lead Youthworks with the Lord's wisdom and strength.

DAY 30

DIOCESAN ORGANISATIONS

Anglicare, Anglican Aid, Anglican Education Commission, Anglican Media, Anglican Retirement Villages, Sydney Anglican Schools Corporation

But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. 1 Peter 2:9

Give thanks for the work these organisations do in the name of the Lord Jesus as they support, care for and serve the young, the elderly and the needy both here and overseas to know God's love in Jesus Christ our Lord. Pray for the leaders of these organisations as they work with diocesan leaders and local churches in assisting the diocesan Mission.

DAY 31

ST ANDREW'S CATHEDRAL

How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? Romans 10:14

Dean: The Very Rev Phillip Jensen

Praise the Lord for the teaching and evangelistic ministries of the cathedral to the city of Sydney. Pray that this ministry will continue to deepen people's understanding of the Lord.

COVER
FEATURE

FEATURES

The busyness epi



We're all so busy there isn't a moment to stand still, but LEIGH HATCHER argues that Christians need to reclaim their time – and their lives.

FEVER THERE WAS A GUARANTEED WATER-COOLER conversation or barbecue stopper it's our epidemic of busyness and overload. Of all the issues that grab the attention of media and politicians – the budget deficit, even climate change – there's nothing like the rush and crush of modern life to get people talking. It should also get us thinking – deeply.

I'm able to address this issue as somewhat of an "expert", and you might well think a hypocrite. I juggle two jobs as a news presenter on Sky News and as host of the national Christian radio program *Open House*. I've also been writing the latest *Open House* book. So busyness is pretty familiar – the time pressures, the expectations of many people, the decisions, the "pressure head", the logistics and just the sheer grinding tiredness of it all.

Of all the issues we address on the radio, especially with some of the great ones of the Christian faith, this is the one most commonly raised. It's also been striking how each of the people who've spoken about it has proposed the same way forward.

I've been exploring all of this deeply for my own life and I dearly hope some of these reflections and snippets of conversations can be a practical help for those caught up in this epidemic – *without* making us all feel guilty.

CRAZY BUSY

So why are we so busy – even "crazy busy", as I once heard someone call it? What would Jesus do? And as we set out on another year on a treadmill that seems to be more packed and getting faster and faster, what is that way forward? There's no doubting the seriousness of the challenge we all face. The



great Tim Keller from Redeemer Presbyterian Church in New York says, "Globalisation has created such enormous economic pressures that everybody is pushed to their limits, beyond what is fair and right". American journalist Judith Shulevitz says, "Ours is a society that pegs status to overachievement; we can't help admiring workaholics".

A US minister and blogger Christian Piatt told us on *Open House* that "We're always running a deficit. If church wasn't part of what we did for a living, it would be really hard to find time for it". Retailers are now campaigning for 24/7 trading. In Western Australia, after the introduction of Sunday trading this past year, the Premier Colin Barnett expected Sundays to become the most popular shopping day because the rest of the week was so packed.

There are two significant dynamics at work in our busyness – one external, the other internal.

First, externally – we're drowning in data. There's so much to love about the connected world in which we live. There's so much to know and learn, so many options, interests and especially "friends". But have you ever thought how much of our daily time and headspace is taken up by "stuff" that 25 years ago simply didn't exist, before the onslaught of all of our gadgets? For most of us back then there were no personal computers or mobile phones. Now each day is crammed with email, Facebook, mobiles, texts, tweets, Instagram and so much else.

Consider this: there was more unique information generated this past year around the globe than in the previous 5000 years. Today, one week of information in a newspaper is more than someone in the 18th century would have consumed in a lifetime.

Late last year London's *Telegraph* newspaper reported on a poll that showed a third of those surveyed worked with their gadgets in bed. It painted a picture in which 'hollow-eyed couples ignore each other while typing into several different keyboards at 1.57am'. Some beds are now even being built equipped with wireless internet!

Never before in human history have people's brains been so "wired". Neurologists say our brains are undergoing the greatest change in 200,000 years. Social researcher Hugh Mackay says we're "messaging ourselves to death", losing the ability to be still and just think.

It's also worth wondering whether there's another, quite natural consequence of the way we pack our heads with all this data: that it's led us to think we can pack our diaries and the rest of our lives with lots of the other stuff – all those activities, events and commitments that keep us "crazy busy".

The second dynamic at work in all of this is much more personal. All too often our identities are so tied to what we "do". When we're busy we often feel needed, even important. Pretty soon we think we're the only person in the world who can take on all the demands and expectations that come our way. It makes us feel good, so we struggle to say "No".

Yet cartoonist and writer Tim Kreider has this confronting critique: "Our frantic days are really just a hedge against emptiness. Life's too short to be busy". Mindy Caliguire, founder of the Soul Care organisation, speaks of an important, though uncomfortable home truth: "I cram more and more things into my schedule so I look like I'm more important or more in demand. We start living other people's visions or demands on our lives. It's not really us. It's a fake version of ourselves that's making our lives insane".

When our lives are already packed beyond what's reasonable or healthy, this is a potentially perilous and foolish position to be in.

SUCCESSFUL ENTERPRISE – WITH REST

As the founder of African Enterprise Michael Cassidy has had the most remarkable ministry. In the summer of 1961 he scouted the length and breadth of Africa with a friend, covering 50,000 kilometres. On a pristine beach in Monrovia, West Africa, he prayed this prayer: "God, I'm going to walk 50 steps along this beautiful beach and I ask you to give me one year of ministry for Africa for every step I take". It was a great prayer – and so far God has granted him 52 years.

