

Southern CROSS

THE NEWS MAGAZINE FOR SYDNEY ANGLICANS

NOVEMBER
2013

Go west

GOSPEL TO THE GREENFIELDS

+ Clergy collar: curse or catalyst?

& To drink or not to drink

INSIDE:
**SYNOD
2013**
6 PAGES

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Steven Grose (left) and Geoff Bates from Life Anglican Church (Quakers Hill, Stanhope Gardens and Riverstone) on land considered a priority by the Mission Property Committee.

PHOTO: Scott Lincoln

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PHOTO: Gary Hayes



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Southern CROSS NOVEMBER 2013

volume 19 number 10



PUBLISHER: Anglican Media Sydney
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Acceptance of advertising does not imply endorsement. Inclusion of advertising material is at the discretion of the publisher.

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EMAIL: subs@anglicanmedia.com.au
\$44.00 per annum (Australia)

PRINTED BY: Pegasus Print Group

New mission campaign to bring Jesus to Sydney

NICK GILBERT

A NEW MISSION CAMPAIGN FOR the Diocese, called Jesusbrings, is set to kick off in 2014.

The campaign, officially endorsed at Synod and commended to all churches, is designed to encourage churches to conduct locally relevant mission but have the support of centralised resourcing and branding, as well as flagship events.

The Rev Baden Stace, rector of St Cuthbert's, South Carlton and chairman of the Jesusbrings steering committee, says the aim is to support local parishes to push particularly hard in 2014 with mission.

"We're trying to energise the parishes," he says. "Connect09 was a

great time for many churches across the Diocese, and they sounded energised to be part of something bigger, and to be part of something together... we're wanting to equip them and give a mission focus such that 80,000 Christians in Anglican churches across Sydney and the Illawarra can collectively shout out to our region what Jesus brings, and get to the heart of the gospel."

The theme of the mission is designed to be targeted, providing a theme that's specific enough to give focus, and broad enough to allow for local flexibility. The focus also allows for what Mr Stace describes as particular "seasons" in the calendar year that allow for larger events which still fit in with what churches will be doing in their own parishes.

"We're calling parishes to align

around two seasons," he says. We're wanting to use the Easter season next year as a point of focus ... but we're also looking to provide a second season in August and September when we can turn up the heat again and offer another point of focus to parishes. If I can put it like this, Easter is about local churches doing local mission well, and the August season is about doing mission together on a larger scale with some larger events around the city."

A key part of the campaign itself, Mr Stace says, is about providing specific resources for churches to make use of throughout the year.

"We are developing a whole range of mission resources," he says. "So there are things like banners to be put up in front of churches or public

squares, as well as T-shirts. We're working on targeted gospel fliers which churches can use right across the Diocese.

Creatively we're developing quite an innovative gospel resource which combines the text of Luke's Gospel with web content that people can access via their mobile device, which we're working on with the Bible Society. It will have six QR codes [barcode-like stamps that can be read by a smartphone camera and include information like URLs] which can be scanned and can actually give the reader a guided experience through the gospel, with apologetic material, background about Luke and the cultural context."

Churches have also been asked to pray for the mission on February 2, 2014 during services.

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Churches join battle

NICK GILBERT

AMID ONE OF THE WORST NSW bushfire seasons in decades – even before summer begins – churches have been thinking through how best to serve and support others, even when they themselves have often been in the path of the fires.

The Rev Steve Young, rector of Springwood Anglican Churches, says 12 church members have lost homes in the bushfires. Nearly 200 homes in the area had been destroyed by the time SC went to press with more than 100 damaged, and there is great need for support – both now and after the fires are gone.

"People from the other Anglican churches, from other churches and other organisations and agencies, have been really generous in



Smoke from the Lithgow fire, viewed from Govetts Leap. PHOTO: Gary Hayes

donating money to our church, and to Anglican Aid, which I think is working at least in part through our church," Mr Young says.

"That's been quite overwhelming,

to see that generosity, and I think, being a local church, we will still be here when all the agencies and the media and everyone else goes away. To us, it's important to establish

those relationships and supports, nurture them and then keep going."

The Rev John Gaunt, rector of Blackheath parish, had hoped that perhaps the worst of the Mount Victoria fire at the top of the Blue Mountains had already passed by, with some clean-up commencing on the first Friday after the current fires began.

However, worsening conditions resulted in an increased threat, and Mr Gaunt says many members of his church and other residents left the area early. He himself stayed in Lithgow and is out of the path of the fires.

"I guess in terms of what will happen we really don't know," he says. "Up until now it looked like things were under control and we hope it stays that way, but... a lot of people left yesterday, or one person stayed with the car, others headed

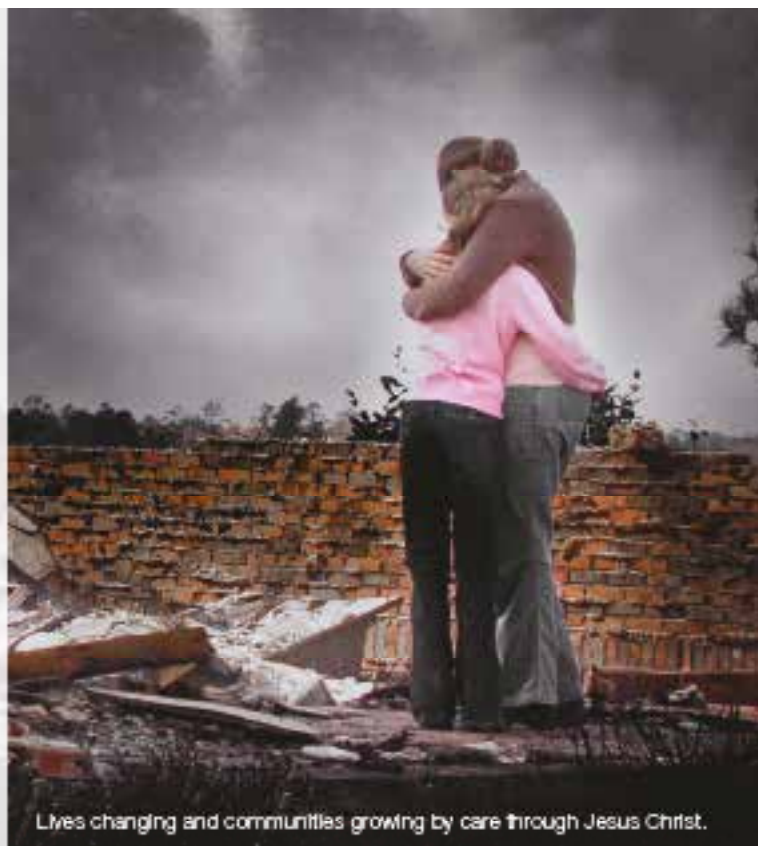


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against NSW fires



Devastation from the "Linksvie Road" fire at Springwood. PHOTO: Matt Broad

out on the train, things like that. Everyone seems to be taking it in their stride, there's no sort of alarm or panic. Most people's attitude seems to be, 'If we're going to lose our house, we're going to lose our house'."

The situation has been less extreme in the Southern Highlands, where after some loss of property in the village of Yanderra, firefighters were able to successfully hold the fire off around Yanderra and the nearby village of Bargo.

At time of writing, the prognosis for the current fires – particularly around the Blue Mountains region – had been see-sawing. After a day of backburning and containment, fires in the area had been held to their existing lines, with the possibility that Blue Mountains residents who had evacuated could soon be allowed to return home. Then strong winds sent two of the fires back up to "emergency" status.

It is clear much will need to be done in terms of recovery and support regardless of how quickly the immediate threat of the fires themselves is lifted.

Anglicare Disaster Recovery teams have been working in a number of evacuation centres in the Blue Mountains and Sydney's south, and have also been active as far south as the Shoalhaven area.

The director of disaster recovery at

Anglicare, Sue King, says the teams work in tandem with other agencies and are involved in immediate care at centres, as well as doorknocking people in threatened areas to make

lose friends or loved ones, because people were evacuated early. But people are anxious. Kids can be really anxious and worried about it and then parents are anxious.



Firies working together at Mount Riverview. PHOTO: Greg Harper

sure they are safe and any needs are met. Often, those needs are pastoral as well as practical.

"People are coming in frightened and uncertain, they've been told to evacuate, and people might have already experienced the loss of their property," Ms King says.

"This time we haven't had people

There's concern about what's going to happen next, especially if they have lost their home."

The Fellowship of Confessing Anglicans' Global Anglican Future Conference (GAFCON) in Kenya has also joined in prayer with Australian Christians for intervention in the fires, with the Bishop of Western

Sydney, the Rt Rev Ivan Lee, briefing delegates at a special gathering in Nairobi.

The Archbishop of Sydney, the Most Rev Dr Glenn Davies, has called on Sydney Anglicans to support emergency service personnel, recovery teams and individuals in prayer.

"As Christians we know we have a God who loves and cares for us," Dr Davies said. "Let us redouble our efforts to pray that by God's mercy we may see a change in weather conditions and that he might supply sufficient grace and strength to our community to come through this dark hour."

A special emergency Anglican Aid fund has also been opened, with Bishop Lee and Anglican Aid working to distribute funds to those most in need.

Both Ms King and Mr Young say the best ways to support those who have lost homes – and the recovery effort more widely – is to donate funds as opposed to physical items, which do not always address the specific needs of an individual.

"The best way that people can support the appeal is really to provide funds," Ms King says. "Those funds get distributed to people in need, but it's just really hard to store physical items and then distribute them. Money really helps people in the short term."



Brotherhood takes gospel to biker family

Riding into town: (from left) Grant Howard, Tim Robinson and Greg Hirst. PHOTO: Nick Gilbert

NICK GILBERT

SYDNEY'S BROTHERHOOD Christian Motorcycle Club (CMC) is continuing to minister and conduct outreach to the Australian biker community through direct mission, motor show events and even a free-to-air television show.

The club, based on land leased from the Diocese of Sydney in Parramatta in Sydney's west, has been in operation for over 36 years, and seeks to reach people for Christ while being authentically "biker" in culture. In a political culture where bikers are cast as negative influences Grant Howard, a member of Brotherhood CMC and pastoral team leader with its Street Level Christian Community church plant, says there are many positive aspects of biker culture and many ways in which Jesus can be made known.

"I think lots of people want to belong, and they want to have a family," he says. "They want to be cared about and have genuine mates. At the strongest end of the scene, people in the club are really committed to each other. They're committed to the lifestyle, riding together and living life together.

People often come from situations where they don't have particularly strong family and clubs often meet that role."

However, there are negative aspects to the culture where Mr Howard says it's important to provide authentic Christian witness. "There's a lot of alcohol in the culture, strippers, things that can easily cause people to stumble in their walk with God," he says. "And so we're really careful about watching that line there."

Greg Hirst, the head of Brotherhood CMC, says it's really important to them to maintain the fact that they must "be in the world, but not of it".

In many cases, it's the ability of the club to maintain a true love of bike culture while also drawing a line of separation when it comes to some activities that has forged the relationships the club has maintained for decades, not only with bike enthusiasts and the police, but also with "one per cent" or "outlaw" motorcycle clubs.

"They come knowing that being Christians and talking God stuff is part of how we run an event like a motor show," Mr Howard says, "but that's ok because they accept us with that. They may not agree with

it, it may not fit into their lifestyle, and what they're involved with would not be a part of our lifestyle, but it results in that mutual respect and opens ways for us to point people to the gospel in meaningful ways."

Current projects for Brotherhood include its TV show *Temporary Australians* – currently airing its second season on Network Ten's ONE digital channel – which showcases bike culture and the stories of bikers, both Christian and non-Christian.

"There's a mixture of the real breadth of bike culture, including police clubs, Christian clubs, and one per cent clubs," Mr Hirst says. "We look at the breadth of the culture, withholding moral judgements, as tastefully as we can. People connect to that... Some of the stuff I've gotten feedback on. One of the testimonies, from a guy named Vic, got some feedback on Facebook, and the guy said he thought it was the best story he'd ever heard. People are listening."

Tim Robinson, the director of the TV show and currently a "nom", or prospective member of Brotherhood CMC, became involved with the club through his work on the TV show. He says he became a part of the club

scene for the first time through seeing how Brotherhood integrated its faith and its culture.

"To me it felt like a natural thing, because I can integrate my faith with what is now my culture," Mr Robinson says. "I love bikes, I love Jesus, I love documentaries, and they all kind of fit together here."

The club is now looking to expand its relationships with churches. It's already planning to bring its experience in motor shows to bear, as it currently runs an annual show called the Silverwater Motor Festival. The club also has experience in counselling and pastoral care, and has a particular heart for men and youth, with many members of Brotherhood having backgrounds in youth work.

Mr Hirst says prayer for the biker community is needed, with many people in the scene thinking through what it means to follow God.

"There's actually a lot of people trying to figure out the God stuff, just secretly," he says. "When you're actually out in their culture you find this stuff out, because those gospels [copies of Mark's Gospel published by the Bible Society] are remarkable. At all sorts of motorcycle events, even the wilder ones, people will take a gospel, and they read it."

Agora launched



Professor Dalziel (right) with David Smith from St Andrew's Cathedral School.

CHRISTIANS INVOLVED OR interested in education from Newcastle, Wollongong and across Sydney met at the Macquarie Graduate School of Management last month to officially launch Agora. The group of teachers, tertiary students, academics and educational administrators (aged 20 to 73) were brought together by their interest in robust discussion about contemporary educational issues from a Christian perspective.

In his opening remarks Dr Bryan Cowling – the CEO of the project's sponsor, the Anglican Education

Commission – described Agora as “a virtual and face-to-face community of Christian educators of all ages and backgrounds who want to engage in conversations with each other with a view to transforming education and society”.

As guest presenter the director of the Macquarie E-Learning Centre, Professor James Dalziel, advanced strong reasons for using technology as a trigger for transforming Christian approaches to education. This led to spirited discussion which can be followed on the Agora website at www.agora.org.au

Registrar farewelled

IN A SPEECH ACKNOWLEDGING the work of the outgoing Registrar of the Sydney Diocese at his farewell last month, Archbishop Glenn Davies said how grateful he and the Diocese were for the service Philip Selden (right) had given and “the richness of your gifts”.

Dr Davies said he and Dr Selden had begun working in the St Andrew's House office on the same day – January 1, 2002 – after he had been appointed Bishop of North Sydney and Dr Selden had left his flourishing medical practice in the northern suburbs to work as Registrar.

He described the care Dr Selden always had for other members of staff and how, at Bible studies and prayer meetings, “you were always there, leading and encouraging the spiritual element of our work together”. Dr Davies added that once he took up the role of Archbishop a few months ago he was constantly struck by Dr Selden's efficiency: “I'd say something and it was done!” he



said. “He was there to serve – and we're very grateful to God for that service.”

Dr Selden said that when he had been in general practice he had always “regarded it as work for the Lord... but it's been a particular joy to be involved in Christian service. I didn't miss medicine at all.”

His replacement as Registrar, Mr Doug Marr, begins in the role this month.

Got your dictionary handy?

Anglican National Super (- noun - ANS)

Definition

Superannuation fund for the Anglican community of employers and employees throughout Australia, established in 1981, guided by the principles of ethical, responsible investment and Christian values. Consistent with transformed living as described in Romans 12:1-2.

Superannuation is part of paid income, available to every worker at the end of their formal paid working life. Using superannuation in the right way is just as important as using the rest of your wage in the right way, reflecting the values of heaven as you consider your wealth on earth.

ANS, by definition, is the fund that carries Romans 12 thinking into the world of superannuation, offering:

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Cut back for the gospel's sake

JUDY ADAMSON

IN A BOLD MOVE SEEKING TO keep Church Army Australia focused on its core business of supporting evangelists – as well as providing it with long-term sustainability – the organisation has undertaken a major reduction in its staff and operations.

