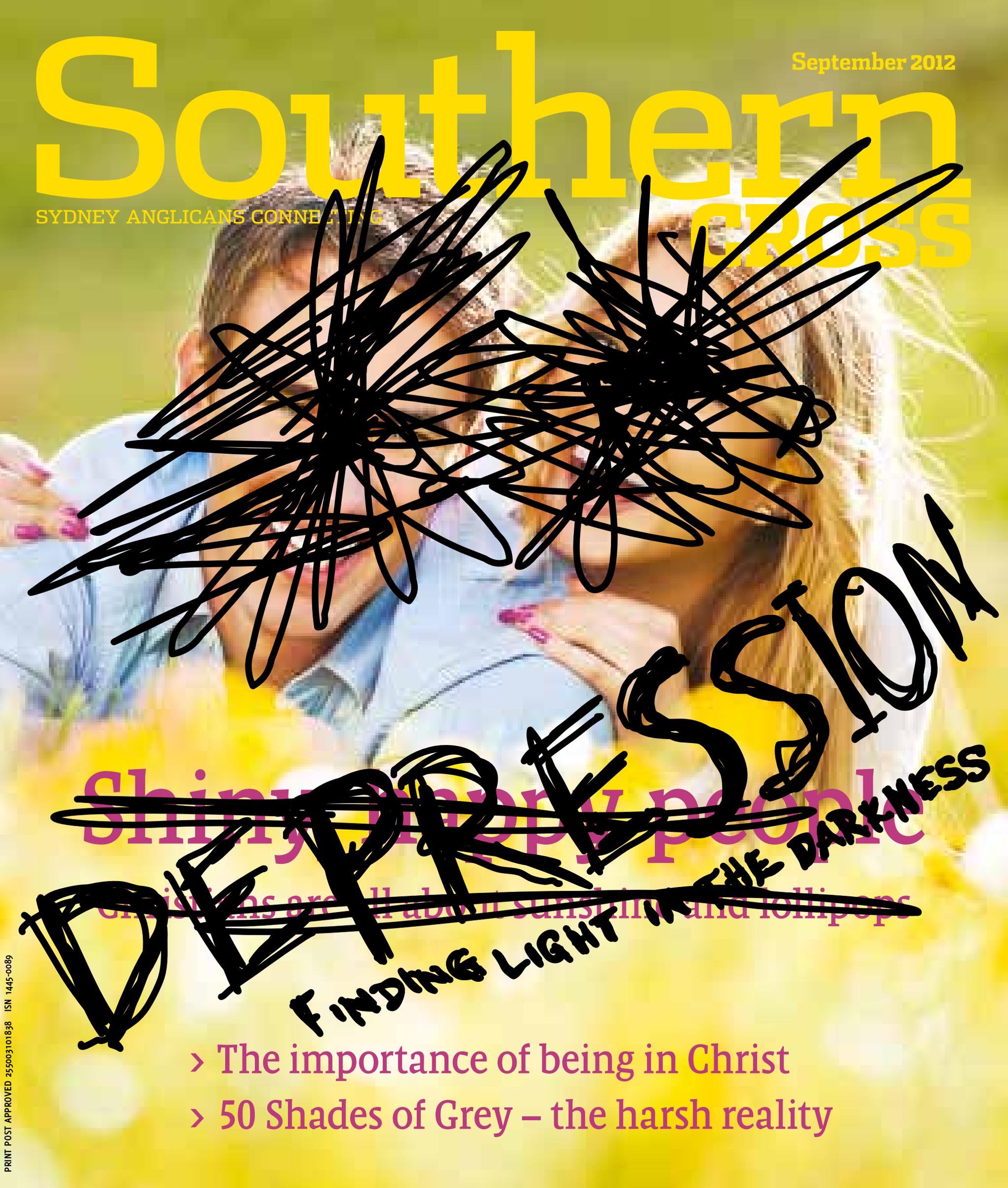


September 2012

# Southern CROSS

SYDNEY ANGLICANS CONNECTING



~~Shiny happy people  
Christians are all about sunshine and lollipops~~

**550N**

**FINDING LIGHT IN THE DARKNESS**

- > The importance of being in Christ
- > 50 Shades of Grey – the harsh reality



## COVER

Everyday life and emotions take a back seat when depression strikes, but can there be there light in the darkness?

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# Down peacock's feathers!

DR PETER JENSEN

ONE OF THE MOST OBVIOUS DIFFERENCES between the Christianity of the Reformation, as found in the Book of Common Prayer and the Articles of Religion, and that of our own day, is in the doctrine of human sin. Of course there are churches and denominations which almost make it a fetish to speak well of human nature and to do nothing which would harm self-esteem. They continuously flatter under the guise of encouragement. But even in churches which are not committed to such follies there is a reticence to talk about sin, to identify sin, to explain the roots of sin, to call upon repentance from sin and to urge Christians to fight against sin in their own lives and in the community of which we are part.

By contrast, listen to these words from the Reformation sermon (or 'homily') called 'On the Misery of Mankind', which forms part of our doctrinal heritage from the Church of England: 'good people, let us beware of such hypocrisy, vainglory, and justifying of ourselves. Let us look upon our feet; and then down peacock's feathers, down proud heart, down vile clay, frail and brittle vessels.'

I certainly commend that you read the whole homily – you can find it easily enough on the internet. It brings together the biblical teaching on sin in a powerful and persuasive way.

There are a number of reasons we have altered our language. One is, of course, that under the impact of psychological and neurological studies much has changed in our understanding of how humans function and why we act as we do. These studies have shaped a great deal of thought in what is called pastoral theology, with a tendency toward therapeutic pastoral practice emerging in place of hasty moral judgement.

There is something to be said for this development. In particular the wellsprings of human behaviour need to be understood by pastors lest we are too quick to pass judgement. Likewise, despite the danger of flattery, there is a great need for encouragement and praise in a world where people are frequently criticised and put down. In fact we cannot simply return to the 16<sup>th</sup> century as such.

And yet, the difference is more superficial than we may think.

I am always fascinated by the way in which, despite all the changes in our world, we are constantly passing moral judgements on one another. It is a

testimony to the fact that we live in a moral universe and nothing can take the place of the moral structure which we inhabit.

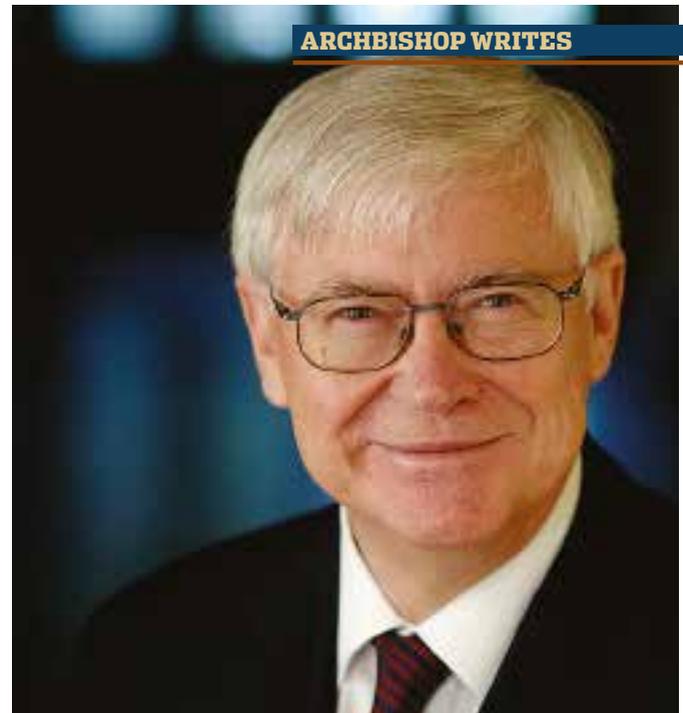
At the same time that 'moral structure' is treated as though it is constructed of elastic. The obsession with human freedom so characteristic of our culture means that we are prone to make up rules for ourselves rather than to think that ethical obligations come from outside ourselves and cannot be transgressed with impunity. Pastoral theology must be conducted in the biblical framework of sin and repentance, or else it will be merely secular and fail us badly.