Countless numbers of Africans have come to faith in Christ through African Enterprise's work. Cassidy played a pivotal role in South Africa's 1994 election that saw the end of apartheid. African Enterprise mobilised thousands of people to pray for a peaceful transition and God answered that prayer.

When Michael Cassidy joined us on *Open House* I asked him how he kept his faith fresh. His reply was immediate. "I'm a Sabbatarian. I always take one full day off a week, 10 days mid-year and three to four weeks' holiday at the end of the year. God made us for breaks".

He said if ever he encountered a minister who said something along the lines of "I'm just so busy for God I haven't had a holiday for four years" he would reply: "Sinner repent!".

Cassidy's secret to longevity in ministry is such simple wisdom – so simple it might easily be missed or dismissed: "You need to develop a theology of good self care and remain deeply and personally devoted to our Lord".



Michael Cassidy (left) with Leigh Hatcher.

WWJD?

Curiously, this is a particular problem in the Christian community. There's so much to be done, and so much of it's so good. How can we possibly say "No"?

In a survey of 70,000 churchgoers in the United States the Back to the Bible organisation found a widespread malaise: people who were so busy, stuck and burned out that they were saying things like: "I play church and act as if I have it all together, but inside I'm tired". Eighty per cent of those surveyed reported that they wore a mask when they went to church.

When I was speaking to a friend of mine about writing this article his comment was that "Our churches are the worst places to be for this busyness". We of all people, whose foundational identity is in Christ, should be the last people in the world to find our identity in what we do or in what others think of us.

So, as the saying goes, "What would Jesus do?". There are two elements of Jesus' life that are relevant to this question. First, he was a busy bloke. There are many references to 'large crowds' following him, understandably with great expectations. Second, he frequently retreated from the crowds, even from his disciples, to find space, silence and connection with his heavenly Father.

Mark 1 provides a good, healthy balance. Jesus gets up early to go to a solitary place. Then, when Simon and his mates come for him saying "Everyone is looking for you", Jesus goes with them to the nearby villages "so I can preach there also. That is why I have come". First he finds some space, then he gets busy.

Jesus is a great beacon of balance. In the story at the home of Mary and Martha it's Mary he commends for her lack of busyness. And has it ever struck you amid the raging storm on the lake that Jesus was asleep?

So we should commit ourselves at the start of 2013 to be more Christlike as we confront our epidemic of busyness and overload. We need space and we need nourishment from our heavenly Father.

One way we'll be able to do this is to confront the stark, yet liberating reality that each one of us is dispensable. I learnt this powerfully when I lost two years of my work, ministry and much of my life to Chronic Fatigue Syndrome in the late 1990s. At the time I was a high-profile TV reporter with the Seven Network and was very

busy on the evangelistic speakers' circuit. I learnt very quickly, much to my shock, that Seven News was going to air as normal every night – without me! The promos rolled on day after day without skipping a beat – without me!

It's a confronting realisation, yet again a liberating one. It's one of the best ways you can learn to say "No". As the London *Telegraph* reported, "It's a vanity to imagine that the world can't turn without us".

At the beginning of a new year we'll probably need to take another look at our true identities and be absolutely ruthless with our diaries. We may need to take some pretty costly and tough decisions – and these may well start with our church life.

SAYING "YES" TO SAYING "NO"

On *Open House* last year I interviewed a man who had taken on a significant Christian ministry in Sydney. After five years of overload and finding his identity in his important work he fell in a heap. He said the phrase "I'd rather burn out than rust out" expressed almost precisely his attitude to ministry.

"My burnout was driven by a strange mix of pride and a deep need to be accepted by others, combined with a desire to be full-on for God," he said. "It was actually a convenient way of disguising my refusal to accept my limitations and of covering over my longing to please others." When he came to the point of being willing to

“ Jesus was a great beacon of balance... has it ever struck you amid the raging storm on the lake that Jesus was asleep? ”

FEATURES

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give up his job he finally realised his identity was not in what he did, worthy as it was.

Here is Tim Keller's wisdom: "Avoiding overwork requires deep rest in Christ's finished work for your salvation. Only then will you be able to walk away regularly from your vocational work and rest". This is not copping out or losing our 'edge' for God's work. It's healthy. It's what Jesus did!

Another important point to accept is that the rush and crush of our lives today isn't good for our families. On *Open House* I spoke about it with well-known Australian psychologist and author Steve Biddulph, whose book *Raising Boys* sold three million copies. He says, "Hurry is the enemy of love. Your child would rather have you than the money".

One story that resonated powerfully with me was that of Mike Wallace, a famed and much-feared TV reporter with America's *60 Minutes*, who died in April last year after a long battle with dementia. His son Chris, who followed his dad into the news business as a Fox TV news presenter, said in his father's final days he would only ever speak of his family and "never once his successful and storied career. This is a man for whom work always came first. Now he can't even remember it".

But here's the big question – in practical terms how do we live life differently? First, and this might be a rare thing to read in a Christian publication, we need to do less. We need some space in our lives. Therefore probably all of us will need to lose "stuff". This will require some tough decisions and perhaps iron discipline.

We don't have to do everything. We don't have to meet all the demands and expectations of others. We need to learn to say "No", and often keep on saying it (remembering the world can actually turn without us). We'll need to actively make time. This probably demands a data-free day once a week where we leave all our gadgets turned off. Now there's a challenge for 2013!

It may surprise you how hard it is to find some space and the lengths to which we may need to go to find it. Last year I spoke with a prison chaplain at Long Bay Jail. He explained how striking it was to see the number of men who come to faith in Christ when they find themselves behind bars. He said it's often the first time in their lives they've had the time to ask questions like "Where have I been?", "Where am I going?", "Who am I?", "What's important?" and "Is there a God?".