Four full-time staff positions (including that of national director the Rev Martin Morgan) and two part-time jobs have been cut, in addition to the closing of the drug rehabilitation ministry Kihilla Restoration in the Blue Mountains.

The organisation's acting general manager, the Rev Peter Adkins, is sad to see the rehab program close but adds that Church Army had been running it "at a net cost, and we just can't afford to do that any more".

"The [money] issue has probably been there for 25 years – the cash flow running out and then some people coming to the rescue: giving money or selling something," he says. "I think this time the board's done some serious work saying we can't continue like this, and certainly



Some of those training with Church Army Australia in 2012.

Martin realised it wasn't sustainable.

"Church Army was set up 80 years ago and times have changed. We need to be much more responsive, more nuanced, more flexible to different mission contexts, and have a wider network as well.

"Sometimes God creates a shift in individual organisations because of circumstances that happen around us. I suppose the ideal way is to hear his voice and respond, but the discomfort of remaining as we are is less comfortable than the change that is needed."

Mr Morgan, who became national director of Church Army 2½ years ago, says he was asked to join the organisation "to work out how to

make it sustainable and ongoing. The more that I looked at it the more I could see we were operating as though we were a much larger organisation... [everything] could be run by a volunteer board like some of the early missionary organisations were, and then the money could go straight to the coalface – to the evangelists."

That being the case, he planned himself out of a job. "Church Army is really about equipping and sending out evangelists, so it didn't make sense to employ a lot of people in admin and head office," he says. "It's been fantastic and I'm still involved – I'm just not getting paid any more! I'll be helping as a volunteer... helping

send evangelists across Australia to reach outside the existing church with the gospel of Jesus."

At this stage, in addition to its continued support of evangelists' work, Church Army will offer a training course in evangelism, mission and church planting, create an increased web presence to provide connection points for evangelists, and run the Kihilla property as a conference and retreat centre for groups of 10 to 40 people.

"I think the thing I'm convinced about more than ever is that Australia needs evangelists," Mr Adkins says. "We've thought in the past few months 'Does God want our organisation to continue?' and we've all realised that God needs more evangelists and better evangelists who can be culturally sensitive as well as bold.

"There's a great harvest out there and not enough workers. We want to be able to support, network and inspire evangelists to do the work of evangelism in whatever walk of life God puts them in."

For more information about Church Army's work see www.churcharmy.com.au

Traineeships up as college bags Dr Jensen

RUSSELL POWELL

A GROWING NUMBER OF traineeships for youth and children's workers are being offered for 2014, boosting both youth services in the diocese and enrolments at Youthworks College. In addition, the college has snapped up former Archbishop Peter Jensen to teach the doctrine unit "Holy Spirit, Grace and Hope" next year.

"Providing specialised training to the next generation of youth and children's ministers requires the right people with energy, experience and know-how," says Youthworks College principal Andrew Nixon. "As [Dr Jensen is] a former principal of

Moore College and a former primary school teacher, I can't think of a better person to teach doctrine to our students."

Youthworks College is the only theological college in Australia that specialises in preparing children's and youth ministers. The students have two days a week of face-to-face teaching alongside a position in a church for 2-2½ days a week.

Mr Nixon believes the mix works for youth ministry, which is why there are an increasing number of traineeships being offered. The college has begun advertising these on its youthworks.net website.

The Rev Brendan McLaughlin, rector of Earlwood, is one of those searching for a trainee. "The system is geared towards home-grown

recruits, so if you want a Youthworks student then you raise them up in your church and encourage them to go off to the college," he says. "For smaller churches or churches with a small young adults group like ours, it is harder to do that."

The church's assistant minister already heads the youth work and the trainee will have a clear field to take over and direct children's ministry. "I initially was hesitant about Youthworks College but seeing what they do and how they specialise, that's the way I convinced my parish council we need to go," Mr McLaughlin says. "We are stretching our budget but we'll find the money."

Mr McLaughlin also has experience with this style of vocational training. "I did a sandwich course at uni in

engineering – six months in industry, six months studying. I chose that for a reason. I think it is an excellent way to grow into a role, so I'm very much on board with them working and studying and what they learn they'll bring over and no doubt be able to teach me."

Over at Bondi, new rector the Rev Martin Morgan has not even started but knows he will need a trainee. "There's been some great work done already on a kids' club but a big slab of those attending are about to enter high school," he says. "So one of the most exciting ministries of the parish is about to feed into nothing. We really do need youth work to begin next year. We've earmarked the money. Now we just need to find the right person."

Land buy to continue

From left: David Winley and Bishop Ivan Lee, Mission Property Committee Members; Geoff Bates and Steven Grose, Life Anglican Church. PHOTO: Scott Lincoln

RUSSELL POWELL

ON THE FIRST NIGHT OF SYNOD, members voted overwhelmingly to continue the Church Land Acquisitions Levy for another two years in order to fund land purchases in new areas. The vote came just two days after the completion of a significant deal to buy land in the north-west growth centre of Sydney.

Each church contributes just over 2 per cent of its net income, which raises about \$2 million a year to buy land for churches in new suburbs and housing estates – the so-called

“greenfield” areas of Sydney.

In a motion put by the Bishop of Wollongong, Peter Hayward, and seconded by John Pascoe, Mr Pascoe told Synod that “Sydneyiders are renowned for being obsessed with real estate, following the market up and down – mainly up. So we all know that \$2 million doesn’t go very far in trying to buy real estate in Sydney... the secret is to get in early when the prices are cheaper and suitably located land is still available”.

It was confirmed just before the Synod that contracts have been exchanged for the purchase of land at Riverstone, in the north-west

growth corridor, for a 2.6 hectare church site. The Mission Property Committee will contribute about \$1.3 million of the funds raised from last year’s levy towards the purchase of this site and the parish will contribute the other half.

The Rev Geoff Bates, rector of Life Anglican Church (which comprises the Quakers Hill, Stanhope Gardens and Riverstone churches) and the local Mission Area leader, said after the vote that “thousands of people are moving into new houses in the north-west area every year and this will amount to hundreds of thousands over the next 20 years. We now have the land and the best

position to build a church before the land price skyrockets”.

Mr Bates told *Southern Cross* that “The Christians of this generation and many after that will be thankful to God for the vision and commitment that was shown by our Synod to build good, healthy churches that can reach the growing needs of the area. This a highly fruitful acquisition!”

Mr Pascoe, in his Synod speech, agreed. “It’s timely that we as Synod members can actually see the levy we raised last year being put to good use,” he said. “This is not the time to step back from a program of ongoing land purchases.”

“Green” and “brown” ministry strategy

THE FIRST STEP IN A HOLISTIC strategy for promoting new ministry in “greenfield” as well as “brownfield” areas of the Diocese was presented to Synod with a request for feedback to the newly created Church Planting Task Force by the end of this year.

One of the movers, the director of Evangelism and New Churches the Rev Bruce Hall, said a working group considered demographic information prepared by Anglicare, which estimated that every year for the next decade 20,000 extra people would move into greenfield areas of the Diocese and 40,000 would move

into brownfield areas.

“We became conscious that a strategy for both types of area was needed... in greenfields for new ministry and in brownfields where ministry was inadequate or not functioning properly,” he said.

The working group’s opinion was that most of the funds raised to support the strategy should still be spent in greenfields areas – on land for churches and clergy housing – but considered that some of the money should go to seed funding for new ministries in greenfield and brownfield areas.

“We need evangelical initiatives

and some will need to be different from what we’ve done in the past – inviting friends to come to existing ministries,” Mr Hall said.

He described three major issues facing evangelists in 2013. The pool of newcomers in churches was shrinking “so public preaching evangelism has smaller audiences of unbelievers”. Ministers also have many demands on their time, so the role of evangelism in churches was under pressure, even if they sought to make it a priority.

Third, he said, “we are mostly out of touch with the bulk of our society – we are mostly a cultural

enclave. Even if we were to grow our churches four times better than we currently do, 90 per cent [of people] are still unreached by the gospel”.

“How will we encourage churches in new initiatives and foster new initiatives that are connected but not limited to our existing churches?” Mr Hall asked. “It’s an enormous challenge to work on these things but it’s something we need to do. You have ideas – you are doing things. We would love to hear them.”

Synod members have until December 31 to provide feedback and ideas to the Diocesan Secretary on rjw@sydney.anglican.asn.au.

Mission: next

A REVIEW OF THE DIOCESAN Mission has been presented to Synod with the request for feedback so a new Mission can be planned, prepared and brought to Synod in 2015.

Speaking to Synod members Bishop Peter Hayward (right) provided a summary of the results of the 10-year diocesan Mission from a survey of nearly 850 Synod members and parish wardens. He said 94 per cent believed the Diocese "should continue with some form of Mission or other", but respondents also recognised that there had only been "reasonable" results from the last Mission at parish level.

Results from the National Church Life Survey show that although much was done and achieved during the Mission, weekly church attendance in the Diocese had continued to increase at much the same rate as it had in the 10 years



before the Mission.

"We've basically still grown with the population but we haven't grown any faster than we have previously," Bishop Hayward said. "What would have happened if we hadn't had a diocesan Mission?

"That we have continued to grow at all is something for which we

should give thanks to God... that we have not grown as we expected should cause us to reflect and think hard."

He added that "one of the blessings that did occur" during the Mission was the doubling of the number of people born overseas attending Sydney Anglican churches.

The Diocese was also "heading in the right direction in retaining children into youth and youth into adulthood".

An early exposure draft of the vision and potential goals for a new Mission was presented to members, with long-term goals that included a focus on lay training and deployment, children's and youth ministries, the need for creative gospel proclamation – particularly in other language and culture groups – and developing partnerships throughout all elements of diocesan life.

Bishop Hayward asked members to give feedback on the draft to help direct the way forward. "We want you to be involved in the process to refresh and sharpen this very important part of our life," he said.

Synod members have until the end of this month to comment on the draft report.

Mission Areas locked in

THE LAST ADMINISTRATIVE details have been cleared by Synod to cement the Mission Areas system in the Diocese.

Mission Areas began as an initiative of Archbishop Jensen in the wake of Connect09, as a way to encourage partnerships and more co-operation between parishes. They replaced the area deanery system.

Ivan Lee, the bishop in charge of the Mission Area program, told the Synod that although the system was still a "work in progress", the growth and effect of the increased co-operation had been "nothing short of miraculous".

In view of this, he said, it was "time to decommission area deaneries" and restructure regional councils in line with the changes. Synod

was told the number of mission areas has now risen to 22, with some combined areas – such as Shoalhaven-Southern Highlands – now counted as two areas.

Synod voted to adopt a new ordinance under which each regional council would comprise the bishop and at least one layperson and one rector from each Mission Area in the region.

Dr Rodney James, in seconding the bill, said Mission Areas had given him a chance to participate in regional ministry – which he had not been able to do before.

"Area deaneries were never for the lay, only the clergy," Dr James said. "For that reason I believe we should be concentrating more on Mission Areas rather than area deaneries, which have now become extinct."

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Robertson and Clovelly become full parishes

NICK GILBERT

TWO PROVISIONAL PARISHES were reclassified at Synod this year as full parishes, after new inroads were made in local ministry.

The latest work at St Luke's, Clovelly, in Sydney's eastern suburbs, was begun by the then rector, the Rev Lindsay Johnstone, who called on St Matthias', Centennial Park five years ago to enlist help in kick-starting ministry in the parish.

"The Rev Lindsay Johnston, approached St Matthias, where I was the evening church minister, [wanting] to begin a new work in Clovelly," said current Clovelly rector, the Rev Dave Rogers.

"After a number of months of praying and planning, 15 adults and a toddler met in a loungeroom and prayed and dreamed about how the gospel might again speed ahead in Clovelly. Fast forward to 2013: our gathering on Sunday afternoon has 65 adults and 44 kids – yes, the kids are taking over," he joked. "We've seen God answer some amazing prayers."



The Big Potato at Robertson.

The church plant – or "repotting" as it was referred to by the Bishop of South Sydney, the Rt Rev Robert Forsyth, in his speech in favour of the motion – has recently started a new youth group for Year 6 to 8 students, and is set to employ a full-time youth minister from the beginning of next year. It also gives 10 per cent of its offertories to ministries outside the parish and in other parts of the world.

"[It's] a place in Sydney where, many years ago, you would think 'Surely we don't need another

Christian ministry, an Anglican Christian ministry there?'" Bishop Forsyth said. "And now it's a wonderful example of a growing church in Sydney. I thank God for those people, and I commend it as an example of what God can do in the brownfields areas."

The parish of Robertson in the Illawarra region has experienced a similar resurgence, in large part due to a new ministry centre which the church began using in 2007.

Speaker for the motion and assistant to the Bishop of

Wollongong, Mr Tony Willis, said that Robertson's current minister, the Rev Barry Lee, had been working fruitfully for 13 years in the provisional parish, but that the new centre was a "turning point" for local ministry.

"Suddenly the parish had a site that was attractive for people to come to – dare I cast any aspersions on what was already there," Mr Willis said. "This ministry centre really enabled the parish to move forward in the work it was doing."

Mr Willis asked for prayer from the rest of the Diocese that growth would continue in the newly reclassified parish.

"We really do look to the future, and ask God to bring growth," he said. "This has been already happening. I know that even in the last few weeks, two new couples have joined the church, and we thank God for that. We need to pray that in this village area, this gateway to the Southern Highlands, God in his mercy would continue to use his people to bring his message of salvation to them."

Both reclassifications were approved unanimously by the Synod.

Synod approves an in-principle Mission Property contribution

SYNOD HAS GIVEN IN-PRINCIPLE support for a contribution to be paid by beneficiaries of Mission Property Commission funding, in order to replenish those funds.

The contribution is proposed to come from churches benefiting from MPC funds for ministry centres, amounting to 10 per cent of total offertory.

It also calls for a contribution of 50 per cent of the market rental value, increasing to 100 per cent, of any MPC-funded ministry residences, until the initial investment is repaid.

The Bishop of Western Sydney, member of the Mission Property Committee and seconder of the motion, the Rt Rev Ivan Lee, said the proposal came after several years of thinking about ways in which churches could give something back to the central property fund to support further projects.

"We commend this to you, we want to bring this to you and engage your support, for what I think is a realistic and good arrangement, so there's a sense of ownership within a new church plant [of their property]

right from day one," Bishop Lee said.

"There are other reasons there. One is a survey a couple of years ago of potential givers... they said it would be great to see the actual congregations giving back, and we've taken that on board. There are other reasons [in the MPC report] that show why we think this is a good arrangement. It's not onerous. It's real and substantial enough, and together we can hopefully build not only one or two, but a third, fifth, sixth site into the future."

An amendment, proposed by

the Rev Jono Squire of South Creek, suggested several changes. These included altering the commencement of repayments and a lowering of the percentage of offertories to be paid, because of the potential impacts on new church plants. The amendment was also supported by the Rev David Clarke of Hoxton Park.

The amendments proposed were defeated by a sizable majority of the Synod on the voices, with the original motion then approved unaltered.



Synod highlights indigenous ministries

Pastor Michael Paduch-Duckett addresses the Sydney Synod.

THE 2013 SYNOD HAS overwhelmingly passed a motion giving thanks and calling on parishes to continue to support indigenous churches and fellowships.

The motion was moved by indigenous pastor Michael Paduch-Duckett and seconded by Archdeacon Deryck Howell, a

member of the Sydney Anglican Indigenous Peoples' Ministry Committee.

Pastor Paduch-Duckett, who looks after an indigenous congregation that meets in the old church at St Peter's, Campbelltown, reported that other indigenous churches were meeting at Glebe, Mt Druitt

and Nowra, and there were plans to start a church in Redfern.