At this point, our theology often falters because of an unwillingness to identify sin as a transgression of the law of God. The Scriptures reveal the will of God for human life and as part of their teaching we have the law of God and the examples which flow from keeping or failing to keep the law. If we slip over into a sort of intuitive description of God's will, we endanger the authority of Scripture, cease to recognise ourselves as guilty sinners and cease to render to God the obedience which is at the heart of true piety.

In my view, a weakness in the doctrine of sin is our chief theological peril. Once we learn to think well of ourselves, we find that our teaching on God's judgement is diminished, for why would he condemn us? It follows that we invent new ways of thinking about the death of Jesus, for if God's judgement matters less, then his death need not be penal and substitutionary. Naturally, then, our doctrine of God changes since we cannot understand the love of God as his mercy on his enemies. Likewise, the doctrine of justification by faith tends to universalism, since our sins are not really enough to condemn us. Furthermore the Christian life is no longer one in which we seek to amend our lives and obey God in the transforming power of his Holy Spirit.

That is why a homily like the one 'On the Misery of Mankind' is so bracing for us. Without having to grapple with modern ways of looking at the world, it takes us back to Scripture and forces us to ask who is right and who is wrong on this subject. It addresses our pride and self-sufficiency, our tendency to be kind to ourselves (while being hard on others), our happy vagueness when it comes to the nature, prevalence, treachery and consequences of sin. It summons us to a better theology and so a better place.

SC





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LITHGOW OUTREACH

# A bundle of care

JUDY ADAMSON

IT'S AN ONGOING question for every parish: how to reach out to the community and show the love of Christ, but do it in a way that will be effective and welcomed.

The parishioners at Lithgow were asking themselves the same question last year, brainstorming in their Bible study groups for ideas that would not only support the community but create potential openings for the gospel.

Then one young woman who worked at Lithgow Hospital suggested care packages for the parents of newborns, and the "baby bundle" idea was born. The church's women's ministry committee and ladies' fellowship were keen and, when the call was put out to the rest of the parish for nappies, new clothes and other practical baby items the response was immediate.

"There was such a positive response from the whole congregation – people donated so much," says Kristen Young, one of the baby bundle organisers. "After the announcement at church one guy turned up on our doorstep an



Bundles of joy: ladies from Lithgow Anglican Church with care bags for new mums.

hour later with three bags full of baby wipes – he'd cleaned out Coles!"

The "Bounty" bags that new mums received in hospitals for many years were discontinued by the State Government because they were put together by a commercial organisation, so the church was unsure of its reception when members approached Lithgow Hospital with the baby bag idea. However, the hospital's response was enthusiastic.

"We asked what they wanted in it and they said, 'As long as you don't have anything that's anti-breastfeeding you can go for your life,'" Young says.

Keen to ensure the bags would be a long-term positive for the hospital as well as the community, church members thought

long and hard about what kind of Christian element they could or should include with the nappies, wipes, clothing item and other elements.

"We wanted it just to be a gift for new mums and dads and we thought about who was actually handing out the packs – that it was coming through the nursing staff of the hospital who weren't members of the church and not necessarily Christian," Young says.

"So we included a magnet saying, 'This is a gift from Lithgow Anglican Church' with a link to our website. We have a page on our site specifically linked to the baby bundles – saying that we'd love to see people, and how we're all about Jesus... there's also a pamphlet advertising our playgroup and a card

saying 'Congratulations on your new arrival' with a verse from Psalm 25 that 'children are a blessing from the Lord'."

The first batch of baby bundles was delivered to the hospital last month and so far the feedback is all positive. And while the church initially planned to only do the bags for one year, Young says the level of involvement and enthusiasm among church members is so high that they have since told the hospital they will seek to provide the bags for as long as they're wanted.

"It's taken a little while to set up but it's such an easy and positive thing to do and it just shows love to the community," Young says. "It's certainly something that other churches could do if they were interested."

SYNOD 2012

## Finance restructure for 'greenfields' sites

A RESTRUCTURE TO enable the purchase of land for churches in new suburbs will be the centrepiece of financial matters to come before Synod in October.

Population in the so-called 'greenfields areas' of the Diocese is expanding rapidly and the best opportunities for land purchases will be in the early stages of development. Parishes would contribute to the cost of this via a land acquisition levy, with a suggested level of 2.2 per cent of the net operating receipts of a parish. The sale of Bishops court will also be reconsidered as part of a longer term plan to restructure diocesan assets.

The St Andrew's House office block has already returned to profitability with new tenants in the upper floors, consolidation of church offices and the leasing of the underground car park.

Synod is being asked to provide an authorisation window of five years to enable Bishops court to be sold and a new home for the Archbishop to be purchased. According to a report to Standing Committee, the office of Archbishop "would be better served by a more contemporary and

less 'grand' building with modern facilities". A new Bishops court, which would be the fourth official residence



Artist's impression of the proposed Stanhope Gardens Ministry Centre, one of the greenfields sites.

in the Diocese's history, would also free funds to rebalance the income flow of the Archbishop's endowment, the Endowment of the See.

The Archbishop's commission reported that a sale would allow for lower running costs and the balance between the sale and the purchase price of a smaller residence would be reinvested to provide greater cash flow for the work of the EOS.

The annual Sydney Synod, held over five evenings in October, will also be asked to approve further cuts in grants to diocesan bodies. In addition, the parish cost recovery system is being changed so the General Synod assessment will no longer be borne by parishes but come directly from Synod endowments.

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## 24HR DANCE COMPETITION

# Winner shares his faith

ANDREW BUERGER

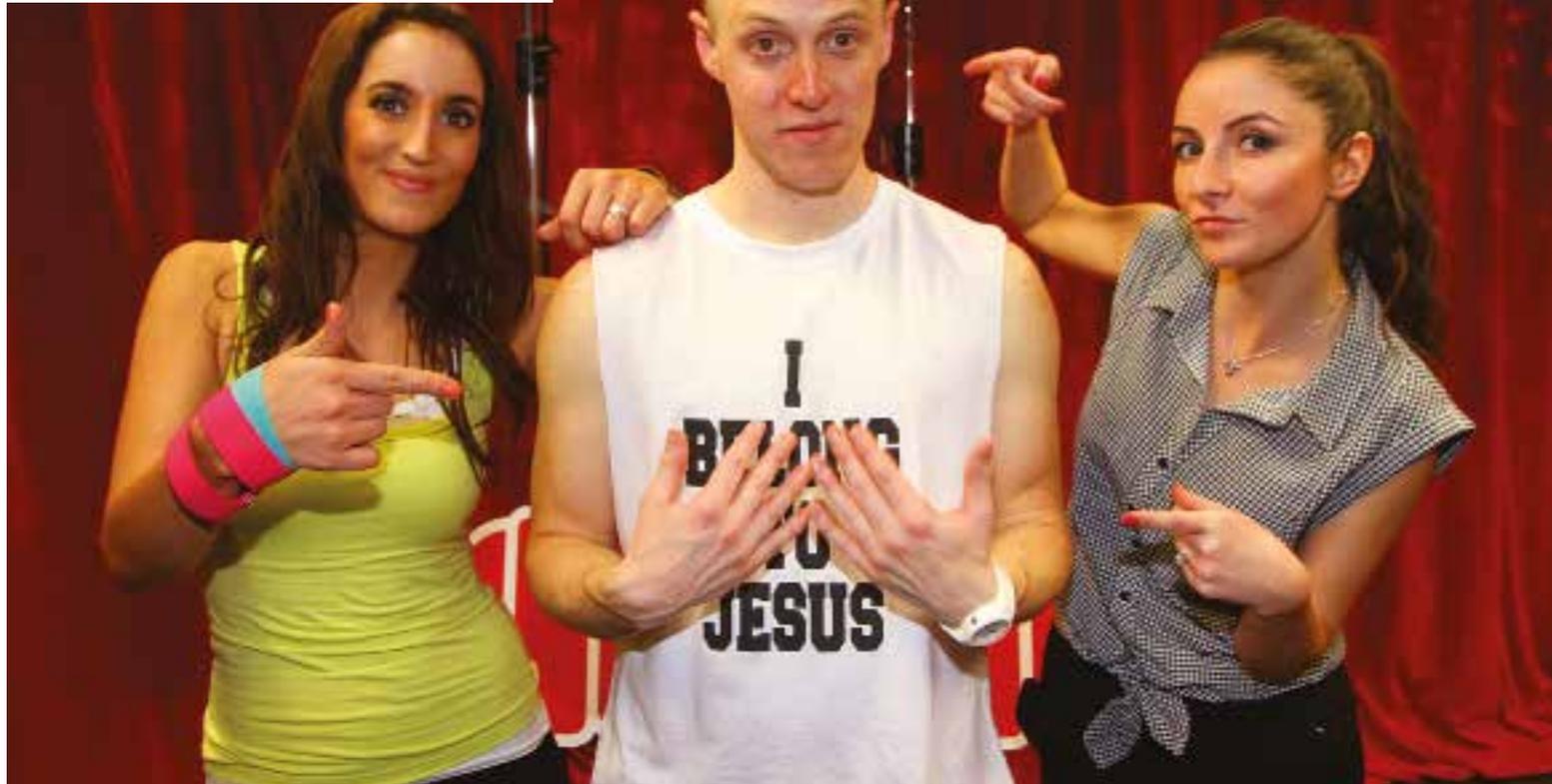
JOSH HAWKINS WON \$10,000 in a recent radio competition and used the exposure to share his faith with the country.