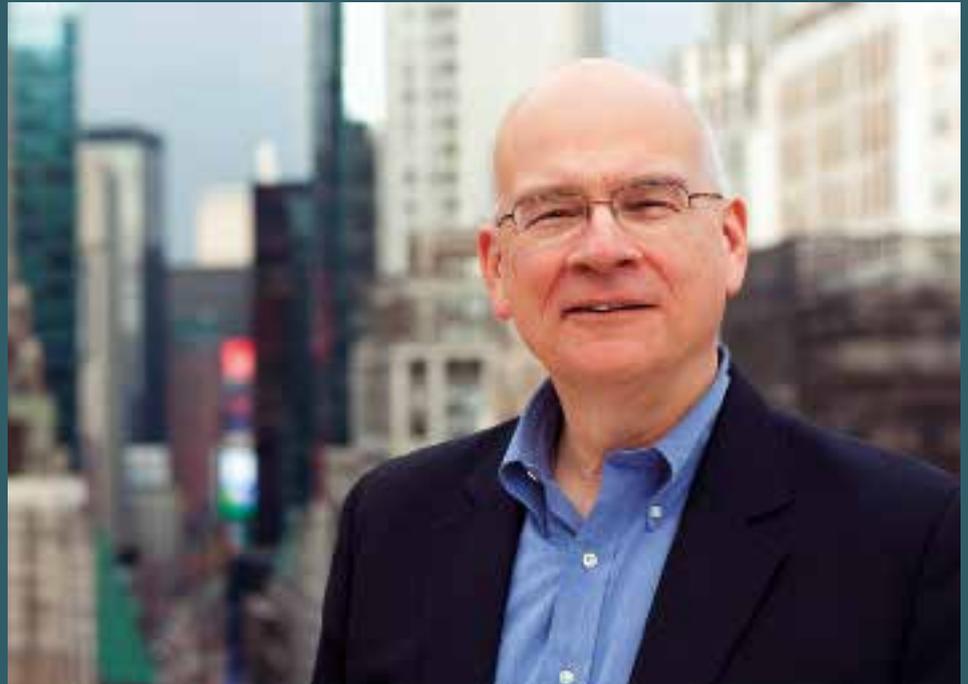
Second, we need nourishment. We have just experienced another Olympic year. It's unthinkable to imagine those elite athletes facing up to their marathon training and ultimate performances without the best, most expertly refined nourishment. The lives we live, especially in church, more and more resemble a marathon. They are more and more squeezed for space and especially nourishment. There's always something more urgent to do.

The Back to the Bible survey found there were two big reasons why 80 per cent of respondents

wore a mask to church: they were simply too busy and they didn't have enough time in the day. The average minister who responded to the survey prayed for just four minutes a day.

Interestingly, the survey also found that those who were able to lead a more balanced life were

KELLER ON THE SABBATH



Tim Keller has one of the most important, best argued, contemporary, workable and biblical arguments to seize back the Sabbath and seize back our lives. He says, "The Sabbath gives us both theological and practical help in managing one of our primary resources – time".

He believes God didn't just cease from his labour at the dawn of creation but also enjoyed what he had done. Keller says the whole point of the Sabbath is joy in what God has done. It's a vital counterbalance in our lives, not just taking time off. A Sabbath will ensure that the rest of our work can be good and beneficial. It's "external rest of the body and inner rest of the soul, a sign of the hope that we have in the world to come".

He also spells recreation "re-creation" – a mental refreshment that is part of a balanced diet for body and soul.

Keller is practical in how we can do it all. He urges "sheer inactivity" on the Sabbath, unplanned and unstructured, just as Israel let a field go fallow every seventh year (my guess is that for most of us this will probably not happen on Sunday!). He says prayer and worship are essential but not exclusively on the Sabbath.

He goes further, urging us on the Sabbath to do something that's a sheer pleasure and exposing ourselves to the works of God's creation that will refresh and energise us. He describes this as "a path of freedom because of the rest I have received from Jesus Christ, even to falling behind in your career and yet retaining your sanity".

For more thoughts from Tim Keller's article on Wisdom and Sabbath rest go to www.qideas.org/blog/wisdom-and-sabbath-rest.aspx

connected with God's word at least four days a week. So we'll be living well if we, even ruthlessly, make time and space for that nourishment and turn our eyes more to the important rather than the urgent.

If it was good enough for Jesus to find both space and nourishment in his life, it's good enough for us – especially those of us with families.

SABBATH REST

For many of us, however, there will still be the "how to" question. How do we find that space and nourishment? The most common answer from many of the great ones who have joined us on the radio program is this: we need to reclaim the Sabbath.

Many of us have theologised the Sabbath almost out of existence as we're now living in the age of the new covenant. Yet the notion of the Sabbath was there at the dawn of creation. If it was good enough for God to rest on the seventh day, surely it is for us?

Rick Warren, author of *The Purpose Driven Life*, observes that "If you're not taking a day off you're breaking the 10 Commandments. It's not just an optional idea. God considered rest and recreation so important he put it in the 'big 10', right there with don't murder and don't commit adultery".

Theologian Ched Myers has proposed an entire new economic order for the world called "Sabbath Economics", saying that "The Sabbath demonstrates that under God's scheme of things there is a limit to production and consumption".

All this may require a greater exercise of faith, trust and dependence on God. It will ultimately come down to what we think life is about and who's running our lives and our world. Yet much-loved pastor and author John Piper poses these questions: "What could be easier than faith? What could be easier than to stop trying to work our way to heaven and simply rest in the

free grace of God and the power of Jesus Christ, rather than rising early and going late to bed, eating the bread of anxious toil?"