The motion thanked God "for those who first brought the gospel to this land and proclaimed it to our first peoples" and "for the thousands of indigenous believers who in past days have faithfully run the race set before them".

Mr Duckett prayed for the indigenous work. Archbishop Davies then urged members to return to their parishes and highlight the motion's call for them "to consider prayer, financial and other forms of partnership with our indigenous churches and fellowships beyond the present funding".

Finances "stabilising" as Synod money bill passes

SYNOD HAS PASSED THE 2014 diocesan budget, with "some certainty" returning to finances after the impacts of the Global Financial Crisis, but with a warning that cuts have gone as far as they can go.

Bishop Peter Hayward, chair of the Mission Board strategy committee, briefed Synod on the proposed budget, saying there had been a 60 per cent reduction in the amount of money available for distribution to diocesan organisations in the past five years. The 2009 distribution

was \$11.5 million, whereas just \$4.6 million is available for 2014. In this same period the Archbishop's office made reductions of \$2.4 million.

"With this year's appropriation we have reached the point where we begin to have some certainty about our situation," Bishop Hayward told Synod. "It has taken four years for the full impact of our changed situation to be settled."

The bill included a cessation of funding for the Mission Areas and Year 13 program and a 5 per cent

reduction for Ministry Training and Development, Moore College, Youthworks College, Evangelism and New Churches and Youthworks children and youth.

Bishop Hayward noted that even those organisations that had maintained their 2013 level have had no CPI increase for a number of years, which amounted to a real reduction in funds.

"We have reached the point where many organisations have been cut as far as they can," he said. "Any

further reductions will mean a very significant overview of their operation. For example, Anglican Media has reached the minimum funding for the council to operate without a complete review of their activities."

Synod was told the projections showed the amount available for distribution would continue at current levels for at least the next five years. Bishop Hayward described the current funding as "the new norm".

Governance a hot topic

JUDY ADAMSON

AFTER A LONG AND SOMETIMES heated debate on the second and third days of Synod, members agreed to approve a governance policy for diocesan organisations in principle, but deferred a decision on taking the final step of passing the policy until Synod in 2014. The deferral will enable the detail of the policy to be considered further.

Dr Laurie Scandrett, CEO of the Sydney Anglican Schools Corporation, has been working on the policy with a small committee for the past four years. In bringing the policy to members for their consideration he said, "I find it remarkable that this Diocese does not yet have a governance policy... we are yet to have a common statement as to how we want our organisations to be governed".

The main issues of contention

were limits the policy would place on the consecutive years a person can serve on a board (up to 14 years on the board and nine years as the chair), plus the removal of the option for alumni-elected members on a school board to sign a declaration supporting the school's Christian ethos. The change would require them to sign the statement of personal faith all other Anglican school board members sign.

There was much debate over whether the policy should pass in principle (before amendments were officially considered). The rector of Strathfield and Homebush, the Rev Dane Courtney, said he agreed with many things in the policy but "the description of the issues of long tenure and the supposed negative influence of alumni members are caricatures – they are nothing like the experiences I have had on school councils and other boards. The question before us... is not whether we want a policy; it's whether we

want this policy".

Dr Scandrett said the Diocese's recent history showed the importance of renewal on boards and introducing people with fresh ideas. He also said the governance policy would not come into force until each school revised its own ordinance, adding that "no-one is ever going to be asked to resign from an organisation if the time limit comes up... but they wouldn't be available for re-election".

Speaking against the plan to require alumni to sign a statement of personal faith, the Rev Michael Kellahan, rector of Roseville East and a member of the Shore School council, noted that "non-Christians on the [Shore] board... have given in remarkable ways, want to serve this school, and they support its Christian ethos.

"We cannot do evangelism by ordinance. The kingdom of God is not going to grow by us passing legislation like this... we will have

divided boards where you're setting Synod versus old boys and old girls. Who is this meant to help?"

However, the headmaster of St Andrew's Cathedral School, Dr John Collier, said it was important for all school council members to be Christian, including alumni – "otherwise you can't move forward with the Christian mission of the school". He spoke of a number of school heads who had to "battle with council members for the heart and mind of the school. Problems exist, mostly with alumni who are opposed to the Christian mission of the schools".

When the requirement for all to sign a statement of personal faith passed by just a few votes Dr Scandrett acknowledged the house was divided on the issue. He promised the committee would "take a year to consider, consult with a bigger committee and will bring [the policy] back to you next year with some improved drafting".




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Domestic violence response

NICK GILBERT

SYNOD VOTED UNANIMOUSLY IN support of a resolution calling for greater education among clergy with regard to domestic violence. The motion, forwarded by Canon Sandy Grant from St Michael's Cathedral in Wollongong and seconded by Moore College lecturer and director of the Priscilla and Aquila Centre Ms Jane Tooher, requested that the college and Ministry Training & Development (MT&D) investigate the issue and, if required, develop new approaches to clerical education to help ministers deal with domestic violence if they become aware of it in the course of pastoral care.

"The biblical concept of submission has been under threat, so we've defended it, vigorously and at cost, but we have not defended as well

against its abuse," Canon Grant said in moving the motion. "There is no excuse for domestic violence, never ever. We must work out how to say this loud and clear. We have the additional missional reason to pay attention: it is an area of suspicion in our society."

Peter Hanson, a lay member from Christ Church St Laurence, moved that the second paragraph of the motion be deleted, part of which read: "consideration ought to be given to ensuring that upholding the Bible's good teaching on submission – both in preaching and teaching, and in marriage education or counselling – is not easily twisted as cover for abuse". Mr Hanson said his amendment was because a failure by husbands to sacrificially love was the teaching most often disregarded and twisted, not submission.

A speech from another representative in support of the amendment drew attention to

instances around the world where teaching on submission has allegedly been used to justify domestic violence.

The principal of Moore College, the Rev Dr Mark Thompson, spoke in defence of the unaltered motion and its second paragraph, saying the paragraph was the "beating heart" of the motion.

"It is precisely because those stories have been told that we need to keep paragraph two in," Dr Thompson said. "It is precisely because the doctrine of headship, loving self-sacrificial headship, and voluntary submission has been twisted and distorted as a justification for that abhorrent behaviour, that we need to ensure that when we talk about domestic violence, we talk about this as well, and say that this biblical teaching must never be used... as an excuse for that sort of behaviour."

Debate also included stories

of abuse known to Synod representatives, as well as instances where churches have reacted heavily-handedly in response – with one person mentioning a friend who had been told they would no longer be welcome in church after considering separation while in a domestic violence situation.

Mr Hanson's amendment was eventually defeated but Synod did accept an amendment by the Dean of Sydney, the Very Rev Phillip Jensen, which added the words "and sacrificial love" after "submission", in order to address the concerns raised, particularly those from Dr Thompson and Mr Hanson.

"It would seem to me that rather than seeing 'love' as being left out [and] therefore leave out the paragraph, let's put 'love' in," Dean Jensen said.

After the motion passed Ms Tooher led the Synod in prayer for victims of domestic violence.



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SYNOD BRIEFS

SYNOD 2014

Members have approved a five-day session of Synod for 2014, with the first session of the 50th Synod to meet on five days over two weeks.

The original motion, forwarded by Diocesan Secretary Robert Wicks and seconded by the Rev Raj Gupta, proposed a four-day Synod. However, a motion moved by Professor Bernard Stewart (Paddington) and seconded by Canon Sandy Grant (Wollongong) was upheld by the Synod, providing for a five-day meeting in 2014. An amendment calling for a starting time of 2.45pm instead of 3.15pm was defeated.

The dates approved for Synod next year are Monday, October 13 to Wednesday, October 15, plus the following Monday and Tuesday. There will be afternoon and evening sittings on each of these days.

Electronic Communications

Synod approved an ordinance designed to reduce the amount of physical paper used during proceedings and pave the way for a paperless Synod.

Diocesan Secretary Robert Wicks and the Rev Nigel Fortescue – a member of the electronic communication working committee – said it was time to cut down on the use of paper and its costs. The "Synod book" of relevant material distributed to members this year ran to more than 300 pages, with amendment sheets and other daily changes adding much more.

Chief changes will include the primary use of email to distribute documents, as well as provision of Wi-fi services at Synod venues, with a proposed paperless Synod by 2020.

Concerns were raised about what the changes would mean for those without ready access to or familiarity with online services, while others wanted more significant changes sooner.

The ordinance was passed without significant amendment.

GAFCON comes of age

RUSSELL POWELL

THE SECOND GLOBAL ANGLICAN Future Conference (GAFCON), held in Nairobi, has exceeded the size and reach of the first meeting, held amid the Lambeth crisis in 2008. The conference and the movement it began, the Fellowship of Confessing Anglicans (FCA), is being widely acknowledged as a strong force in the Anglican Communion.

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, made a flying visit, detouring from a trip to Iceland to meet the GAFCON primates in Kenya just before the conference opened. He spoke to multiple services at the All Saints' Cathedral and spoke of a "new Anglican Communion", saying new structures were needed for the 21st century. Later the primates and Archbishop Welby attended a luncheon reception.

"It is a great privilege to have shared this lunch with you and to be here as you set off on this extraordinary week, which I hope and pray will move the whole Anglican Communion forward," Archbishop Welby said.

The general secretary of the FCA, former Archbishop of Sydney Dr



Peter Jensen, said, "I believe that the new Anglican Communion could be seen at the first GAFCON in 2008... This great gathering in Nairobi is a model for our partnership with each other within the Anglican Communion, based on the truth of the Bible."

Although initially expecting 1100 delegates the final total was 1352, with attendees including 30 archbishops, 331 bishops, clergy and lay people, men and women, from almost 40 countries.

Archbishop Nicholas Okoh, Primate of the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) – which has 18 million active Anglicans – sent a delegation of more than 450.

At a news conference Archbishop Okoh, the Presiding Bishop Tito Zavala of the Southern Cone and the Chairman of GAFCON, Archbishop Eliud Wabukala, refuted characterisations of the gathering as a breakaway movement, with Dr Jensen responding that "nothing could be further from the truth".

Archbishop Glenn Davies, who was on the statement-drafting committee at the first GAFCON in Jerusalem, led the Sydney delegation, which, together with delegates from the rest of Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific, numbered about 80.

Several Sydney delegates including the Rev Gav Poole, the Rev Dr Michael Stead, the Rev Lachlan Edwards and Australian Deaconess Ministries' Dr Karin Sowada played key roles in organising the conference.



Clockwise from main: Congregation members at All Saints' Cathedral (PHOTO: Russell Powell); Australian CMS Missionary Mike Taylor came from Tanzania for the conference (RP); Archbishop Justin Welby and Archbishop Eliud Wabukala (PHOTO: Andrew Gross); Archbishop Davies greets a fellow delegate (RP); Session host Winnie Njenga (PHOTO: Stephen Sizer).

Ethiopia benefits from MU

ZOE MURRAY

A SMALL REVOLUTION IS spreading throughout the Gambella region of Ethiopia. The agents of change are not your stereotypical revolutionaries. They are women: members of the local Mothers' Union, mostly middle-aged, many of them illiterate.

Apart from a few cooking pots and other demonstration materials, their weaponry is not visible. Instead, they have recently been armed with knowledge. The messages they carry are deceptively simple: "Small things we can't see without 'glasses' [microscopes] cause disease", and "Just like we need wood, mud and grass – all three – to make houses, we also need protein, vitamins and energy foods – all three – to make strong bodies".

Some messages can't merely be told, they must be demonstrated: how to construct a vertical garden, how to weave mats to earn an income, how to treat common illnesses in children. Together, they promise to overturn basic yet entrenched problems that have long hampered the region, making it one of Ethiopia's poorest – poverty, poor health and inter-tribal tension.

The epicentre of change is Gambella Anglican Centre. From here a train-the-trainer program empowers women to effect change in their own communities. First, 30 Mothers' Union representatives



A Gambella woman leads a literacy session.

received health, livelihood and biblical training. These 30 women then returned to their communities, sharing their knowledge through structured programs for a further 1500 Mothers' Union members across 15 centres. Each of these Mothers' Union trainees will soon become trainers, inviting one community guest to attend a program at one of 70 local churches.

Over three years, for only \$35 per woman, the Mothers' Union will

provide training courses for 3000 women every two months.

The project, with contributions from the Archbishop of Sydney's Anglican Aid, has been designed by Dr Wendy Le Marquand, a doctor with more than 30 years' experience in family medicine as well as training and experience in tropical medicine and village medical practice. Dr Le Marquand has already overseen a similar community-based health care program in Mount Kenya South

Anglican Diocese.

Apart from the support provided by Dr Le Marquand, the Gambella Child Survival Project will be co-ordinated and administered entirely by local women, who bring with them indispensable knowledge of the local culture and languages. As the Rev Wilson Okwello of Dimma Mission Centre said, "This is the kind of grassroots movement we really need to build up and empower our communities".

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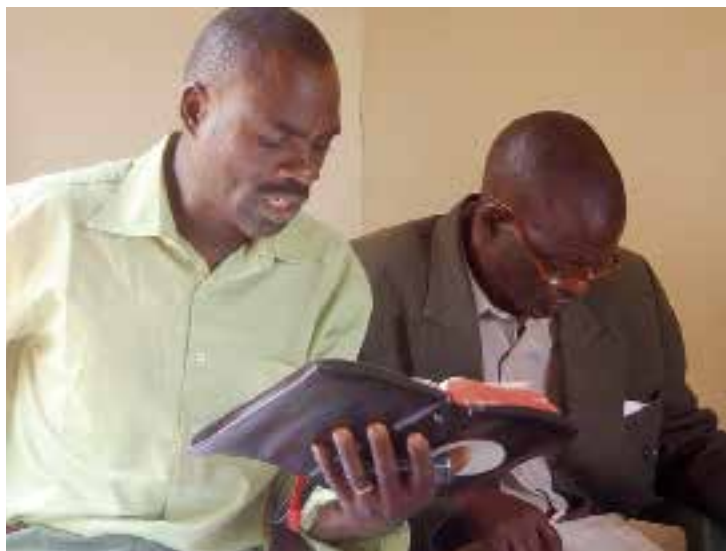
Mission links presented at Synod

SYNOD HEARD ABOUT MANY translation and training initiatives taking place around the world involving Sydney Anglicans, from Asia to Africa and further afield.

Three separate presentations highlighted the work in Cambodia and Tanzania, while Bishop Peter Tasker showed how contributions and support from Sydney have been able to assist dioceses across the globe.

David Painter, who works for the Church Missionary Society (CMS) translating the New Bible Dictionary into Khmer, as well as teaching Preliminary Theological Certificate (PTC) courses in Khmer and English, said inroads have been made in recent years to provide native language translations of training literature, where previously all training had to be translated from English into Khmer in the classroom.

"Now our students have books to study from, rather than relying on handwritten notes that they



Church workers in Tanzania studying the Bible with the help of the PTC.

received from an interpreter," Mr Painter said. "Now they can prepare by reading before we meet, and afterwards they can revise and have something they can take into ministry."

Synod also heard from former

CMS missionary the Rev Colin Reed about ongoing translation work in Tanzania. Mr Reed said having teaching materials in Swahili was greatly aiding local clergy, and quoted one Tanzanian clergyman: "I like parts of the Old Testament

and New Testament in teaching and preaching, as the whole Bible is the word of God. The Old Testament is the foreshadowing of the New Testament, and so I like to teach the whole. My understanding has changed during this course, and I love to learn more about God's word."

"Pray that God would continue to use the Moore College course to build up his people," Mr Reed said to Synod.

The Rev Michael Palmer spoke further about recent work in Tanzania (read more on p32), and Bishop Tasker reminded Synod of its links with dioceses around the world, ahead of GAFCON.