Mr Hawkins, who attends St Paul's, Castle Hill and is currently studying a Bachelor of Theology at Sydney Missionary and Bible College (SMBC), beat 24 other contestants to win the dance competition run by national radio station Nova FM.

"The reason I entered is because I love to dance," Mr Hawkins said. "I also like to enter competitions, entertain people and do random stuff."

Meshel, Tim & Marty's '24hr Dance Off' took place across five states from 5pm on August 9 to 5pm on August 10.

"Twenty-four hours of dance is a lot, you can't really do much to prepare," Mr Hawkins said. "I did go out dancing with my sister



Josh Hawkins with fellow contestants after being announced as the \$10,000 winner of Nova FM's dance competition.

for six hours and I pulled a couple of all nighters to try and adjust my sleep patterns."

Five competitors each from Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Adelaide and Perth were required to dance to 24 different music styles from disco

to boy bands, while taking part in challenges to whittle down the number of contestants. The whole competition was broadcast live on the radio station's website.

Mr Hawkins had different outfits for all the dance styles, his final

outfit including a shirt that said 'I belong to Jesus.' "I really wanted to wear it in case [the presenters] brought it up," he said. "For me that stuff is pretty easy [to do]. It is really important to me.

"I had spoken to the other contestants and

the Nova staff about what I did, so it wasn't a surprise for them."

When Mr Hawkins was announced as the winner, he was given the opportunity to describe what he was wearing to the national audience.

"I wanted to make

it clear that I was a Christian," he said.

Mr Hawkins, who plans to go into full-time ministry after completing his degree, will give some of his prize money to help pay off debts and save the rest.

## GROUP GAMES APP

## Playing around

ANDREW BUERGER

AS MOST YOUTH GROUP leaders would know trying to think of new, interesting games each week can be a challenge. However a new iPhone app has done a lot of the hard work for you.

Group Games was designed and created by Calum Henderson from St Stephen's, Normanhurst to assist youth group leaders and schoolteachers alike.

"While I was leading games at a youth group, someone once asked

me where I got all my games from, so I started thinking about ways to share them," Mr Henderson says. "I started a blog, updating it regularly with games, then I thought of putting them into a book, but I thought that an app would be much more user-friendly."

The app currently includes 111 games that users can either browse through or quickly find using the search function. By selecting the group size as well as the desired duration the app will filter the games, only listing ones that fit

the criteria.

Information for each game includes the rules and a list of required resources, as well as an expected duration and the amount of prior preparation involved.

"I wanted to help youth group leaders and teachers," Mr Henderson says. "When you have those 20 minutes to fill and you have no idea what to do this app can help."

The app was launched in the iTunes app store at the end of April and has already been downloaded more than 900 times.



Mr Henderson, a teacher, created the app himself using the Fusion development platform by Red Foundry.

"A lot of the games are classic youth group games but there are quite a few in there that I made up myself," he said. "I also had help from my wife and some friends to edit all the text of the app."

App developers are expected to continually

update their apps to enhance their usability and features, and Mr Henderson says he has already had some feedback from designers about the look of the app. "I'll also continue to add games and I'm hoping to develop an Android version of it."

Group Games provides youth leaders with a great resource that can complement their Bible teaching. "Games can

often be used to illustrate a point, to help young people better understand the message, and link into the main teaching point," Mr Henderson says. "A game you can play on the reliability of the Bible is Chinese Whispers. The kids can learn that the Bible isn't like that; the text we have is the original."

*The Group Games app is available from the iTunes App Store for 99c.*

VINE CHURCH CELEBRATES

# Community is the inner-city recipe

MARK A HADLEY

RELIGION IS OUT. Relationship is in. That's the dynamic that has turned a gospel-centred ministry in Surry Hills from a goal to a going concern one year on.

Launched in August 2011, Vine Church was planted by Moore College graduate Toby Neal and his wife Liz, with the support of the Geneva Push.

"I guess we started Vine Church to reach people who feel they have no need for God," Toby Neal says. Reflecting on the self-assurance inner-city residents can have, he adds that the church's goal "is to show them that life is only

meaningful when God is at the centre, rather than at the periphery or absent altogether".

Celebrating the church's first birthday has provided an opportunity to consider why a suburb where 36 per cent of residents identified with 'no religion' on the 2011 Census has chosen to embrace their new work.

For Heidi Evans it was the combination of 'come for the community, stay for the Bible' that convinced her. "My family aren't Christian and every time I walk into a church I ask myself, 'Would they feel alienated – weird – pressured?'. Vine isn't like that. It welcomes in people who don't have 'straighty-180' church backgrounds."



Sing out: Vine Church members celebrate the congregation's first birthday.

Justin Yoon continues to attend because of the intersection between real teaching and real life. "I really like Toby and the way he goes through God's word and hits the heart of what the Bible's saying," he says. "But also because it's really easy to apply it back to my everyday life."

Says Toby Neal: "That's what people are looking for – an authentic spiritual experience that isn't contaminated by dry religion or self-help platitudes."

For Rhonda Grant it was the determination of Vine Church members to be involved with her day by day that led to her

choosing the new plant as her spiritual home. "Vine is actually the first church that I've been to where I've made close friends that I can do life with and I want to hang out with throughout the week," she says.

One of the oldest members of Vine Church, Robert Wood, says what

the congregation is putting into practice isn't "anything particularly new" but an old truth revitalised. "Being there reminds you of the dynamic of Christianity again," he says. "It's very encouraging to me."

*Vine Church meets in the Surry Hills Library on Sundays at 4pm.*

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BIBLE SOCIETY

## Daily reading for time-poor Christians

AUSTRALIAN Christians aren't engaging with the Bible and the Bible Society of Australia wants to change that.

Throughout October, the *Live Light in 25 Words* campaign will encourage Christians and churches around Australia to make daily Bible reading a habit. "Research is telling us that Christians aren't engaging with the Bible and we want to address that," says Chris Melville, national programs and campaign manager for the Bible Society of Australia. "We're starting with 25 words, which is roughly a verse, and then we'll go from there."

According to the Bible Society's research one of the main reasons Christians aren't reading the Bible each day is that

they are 'time poor'. "We want to make it as easy as possible for people to build up a habit," Mr Melville says. "We don't want to scare people off, we want to set them up to succeed and show them they can engage with God's word daily."

At the time of printing, 2151 individuals and 1879 churches around Australia had signed up.