If, as I fear may happen, some may now be feeling guilty after reading all this – thinking their lives are too packed, too rushed, too over-committed, feeling yet again that they're not reading the Bible enough – please don't! Instead, meditate deeply on the freedom that is at the centre of Sabbath rest and freedom in Christ. Meditate deeply on our true identity.

I love that Tim Keller doesn't resort to the guilt trip in exploring Sabbath rest (see box, left).

He says it may be that for some of us there is a "season of work" that does require high energy, long hours and insufficient weekly Sabbath time. However, he says this should last no longer than two to three years.

For me, I'm fast approaching the two-year mark of the insanity of juggling two jobs. I'm not as much of a hypocrite as you might think – 2013 is decision year for me. SC

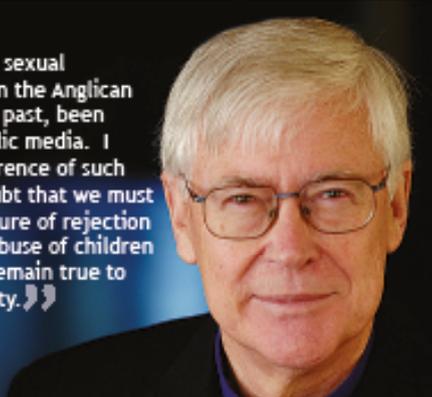
Open House: A New Era with Leigh Hatcher is available as a book, e-book and audio book from www.hope1032.com.au

FINDING SPACE AND NOURISHMENT

- Realise your identity is not what you do or what others think of you.
- Realise the freedom we have in Christ.
- Learn to say "No". The world can turn without us!
- Don't be fooled that the urgent is always the important.
- Finding space will require organisation and discipline – work to a plan and plan to work. The plan will need periodic review.
- Lose one thing in 2013 to open up some space. When that space opens up, don't be afraid or guilty about doing nothing for a time.
- Remember the Sabbath and, more importantly, take it. Set some time aside on the Sabbath for a quality time of personal prayer, Bible reading and reflection.
- Resolve to read the Bible and pray at least four days a week. It may well help to diarise it.
- Plan for a data-free day – leave the gadgets off. Consider removing email from your smart phone, if you have one. And definitely no gadgets in bed!
- Plan on getting more sleep and some regular quality exercise.

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

Dr Peter Jensen
Archbishop Of Sydney



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The good God who speaks

In an age when the Bible and those who believe it are ridiculed, it's good to remind ourselves why we can have confidence in what is written in its pages, writes MARK THOMPSON.

IT IS A SAD FEATURE OF OUR MOMENT IN TIME THAT CHRISTIANS ARE RIDICULED FOR their confidence in the Bible as the word of God and that this ridicule has an edge of suspicion about it. Our appeal to the Bible is understood by some as a personal power play: we are simply trying to impose our own opinion or our own religious preferences. Others suggest even darker motives.

Five decades ago a visiting American evangelist could repeat "the Bible says" and Sydney took notice. Hundreds of thousands wanted to know what the Bible said, what God said. What he had to say changed everything for good. Today, however, the response is more often "How do you know?" – or even "Why should I listen to your inhumane religious bigotry?".

It's not hard to understand the reasons why this shift has taken place. At the level of ideas, more than a century of suspicion has been generated by the likes of Marx (it's all about gaining financial advantage), Freud (it's all about sex) and Nietzsche (it's all about personal or group power). We've become used to questioning the motives of those who tell us things, often with very good reason. Strangely, one of the only things we are prepared to take on face value is the insistence that there are no such things as facts, only interpretations. At another more basic level, the ugly face of religious bigotry was forced into our consciousness by the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. A more general assault on all religious claims since then has been reinforced by one report after another of sexual exploitation by clergy and the concerted efforts of a rejuvenated atheism (the new atheism is, in fact, just the old atheism made "sexy").

In such an environment it is tempting for Christians to soft-pedal a bit on our insistence that the Bible is the word of God and the word of God is worth a hearing. In our efforts to distance ourselves from the religious zealots – whether the violent type or just the dogmatic type – we concede too much to the masters of suspicion. We can be taken in too quickly by claims that human language is too fragile to convey the truth about God, that the real involvement of human beings in writing the Bible necessarily involves error or ignorance, or that these are just the words of believers bound in their own time and space which must be supplemented or revised if they are to be taken seriously in our time and space. So it is worth taking a moment to remember why we treat the Bible as the word of God and why we take what it teaches so seriously.

Quite simply, Christians do this because Jesus taught us to do this. Time and again the gospels have been shown to have all the hallmarks of reliable eyewitness testimony. The experience of Christians through the ages has

“ **It is tempting for Christians to soft-pedal... on our insistence that the Bible is the word of God.** ”

been confirmed by careful study of the gospels. Even their differences of perspective, the reporting of different details and the little personal touches which are embedded in each of these four accounts of Jesus' life and ministry reinforce this judgement. In the gospels we are confronted with the real Jesus, with what he actually did and actually said.

If we want to know what Jesus thought about the Bible (such as it was in his time – the New Testament had not been written yet), the responsible thing to do is to turn to the gospels. Three things stand out:

Jesus taught us that the living God is a God who speaks. Of course, he taught this in common with the faithful Jews of his own time. Unlike the idols of the nations the God who made all things, redeemed Israel and sent his Son into the world is not silent (Jer 10:5; Is 55:10-11). He is not simply present and active in the world. He allows us to know and understand who he is and what he is doing in the world by using human language to address us. Jesus reminded his religious opponents that God spoke to Moses from the bush that did not burn (Mk 12:26). God used ordinary language that Moses could hear and understand. Jesus insisted that he himself came speaking “the truth that I heard from God” (Jn 8:40). When confronted by the tempter in the wilderness he countered with “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God” (Matt 4:4). Language is not just a human invention. It is God's gift that he himself uses to relate to us.