Bishop Tasker said he had received emails from Tanzanian church workers able to attend GAFCON thanks to donations.

"We have been able to help through our churches, and they've expressed their grateful-hearted joy for this fellowship with you," he said.

"I totally support the stand that our Diocese and leaders have taken in stating our total abhorrence of sexual misconduct and any abuse of children. I am committed to strengthening our culture of 'safe ministry' through education and professional development of our clergy and lay people, as we seek to maintain the standards of Christian ministry which are grounded in the teaching of the Bible."

Archbishop Glenn Davies

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Care for Syrians

In response to "Syria Crisis Deepens" by David Mansfield in October SC, as world leaders focus their attention on chemical warfare and arms trafficking in Syria – bungling out a toothless United Nations Security Council Resolution – Anglican Aid, together with the many Christians in Australia, seems to be focusing its attention on the innocent families left in the wake of this geopolitical mud-wrestling in Syria.

The two million refugees, the 25 per cent of the population internally displaced and the more than 100,000 dead mentioned in the story should never be regarded just as numbers on a page. I am glad that Anglican Aid is partnering with Christians to provide support for these fathers, mothers and their children.

I've heard it said that the least we can do is pray. But raising our petitions to the God of the universe should be the best thing we can do. The best thing we can do is pray for these victims of war. I pray that the many Christians in Sydney continue their disdain of politicians regarding refugees as political punching bags. Refugees are people who were also created in the image of God. If Christ

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

died for all the image bearers of God surely we must act for their benefit.

Jireh Jang
 St Andrew's, Strathfield

Amped-up options

I read with interest the October article "Gospel Through Song" (SC, October) which talked about contemporary worship at Church By The Bridge in Kirribilli.

One day I should probably visit CBTB to see one example of how different churches do their music sets. I wonder what it would be like if contemporary churches in general mixed it up a bit, and tried the following:

- having hymns played as they are, with only some archaic words changed. Congregations may not be familiar with different melodic arrangements, which too often are nowhere near as grand or majestic as their originals;

- the use of classical instruments such as the piano (or *gasp*, the organ), either separately or together with contemporary instruments; if not that, the use of acoustic guitars. Perhaps that is something contemporary musicians would be more comfortable with.

There are at least a few of us who aren't only into loud, amped-up music all the time.

Arthur Lee
 Bexley North, NSW

I love Dan op de Veigh to death but there was a mistake in the article "Gospel through song" by Scott Monk. Dan was the singing leader at Engage this year but the music director, hence team leader

(including Dan), was Matthew Mulready (from Simply Sing).

Both Matt and Dan did a great job this year and are a great blessing to our Diocese.

Steve Morrison
 Chairman, Engage Conference

In our midst

Brian Doak's letter in October's SC is offensive in equating asylum seekers arriving by boat as being equivalent to disruptive teenage party guests requiring police removal.

Doak claims that Australia's "soft love" has "caused" an increase in boat arrivals. This view seems completely ignorant about the worldwide chaos (eg Sri Lanka) that has led to many fleeing to seek asylum on our shores – which Australia is meant to accommodate as signatory to the Refugee Convention. The Law Council of Australia records that 90 per cent of those who seek asylum are found to be legitimate refugees – and I would say show grace to the other 10 per cent.

Christians should be the first to lobby our Government to prevent oppressing the foreigner in our midst (Jeremiah 22:3) and to show hospitality (Hebrews 13:2).

Polly Seidler
 Darlinghurst

Brian Doak in October's SC does not help us form a Christian response to asylum seekers, preferring to describe them as "boat people". The mode of transport is not relevant. In a different context they could be "camel people". Ultimately it will be determined by the authorities if

they are refugees. In the meantime let us be non-judgmental, serve them with love and rejoice as we experience their gratitude and response to the gospel.

Phillip Hellman
 Beecroft

Wrong until now

Re the debate in your letters column on voluntary euthanasia, someone once said to the actress Elizabeth Taylor that big diamonds were vulgar. She replied, "I thought so too, until I had one".

I thought euthanasia was wrong till a tumour in my bowels made me wish I could be a horse so that I'd be shot; till I lay in a hospital bed knowing that every minute contained 60 painful seconds; till I said to no-one in particular, "Just let me go". I now believe in voluntary euthanasia.

Medical interventions got me better. What about those whom it doesn't? I support Mr Wood (SC, August) and Christians supporting choice for voluntary euthanasia.

Lucy Tamplin
 Ingleburn

VACANT PARISHES

Parishes and provisional parishes, vacant or becoming vacant, as at October 23, 2013:

- | | |
|---------------|--------------------|
| • Bankstown* | • Nowra |
| • Blackheath | • Paddington |
| • Eastwood | • Penrith |
| • Hurstville | • South Carlton |
| • Longueville | • South Hurstville |
| • Mosman, | • Wentworth Falls |
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MOVES



DE JERSEYS OFF TO DUBAI

The rector of St Matthias' in Centennial Park, the Rev Warwick de Jersey, will finish up in the eastern suburbs parish at the beginning of next February after almost 11 years. He and his wife Caroline will then spend six months at St Andrew's Hall in Melbourne before going to Dubai with CMS to join the staff at the Fellowship of the Emirates church.

"We've always said that after 10 years at Matthias we ought to stop and ask the question, 'Should we keep going?'" he says. "We could stay in our position... but Caroline and I strongly believe that it's up to those who have tenure to stop and ask what's best for the congregation and not just what's best for them.

"That was our first thought. The second thought was that Jim Burgess, who's the senior pastor of the church in Dubai, needed a bed for a couple of nights in August last year and Andrew Doust – who is a good friend from our Holy Trinity, Adelaide days and one of the

elders at the church – rang us and asked if we could put him up."

Mr de Jersey says the short visit from Mr Burgess, coupled with their desire to reassess their next step in ministry, found them on a plane to Dubai for a week in the middle of the year. After conversations and prayer with some of key leaders at St Matthias' and a green light from CMS, the couple then made the decision to go.

"We're very sad to be leaving Matthias because we love it, and the people are fantastic and the ministry is brilliant," he says. "But we're also excited about going with CMS to Dubai to work with Jim at the Fellowship, with a congregation full of new Christians who desperately need to be looked after.

"We haven't exactly worked out my role yet but I'll be teaching the Bible, doing evangelism and training... and Caroline's hoping to be involved in teaching ESL and doing some evangelism through that."

FROM PENRITH TO Lake Illawarra

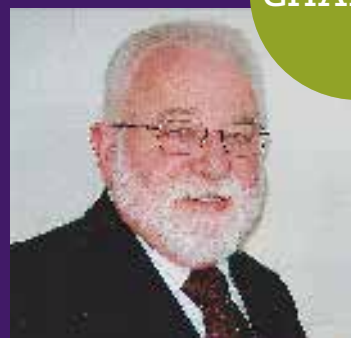
The Rev Rick Miller will be retiring from St Stephen's, Penrith on December 31.

Mr Miller did a Commerce degree at the University of NSW and became a Christian while he was at university through the ministry of his local Anglican church at East Lindfield and the 1968 Billy Graham Crusade.

After working as an accountant and in administration he went to Moore College in 1978, graduating in 1981 before becoming curate of Sans Souci and, in 1985, assistant minister at West Wollongong.

In 1987 Mr Miller became the assistant minister of Cataract with Ambarvale, taking charge of the provisional parish from 1990 to 2000 when he moved to Penrith. Mr Miller was also inaugural chaplain to the former Illawarra Steelers and has planted new congregations in his Penrith parish.

"I'll miss working with my wife Lorraine and my son and daughter in ministry, the great staff teams, the wonderful godly people and the threefold variety of preaching and teaching, pastoring and visiting and organising events," he says. "It's all gone so quickly and I've enjoyed it so much. It's been a great privilege to have 32 years in parish ministry and I thank the Lord for it. But now there are many different things to look forward to, such as spending more time with Lorraine, doing locums, getting involved with a new church and inviting people into our new home near Lake Illawarra. And I'll be able to give stronger support to the St George-Illawarra Dragons!"



NEXT PHASE FOR CLAY

Former rector of Enfield, the Rev Syd Clay, retired on September 30. Mr Clay became senior assistant minister earlier this year when his parish merged with St Andrew's, Strathfield to form the larger Enfield and Strathfield parish.

"It's proved to be a great thing under God to do," he says. "It's given new life to the Enfield end... a future that they didn't expect to have, which has been very positive. Seeing a whole group of people coming in who are younger and have got energy has been very good."

"A lot of people wanted me to stay [in the parish], but I think it was important to go. Some people still deferred to me, and it's good to not have two rectors of a parish!"

Mr Clay is making no firm plans until next year, apart from teaching his two Scripture classes until the end of 2013. "There's a café at Flower Power in Enfield not too far from the school – I meet with other Scripture teachers and have lunch with them, and I'll keep doing that till the end of the year if people want to stop by and have a chat," he says.

VALE

The Rev Donald Hood died on September 15. Born on June 21, 1927, Mr Hood grew up in Marrickville and Chatswood and became a Christian in his teens. He trained as a maths teacher, working in country NSW, Tempe Intermediate and Randwick High School. He was then invited by CMS to be a relief teacher at St George's Grammar School in Hyderabad, India. After two years he returned to Sydney and spent a year with the then Anglican Board of Education teaching Religious Education in high schools.

Returning to Hyderabad in 1959, he married his wife Patricia – also a CMS missionary. He continued



teaching, completed a ThL in 1962, and was ordained into the United Church of South India.

After furlough in 1966 the family was unable to return to India due

to changes in visa regulations, so Mr Hood taught maths and Christian studies at Barker College and was also later appointed Master of the junior and then the senior boarding house. During this time he was also part-time curate to the parishes of Longueville (1968) and Turramurra (1969-70). In 1982 Mr Hood was appointed chaplain at SCECGS Redlands, and four years later returned to Barker College as its senior chaplain, finishing up at the end of 1990. The following year he was asked to become chairman of INF Australia (International Nepal Fellowship). He and his wife visited Nepal, which began a long association and support of INF's ministry.

In a eulogy at the thanksgiving service for Mr Hood's life held at

Barker College, his son Warwick said that after his father's retirement he was invited by the then rector of St Paul's, Wahroonga to begin a group for the older members of the congregation.

"In 2012, this group celebrated its 21st birthday and averages about 50 members per month," Warwick Hood said. "Even in his last few weeks he was attempting to organise the Christmas service, which he always took great effort and care to prepare."

The final Bible verse Warwick Hood read in the eulogy was from Matthew 25:23: "His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a little, I will set you over much; enter into the joy of your master.'"

Archbishop Davies says: “Refresh and sharpen” our mission

Making and maturing disciples our task: Archbishop Davies speaks to Synod members.

This is a condensed version of the Archbishop's first Presidential Address to Synod, given on October 14, 2013.

MEMBERS OF SYNOD, brothers and sisters, saints of the Most High, welcome to the final session of this Synod.

My vision for the next five years is to see the name of Jesus exalted in the city of Greater Sydney and beyond, and to see his body, which is the church, gaining greater honour and respect among the communities in which we live (Ephesians 3:10, 21). For this to happen we must be people who are energised and transformed by the gospel, such that our lives reflect not merely the rhetoric, but the *reality*, of the love of Christ.

Let our love for one another and our love for God, grounded in Christ's love for us, be the magnet that draws unbelievers to the Saviour so that they too may be enfolded into the fellowship of the church, which is his body and his temple. We love him because he first loved us. It is his love that we proclaim and his name that we seek to exalt, as we commit ourselves afresh to glorify God with every fibre of our being.

Our Saviour left a final command to his

apostles: to make disciples of all nations. This Great Commission, so aptly named, has not been superseded. It has not run its course, nor lost its energy or its urgency. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever. All authority in heaven and earth has been given to Jesus and it is by his authority that we make disciples through baptism into the triune name and teach them to observe all that he has commanded. Our mission is twofold: evangelism (the making of disciples) and teaching (the maturing of disciples). While our context is different from the first-century context of the apostles, the mission is the same and will be the same until the Lord returns.

Over the past 10 years we have embarked on a diocesan Mission, a particular application of the Great Commission suitable for our times and focused on a specific goal. We may not have reached the initial goal of 10 per cent of the population attending Bible-based churches within the specified decade, but this goal was meant to lift our spirits and raise our eyes to new horizons, knowing that any achievement of such a goal would only be due to God's grace and mercy, rather than our own efforts. We

thank God for those who became disciples in that period of time and we thank God for those who have matured in their discipleship by keeping the commandments of Christ.

But what now? you ask. What is the next plan? Where to from here? The Standing Committee has been working on this through its Mission Board and you will find in your papers a report from the subcommittee chaired by Bishop Peter Hayward. This report was prepared following feedback from parishes and organisations over the last year, and is now presented to the Synod for its response. It will require our input before any future phase of a diocesan Mission is adopted by the Synod. Over the past 10 years new things have been tried and old ways have been refined, while still seeking to be faithful to the truth of the gospel. In the next stage of our life together as a Diocese our mission needs to be refreshed and sharpened, as we learn from the last 10 years. Following that feedback from members of Synod, the Standing Committee is planning to present a new proposal for our consideration in 2014. Yet brothers and sisters, we do not need to wait till next October to act. The words of Jesus continue to ring within our ears – make disciples of all nations!

You will notice the multi-ethnic approach of Jesus, not just disciples who are Jews or even Mediterraneans, but disciples from *all* nations. Our own churches are sadly no longer a reflection of Sydney with its current multi-ethnic mix and we are in danger of becoming Anglo outposts in a multicultural city. This is a challenge that is not to be relegated to the Department of Evangelism and New Churches, but is our responsibility as a whole Diocese – our parishes, organisations and schools who live within the multi-ethnic stream of Greater Sydney and the Illawarra. There are significant challenges for us in this regard and we need not only the expertise of experienced cross-cultural workers among us, but we need to pray earnestly for our heavenly Father's blessing on the work of our hands as we seek to engage with our neighbours, family and friends with the love of Christ.

ROYAL COMMISSION

On November 12, 2012 the Prime Minister, Julia Gillard, announced that she was recommending to the Governor-General the creation of a Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.

We welcome the Royal Commission as a church that is mindful of its obligations to care for children, some of whom are the most vulnerable members of our society.

The next 10 years, I suspect, will see a number of revelations that will be uncomfortable for the Anglican Church as well as other denominations and Christian organisations. The suffering of those who

have been abused can never be overestimated. We must face any failures of the past with integrity, honour, repentance and compassion. In November 2012, the General Synod Standing Committee established a Royal Commission Working Group to participate in the consultation process, to identify among all dioceses best practice protocols and procedures which respond to and prevent child sexual abuse, and to assist dioceses as they are called upon to respond to the Royal Commission inquiries, should such assistance be required. The Standing Committee appointed as convener of the Working Group Mr Garth Blake SC, who has been a tireless champion of child protection not only in our own Diocese, which we gratefully acknowledge, but also across the Anglican Church of Australia and throughout the Communion as a whole. Our own Standing Committee has

“
The words
of Jesus continue to
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also established a Steering Committee to oversee the response of the Diocese to the Royal Commission and to provide the director of Professional Standards with a point of reference for undertaking this work. Thus far a team of people have been sifting through diocesan records to provide as complete a picture as possible of known cases of child abuse in any Anglican parishes, organisations or schools within the Diocese, the protocols and procedures in place at the time of the incident, the degree to which they were followed and the outcome of such cases. This is all expensive work, but absolutely necessary.