Each day during the 31-day campaign people will receive an email with an encouraging Bible verse along with a question to help them engage with the passage.

"This is not about the Bible Society 'doing something'," Mr Melville says. "It's about people reading the Bible."

The Bible Society's website has an array of resources to help people, including daily devotions written by well-known

Christians as well as nine pre-recorded talks that ministers are being encouraged to use in their services.

A significant part of the campaign is doing it with other people rather than trying to do it alone. "To build a habit you need to be accountable," Mr Melville says, adding that someone could take part with their church, spouse or a group of friends.

"There are opportunities and resources to help you go deeper than the daily verse," he says. "We want to change the perception that it is too hard."

The Bible Society resources, plus those from a number of other organisations, have all been made available free.

*For more information see 25words.biblesociety.org.au*



PARALYMPIC CHAPLAINCY

# The best athletic support

David Tyndall with Ian Thorpe at the Athens Olympics in 2004 and (below) at the 2000 Paralympics in Sydney.

ANDREW BUERGER

WITH THE OLYMPIC Games all done and dusted, London has turned to the Paralympic Games, which started on August 29.

The Rev David Tyndall is one of eight Christian chaplains from around the world who will be ministering to the 7000 Paralympic athletes.

"The local organising committee has to provide chaplains for all the major faiths as well as a religious services centre," he says. "Chaplains aren't appointed to the teams; instead they are appointed to venues. I'm a chaplain in the

athletes' village."

The duties of a chaplain are very similar to those of a local minister. Each day they run a church service as well as two Bible studies. The Christian chaplains also go out and find people who want to talk to them.



"In that regard it is like beach mission," Mr Tyndall says. "You don't know when the athletes will be competing so we

need to make sure we are providing services for them when they need them. Sometimes we are also asked to run Bible studies for a whole team."

The London Paralympics will be Mr Tyndall's fourth

Olympic Games. He also worked as a chaplain at the 2006 Melbourne Commonwealth Games as well as the 2003 Rugby

World Cup. In addition, he ran the Archbishop of Sydney's Olympic Task Force from 1996 in preparation for the Sydney Olympic Games.

"It's an opportunity that many Christians don't get," Mr Tyndall says. "We get oodles of opportunities to preach the word of God and tell people the gospel.

"It is a great help for the athletes because when they have doubts or fears they can be embarrassed to talk to their coaches or teammates so they come to us.

"At one Paralympics a lady from a small African village came to see me," he says. "The people in her village had given up their food so she would be strong enough to compete. She was feeling immense pressure to perform well because of the sacrifices others had made for her. I can't remember what colour, but she did win a medal."



To raise the \$13,000 needed to cover his trip Mr Tyndall was sponsored to play 100 holes of golf in one day.

LOCALS SUPPORT CAMPBELLTOWN

# Showing the love

IT'S NOT EVERY DAY A star of international standing describes the suburb you minister in as "a dump", but when Irish actor-comedian Chris O'Dowd said just that about Campbelltown in an interview for his latest film it spurred the local rector, Nigel Fortescue, into action.

He says Campbelltown Anglican Churches had been thinking about how some of the ideas used at Church by the Bridge – such as the I Heart Kirribilli art show – could be utilised in their area. The parish had plans in place for its own photography exhibition, with entries to be sent via social media, when the O'Dowd story broke.

As unpleasant as it was for locals to hear it was also "a bit of a God moment", Fortescue says. Within days a press release was out, encouraging people to take part in the church's I Heart Campbelltown competition.

Locals were asked to take a photo of their favourite place in the suburb – or a photo that showed why they love the suburb – and post it by September 5 on the I Heart Campbelltown Facebook page or through Twitter or Instagram. On September 9, St Peter's, Campbelltown will host an exhibition of the

photos in the church hall, where winners will also be announced.

Local newspapers were quickly on side – and one was so keen it had "semi-stolen the idea", Fortescue says with a laugh. But he's happy locals were told about the competition, as well as other mission-related things the church has done recently such as giving a daily newsletter to commuters at the train station, walking the streets inviting people to a barbecue in the park (65 people came), afternoon tea at a retirement village, plus men's and women's events.

The main hope is that people will "become Christian and commit themselves to Jesus", but Mr Fortescue also wants to raise awareness of the church through his "purple cow" theory.

"If you're out driving and you see black and white cows, you think 'There are some cows', but if you see a purple cow you think 'What the heck? There's a purple cow!'," he says. "Churches exist in the background for most people... if you make things a little bit interesting it can change their perception from 'It's just another church' to 'Wow, this church is doing something different'. It helps us connect with people on a deeper level."

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"The teaching has had a tremendous impact on me, especially in the way I read the Bible and seek to understand it. The opportunity to learn from and interact with great teachers and preachers has been a privilege." MATTHEW KILBY, 2011 STUDENT

TWO MORNINGS A WEEK FOR BETTER PREACHING & TEACHING



WYCLIFFE IN VANUATU

## Pacific partnering

A recipient of the recently launched Nivhaar language New Testament.

THE YASUR VOLCANO was booming in the background. But it was hard to tell whether the ground rumbling was attributable to Yasur or the energetic, foot-thumping traditional dancing in Yemelin, a little village on Vanuatu's Tanna Island.

The reason for the dancing? The dedication and launch of the New Testament in the Nivhaar language, one of the 100 languages of Vanuatu.

Yemelin village is a long way from Sydney but the partnership of several Sydney Anglican churches has allowed Ross and Lyndal Webb of Wycliffe Bible Translators to work in Vanuatu and assist in the 10-year translation project.

As administrators they weren't on the ground in the village all those years – rather they were mentoring Ken and Mendy Nehrbass from the United States and

assisting them as they helped the local people finish this huge task.

In 1982, after graduating from Moore Theological College, the Webbs were 'sent out' to Papua New Guinea by St John's, Sutherland. Partnering with St John's, Campsie, St Luke's, Hornsby Heights and St Jude's, Dural, the Webbs were closely involved in the translation of the Irumu New Testament and the Psalms which were released in 1997 – and again in a revised version in 2011.

St John's, Beecroft also joined in the partnership some years ago, making Bible translation in the Pacific quite a Sydney Anglican affair!

The partnership has been a long-term one and a fruitful one – but the needs go on in Vanuatu, with some 60 languages still requiring help to get God's word into their mother tongue.

## MISSION AREAS

# Working together in Sutherland

HOW CAN THE Anglican churches and organisations in the 10 parishes of the Sutherland Mission Area work together to reach the 220,000 people around them?

This was the issue before 150 leaders at a recent dinner. Rectors and lay leaders of each parish, with managers and leaders from ARV and Chesalon, came together to work out how, under God, they might see more people connected to Christ and established in his church.

Organised by Amanda Garlato (from Miranda) and the Rev Neil Fitzpatrick (Mission Area leader and senior minister at Jannali), the night included a talk by Archbishop Peter Jensen about the vital role of lay leadership in local mission.

He highlighted the importance of training and inspiring church members to be confident and active in evangelism and of finding ways to penetrate the structures of society with the gospel, rather than waiting for people to come to us.

To celebrate what's

already happening and share ideas across the region, 12 people told the stories of initiatives in local mission. These included:

- a homework club to reach children and their families;
- a chaplaincy opportunity at Cronulla SLC;

networking to find ways of working together, with the results collected to be distributed to everyone who attended.

The Mission Areas co-ordinator, Bishop Ivan Lee, was very encouraged by the event. "Welcoming people who walk into a local church is of course

### A sample of what people said:

"Let's have more meetings like this (be it small or large) to share ideas and be encouraged."  
 "Mission is something we do every day and not just a two-year trip."  
 "Fantastic to hear what is being done to spread the gospel."  
 "If you always do what you always did, you always get what you always got."

- the Soul Revival Church to be launched in September;
- progress in a new SRE ministry at Sylvania High School;
- a "sceptics, seekers and cynics" group for men at ARV Woolooware Shores;
- relationship seminars for the community;
- visiting houses that have recently been sold to meet those who've "just moved".