Jesus taught us that the Bible is the written word of the speaking God. Jesus had no difficulty in referring to the Old Testament as the word of God (Matt 15:6; Jn 10:35). He did this without minimising the involvement of the human writers such as Moses or David or the prophets. Yet he regularly appealed to texts from the Old Testament as the word from God that settles any question about God's purpose or his character. The temptations of Satan in the wilderness are answered at each point by a quote from the book of Deuteronomy (Matt. 4:4, 7, 10). He chided those who challenged him about marriage and divorce by referring to the book of Genesis as a record of not only what God did but what he said (Matt 19:4-5). His personal commitment to live by the Scriptures and his call to those who heard him to do the same flow out of this understanding that they are the written word of the living God.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly in today's climate, *Jesus taught us that the God who speaks and whose word is written for us is the God who loves us and is committed to our welfare.* It is true that in places God speaks and acts in judgement. God's words can be terrifying to those who refuse his claim on their lives. Yet the most basic truth about God which



Mark Thompson is principal-elect of Moore College. He takes up this responsibility after John Woodhouse completes his term of office in May 2013.

frames all else he says and does is that he loves all he has made and is full of compassion, gentleness and forgiveness toward those who turn to him. God's word is not vindictive or restrictive or oppressive. It brings new life and nourishes that life by attuning our minds and wills to the character and purpose of God. “God so loved the world”, Jesus said, “that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life” (Jn 3:16). He told his disciples on the night he died that “the Father himself loves you, because you have loved me and have believed that I came from God” (Jn 16:27).

There is much more to be said. Jesus' commission of his apostles in time generated the New Testament that has been placed alongside the Old Testament as the word of God. There is a movement from promise to fulfilment with Jesus at its centre that means all parts of the Bible must be read in the light of the whole if we are not to distort its message. Nevertheless, at this key point we can and must say that Christian discipleship involves a willingness to take seriously the Bible as the word of God and to allow our thinking, speaking and behaviour to be shaped by it in every context in which we find ourselves. What God has to say is always more important than what we have to say. What's more, because he is good and loving and generous, what he has to say is good and loving and generous. We do not have to concede ground to the sceptics or the purveyors of suspicion.






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Department of External Studies

FEATURES

The Rules



Type any name

It's not easy to take the lock off the gate and allow more freedoms as our children get older, but taking steps towards their independence - with care - is crucial, writes **GRAHAM STANTON**.

THE OTHER WEEK OUR ELDEST DAUGHTER TURNED 13. HIGH AMONG her reasons to celebrate was the fact that she is now old enough to have a Facebook profile. The Facebook Statement of Rights and Responsibilities point 4, sub-point 5 states clearly, "You will not use Facebook if you are under 13" (<http://www.facebook.com/legal/terms>).

Of course, just because Mark Zuckerberg says she is allowed doesn't necessarily mean that my wife and I have to agree. I realise there are strong opinions on either side of the should-we-or-shouldn't-we debate. We have good friends who have decided against allowing their children to be on

Facebook even though they're 15, as well as others who have allowed their children to sign up ahead of their 13th birthday (all it requires is entering a false birthdate – clearly a contravention of the SRR and not something I'm encouraging!).

We concluded that social media is here to stay – at least for the remaining five years of mid-adolescence for our daughter and most likely beyond then as well. We decided it would be best for us to teach our daughter how to navigate this new world successfully rather than just putting up a sign that says 'keep out'.

Not that there's anything wrong with prohibition in the right circumstances. We've had a 'keep out' sign over Facebook until now (and will leave that sign in place for our younger children). There are 'keep out' signs over alcohol at least until they're 18, and the 'keep out' signs over smoking and recreational drugs are most likely to remain for as long as we have authority to maintain it. Part of teaching our children how to navigate this world is to know where the dangers lie.

In short, we've decided that it is now appropriate for our daughter to start having supervised access to Facebook. 'Supervised access' is the key phrase. Much like what we would have done if we'd owned a swimming pool. When your children are toddlers you make sure the pool has a fence with a childproof gate. Up to a certain age and ability, the pool is simply a no-go area. Once the children are old enough to know how to climb the fence (or stand on a bucket to reach the lock) they're also ready to exercise some responsibility: they need to learn that "just because you can open the gate without an adult doesn't mean you're allowed to". For some years you'll allow children to be in the pool as long as there's a responsible adult with them in the water teaching them how to swim. Eventually you'll allow them to be in the pool on their own as long as you're watching them from inside the house. And once you're confident they've learnt how to be responsible you'll be happy for them to go swimming on their own.

When it comes to this new world of social media we're not about to just let our daughter loose to fend for herself. We want to take on our responsibility of parents to 'bring her up in the fear and instruction of the Lord' even in relation to or, rather, *particularly* in relation to, the world of Facebook.

Hence the rules.

This is the first thing that was written on her wall:



Graham Stanton
about an hour ago

Welcome to Facebook!
Until you turn 16 these are the rules:

You promise to:
have mum and me as friends;
stay friends with your extended family members (though you don't have to have your family members posts show up in your timeline – I can show you how to manage that setting);
not change your password without our knowledge or permission;
not change your privacy settings without talking to me first;
and agree to renegotiate these rules whenever we think it's appropriate.

Mum and I promise to:
not post on your wall (other than this one time);
not tag you in photos without your permission;
help you learn how to navigate this world in a way that protects you from harm and from harming others;
and agree to renegotiate these rules whenever you think it's appropriate.