Since the days of the Wood Royal Commission in the 1990s, in the Diocese of Sydney we have put in place a number of measures to address the sin of child abuse in its manifold forms. The first full-time director

of Professional Standards was appointed in 2000 and the Professional Standards Board (now called the Safe Ministry Board) was established by ordinance in 2001. *Faithfulness in Service*, the national code of conduct for clergy and church workers, was adopted by the Synod in 2004. Safe Ministry training has now become a mandatory part of our fellowship for those involved in ministry with children and it is required by ordinance for all rectors and assistant ministers as well – a change long overdue, although it is heartening to note the large number of ministers who had voluntarily undertaken this training in previous years. The recently revised State Government's Working with Children Check provides a more stringent regime for protecting children, which, in principle, we applaud. This means, of course, another layer of bureaucracy and another canon of compliance.

While rectors and churchwardens grit their teeth when they see yet another form to be completed, another rule to be observed, another dictum to be obeyed, I do trust that you will stop to consider the wider picture and not merely judge things from a worldly point of view. As Christians we have an obligation to obey the State, even when it is bureaucratically overbearing and where such obedience rendered causes hardship and inconvenience. However, how much more should we, as members of the body of Christ, be willing to express our care for the vulnerable in our midst, and ignore the inconvenience, especially when it relates to those who are of the household of God? Our reputation as Christians, ambassadors for the name of Christ, should be paramount since it is his reputation that suffers when we are not walking in the paths of righteousness (Psalm 23:3).

EPISCOPAL OVERSIGHT

One of the pressing issues that the Administrator, Bishop Robert Forsyth, brought before this house at the Special Session of Synod in August was the challenge for the next Archbishop regarding the finances of the Endowment of the See. This challenge I now see is mine.

I am aware that various opinions have been expressed within the Diocese concerning the current situation and it has been suggested that we have an opportunity to revisit the role of regional bishops. Should we have four regions rather than five? Should assistant bishops be appointed with portfolios rather than geographical regions? Should assistant bishops be part-time, with a portion of their time being devoted to a parish (either as rector or senior assistant minister)? These are all important questions, and ones that various archbishops have wrestled with over the years. I have been aware of the problems of the Endowment of the See for some time

and I have struggled afresh with these issues. Personally, I can see no practical advantage, and a number of disadvantages, to having our assistant bishops exercising part-time episcopal oversight.

Furthermore, I consider that the organisation of the Diocese into five regions is the best way to advance the gospel and care for the people within our parishes. I have therefore given notice to the Standing Committee, as required under ordinance, that I intend to bring a name for the appointment of an assistant bishop to the next meeting of Standing Committee for their approval. In all likelihood the person so approved will become the next Bishop of North Sydney. Though we currently do not have a stipendiary bishop for the Georges River Region I am grateful that Bishop Peter Tasker and Archdeacon Ian Cox, at the invitation of my predecessor, have graciously and willingly offered to exercise unpaid episcopal and archidiaconal ministry within the region till the end of the year. Furthermore, after consultation with and the goodwill of the Georges River Regional Council, given the state of flux in the financial position of the Endowment of the See, I have asked these two brothers to continue this ministry throughout 2014, and again they have graciously consented.

By this time next year we shall be in a better position to evaluate the ability of the Endowment of the See to fund the Bishop of Liverpool from 2015. In my own view, I consider it would be a retrograde step to merge our five regions into four. Georges River, in particular, with its ethnic mix and cultural diversity, is a microcosm of what Sydney will be like in 20 years' time. The innovative cross-cultural ministries that have been trialled under Bishop Tasker and Archdeacons Huard and Cox have already borne fruit and will continue to provide insights for our future ministry. It would be a tragedy if the population of over 1 million people in this region did not continue to receive direct episcopal oversight. If the Synod agrees with this judgment and the Endowment of the See were unable to fund such oversight, I may have to return next year and ask the Synod if it were willing to assist in the funding of the position of Bishop of Liverpool from 2015, either from the Diocesan Endowment or from a contribution from parishes.

ETHICAL CHALLENGES

Australian society is ever changing and Sydney, the most populous city in the nation, is often in the vanguard of change. The political landscape has changed markedly in less than a decade. Whereas in 2004 the Howard Government, with bipartisan support, strengthened the Marriage Act so as to make explicit the definition of marriage as 'the union of a man and a woman to the exclusion of all others, voluntarily entered into for life', we have

already seen attempts within the life of the last Federal Parliament to amend this definition and moves within the Australian Capital Territory, Tasmania and our own State Parliament to challenge the *status quo*. Notwithstanding the Federal Attorney-General's recent decision to refer the ACT legislation to the High Court, the agitation for so-called 'gay marriage' will not so easily disappear. Specious arguments for 'marriage equality' and 'equal opportunity' have become the mantra of many, without any serious engagement with the nature of marriage, its significance as the foundation of family life and the importance of the biological connection between parents and children. While we can mount strong arguments from

“ We shall need great courage to stand against the tenor of our society as it slips further and further away from the tenets of scriptural authority and biblical morality ”


the experience of human society, we also have a clear mandate from Scripture that recognises marriage as God's design, not ours. It is his plan for the procreation of children, his ordinance for the mutual comfort that a man and a woman might have in their union of one flesh. In the words of the *Book of Common Prayer* such union is 'holy matrimony': 'For be ye well assured that so many as are coupled together otherwise than God's word doth allow are not joined together by God; neither is their Matrimony lawful'. Even if the law regarding matrimony were to change in this country, we can still declare such a union as contrary to God's law, or perhaps we should describe it simply as 'unholy matrimony'. We

shall need great courage to stand against the tenor of our society as it slips further and further away from the tenets of scriptural authority and biblical morality, whether it be 'same-sex marriage', abortion or euthanasia. We should also pray for those who govern us, as the Apostle Paul directs, 'that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life, godly and respectful in every way' (1 Timothy 2:2).

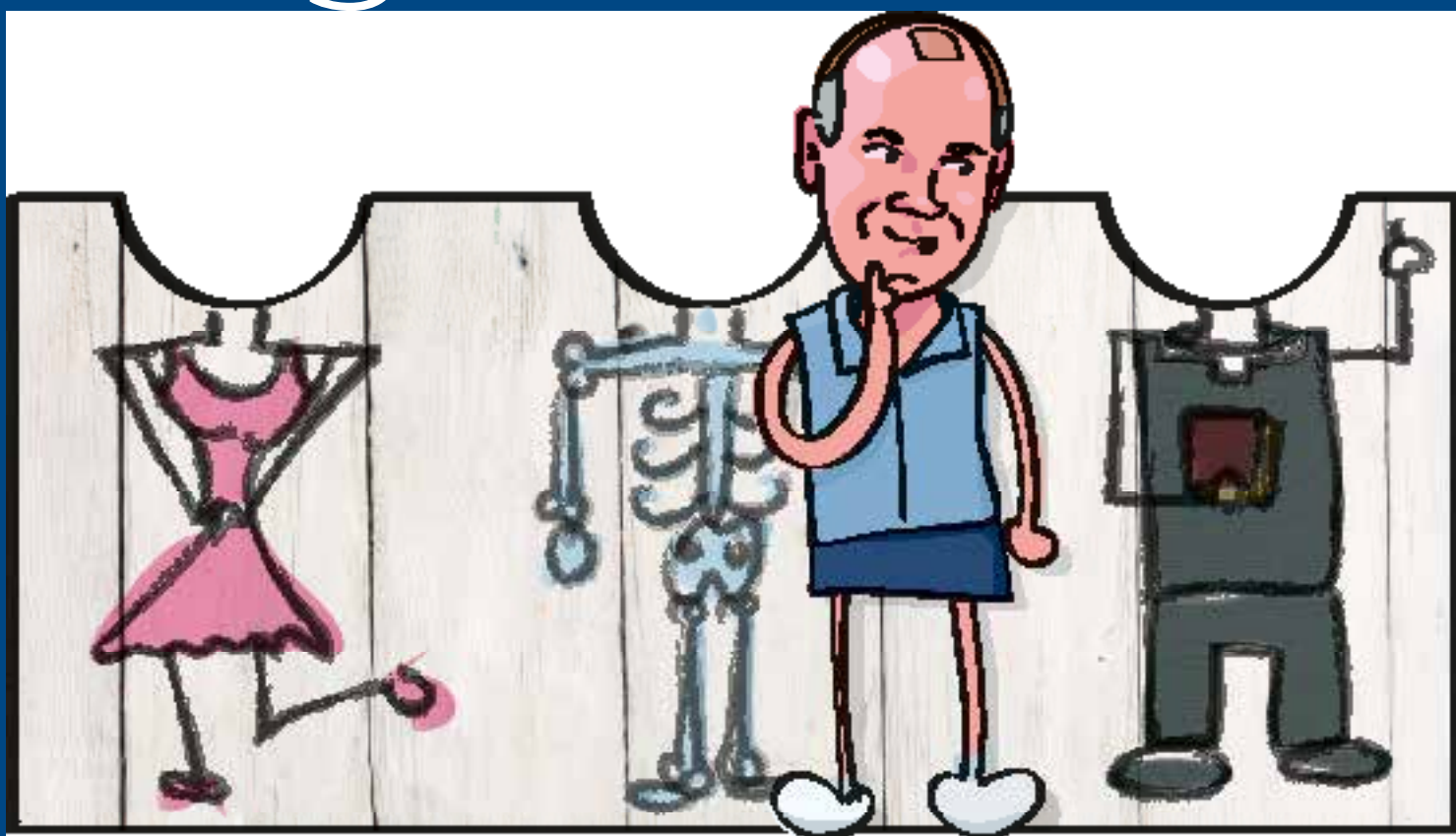
The present crisis of asylum seekers and their treatment by our Federal Government is another cause for our concern. Sadly it has become a political football in recent years, with politicians playing to irrational fears within our society. The evil of people smugglers only exacerbates the ethical minefield that awaits any who enter into this debate. Yet no policy can justify the ill treatment of human beings, which either minimises or dehumanises their status as bearers of the image of God.

Questions of onshore or offshore processing are important issues which may divide us as Christians; the number of refugees that Australia can support may identify areas of difference among us; but we should all be united in our affirmation of the dignity of human life, regardless of a person's ethnic identity, religious affiliation or economic circumstances. That God's image-bearers should be allowed to deteriorate behind wire mesh enclosures without effective opportunity for work, or occasion to give expression to their God-given gifts of creativity and imagination for productive output, is a tragedy which we should all deplore. Yet even to make this stand will invite criticism from within the community, as I myself have experienced in recent days, having being labelled both a communist and soft-hearted libertine! But this should not dissuade us from speaking God's truth into the world, declaring his righteousness and doing good, as we are called to do – so that we may be 'a people of his own zealous for good works' (Titus 2:14).

FINAL REMARKS

Significant responsibilities are placed upon us in this assembly, as we come together as representatives of the parishes and organisations of the Diocese to make decisions, either by ordinance to pass legislation, or by resolution to express opinion. Yet we do not make these decisions in secret but openly and within full view of the public eye. More importantly, we make these decisions in the presence of God. It is to him that we must give account of our stewardship of time, resources and gifts that he has bestowed upon us. As our mission is gospel-focused and Christ-honouring, so our deliberations in this house ought to be gospel-focused and Christ-honouring. May his Spirit so direct us in our thoughts, words and deeds that what we do here over the next three days might be pleasing in his sight. 

How I got collared



In a diocese where regular donning of the clergy collar is the exception rather than the rule, parish rector **MICHAEL WILLIAMSON** decided to make himself more visible by putting it on – with surprising results.

THE CLERGY COLLAR... CURSE OR CATALYST? IN THAT there's a wide variety of practice in wearing or not wearing it among clergy, I thought it didn't really matter. The collar had its place at ordinations, hospital visits, official civic functions and at funerals of non-church members. Apart from these moments when it's helpful to identify the minister, I assumed it to be an obvious curse to effective ministry, a stumbling block to unbelievers and foolishness to all Christians. Yet was I right? A series of experiments wearing my collar has led me to ask new questions.

It all began in early February as I began having breakfast meetings in a local café with other rectors from our mission area. As the newly appointed co-leader for Wollongong (south for me, north for Peter Hutchinson) I'd booked them all up one at a time to have brekky, talk mission and pray.

So there I was, Thursday by Thursday, sitting in a café next to the glass windows plotting to save the world with other like-minded South Wollongong men. Something that came up continually was the

- growing invisibility of the churches and the chameleon-like nature of local Christians. And then it finally struck me. Here I am sitting with other ministers week after week in a public space, talking about how to become more noticeable and neither of us was noticeably different from anyone sitting around us. Talk about the pot calling the kettle black!

So I decided to try an experiment with my clergy shirt and church name-tag badge. Same café, same meeting setting – what would happen? Surprises at every turn.



EXPERIMENT 1

The first thing that shocked me was how exposed and foolish I felt. As a committed evangelist I have no problems with walk-up evangelism in any setting. But that's when I'm wearing my civvies and looking comfortably like everyone else. Had I been hiding behind "looking normal" all these years?

Second, I was a shock to my breakfast partner. His first question, honestly and compassionately asked: "What time's the funeral?" Then it looked as if I was a minister and he was a non-Christian. Next, it was the source of speculation between us as to how negative it must look to others and how negatively divisive it would be in public outside of a funeral setting.

But why did we think this? Was there any evidence from our 90 minutes in that café? None. Quite the opposite. On the immediate upside we were given first-class service – by the manager, no less. This was new. Second, other diners were watching us intently and no-one threw anything at me. Third, the passers-by all looked at me constantly. My brekky mate was given no more than a glance. I was given eye contact from all passing by and had time to smile and greet people with a nod. Lastly, when paying the bill, the hostess inquired about my work and I was given opportunity to introduce myself and what I do – the first time ever!

I reckon the experiment had just begun.



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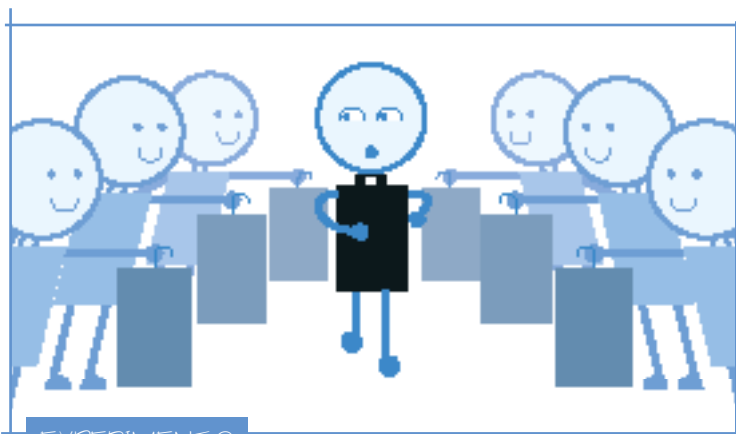
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EXPERIMENT 2

Once more I'm greeted by my rector breakfast partner with compassion and concern – "What time's the funeral?" Is this really the only time we now wear gear like this? Likewise the other rector is swift to jump in and say grace. This never happened when I wasn't wearing a collar. Curious.

Casual glances from passers-by again become lingering stares that I am able to respond to with smiles. Would conversation be possible if I was walking slowly along? I must test this some time.

The café again supplies excellent service. The manager engages in conversation about the new reduced flow of trade following the building extensions. Surprisingly open to conversation.

Following breakfast I decided to enter some shops in search of a new casual shirt – Target, Just Jeans and two other men's boutique shops. I received quick and attentive service from the staff at Target. One shop ignored me as I'd normally expect to be ignored. The other two were quite the stir of activity. In each of these the staff were most apologetic that they had changed seasons and the shirts I wanted were no longer on the racks. Both went to check the storeroom for me without me asking. At one of them I was invited *into* the storeroom out the back to sift through their stock and give my opinion on shirt after shirt that the assistant showed me. Numerous apologies followed when they didn't have what I was looking for. Is the collar really that powerful?