Time was also spent brainstorming ideas and strategies, praying and

absolutely essential and needs improvement, but mission challenges us to also look outward. Developing gospel partnership and thinking like missionaries is what Mission Areas is about. This missional mindset change is a long-term project, and that's what I see reflected in this dinner and developing in the Sutherland area."

Neil Fitzpatrick asks readers to "pray that God will use the night to stir up ongoing initiative and cooperation across the area".

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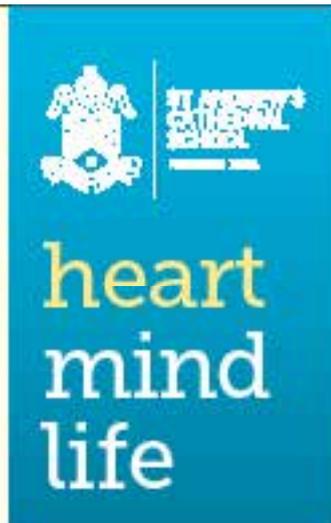
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## LIFE QUESTIONS

# Answers found in Christ

JUDY ADAMSON

WHEN KEVIN CHEN and Tracy Kang emigrated to Australia from China in the mid-1990s, discovering Christ was the last thing on their minds.

The couple had met at a Beijing university in their late teens and were now keen to try a different country to see if they enjoyed it. They did – both of them loved Australia and decided to make it their permanent home. They ran businesses, made friends and created a new life for themselves in their new country.

A few years after their move, Kevin says, the Christian mother of one of his friends encouraged him to read the Bible in Chinese and gave him a booklet about Christianity written by a native Chinese speaker. He found the booklet very thought-provoking but when it came to the Bible, he says, “I just couldn’t understand it so I gave up”.

Kevin had been wondering about the things of faith for some time, looking for answers to the big questions of life. Before moving to Australia

he had followed along with Chinese cultural superstitions such as “going to the temples for pray for a better life”. But then he decided this wasn’t “real religion” and the answer was elsewhere. For a time he read books about Buddhism, but found the answer wasn’t there, either.

Then, in 2008, a friend of theirs got to know the senior minister of Wild Street, Rod Cocking, through school. Rod invited their friend to take part in an Introducing God course at Wild Street but he didn’t want to go alone, so Kevin and Tracy went as well.

Kevin was already interested thanks to the booklet he had read years before, and before long he and Tracy had plenty of questions to ask.

After the course they were invited to start coming to church, which they did from time to time – still with plenty of questions. They knew they weren’t Christian, Kevin says, but they were struck not only by the willingness of church members to encourage them in their understanding of faith but by their helpfulness in answering questions.

About two years ago



New life: Rod Cocking (left) with Kevin and Tracy on the day of their baptism this year.

they were asked to join a Bible study and there, Kevin says, “we learned more about the Bible and Christianity and we also got to learn about other Christians in depth”.

After church or Bible study the pair would go home and continue the discussion and debate about the things they had heard.

Over time, Tracy says, “we found the answers got clearer if there was a God. If there is no God then it’s like there’s a black hole there and many things make no sense at all – we couldn’t get a conclusion or an answer... With no God and no eternal life many things we do now would seem meaningless.”

While there is no

particular day or moment either can point to where they accepted Christ, gradually their position moved from unbelief to belief. Church also became something they wanted to take part in every week rather than something they did “if there was nothing else to do”.

Kevin adds that unlike the general belief in China that people are good enough because they might be kind to others or not break the law, he and Tracy gained an understanding of sin, realising that “people are sinful and that we cannot save ourselves”.

He says coming to faith in Christ has not only given him the hope

of a future life but the experience of deep and abiding joy. He is also looking to Christ as the example for how to love and care for others.

The couple were baptised by Rod Cocking in their backyard pool in February, with 40 family and friends there to witness the event – including the friend who had first invited them to Introducing God.

Kevin and Tracy’s keenness to tell people around them about Christianity and the things they are learning has meant that Tracy’s sister also attends Wild Street regularly and is in a Bible study group, which gives Tracy great joy. She says other friends are showing

interest in Christianity as well, “so hopefully there will be suitable opportunities for them to do their own investigation”.

In Tracy’s own life, there are now fewer worries about the future of their business in difficult economic times, because she has placed those worries in God’s hands. In addition, she says, “when I discuss things with other people I feel more comfortable to open my heart and tell my thoughts straight away. I think it doesn’t matter how I decorate my words because my true heart and true thoughts cannot be covered before God, so it makes things more simple. I like that.”

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BCA APPOINTMENTS

# Three go bush in a week

MINISTRY appointments by Bush Church Aid have seen three new inductions in a week at Coober Pedy and Kangaroo Island in South Australia, and Adelong and Tarcutta in NSW.

Geoff and Tracey Piggott were inducted as BCA field staff in the Catacomb Church in Coober Pedy on July 30. The couple has served in parish ministry in the dioceses of Sydney, Grafton and Newcastle, with their most recent position in the parish of Camden Haven, where they ministered for 17 years.

"Coober Pedy seemed a really good match for who we are and we had heard numbers of reports about the faithful congregation," Geoff Piggott says.

The couple is excited about the range of ministries open to them

in the town – in the church, the community, to the miners, tourists and others.

Says Geoff: "We want to encourage the keen congregation and work together to get the message of Jesus out... we would like to represent Jesus well through all we do and say, be good listeners and good neighbours and teach God's word faithfully."

On August 3 Brad and Joh Henley were inducted as BCA field staff on Kangaroo Island. They came to Christ in Adelaide through the ministry of St Matthew's, Kensington and Brad has served in the city as an assistant in two parishes and as diocesan youth officer.

A few days after the Henleys' induction, Keith and Cynthia Groundwater were welcomed as BCA

affiliates in the parishes of Adelong and Tarcutta in south-western NSW, where they will work with local Christians to develop a long-term strategy for ministry and mission. Keith

and Cynthia came to Christ in their early 40s and have since served in country and city churches – and both are delighted that God has been at work in their "retirement" to open up

a new opportunity for ministry.

The national director of BCA, the Rev Dr Mark Short, is thrilled by all three appointments. "I am excited that the Piggotts, Henleys and

Groundwaters will be serving with BCA; they have been an answer to our prayers," he says. "We have a good sense that they are God's people in God's place at God's time."



Geoff Piggott and the euphonium presented to the congregation as a reminder to use God's gifts in ministry.

PHOTO: courtesy BCA

## WORLD NEWS

### Nigeria



Attacks on churches have led to a 30 per cent decline in attendance in some

areas of Nigeria. Addressing the synod of Kaduna diocese, Bishop Josiah Fearon said a series of attacks during services meant that a "significant number of our members prefer to stay within the safety of their homes rather than go to church and be bombed to death".

The attacks were also having an effect on the church finances and aid projects and the economy of north-eastern Nigeria. Some of the attacks have been blamed on the Muslim Boko Haram group led by Abubakar Shekau, who has been declared a "global terrorist" by the US government.

### Israel



Archaeologists excavating at Beit Shemesh near Jerusalem have uncovered an ancient stone seal they believe may illustrate Samson's fight with a lion. Tel Aviv University researchers say the tiny seal dates to the time of the

Judges in the 12th century BC. The crude engraving shows a man fighting with an animal and the archaeologists say the date of the seal and its location indicate it may represent the story of Samson.

In 2010, a Philistine temple was uncovered in what would have been the ancient city of Gath, providing valuable clues to the architecture of the temple of Dagon, which Samson demolished.

### England



The Church of England has sold shares in News Corporation because of the phone hacking scandal which has engulfed Rupert Murdoch's UK operations. Church Commissioners secretary Andrew Brown announced that holdings of almost £2 million would be sold on advice from the church's Ethical Investment Advisory Group (EIAG). "Our decision to disinvest was not one taken lightly and follows a year of continuous dialogue with the company, during which the EIAG put forward a number of recommendations around how corporate governance

structures at News Corporation could be improved. However the EIAG does not feel that the company has brought about sufficient change and we have accepted its advice to disinvest." Dozens of arrests have been made by police investigating phone tapping by journalists at the now closed *News of the World*. The ethical stand will be financially costly, as News Corp shares have outpaced the broader market, gaining almost 30 per cent so far this year.