Happy Birthday!

[Like](#) - [Comment](#)

I've insisted that she remain friends with us, her parents, but have done so for supervision reasons, not so we can barge in on her social life. Much as I may dream of being 'the cool dad' that my teenage children and their friends love to have around, I am self-aware enough to realise that this is

a fantasy! We know how to be around as supervisors without intruding when our children have friends over to play – the Facebook equivalent is being friends but never posting on her wall, not tagging her in photos and not having our posts show up in her feed (if she doesn't want them to). This is our rule for now. We know other families whose children have no problem with their mum or dad posting on their wall, but they tend to be older than our 13-year-old. We'll wait for her to say she wants to relax this rule rather than imposing our preference on her.

Being friends with our daughter gives us access to her wall but doesn't enable us to see her news feed. We can see what she's saying to others, and what others are saying directly to her, but by just being friends we wouldn't be able to see her messages or what her friends are saying to the world. That's why we need to know her password. For those who have carefully read the SRR, you'll realise that we are therefore forcing our daughter to violate condition 4.8 ("You will not share your password ... let anyone else access your account, or do anything else that might jeopardise the security of your account"). In my mind I'm going to apply Acts 5:29 – if they want to put me in jail for that, then off to jail I go (by the way, we also set her password for her and made sure it was strong – one that would take a desktop PC 4000 years to crack. Check the strength of your passwords here: <http://howsecureismypassword.net>).

We've had to add a new discipline to our week – to log in to our daughter's account and check what's going on. The first few days we logged on with her and began teaching her the ropes.

Within the first 24 hours of having a profile we had to deal with soft porn. What do you do when a friend (who happens to be a boy) has posted pictures of semi-clad women as his status update? I must admit that my first reaction was to think, "Oh, no! What have we done to our daughter?" (and this may well be enough to warn other parents against taking the route we've chosen). My next thought was to remember our intention to help our daughter navigate a new world that has its own fair share of dangers. So we taught her how to stop friends' status updates from appearing in her news feed. We talked about the mechanics and ethics of unfriending.

We have made sure that she is friends with the online members of our extended family – uncles, aunts, cousins and her technologically savvy grandfather. Again, she doesn't have to have their posts show up in her feed and we'll want to remind her relatives to be conscious of the potential for embarrassing her online. But we wanted to add to the 'supervisory community'; already the line "Remember that Grandad can see that" has been a helpful reminder to her to watch what she says online.

The rules are also up for constant review. And they need to be, particularly if they're going to continue to be an expression of teaching and trust. Already there's a strong element of trust in what we've set up – there is nothing to stop her setting up a secret Facebook account (other than violating SRR 4.2) and we're not expecting we can control what she posts or how she responds to others. We trust our daughter and we need to grow to trust her more as she gets older.

As her skills increase and our trust builds we'll need to relax the rules. I think the first change to be made is whether we have ready access to her password or not. There are areas of her life that ought to be private, at least in the sense of not being accessible to your parents. We're willing to renegotiate and we need her to be willing to renegotiate if we feel there's a need.

We are fearful of our daughter being hurt as a result of being on Facebook. And we're fearful that she may be involved in hurting others, even if it is only inadvertently. We've taken the lock off the gate and recognise that we need to be alert, particularly as she learns to find her feet.

One day, God willing, each of our children will be adult members of the community and of the church. One day they may well have responsibility to teach their own children how to navigate a world that we can barely imagine. As long as we live she will always be the object of our concern and love, but one day we will no longer be responsible for her choices.

But for now, these are the rules.



The Rev Graham Stanton is the principal of Youthworks College.

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The 'slums' in which Arden Anglican School students spent the night.

STUDENTS at Arden Anglican School spent a night 'roughing it' to understand what it is like to live in a slum.

Late in Term 4 last year, Year 8 students participated in the Tear Australia 'Slum Survivor' program.

"Slum Survivor is an attempt to give people just a bit of an experience of some of the daily challenges faced by a billion people on our planet," said Ben Thurley, the program's creator. "It is a tool that gives people a chance to step out of their own reality... in order to gain more empathy and understanding and to be challenged to respond."

Students were required to participate in a number of tasks and challenges, eat a meagre meal of rice and beans and sleep under cardboard boxes.

"It made me realise just how lucky [we are in] Australia and made me more determined to do something about it," said student Katherine Low. "The children that live in slums often have so much happiness [yet] we are unsatisfied and ungrateful."

The program was a joint initiative between the geography and Christian studies departments and supported the focus area: What does God require of us?

"The students' feedback suggested that it was a confronting, exhausting yet incredibly worthwhile simulation that encouraged them to explore the realities of living in poverty," said geography teacher, Mrs Karen Moss. "Many came to the realisation that life for millions of the world's children was unacceptably dangerous and difficult."

During a final debriefing session, students were challenged to consider what they had learnt and how they might respond.

Said student Phoebe Goto: "I now feel that is unacceptable for me to ignore this problem; I have a responsibility to act."



Christine Clifton and Hugh Petterson begin to understand what it is like to live in a slum.

REGISTRAR

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5000 GATHER FOR FIGTREE CAROLS



Figtree Anglican Church's annual carols event the biggest in Wollongong.

ONE of the biggest community carols events in the Sydney Diocese is run by Figtree Anglican Church and 2012 was no exception, with about 5000 people attending the event.

Held on December 15 at Figtree High School, the carols night has become so large it is now endorsed and financially supported by Wollongong City Council.

"We want to claim back Christmas time for Christ," said carols project manager, Karen Dixon. "As a large local church we need to take responsibility to show the community what the real reason of Christmas is."