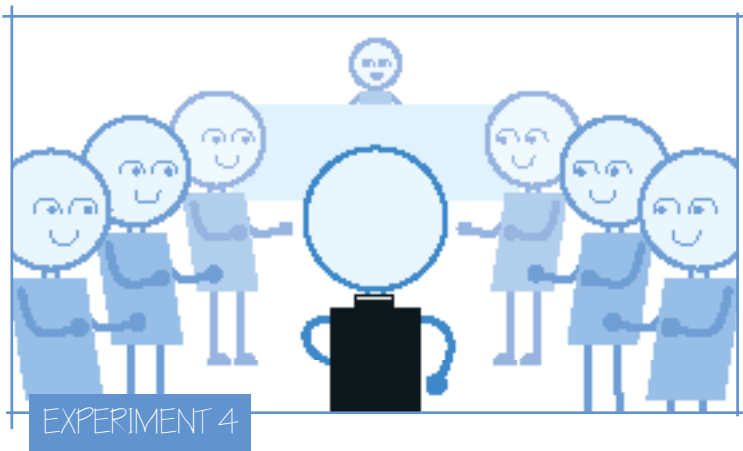
EXPERIMENT 3

The trends continue...

Another breakfast rector concerned at the funeral I must be about to take. Likewise, this rector is more assertive and louder than usual. Is there a sensitivity among rectors to demonstrate to others watching that there is more than one minister at this table – not just the guy with the collar?

Café staff friendly and engaging, ready to chat and willing to be delayed. Could I engage like this with other shop managers? What if I went shop by shop chatting: "Hi, I'm the local Anglican minister – just wondering how business is going for you?" Perhaps I should arrange some diary time for the occasional attempt.

I am yet to try any direct evangelism while wearing the collar. Recent attempts while dressed casually have been normal and fruitful. Would the collar slow this down? Put the person off? Or would it allow a starting point? Must try direct evangelism wearing the collar and badge.



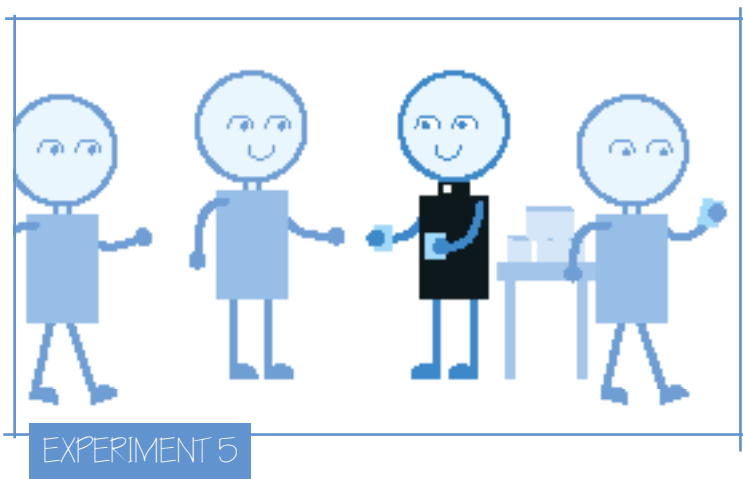
This week I held meetings with two different church members and some reading time while sitting in the food court. The church members were at ease and the trend continued with people's general lingering looks.

The fascinating news about shop owner favours continued. The guy whom I bought coffees from didn't want payment on the spot – he said I could pay when I was finished. Remembering that this was in a busy food court, it was quite astounding! The church member I met with also purchases from this guy all the time and has never been offered service like this. We finished 90 minutes later and paid. I then came back for the second meeting 30 minutes later and the guy ran me a tab again and even remembered what I had ordered the first time. Hmmm, a little bit spooky.

Later, when purchasing prawns at a fish shop, the other customers deferred to me in the queue, wanting me to go before them. I wonder if that would work in a supermarket deli queue with the number system?

Sitting in the food court to work was excellent. There were numerous friendly walk-ups from locals whom I knew and/or church members. However, it was more effective the second time around when I was facing out towards the busy thoroughfare rather than with my back to the entrance. Must remember, though, that if I actually intend to read or to meet intensively with the other person that the interruptions were a problem.

A slow walk through the centre afterwards gained many looks and smiles from strangers but nothing more substantial.



This week we held a food drive at a different local shopping centre. In my collar and badge I stood on the door from 9am to 10.30am on two successive days, handing out fliers and asking people to give an item of

STANDING OUT

In Lakemba, plenty of people on the streets wear clothes that mark out their faith. It's the norm. Of course, they're usually Muslim – but that's part of the challenge: to stick out for one's faith, or to fly under the radar.

For the Rev Mark Eaton, the locum at Lakemba, the choice is obvious: to wear his clergy collar. It's something he's consciously done even before his stint at Lakemba began four months ago.



"I was rector at Oatley for 12 years and after 9/11 a number of us in the area decided that we weren't to be ashamed to wear a clerical shirt – especially if we went shopping somewhere like Roselands where the ordinary Muslim man wears the long shirt that goes down to the ground and the women wear the burqa or the hijab," he says. "I walk up the main street to the Lakemba shops [in the collar]. I certainly get looked at but I don't care.

"Everyone's got a different position about it. Guys don't wear it in other areas but maybe I need to. If you wear one people will often stop you and talk to you, or ask a question – or even get angry. But generally people are quite respectful and it certainly opens up conversations because you stick out like a sore thumb!"

Eaton says that when he was at Oatley the Lebanese people in his congregation, as they grew up, were very careful to wear a lot of gold – particularly a gold cross. When he asked the young men why they wore so much gold, they said it was because they wanted to make clear to the Muslim Lebanese that they were Christian. They wanted to stand up and be different, in their own cultural way, for their faith.

"I thought, well, if they're Lebanese and they're Christian the boys, and the girls as well, will wear a cross," he says. "So I thought, well, I should be wearing a clerical shirt. For people who think that Christianity's dead in places like Bankstown or Lakemba, it's really good to wear [the collar]. We're making it clear that Christians are still around. We ought to set up a little stall at one of the shopping centres with a sign saying 'Ask away' or 'Do you need prayer?'"

Judy Adamson

food today to help feed the poor in our area.

The food drive itself was a great success. As for the collar... in one sense it made little difference to handing out fliers in my civvies – it was still possible. Yet I'm convinced I had more success in gaining attention and acceptance for the fliers in my collar. Each person as they approached would meet my eye, glance at my collar, glance at my badge (ignoring the flier in my hand) and then either look away if their judgement was made against me or look back to my eyes if they were going to engage. It only took a split second but the same thing happened every time.

When I was without the collar and just wore a badge the people would meet my eye, glance at my hands with the fliers (skipping the badge) and make their decision based on whether or not they wanted my flier. If they engaged I'd have to show my badge and describe what Anglicare was and what we were doing. With the collar on I didn't have to explain Anglicare at all, not even once. The hit rate was excellent.

The collar also opened up an interesting set of interactions with people. One man immediately engaged me in 10 minutes of his life's woes and then instructed me to take on the Government with regard to all his issues (and to stop the boats!). Sadly he wasn't interested in my offer of coffee and a chat, nor did he bite at my attempts to salt the one-sided conversation.

Others who were open to me on the first day were also present on the second day at the same time slot (note: some people shop at the

WEARING "THE UNIFORM"



For the Rev Keith Dalby, rector of St John the Evangelist in Gordon, wearing his clergy collar every day "is a no-brainer".

"I remember on the eve of Connect09 Andrew Nixon and I sat down and had a conversation," he says. "I'd come to the parish in December 2004, so he was asking me how I got connected so quickly there and I said, 'It's easy, just wear your collar... How else do people know what you are?'"

"We were sitting at a coffee shop under St Andrew's House and the waitress came up, and I asked her who was the clergyman at the table. She said, 'You are'. I pointed to Andrew and said he was too, and her response was 'Well, I wouldn't know that'. I turned to Andrew and said, 'See?'"

"The furies wear their uniforms, and the police wear their uniforms. You know where to find them and you can identify them by their uniform. I've had more conversations in the shopping centre and down the street simply because I wear my collar. People just come up and talk to me."

He admits that sometimes he needs to go to the shops in civvies if he doesn't have two hours to spare for conversation, and adds that on one occasion he was spat at and called a child molester by a man who wasn't interested in hearing this wasn't the case. Yet, he says, "That's part of the sin of the church. If you stand up and wear the collar you've got to take the good with the bad". But for him, wearing "the uniform" is an overwhelmingly positive experience.

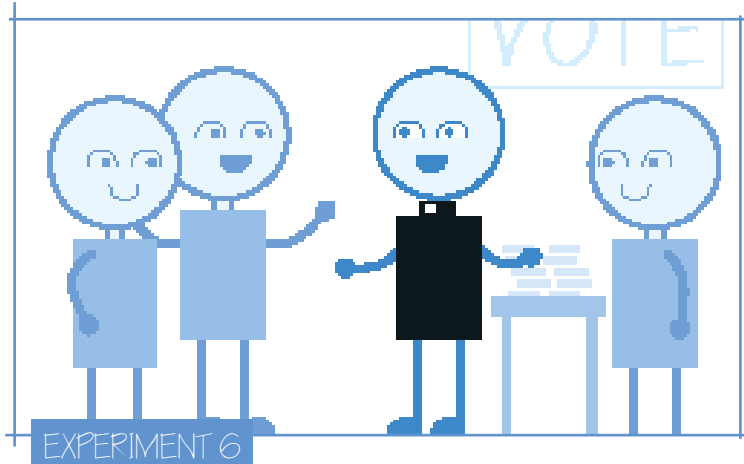
"Even though I don't know the names of every shopkeeper in Gordon they all know me by sight," he says. They all say, 'How're you going, Father Keith?' And when the shopping centre had a huge changeover of tenants... a number of the shopkeepers came and said, 'Can I have a chat with you?' and I did a lot of counselling with people who didn't come to church just because they all knew who I was. So I was able to help them."

To clergy in Sydney who don't wear their collars Dalby asks, "Why not? You're a clergyman, don't be ashamed of who you are. Be willing to put yourself out there. Don't hide behind the anonymity of civilian clothes."

"If we're fair dinkum about being a positive effect on our community, the easiest way of telling people we're there is wearing the collar. They see the church and that's fine but if they see the rector or the assistant clergy out locally, it tells them that we're not stuck in our little holy huddle on the hill, we're out in the community. And if we're not wearing the collar, how the heck do they know we're doing it?"

JA

precisely same time daily... lots of people!). They all greeted me – either warmly, or at least acknowledged me this second time. It made for multiple second interactions with people. If we weren't booked in with centre management just to do what we did, I'd seriously wonder about doing this more often – same time, same entrance, same people.



Walk-up evangelism!

Our church was a polling place for September's Federal Election. Every election we manage to give away more than 200 bibles or other Christian information to the people who come to vote (about 10 per cent of voters).

We've learnt much about this over the years, not least of all that we should only offer bibles as people exit the building, and we need to be right at the exit but separate to all others. I've also noted in past years that the last two hours of polling are the least effective and most frustrating for the volunteers. Of course we've always worn our church badges to declare who we are, but I've never before worn *the collar*. This time I did, and I took on the last two hours of polling solo to see if it made a difference.

And what a difference!!! The Bible giveaway rate jumped to 50 per cent of all attempts and the follow-up of other offered information also significantly lifted. While there was no change in the conversation engagement with those coming to vote, what did happen was that the staff within the polling booth wanted to engage with me on their breaks, as did most of those who were handing out polling information. I didn't approach any of them. They each voluntarily came to me wanting to speak deeply about spiritual matters. They each bided their time and then sidled over for meaningful conversation and gave me opportunity to present the gospel.

Far from being a hindrance, the collar was a help in Bible distribution and was a magnet for conversation.

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CONCLUSION

No doubt there will be more opportunities to experiment with the collar. However, from my six experiments so far I'm convinced my original prejudice was ill-founded. Not only is it an excellent help to identify the minister in formal settings, ceremonies and in hospital visitation, it is also a useful icebreaker for evangelism, social action and public interaction. The general respect accorded to a minister in a collar is in line with what our Connect09 researchers declared to us four years ago. There is still some public credibility automatically offered to an Anglican minister.

However, I'm not yet ready to wear it constantly for this precise reason. In numerous settings the collar has too much power, as I discovered in the shops – power that's tempting to abuse for personal gain and power that can be misunderstood by others.

I've found there is a community superstition that presumes the minister's prayers are more powerful than our own. One local restaurant offered for me to regularly come and eat free if I'll promise to say the occasional prayer for the owner. I assured him I already prayed for him; he didn't need to buy it. While I'd prefer to avoid such moments, this challenge creates a potential opportunity for the gospel to be adorned when I argue to pay full price and not jump the queue and refuse to take advantage. Godly and prayerful wisdom is definitely required to discern what's happening in each setting. Sadly that is often beyond me. Deliberately not wearing it because of personal weakness is valid.

One practice that has changed decisively for me from these experiments is to wear my church name tag every time with the collar. I've found it's important to distinguish myself from other denominations to clearly advertise the church where I minister and also declare my personal identity beyond the collar. Especially in evangelism and public interaction settings, the large and clear name tag works as the social glue in the conversation. The collar might be the initial icebreaker but the badge then warms up the conversation into a personal exchange.

While it all began with trying to solve the practical problem of our invisibility in the community, the issue itself leads to thinking theologically about the issue of distinctive dress. Pragmatic results matter but any practice should be rejected if it discredits our Lord or causes others (or even ourselves) to stumble. Allowing freedom and reserving judgement on how we ministers dress is vital for this reason.

Paul's discussion of this in 1 Corinthians 10:23-11:1 says it all: "Everything is permissible" – but not everything is beneficial. "Everything is permissible" – but not everything is constructive. Nobody should seek his own good, but the good of others... So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God. Do not cause anyone to stumble, whether Jews, Greeks or the church of God – even as I try to please everybody in every way. For I am not seeking my own good but the good of many, so that they may be saved. Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ. I'm hearing you, Paul, and my wardrobe is following suit.

SC

COLLARLESS

The Rev Jodie McNeill, who is rector of Oak Flats – next door to Michael Williamson's Shellharbour City parish – says he's happy to be convinced otherwise but at this point he "never ever" wears his collar.

"My reason not to is not the same as some of my friends, who may have gone to Catholic schools and so on," he says. "For them there's a whole lot of theology that's being pushed through it, in terms of the role of the priest as intercessor and stuff like that."



"For me, my main thoughts are about trying to communicate to everyone in the church that we are all ministers. I don't want to stand out as being particularly different except in areas where I need to. Minister just means 'servant', so we're all ministers – but at the same time I'm also the pastor and I need to have the responsibility that my teaching is up to scratch and I'm not leading anybody astray. So there is a distinction between people who have a different form of ministry, but my concern with wearing a clerical collar is that it will end up leading us to be seen to be different for the wrong reasons."

McNeill says that all the local shop owners know he's the Anglican minister because "it comes up in conversation, not because I wear the uniform".

He appreciates what Williamson is doing, understanding that "his missional heart really wants to engage with the community", but chooses to engage through everyone in the church rather than just using himself as a figurehead. Once every three months, for example, 100 parish members wear green "Oak Flats Anglican" T-shirts and do a community letterbox drop. At one such day earlier this year, McNeill says some locals commented that "The Anglicans are out in force!"

"It's more than just connecting to people's preconceptions about the minister as the teacher and everyone else just turns up," he says.

"Egalitarianism is such an intrinsic element of Australia. And I feel that by putting a clerical collar on in my church and in my situation, people would think I'm having myself on. If I just dress slightly better than I normally would by wearing a jacket – even if I don't tuck my shirt in – people say, 'Oh, are you dressing up, mate?'"