### Scotland



The Scottish Episcopal Church, part of the Anglican Communion, has objected to the Scottish Government's plans to legislate for same-sex marriage. The church had already made a submission to a 2011 inquiry quoting its canons as describing marriage as a 'physical, spiritual and mystical union of one man and one woman created by their mutual consent of heart, mind and will thereto, and as a holy and lifelong estate instituted of God'. In a statement after the Government

announcement Bishop Mark Strange, convener of the Faith & Order Board's working group on same-sex marriage, reiterated that the church's canon on marriage was "clear in its wording".

### United States



Billy Graham has been released from hospital after a bout of bronchitis.

Despite his illness, doctors say the 93-year-old preacher is "remarkably healthy" for his age. His spokesman said he was in good spirits and praised hospital staff as well as those who sent him prayers and letters. "Such an outpouring of love and support is always a blessing but was especially appreciated during my hospitalisation," Dr Graham was quoted as saying. In the mean time the Graham organisation has announced plans for the largest North American evangelistic event in more than 60 years. The high-tech crusade will use new media distribution rather than stadium events. "My Hope With Billy Graham" is planned for November 7, 2013, the evangelist's 95th birthday.

## MOORE COLLEGE IN AFRICA

# Malawian students make history

ANDREW BUERGER

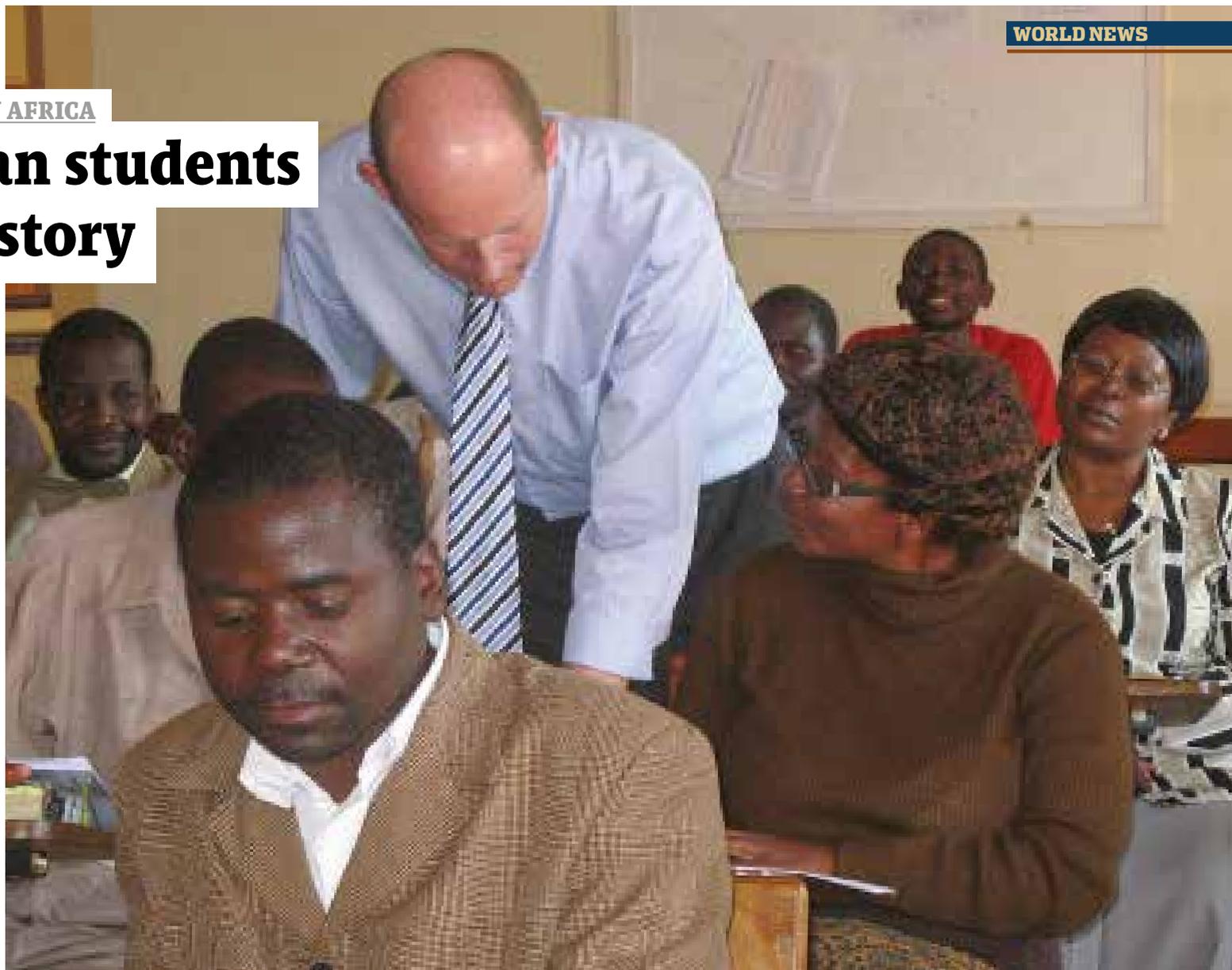
NOW IN ITS 10<sup>TH</sup> YEAR, the International Certificate of Biblical Studies in South-East Africa program (ICBS) is showing no signs of slowing down, with 12 students recently completing Level 2 qualifications – a first for the program.

ICBS is a joint venture between Moore College's Department of External Studies and African Enterprise and aims to provide high-quality, short-term, low-cost theological training to African Christian leaders.

At least 20 Australian lecturers have taken part in more than 50 teaching visits, instructing 600-plus students throughout the program's history.

Lecturers teach Moore College PTC subjects, of which six need to be completed to receive the Level 1 qualification.

The Rev Stephen Liggins, who works at Toongabbie Anglican Church, began the program in 2003 when he started teaching Moore College subjects in Kenya and Uganda. In June this year,



Learning: the Rev Stephen Liggins teaches students on a recent teaching visit to Malawi.

Mr Liggins and two other Moore College graduates, Dan Anderson and Luke Collings, spent time teaching church leaders in Malawi.

"Church attendance is high in sub-Saharan Africa but many of its Christian leaders have not had the opportunity to gain much, if any, theological training," Mr Liggins said. "This

program is targeted at equipping these Christian leaders. By providing them with this training, their churches are, in turn, impacted."

For the first time in the history of the program 12 Malawian students have completed their Level 2 qualifications. This means they have studied 12 subjects as part of the ICBS program. Students

received their certificates at a celebration held on August 31.

"The danger of a lack of training is that false teaching can result," Mr Liggins said. "My experience suggests that things that are particularly prevalent are: salvation by works not grace, the prosperity gospel, a belief that God will cure all diseases,

beliefs about the supernatural that mix biblical and traditional teaching and inaccurate views about sexuality."

The program is a strong link between Sydney and the churches in Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Malawi and South Africa and offers opportunities for mutual support.

"Sub-Saharan African

churches are becoming increasingly important and influential in the worldwide Christian community," Mr Liggins said. "At the same time they are also facing many pressures such as the influence of Islam, liberal theology and Western materialism. We need to stand by and support our brothers and sisters in this part of the world."

## Meet **Rory Steyn** *Mandela's Bodyguard* With Stories of Reconciliation



**Saturday, 27th October 7:30pm**  
Meeting hosted by St Matthew's West Pennant Hills, 1 New Line Rd West Pennant Hills.

**Book tickets on 9479 3700**

**Monday, 29th October 7:30pm**  
Hosted by Mona Vale Anglican Church, meeting at Loquat Valley Anglican School, 1977 Pittwater Rd Bayview.

**Book tickets on 9979 5755**

Coffee and Desert \$10 unless specified otherwise. Rory Steyn's visit is hosted by Anglican Aid. There will be a low key opportunity to support vital aid work in Africa at each meeting.