The community was treated to music from Colin Buchanan as well as a number of other Christian bands, food, stalls, games and fireworks.

"We are going for a fun carnival atmosphere," Mrs Dixon said. "There is a great sense of family and community."

The event is an important part of the Figtree calendar, representing a significant opportunity for the church to reach out to the local community with the message of Jesus.

"We believe that for those people who don't know Christ, [carols] is their church service," Mrs Dixon said, "God works powerfully. We don't know how they will respond. They could be prompted to go to

their own local church. It could be many years before people act in that way, we don't know. We see it as a way to build a bridge with our community."

One of the new introductions of 2012 was the 'sacred space', a physical structure that encouraged people to wander quietly and encouraged them to respond by writing short prayers on Post-it notes and sticking them to the wall.

"We had never realised the impact of giving people an opportunity to respond to Jesus anonymously," Mrs Dixon said. "A number of non-Christians responded in a really powerful way."

Putting on an event for 5000 people cost a fair amount of money. The church is able to continue running the event through sponsorship from the local council as well as financial and in-kind support from local businesses.

"A number of local business owners are Christians and they see sponsoring the event as kingdom work," Mrs Dixon said.

The church has discussed whether or not to grow the event further but has decided against it.

"It is about a local church giving back to its local community," Mrs Dixon said. "We decided against growing it to maintain that feel."

DIARY

Monday, February 4 Priscilla & Aquila Centre Conference

Teaching Truth Together: Titus 2.

The 2013 conference will help delegates think more seriously and creatively about how men and women can work better together in ministry. The main speaker is James de Costobadie (the vicar of St John's Latimer Square, Christchurch, New Zealand).

For more information visit <http://paa.moore.edu.au/Pages/Events.aspx>
LOCATION | Moore College, 15 King St, Newtown

Saturday, February 9 Schools Ministry Conference

Join hundreds of SRE teachers as we kick off the new school year and think through 'Mission in our Backyard', and how to strengthen the connections between SRE, your local congregation and the schools.

For more information and bookings visit www.youthworks.net/events/smc-2013

LOCATION | St Andrew's Cathedral

For diary events email
newspaper@anglicanmedia.com.au

Friday, March 1 Moore College External Studies

2013's first term of Moore College's Preliminary Theological Certificate (PTC) course commences.

For more information visit external.moore.edu.au.

LOCATION | Churches and homes across Sydney

Tuesday, March 12 Moore College Graduation

You are warmly invited to join with us in celebrating the college and its graduating students. All family, friends and church members are very

welcome to attend.

LOCATION | City Recital Hall, Angel Place, Sydney | 7.30pm-9.30pm

Sunday, May 5 – Monday, May 6 Youthworks Outdoor Ministry Conference

Take two days to be inspired about how to maximise the ministry opportunity at your camp, to connect with other activity staff, be encouraged in your work and to observe and learn ways to engage the word of God with the outdoors.

For more information visit www.youthworks.net/events

LOCATION | Rathane and Telford Conference Centre, Port Hacking

You

through the small screen

As our television networks fight for every last pair of eyeballs, programmers settle on a year of tried and tested formulas – and in the process provide a clearer picture of who they think we are, writes **MARK HADLEY**.

S EVEN MAY BE AUSTRALIA'S LEADING PRIME TIME network but, having snatched the title from Nine, it knows how easy it is to lose. What was the jewel in Kerry Packer's media crown is now scrambling for an audience to bask in its glow. Not far behind, TEN is looking to rebuild from the ground up – again – after narrowly avoiding financial insolvency in 2012. Free-to-air television is being nipped at by rising pay TV audiences, pressured by the advent of 3D film spectacles, and menaced by a mounting wave of internet video. It's not surprising, then, that networks are searching for safe ground as the 2013 ratings year rolls around. Armed with the best research money can buy, broadcasters believe there are four things that will engage and keep our attention this year:

envy

Prepare for another round of programs that will teach audiences to further undervalue the meals they're already taking for granted. The standards of elite restaurants have been invading the home kitchen since 2009 and the runaway success of *MasterChef*. Seven will be the first off the mark with the fourth season of *My Kitchen Rules*; *MasterChef Professionals* will make its debut on TEN; Nine will be searching for home talent with *The Great Australian Bake-Off*. Even the ABC is getting in on the act with *The Taste*, a 'blind judge' competition pitting average Australians against celebrity chefs. Programs like these expand our egos as well as our waists. Ten's *Recipe To Riches* (below) promises to make each cook's key ingredient available at Woolworths the morning after the show. So supermarket chains are given yet another marketing boost while we again feel the need to indulge our palates.





FAME

It was *Australian Idol* that began the modern era of selling average people the dream that they were extraordinary. All they needed was the opportunity. This year Nine continues to inflate our aspirations with the second season of *The Voice* and a revamped *Australia's Got Talent*; Seven is not far behind with *The X-Factor*; and TEN is hinting at just how far success can take you with *American Idol*. The illusion these programs create is that our problems will fade the more our lives are bathed with fame. As improbable as that sounds, Australian networks continue to trade on our celebrity longings. *Dancing With The Stars* returns for a record-breaking 13th series. Meanwhile Nine will remind us of its manufactured heroes through *The Block All-Stars*, as TEN offers celebrity opinions on *Can Of Worms* (left). But the ribbon has to go to Seven for *Celebrity Splash*, a show that promises to put household names on platforms high above a pool to perform complicated dives – no kidding. Which leads me on to our fascination with...