"I think if I wore the collar it would create a barrier between me and Dave the deli guy, who I feel I'm just having a relaxing chat with and moving step by step towards a gospel conversation. He sees me as just a guy... rather than a guy who's doing it because it's his job."

JA

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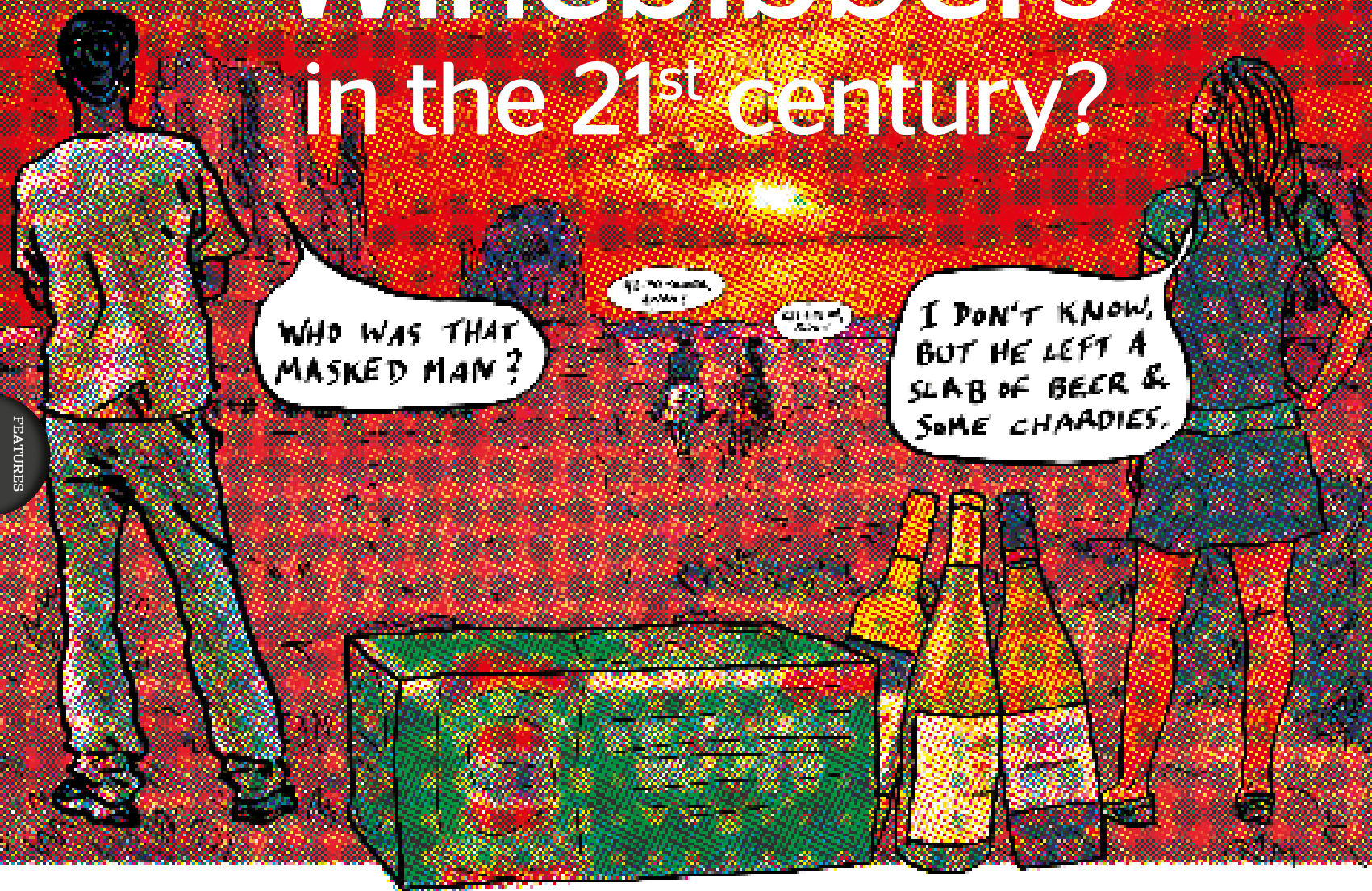
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Winebibbers in the 21st century?



The Bible makes a number of positive comments about drinking alcohol – but it also contains plenty of warnings that modern Christians should take seriously, writes PAUL WILLIAMSON.

A FEW MONTHS BACK MY WIFE AND I WERE AT THE CINEMA FOR A night out. Unfortunately it was not quite the experience I had expected. The problem was not just the movie we had gone to see: I found it hard to embrace the modern take on one of my childhood heroes (the Lone Ranger). However, the main reason my night out was ruined was because the people sitting next to us had decided to bring in a bottle of wine. After pouring this into glasses, the person beside me kept it held up to their nose (and unfortunately too close to mine) during the screening of the movie, and so impinged on what I considered my personal space.

This negative experience got me thinking about a matter that I suspect needs to be on our spiritual “radar” as 21st century Christians – and perhaps particularly here in Australia. And that is, to what extent have we simply imbibed our modern culture, and to what extent should we be counter-cultural with respect to our approach to alcohol?

Coming from a culture (Northern Ireland) that not long ago was, and possibly remains, one of binge drinking for most non-Christians and total abstinence for most Christians, my culture shock when I first arrived in Sydney made for some interesting moments. I still recall with amusement an experience I had on my first college mission. I was slightly perturbed by the initial difficulty I had distinguishing believers from non-believers at the men's evangelistic dinner; nearly everyone had a bottle of VB in their hand!

Since then I have adjusted to the fact that most Aussie Christians drink alcohol, and that

there is no correlation between this and their spiritual maturity. So please do not misunderstand me. I am not saying that drinking alcohol is wrong or necessarily detrimental to our spiritual life. While both would certainly be true if we were guilty of over-indulgence, alcoholic beverages are not inherently sinful. But when we find ourselves becoming dependent on such beverages, or adopt an approach that seems to betray such dependence, that's another matter entirely. And it's really this kind of situation that I want us to give some thought to, both in our own lives and in the lives of those we care about. Drinking alcohol may well be permissible, but is it always wise?

As a teetotaler (unless you count the occasional bottle of lemon, lime and bitters), my own attitude to alcohol is one of total avoidance. This is really no great sacrifice for me, since I can think of only one alcoholic beverage that I have ever enjoyed tasting. As a non-Christian I consumed alcohol due to peer pressure rather than personal taste.

I realise, of course, that this is not true of everyone; nor is abstinence a stance that everyone must necessarily adopt – though for some people, particularly alcoholics or those who may be prone to alcoholism – this is undoubtedly the wisest policy. However, as in all such matters of individual conscience, our Christian attitude should surely be one of temperance, not simply in the sense that we exercise self-control in relation to our own indulgence, but also in the sense that we exercise restraint for the sake of others around us (Christian or otherwise). Both principles seem to be fairly clearly taught in Scripture (see Eph 5:18; 2 Tim 3:3; Tit 2:2-3,12; 1 Pet 4:3; 2 Pet 1:6; cf. Rom 14:15,21; 1 Cor 8:9-12; 10:24; 10:27-11:1).

However, while the Bible does not prohibit the consumption of alcohol, it does offer numerous warnings about it that must be taken seriously. Significantly, the first time Scripture mentions alcohol and its effects, it was an occasion for sin (Gen 9:21). While this passage clearly focuses much more on Ham's shameful act than Noah's over-indulgence, the latter's intoxication is obviously portrayed in a negative light. There was nothing wrong with either making or drinking the wine; but Noah drank so much of the stuff that he sacrificed his normal sense of decorum – a fact that was exploited by his voyeuristic son.

Significantly, a few chapters later, intoxication is again exploited for nefarious purposes. Lot's drunkenness facilitates two acts of incestuous intercourse and the impregnation of his morally unscrupulous daughters (Gen 19: 32-35).

Admittedly, neither of these two texts in Genesis is primarily about the pros and cons of alcohol consumption; nevertheless, both texts highlight the inebriating effects of this drug, and the negative consequences that can ensue from drinking it. The mind-numbing effect of alcohol is further attested in several other Old Testament texts (e.g. 2 Sam 11:13; 13:28; 1 Kings 20:16; Hos 4:11; Hab 2:5,15), and other passages arguably point to its negative impact on wise decision making (Judges 16:25; Esther 1:8-12; Dan 5:1-2; Hos 7:5). While this could also be a factor in the prohibition of alcohol for the Nazirites (Num 6:3,20; cf. Judges 13:7; Amos 2:12; Luke 1:15), it is more likely that in this case self-denial simply expresses separation to God from earthly joys.

However, the derogatory effect of alcohol on clear thinking and decision making may certainly explain why God prohibits its consumption by priests while on duty (Lev 10:9-11; Ezek 44:21; cf. Isa 28:7). It was clearly important for the latter to have their wits about them as they conducted their responsibilities in the worship of God – both for their own sake (cf. Lev 10:1-3) and to ensure the benefit for the worshippers (cf. Lev 22:17-25).

As well as implicit warnings about the dangers of alcohol, there are several explicit warnings within the Old Testament. The book of Proverbs notes that 'Wine is a mocker and beer a brawler; whoever is led astray by them is not wise' (Prov 20:1). The following chapters further warn readers of alcohol's potentially detrimental effects on their personal wellbeing (Prov 21:17; 23:19-21; 23:29-35; 31:4-7). In a similar vein, the prophet Isaiah criticises those whose pleasure in life apparently revolves



Dr Paul Williamson lectures in Old Testament, Hebrew and Aramaic.

around the consumption of alcohol (Isa 5:11,22), and Micah condemns those who seem to live for very little else (Mic 2:11).

To this Old Testament material we can obviously add passages from the New Testament that strongly discourage drunkenness and encourage sobriety (Matt 24:49; 1 Cor 5:11; 6:10; Eph 5:18; 1 Tim 3:3,8; Tit 1:7; 2:3). While some of these texts relate in particular to church leaders, it should be noted that the moral virtues listed apply to all believers, rather than simply a "spiritual elite".

All these texts must of course be balanced by Scripture's more positive attitude to the use of alcohol. As reflected by its use in Old Testament worship rituals, wine is considered one of God's blessings (Exod 29:40; Lev 23:13; Num 15:5,7,10; 18:12; 28:7,14; Deut 14:23,26). Indeed, it is explicitly described as a gift God gives to be enjoyed (Gen 27:28; Deut 7:13; 11:14; 12:17; 14:26; Ps 104:15; Eccl 9:7; 10:19; cf. Isa 55:1) and is depicted as a facet of God's future blessing in the messianic era (cf. Joel 3:18; Amos 9:13; Zech 9:11). Jesus turned water into high quality wine (John 2:1-10), and some of the accusations levelled at him clearly suggest that his practice was quite different from that of John the Baptist (cf. Matt 11:19; Luke 7:33-34). The consumption of wine (albeit diluted with water, according to Rabbinical practice) was a significant part of the Lord's Supper (Mark 14:24-25 and parallels; 1 Cor 11:25), and Paul famously advocated its medicinal value to Timothy (1 Tim 5:23).

It is clear from this that wine (or other fermented drink) falls into



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● that category of everything that God has richly provided us with for our enjoyment (1 Tim 6:17). Moreover, none of us should pass judgment on others who wish to enjoy it (Col 2:16; cf. 1 Cor 10:29). Yet, as many biblical texts underline, we must do so in moderation and avoid over-indulgence, which is simply a form of greed. Moreover, we must avoid exercising our freedom in such a way that might trip others up and see them sin against their conscience (cf. Rom 14:14,21).

But to return to the point with which I started, to what extent should our Christian attitude and practice be counter-cultural? For example, when having a family gathering or other special occasion, do we automatically assume that we must serve alcohol? When we are guests, do we insist on bringing along a bottle of nice wine – even when we know that the hosts are teetotallers?

We had such an experience a few years back. When I informed my guest that we would use the wine for cooking, he was not impressed – we had no idea about the quality of the wine! On several occasions I have received a bottle of wine as an expression of gratitude, and I can understand non-Christians assuming that this is something I will appreciate. However, what about Christians? Do we simply assume that everyone in our society drinks alcohol, and by our reaction or comments imply that anyone with a “dry” house must be slightly odd?

A recent Government advertisement depicted a father subliminally “teaching” his son to consume too much alcohol. Is this something that even we, as Christians, may also be doing? Does our attitude and practice demarcate us from our society? Or does it signal that we are just like others who find it difficult to relax or have a good time without a glass of wine or a bottle of beer in our hand? If so, surely this is hardly the message we are wishing to send – either to the next generation of Christians or to the world at large.

Jesus was falsely accused of being a “winebibber” (KJV). Might the same charge hold more weight for his 21st-century disciples? SC

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DIARY

Tuesday, November 5

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A morning of golf, food and fun. You don't need to be a golfer to have fun, and there are great prizes for all levels. Individual players will be provided with a team.

For more information contact Pam at pamela.ega@bigpond.com, or phone 4683 3838.

LOCATION | Antill Park Golf Course, Jarvisfield Rd, Picton NSW 2571 | 8.30am

Wednesday, November 6

Year 13 Info Evening

The Year 13 Info Evening is an opportunity for prospective students and their families to get a glimpse into what Year 13 is all about. You will have the chance to meet the staff, hear about the details of the program, ask questions and visit the campus. The night includes a free supper.

For more information, visit year13.net/events/year-13-info-evenings

LOCATION | Wanawong Campus, Loftus | 7pm to 9pm

Saturday, November 9

Kurnell Anglican Church Fete

St James' Anglican Church at Kurnell is having one of its much-anticipated opportunity shops. It will have all the features of church fetes of old – a wonderful cake stall with freshly made cakes, pies and preserves; a plant stall; loads of pre-loved toys, books, DVDs and locally produced craft. Devonshire teas, household goods and a sausage sizzle are all on the agenda, as well as face painting and other games for the kids.

For more information, contact Susan on 9668 9936.

LOCATION | St James' Anglican Church, Cnr Dampier and Torres Streets, Kurnell | 8am to 12.30pm

Saturday, November 9 – Saturday November 16

Safe Ministry Week

This is for anyone involved in ministry to children and youth who needs to do Safe Ministry training for the first time or refresh their training. For more information, please visit youthworks.net/events/november-safe-ministry-week or call 8268 3355. Various times and locations.

Saturday, November 16

Mamre Anglican School Fair

Mamre Anglican School is hosting its first-ever fair, boasting carnival rides, food and market stalls and general entertainment. All are welcome and entry is free. For more information have a look at the Mamre Anglican School Fair 2013 Facebook Page or contact Megan at megan.malek@mamre.nsw.edu.au

LOCATION | Mamre Anglican School, 45 Bakers Lane, Kemps Creek | 10am to 3pm

Saturday, November 16

Gymea Anglican Church Spring Fair

The Spring Fair at Gymea Anglican has something for everyone, including stalls selling cakes, craft and books, as well as a BBQ lunch, live bands, a climbing wall for the kids and much more. For more information contact Kim on 9524 6225 or via email at office@gymeaanglican.org.au

LOCATION | 131 Gymea Bay Rd, Gymea Bay | 8.30am to 1pm

Sunday, November 17

Wollondilly People's Praise

Wollondilly People's Praise is a Sunday afternoon program which provides Christians of all denominations with

an afternoon of praise and worship through the singing of the old favourite hymns and choruses.

Our final program for this year will be held in St Mark's Anglican Church, Picton. The guest artist is soloist John Bicknell. Come and enjoy singing along with the recently restored pipe organ.

For more information contact Harry on 0423 640 306 or send an email to hard_cha_arm@yahoo.com

LOCATION | St Mark's Anglican Church, West Menangle Street, Picton | 2.30pm

Wednesday, December 4

Jesus Club Show Night

The Jesus Club, a fellowship and evangelistic group for people with disabilities, is putting on an end of year concert where Jesus Club members can show off their skills in comedy, singing and dancing, while also having an opportunity to share the message of Jesus.