**Tuesday 30th October 7:30pm**  
St Phillip's South Turramurra, 1-3 Parkinson Ave, Turramurra South.

**Book tickets on 9988 4988**

**Wednesday 31st October 7:30pm**  
Meeting hosted by ANeW Church Newcastle, meeting at St Phillip's Christian College Theatre, Cnr Harriet and Station Sts Waratah. (Free Supper).

**Book tickets on 0408 658 104**

**Thursday 1st November 7:30pm**  
Hosted St Barnabas' Broadway, St Barnabas' Broadway, Broadway and Mountain Sts.

**Book tickets on 9211 3496**

**Friday 2nd November 8pm**  
Hosted by Roseville Anglican Church, Roseville Memorial Club, Pacific Highway Roseville.

**Book tickets on 9412 2553**

**Saturday 3rd November 7:30am**  
Men's Breakfast (\$10). Hosted by Rooty Hill Anglican/MBM, Cnr Rooty Hill Rd North and Westminster Sts Rooty Hill.

**Book tickets on 9677 0133**

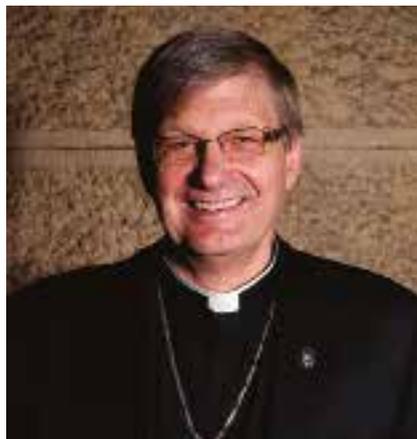
**Saturday 3rd November 7:00pm**  
Hosted by Dapto Anglican Church, Church Centre, Moombara St Dapto.

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# MOVES

## BEYOND THE GRAMPIANS



After more than a decade as rector of Christ Church St Laurence in Sydney, the Rev Adrian Stephens has become rector of the parish of Christ Church, Hamilton, just south of the Grampians National Park in the diocese of Ballarat.

Mr Stephens says he decided to make the change because “after nearly 11 years at Christ Church St Laurence it was time to move on because I’d done what I believed I was called to do. It’s been busy the whole time... and frantic, but it’s reached the point where I believe it’s time for someone else to build on what’s there.”

## WARREN TO ENGADINE

The Rev James Warren became the new rector of Engadine-Heathcote parish last month. After more than 13 years at Crossway Anglican Church (formerly St Paul’s, Carlingford) – first as one of the assistant ministers and then, from 2003, as the senior assistant minister – Mr Warren decided the time was right to serve in another location.

“The nominators were great ads for their church,” he says. “Also they’d done their homework and they thought I’d be a good fit for them... I’ve been wonderfully trained in the Sydney Diocese and at Crossway and I want to be able to share anything I can, and also just serve in the parish.” A number of the ministers at Engadine-Heathcote have moved to different roles in recent months (including the election of the previous senior minister, Rick Lewers, as Bishop of Armidale), so for Mr Warren a crucial step for the near future is to plan the best way forward and ensure that ministries are running well.



“I’m very excited – tinged with slight trepidation,” he says with a laugh. “And the people have been so unbelievably welcoming. I’ll miss the people at Crossway but I had a lovely farewell from there and such a lovely welcome here.”

He was invited to “have a look” at two parishes in the Ballarat diocese and, after visiting both, says he felt Hamilton was the best fit. “This just felt right – [I thought] ‘Here’s a parish where I can see that I can exercise my gifts,’” he says.

The rector of Hamilton is also responsible for four other churches in the nearby towns of Cavendish, Dunkeld, Glenthompson and Peshurst. Mr Stephens was inducted as rector on August 8.

## EAST GOES WEST



One of the assistant ministers at Church by the Bridge in Kirribilli, the Rev Mark Smith, was inducted late last month as the new rector of Lithgow Anglican Church.

Mr Smith said he and his wife Anna were impressed by the care the Lithgow

congregation were taking of each other and “really enjoyed meeting the nominators there, who clearly love Jesus and want to share the gospel with the people of Lithgow. I’ve been at Kirribilli for the past five years and I’ve loved it, but one of the things that really became clear is that [Lithgow] is where God wants us to be. It’s all happening west of the mountains!”

The first chat Mr Smith had with nominators at Lithgow was late last year and, while he felt a strong connection to the people and their work, he wasn’t sure if he was the right fit for the church.

While he got on with his work in Kirribilli he kept in touch with one of the nominators and continued praying for the church to find the right person – “and it seems in God’s wisdom that I was the answer to the prayer,” he says. “God organised things so that not only was it appropriate to make the move but we could clearly see how I could serve with the gifts God has given me.”

### IN BRIEF

The Rev John Maxwell Kohler died on June 22. More in a future edition.

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### Vacant Parishes

LIST OF PARISHES AND PROVISIONAL PARISHES, VACANT OR BECOMING VACANT, AS AT AUGUST 21, 2012

- Auburn (St Philip's)\*
- Christ Church St Laurence
- Dundas-Teloepa
- Dural District
- Glenquarie
- Philadelphia Anglican Church\*
- South Hurstville

\*Denotes provisional parishes or Archbishop's appointments

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## Letters

**Value in God's sight**

IS a human vegetable or a person with a terminal illness of less value than a newborn baby? They all require constant care. Are they of value in God's sight? Jesus said to let the children come to him. He also said to bring in the poor, the crippled, the lame and the blind.

The media constantly tells us that our aging population is causing long waiting lists for surgery. Should we give up our lives so that resources could be used to perform operations that would save lives (as one letter writer suggests in August *SC*). Would such euthanasia be an act of selflessness or self-murder?

A quote from Shakespeare: "In the world I fill up a place which may be better supplied when I have made it empty". Is that a good philosophy for those facing terminal illness?

Most of us have watched loved ones die with advanced dementia or with a terminal illness. We would not like to die that way

ourselves. Do we have the right to decide how we should die?

Romans tells us that suffering produces hope. Many of us know of people who have come to the Lord on their deathbed. My grandmother was bedridden with dementia but she had a time of lucidity as she was dying and she said, "Listen to them singing [her favourite hymn]".

A cousin, racked with pain, with terminal cancer, said, "Look! There's Jesus, and he's come to help me". A friend in hospital, knowing she was dying, said, "I just want people to know I'm a Christian".

Jesus said when he faced death, "If it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will". Should the prayer of Jesus also be our prayer?

**Rewa Bate**  
Tea Gardens

I believe Peter Jones is mistaken in his letter (*SC*, August) when he compares euthanasia with Christ's death on the cross. Do we really

want to live in a society that encourages the elderly or the disabled to feel they would be doing everyone a favour if they knocked themselves off? Based on the reasoning in the letter, children or adults with a disability should be put out of their misery and stop inconveniencing everyone by taking up valuable resources that could be used to cure other people. Who gets to decide whose life is worth preserving? Who gets to set the protocols?

Christ's death on the cross – and even Lawrence Oates' actions during Scott's Antarctic expedition – are situation-specific. I don't think they should be used to inspire us to create a society where people who are plagued by ill health or disability feel they aren't entitled to the same level of care as everyone else. Jesus healed the sick, he didn't put them out of their misery and I think Lawrence Oates might turn in his grave to hear his self-sacrifice being used this way.

**Name withheld**  
West Pymble

Letters should be less than 200 words

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[newspaper@anglicanmedia.com.au](mailto:newspaper@anglicanmedia.com.au)

## Essay of the month

**Together through the Spirit**

As the challenges of 2012 Synod approach JOHN WOODHOUSE asks whether we can think theologically about the Sydney Diocese.

**T**HE STRUCTURES THAT HAVE developed over the centuries in different Christian denominations are complicated. Some may appear to correspond to certain patterns of church life in the New Testament. Others seem to have little direct connection with the Bible. Some denominations have sought to follow biblical patterns as closely as possible. Others have considered that the Scriptures are not prescriptive in matters of church organisation and do not think our structures need to have biblical precedents.