CRUELTY

There is a taint in television that appeals directly to our desire to see others suffer. In 2013 you'll find it in reality programs like *Big Brother* and *The Mole* where contestants work at maligning each other in order to win. The same tang exists in Nine Network dramas such as *Underbelly: Squizzy* (right), where the violence and sexual degradations of 1920s crime lords will be described in lurid detail for us to judge and enjoy. It's even evident in factual programming. This year SBS will broadcast a multimedia special analysing the Cronulla riots titled *The Day That Shocked A Nation*. TEN will also release *Batavia*, a dramatisation of the book by Peter FitzSimons chronicling the horrors survived by the passengers of an 18th-century ship that grounded on the coast of Western Australia. Both run the risk of evoking a joy in others' suffering the moment they emphasise the details over the deeds. But that is a distinct possibility in even the most high-minded programs because, as one of my earlier news directors used to say, "If it bleeds, it leads".



NOSTALGIA

American columnist Doug Larson described nostalgia as "the file that removes the rough edges from the good old days". Seven is opening its tool box with a third season of *Downton Abbey*, while also launching its 1950s small-town drama *A Place To Call Home* (right) – a cross between *Packed To The Rafters* and *The Sullivans*. TEN is returning the '70s sensation *Puberty Blues* to our screens with the first series of episodes to go beyond the lessons of the original book. Not to be left out, the ABC and Nine will both launch miniseries based on Kerry Packer's life and media empire, titled *Magazine Wars* and *Power Games*. The unifying factor for all is a valuing of traditional morals and the characters who taught them to us, often at great personal cost. However most series will sink in sentiment through an underlying sense of superiority based on the assumption we are the inheritors of their wisdom.



2013's schedule can be depressing to consider, little more than the free 'bread and circuses' the Roman poet Juvenal believed had been used to smother the potential of his fellow citizens. Their biggest interests had become sports, spectacles and full bellies. If we're to avoid a similar fate – one that already sounds particularly Australian – then we have to begin with changing the way we approach television. Do you want a new year's resolution? Don't just bring your appetites to the box; decide to carry your Christian convictions as well.





On a mission: Abraham Lincoln (Daniel Day-Lewis) hard at work in his office.

LINCOLN

M

JUDY ADAMSON

MOVIE

SOMETIMES YOU ARE IN THE presence of such extraordinary talent that you don't have to suspend disbelief because the actor does it so expertly for you. Watching Daniel Day-Lewis as Abraham Lincoln is just such an experience.

It's something he has done onscreen to great effect many times before. Few would have believed – had they not known who the actor was beforehand – that the man whose body was twisted with debilitating cerebral palsy as Irish writer Christy Brown in *My Left Foot* was the same tall, urbane fellow who stood up at the Academy Awards the following year to be acknowledged as best actor for his performance.

So, here, when Day-Lewis is onscreen as the complex, driven 16th President of the United States, it's hard to take your eyes off him. Which is just as it should be. Shortly after the film begins, dropping us deep into the despair and horror of an American Civil War battlefield, we see little groups of soldiers flocking to him, eager for a word with the great man or to show him how much of his seminal Gettysburg Address they have memorised.

Despite this cinematic adoration Lincoln was not a tremendously popular president during his lifetime, and was often vilified by the press and people within his own Republican party. The film's action begins shortly after his re-election in November 1864, when he has a reduced majority in Congress and is facing opposition from radical elements within his own party in addition to the men on the other side of the political divide.

And then there is the question of the Confederate southern states with whom the north is battling: the south has set up its own mini-nation, which Lincoln is determined to bring back under the banner of the United States. All while he forges ahead with his plan to abolish slavery with the 13th amendment to the US Constitution. But slavery is what the economy and life of the South is built upon, and he doesn't have enough support to get the amendment through parliament.

Thus the stage is set for the fight that will be the focus of the film: getting the votes to ensure the amendment succeeds, and paving the way for the end of the war.

Most Australians know a little about the Civil War and snippets of things such as the Gettysburg Address ("Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent a new nation, conceived in Liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal", and so on). But the vast majority of us aren't students of American history, nor do we really understand the American political system, however many episodes of *The West Wing* we may have watched.

In addition, political life in the US at the time of the Civil War was very different to how it is now. For starters, the Republican party was the home of liberal, progressive views and the Democrats were those seeking to hold on to things such as slavery – more or less a reversal of how things stand today.

Viewers are likely to spend the first part of *Lincoln* just trying to keep up as political

details, ideas or events are mentioned that you know nothing about and can't always understand through context. But persevere. It's an extraordinary and fascinating story, showing the enormous effort Abraham Lincoln was willing to go to – and the very modern-style backroom machinations that had to be undertaken – to get the abolition amendment passed, even if real political and legal equality for black people took another century to achieve.

Despite Lincoln's hero status in the US now, he is thankfully not portrayed as a complete saint. He has a fractious relationship with his wife Mary (Sally Field); he is willing to buy votes from Democrats in exchange for jobs; and he happily resorts to legal sidesteps to save the slavery amendment on the floor of the house.

Yet at one point director Steven Spielberg does depict Lincoln as saviour-like with arms outstretched as he gives a speech. For many he was and is a saviour, as his tenacity and willingness to spend himself, literally, for what he believed to be right put the US on the path to racial equality. Despite his flaws he was a leader who led, which is a rare thing in any age.

It will be surprising if Day-Lewis does not take home a third Academy Award for his presidential portrayal, although the film contains many other fine performances, particularly Tommy Lee Jones as outspoken equal rights Congressman Thaddeus Stevens. The ensemble scenes on the parliamentary floor are also gold, and the amendment vote is a worthwhile climax.

Go to *Lincoln* prepared to pay attention, and you will be well rewarded.