For more information book online at jesusclub.org.au, or contact Mel at info@jesusclub.org.au or on 0402 545 565. Entry is \$10 and includes light finger food.

LOCATION | Burwood RSL, 96 Shaftesbury Rd, Burwood | 6.30pm to 7pm start

For diary events email newspaper@anglicanmedia.com.au

PALMER TRIP TO TANZANIA

THE rector of Vaucluse, the Rev Michael Palmer, has recently returned from a trip to Tanzania, where he has assisted local clergy Mr Palmer, who has previously spent time in Tanzania as a CMS missionary, speaks Swahili and has longstanding relationships with many Christians there – in particular the Bishop of Lake Rukwa Diocese, the Rt Rev Mathayo Kasagara, whom he first met in 1983. Mr Palmer says the most recent trip was sparked by an idea from Bishop Peter Tasker for someone to go and assist in the training of senior pastors in the still very young Lake Rukwa Diocese.

"Peter Tasker came back and asked whether I would be interested in taking up this plan," Mr Palmer says, "and of course as a friend of Mathayo [and] a speaker of Swahili, it was a great thing to do."

Mr Palmer says he was very keen to work with the pastors in order to train them to be able to teach use Moore College's Preliminary Theological Certificate to train each other and additional workers in the Diocese, rather than simply

teaching the material himself.

"I modelled the teaching in the first few lessons, and then I handed it over to Tanzanians to teach themselves, to teach the group," he says. "You can only really do that if you are a Swahili speaker, because you could hear what they were teaching, and you knew where they were pausing, what the questions were and where the discussion was going. So you could freely hand it over and watch them... There was this process where I facilitated the teaching of the PTC, I modelled, but a good 70 per cent of the teaching they handled themselves."

The three weeks Mr Palmer spent with the ministers of Lake Rukwa Diocese also included opportunities to help facilitate discussions between Bishop Mathayo and his pastors, focused on foundational issues for the diocese.

"[They discussed things] like a strategic plan for the Diocese, or how to improve worship services, or how to minister in a context of poverty," he says. "The sort of things that are foundational for



Bishop Mathayo Kasagara with his wife at Lake Rukwa.
Inset: Mathayo and Michael, 1983.

them, and I guess I participated as somebody from within in their tradition, but from outside their cultural context."

However, Mr Palmer also was able to watch the PTC seminars used as a platform for pastoral ministry and evangelism in the area, which he says saw immediate results.

"We created time in these three weeks where these senior pastors, rural teams if you like, were engaged in pairs in house-to-house visiting, where literally hundreds of homes were visited," he says. "Potentially a thousand people were spoken to, prayed for,

encouraged from the Scriptures.

"Because we were there over that time they could see the effect of that ministry, and in the Sundays after the pastoral visiting, churches were fuller. People who had either not gone to churches for years, or who had never been, turned up. That sort of process where people were engaged over three weeks in the word of God, learning it through the PTC material, their own seminars, and then evangelism – it was just fantastic, and watching this diocese and these young guys take shape was a real privilege."

God is doing amazing things in the Iranian community in Sydney.



Come and hear how you can help.

December 2, 2013. 7:15 for 7:30pm
Tara Anglican Girls School Auditorium
(Masons Drive North Parramatta)

Speaker: Glenn Davies



Hear from the Archbishop of Sydney Glenn Davies, and get to meet Nina who is spearheading the work. RSVP at www.iranianchurchsydney.com.au or office@crosswayanglican.org Tickets are \$10.

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THE SUNDAY GOSPEL IN 2014: THE YEAR OF MATTHEW
Sunday 17 November, 2:00pm to 4:30pm (\$30/15)

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Email institute@stjames.org.au or phone 8227 1300 for more information or to register.

Ceremony of Carols featuring The Choir of St James' and Alice Giles – Harp

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SYDNEY SERVICE HELD FOR PESHAWAR DEAD



A memorial service held to honour the Christian martyrs killed in a terror attack in Peshawar, Pakistan, was recently held in an Anglican church in Sydney.

St Saviour's church in Punchbowl hosted many members of the Sydney Pakistani Christian community, who gathered together to worship, pray and mourn over the attack that left hundreds dead after a service at All Saints' Anglican Church in Peshawar.

The night included a sermon by Pakistani pastor Siddique Paul, prayers from out the front and from the group, songs and hymns sung in Urdu, as well as addresses by various people from within and without the Pakistani Christian community.

The Community Welfare attaché to the Pakistani Consulate-General in Sydney, Mr Sardar Balakh Sher Khosa, attended the meeting in his capacity as a diplomatic

consul, and strongly condemned the attacks against the Christian minority, describing people who would commit such an attack as "less than human".

"No human can take life, whether it is of a Hindu, whether it is a Muslim, whether it is a Christian," said Mr Khosa in English when

terrorism."

Prayers, conducted mostly in Urdu, were said for the survivors and those who are grieving, as well as for those who would commit terrorist acts, that they would know the truth and change their lives.

Also in attendance were members

Party, Rev the Hon Fred Nile.

"It's terrible, shocking what's happening," Mr Nile said. "The other night I was at a big Coptic meeting, similar to this, about what's happening in Egypt. It's a tragedy when the Christian community, peaceful, loving and kind, have suicide bombers walk amongst hundreds of people and kill men, women and children."

Former CMS Federal Secretary and missionary in Pakistan, the Rev Canon John Thew, was also at the event, and has been working with Pakistani church planter Mr Siddique Paul while in Sydney. He said there are practical things any Christian can do to support Pakistani Christians at this time.

"Right now, the average person could support the Archbishop's Anglican Aid appeal," Mr Thew said. "That's a very practical thing right now. Another very practical thing is that if there is a Pakistani family, or indeed any Christian, any foreign family living close by, to just make a one-on-one friendship. It's a long, slow process, but it's a life-changer."

Since the bombing at All Saints' Anglican church further attacks, believed to also have been carried



Main: A woman grieves. Above (r-l): John Thew, Pastor David and John Bales join hands in prayer; Community Welfare attaché to the Pakistani Consulate-General, Sardar Balakh Sher Khosa; Siddique Paul; Fred Nile.

addressing the group. "Nobody dares take life – nobody in the world. We strongly condemn them and, since the creation of Pakistan, Pakistan has suffered to the maximum. Pakistan is the victim of

of the NSW chapter of Tehreek-e-Insaf, the Pakistani political party founded by former Test cricketer Imran Khan, as well as NSW Legislative Council Member and leader of the Christian Democratic

out by the Taliban, have occurred in the Peshawar area against civil servants and public spaces. Bombs on a bus and in a marketplace are believed to have killed at least another 50 people.



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Save the world by

JUDY ADAMSON

Sleepy Hollow

Wednesday 10pm, Ten

Marvel: Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D.

Wednesday 8.30pm, Seven

THE MAGICAL AND MYSTERIOUS are always fascinating for us. We happily delve into story after story – and even alternative worlds – where miraculous and supernatural things are as commonplace as the sun (or suns) rising in the morning.

Good versus evil is usually a central element of each tale, along with ordinary people who are vastly outgunned and outnumbered by forces, creatures, powers or simple brainpower beyond their capacities.

Amid the creativity of the stories we love the good versus evil part because it's clear-cut. There are no confusing grey areas to make

us doubt what is right, just like Harry Potter and Tolkien's tales of Middle-Earth. Even the obsessive vampire stories of the *Twilight* series latch onto the good/evil battle in their own way.

On our TVs there is an almost endless list of shows hinging on magic or the miraculous and "good" against "bad". We've watched everything from *The Ghost and Mrs Muir* to *The X-Files*, *Discworld* to *Charmed*, *Merlin*, *Once Upon A Time* – even *Doctor Who*. Whatever age they're pitched at, you can just about guarantee each will contain curious or scary creatures, unexplained weird stuff and an ongoing fight for the life and future of this king, that family or – more often than not – the whole planet.

Our world is an increasingly uncertain place. The desire for safety and reassurance amid reports of terrorism, natural disaster, mindless local violence and global poverty make such stories welcome, because onscreen the enemy is clear. The story is "real" but still at arm's length, and somehow, some way – even though the cost may be high – the evil is defeatable.

Which brings me to a couple of recent offerings in *Sleepy Hollow* and *Marvel: Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D.* A world apart in style and attitude, but with the same core of good against evil amid extraordinary, superhuman or supernatural occurrences.

Sleepy Hollow has



bedtime

mined the book of Revelation (or "Revelations", as the characters irritatingly call it), taking just a few snippets along the way from Washington Irving's 19th-century short story. The result transforms Ichabod Crane from a self-serving schoolmaster – frightened by a fake "headless horseman" – into a dashing English fighter for the cause of American independence under George Washington. More than that, Crane is someone charged by Washington to ensure the safety of humanity by killing a horseman that, we quickly discover, is part of a devilish plot to bring about the end of the world. And that's just the start of the troubles.

In *Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D* we're taken to the next stage of the Marvel story – a world of action and rescue from the team that brought us *The Avengers*, *Iron Man*, *Thor* and *Captain America*. The S.H.I.E.L.D organisation, which appeared in all these films, is the centre of attention in the TV series rather than on the periphery. We have no Iron Man or Thor to pin the story upon – the focus is a team of mere mortals (clever, but ordinary people nevertheless) who rush about the globe defusing crises, stopping those with superhuman powers from running amok, and generally saving the day while gaining little more than an artistic graze on their faces.

It's a lighter and lesser version of the Marvel films but entertaining nevertheless. Some characterisations within the team are a bit forced – the nerdy scientific pair and the brooding A-type guy, for example – but the stories are inventive and there's plenty of high-tech effects and electronic bling along the way to keep you interested. In addition, the style of the action and dialogue doesn't prevent primary-aged kids from enjoying it as well.

The most curious element in *Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D* is that it has resurrected Agent Phil Coulson (Clark Gregg), who died in heroic fashion in *The Avengers* film last year. How is he alive? Is he a man (supernatural stuff) or some kind of cyborg with Coulson's memories (techy stuff)? Various hints have been given, and no doubt all will be revealed at some stage, but in the meantime Coulson helps stretch the good guy element to its absolute limit with his exhaustingly righteous ethical compass. Is anyone really that disinterested and focused

on doing right? I wonder.

Back at *Sleepy Hollow*, I can safely say that it is much too graphic (and potentially scary) for many primary kids, which may partly account for a move from its original 8.30pm Tuesday slot. Decapitations, demonic possession, torture and guilt-induced suicide all made an appearance in the first month, along with a number of concepts regarding forgiveness, judgement and the end of the world that might really frighten younger ones.


The premise for the show is that Ichabod Crane (Tom Mison), has been brought back to life in modern-day *Sleepy Hollow* after dying in battle in the 18th century at the hands of a

fearsome masked horseman. He decapitated the horseman with his last strength, but now the forces of evil have brought the headless horseman back from the dead. This also resulted in Crane's resurrection, thanks to a spell said over him as he lay dying by his wife – who was a white witch, for want of a better way of explaining it.

The horseman is, we soon discover, one of the four horsemen of the apocalypse. It would take too long to explain all the ins and outs of the storyline, but suffice to say that Crane teams up with Abbie Mills, a local policewoman who is part of a centuries-long history of strange occurrences in the town. She and her sister Jenny saw a demon as children, and while Jenny swore it was true and ended up in an asylum, Abbie lied and managed to keep out of trouble. Until now.

The problematic thing is that Crane and Abbie are working to prevent these demonic forces bringing about the end of the world, but for those who know their Bible it's completely off the dish. The Bible's four horsemen are not sent by hell to end the world and so need to be "stopped" by earthly good guys. They are sent by God as part of his judgment upon the world. And given that Revelation is heavy with symbolism, who says there will be horses anyway?

A second series is already planned, so there are plenty of people watching *Sleepy Hollow*. And unless the storylines get too far-fetched (which is always a danger with this kind of show), it will probably be on our screens for some time.

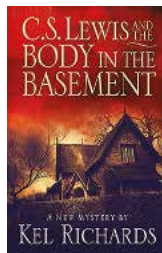
We could just dismiss it as wrong-headed and foolish. But the show pushes all the right buttons for most viewers (time travel of sorts, love that never dies, magic and mystery, fearsome enemies etc.), so our teens *will* be watching it. You may well be watching it – which isn't a bad thing, as it's helpful to be informed so you can ensure impressionable people around you are clear about what is and isn't true. There are also opportunities just waiting for really interesting conversations about God's strength, the reality of judgment and the power of salvation. 



Inspector Lewis investigates

ARCHIE POULOS

C.S. Lewis and the Body in the Basement
by Kel Richards



BOOK
REVIEW

EVER SINCE THE DAYS OF THE Garden of Eden a battle has raged for the hearts and souls of people. One arena where Christians have not fared well in recent years is in the arts: literature, movies and art.

An example of this is that each week in one of our Saturday newspapers writers are asked to list the books that have been most significant in their lives. I have read of the significance of fantasy, travel, biography and children's books; and finally after years of waiting, a recent contributor declared the most influential book for her was the Bible – a book for which she almost had to apologise. We know the power of books and movies to change the inclination of a person's heart and the direction of their lives. And yet it seems that in this field there is so little produced that commends a Christian position, or challenges a person to consider Jesus.

Kel Richards has entered into this battle a number of times over the past few years through contributing books with Christian apologetic argument in his favoured genre of detective 'whodunits' - *The Case of the Vanishing Corpse* was an argument for the veracity of the Resurrection.

C.S. Lewis and the Body in the Basement is Kel's latest instalment. It follows in the tradition of his earlier works but this one has

the very interesting historical twist of making the honoured Christian apologist C.S. Lewis one of the central characters. The drama is set in 1933 just after the publication of Lewis' first book. In this story we meet Lewis' actual brother Warnie, and a fabricated former student of Lewis named Morris. As the story unfolds we get an insight into what Lewis was like and the times in which he lived through throwaway comments such as holidaying with J.R.R. Tolkien.

It is not just quaint and interesting that Richards makes C.S. Lewis a central character. The action is punctuated with conversations between Lewis and Morris about whether there is a God and how one could know, and so many of the words flowing from Lewis' lips are the actual apologetic arguments we are so familiar with from his writings. We begin with a summary of the argument from *Pilgrim's Regress* about the importance of appealing to both thinking and feeling. Later we hear Lewis argue with young Morris employing his much-used statement that the only conclusions one could draw about Jesus are that he is either Lord, Liar or Lunatic. So through the character of C.S. Lewis we get an excellent summary of many of Lewis' actual arguments.

And what about the story? C.S. Lewis acts as a detective in two murders. Kel Richards' plot makes this a page turner and it is very easy to read. Richards introduces characters

through the story in a way that makes remembering who is who easy, and avoids the cheap trick of inserting information only at the end without which you could not solve the case. As is common in this genre one of the costs of ease of reading is that the characters are often one dimensional. I could not solve the puzzle until Lewis revealed it to me, and I won't spoil the read by revealing any more to you.

So where does this most recent contribution from Kel Richards sit? Well done Kel for delivering an interesting, readable detective novel that challenges the reader to explore further the claims of Jesus and dispels some of the common objections to faith. It is the sort of book that Christians should read on vacation to arm themselves with apologetics arguments or give it to friends who are not yet believers for holiday or travel reading. I'd recommend it to those churches that still give Sunday School awards to give it to teenagers as a prize or a Christmas present!

The arguments of *C.S. Lewis and the Body in the Basement* are well reasoned and delivered, but we need more works written and published that carry the truth of the gospel through the reader's affinity with the character in the circumstances through which they travel, as well as by rational argument. To use Lewis' own categories: books that challenge feeling as well as thinking by inviting the reader to align with the character and what they believe.