Yet the structures we put in place – or inherit from our past – should be understood in the light of the Bible's teaching. In other words, although we may have considerable liberty in such things it is important we understand our institutions in the light of the spiritual realities of God's church.

How does this apply to a structure like a diocese? I am thinking here about our Anglican Diocese of Sydney. No-one pretends the Diocese is an attempt to replicate an organisation we see in the New Testament. However I want to suggest that the most important reason the Diocese exists, and the fundamental reason the Diocese matters, is something we see in the Bible. That is, although God has not instructed us to have a "diocese", we have a diocese because of what God has done and is doing among us.

Let me try to explain. The gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ calls people into fellowship with one another. We who were once far off (both from God and from one another) have been *brought near* by the blood of Christ (Eph 2:13). We are being built into his church

(1 Pet 2:4, 5). This reality is expressed as we meet with our brothers and sisters in our local "church". But that is not the end of the story. The same Spirit who draws us to one another in a local church draws us to "all those who *in every place* call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor 1:2).

This means that independence is never a desirable quality either in a Christian believer or in a church. Individual believers are drawn to their brothers and sisters in Christ by the one Spirit (Eph 2:18) as the same Spirit will draw churches to other churches.

This spiritual reality finds expression in many different ways. The churches of a local area may take an interest in one another and perhaps co-operate in some ways. A church in Sydney may establish a link with a church in Africa and each of these churches may care about the other in various ways. This is the unity of the Spirit (Eph 4:3) at work beyond the local church.

In this age it is not possible for all churches to relate to all other churches to the same degree. Inevitably there are churches we never hear about. There will also be churches with whom we have differences that may not be of great importance in themselves, but which make some forms of co-operation practically difficult.

Therefore most expressions of the unity of the Spirit between local churches will not attempt to involve all churches. In New Testament times the churches that had some link with the apostle Paul took a particular interest in one another without neglecting the opportunity (when it arose) to assist

another church (Jerusalem). It was not possible for all of these churches to relate in the same way to all other churches.

If we understand the Diocese of Sydney in the light of the spiritual relationship that God has established between churches, we will (I believe) see the Diocese as, most importantly, *an association of churches*. Obviously the Diocese is a particular kind of association, in which the roles of the Archbishop, the Synod and our Anglican constitution are important. However, most important are the churches and the spiritual relationship between them.

The association of churches is not "the church", but neither is it unimportant. The Diocese is a structure in which churches who love and serve the same Lord and hold the same faith can care for one another and work together to support ministries that would be beyond the capacity of the individual churches (such as cross-cultural ministries, missionary support, chaplaincies in schools, hospitals, universities and prisons, a theological college and so on). These ministries are important and valuable, but they are not independent of the churches. The churches must "own" them. Why? Because the spiritual heart of the "Diocese" – what really *matters* about the Diocese – is the fellowship between these churches.

Structures like the Diocese should be understood in the light of the spiritual realities they express and serve. These realities should guide our policies and practices as we work together in this fellowship of churches to serve our Lord and his gospel.

## READERS' ESSAYS

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

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

Light in the darkness



Depression can be a dark place but LEA CARSWELL reflects upon whether, if the darkness passes, there can be a positive side to an illness which affects about one in five Australians each year.

**L**OW MOOD, MELANCHOLIA, dysthymia, anhedonia, burnout, feeling blue, breakdown, acedia, affective disorder – all words for something like depression. Peter Mark Roget, the author of *Roget's Thesaurus*, survived a life of depressive illness partly by making lists – and his lists of words eventually became the thesaurus, first published in 1852, that has been a boon for writers, speakers, students and crossword lovers ever since.

So, is there an upside to depression?

“There may well be,” says Paul Grimmond of the UNSW Campus Bible Study, himself a sufferer of depression. “But it’s not the kind of thing you would say to someone in the middle of a depressive episode. I have questioned why this was necessary for me to live [through] but, because of depression, I know that I can bring good to someone who might be really struggling.

“I meet many students in my work, 18- to 20-year-olds, and some of them are deeply, profoundly miserable. They are in the middle of a terrible trough – probably for the first time – and can’t see how they can get out of it. Age and experience tell me that their suffering isn’t permanent, even though they may know more depression in the future. By sharing my experience I can help them see that there will be a tomorrow. That is so important, for them and for me.”

It’s likely that all who experience depression think their first episode will be their only one, hoping it’s linked to a concrete reason that can be explained and avoided in future. For some that proves to

be true and depression doesn’t return. For others, however, it forms part of a lifelong pattern that can range from extremely rare through to frighteningly frequent. Where there is a pattern of illness, the good periods between suffering are known as ‘remissions’ and in some cases can last for years.

Throughout history the mental state called melancholia has been identified as a factor in some people’s outlook. It was classified as a medical issue as far back as Hippocrates in the fourth century BC. Over time, the idea of melancholia was replaced with the term ‘depression’, gradually recognised to encompass a wider range of symptoms and included in a stable of mental illnesses such as anxiety, bipolar disorders, psychosis and paranoid schizophrenia.

### GOOD COMPANY

Although depression usually stunts productivity and slows progress, a huge number of people who suffer from depression manage to accomplish tasks of great significance. For some, being depressed actually leads to greater clarity and an ability to express themselves more effectively in their work or creative pursuits.

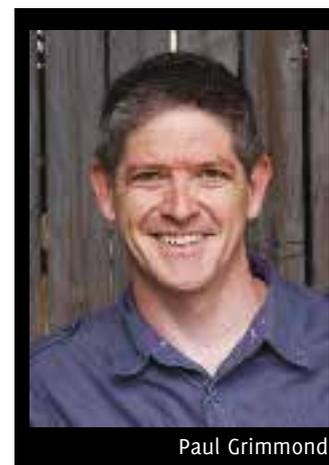
The worldwide depression fraternity is overflowing with famous, notable and successful people (statistically more women than men report depression-like symptoms but most of the celebrities held up as depression poster-stars are male). Great leaders, philosophers, explorers, writers, painters, composers, entertainers, actors, physicists and athletes throughout history

are part of the long list of those who have suffered a major depressive illness. Many achieved more in human terms than most who don’t suffer from mental illness.

However, when someone is in a Bunyan-like “slough of despond” – when even getting out of bed and trying to move forward into the day is more than they can manage – the last thing they need is to be jollied along with rousing stories of someone’s amazing strength in the face of such global and personal adversity. It’s even okay to know that Winston Churchill was a fellow sufferer who used the phrase ‘the black dog’ to describe his bouts of depression, as long as his (invariably different) situation doesn’t get compared to theirs.

### AN ETERNAL PERSPECTIVE

Being a Christian doesn’t shield a person from suffering depression – indeed the Bible offers many examples of human despair, bleakness and emptiness. Some teaching focuses only on what is called ‘spiritual depression’, in which prophets were depressed because of persecution, the sinful state of the people or because of their own



Paul Grimmond

continued next page »

## A GP's view

Catherine Bailey is a general practitioner in a busy practice in Sydney's far west. She is a Sydney Anglican, married to Scott and mother of Olivia and Thomas, four-year-old twins. Here she speaks about depression from her perspective.



Catherine Bailey with Thomas and Olivia.

I find that anxiety and depression are becoming increasingly prevalent in society. I would say 10 per cent of my consultations would be related directly to mental health issues. There are also a vast number of patients whose mental health problems largely go undetected. Different people might present differently with depression – for example, men are more likely to present with anger and a tendency towards outbursts of rage. Other people, often women, may have low self-esteem. Teenagers might have lowered school performance, decreased sociability and excessive oversleeping.

I see a lot of women and children so I see my fair share of postnatal depression and even postnatal psychosis (in rare cases). I also see a lot of middle-aged, perimenopausal women. Both of these groups have several risk factors coming together: huge hormonal fluxes, enormous changes in their families, a difficult time in their marriage relationships, new expectations and demands, mood swings and the need to care for others.

I am hyper-vigilant if a male presents with depression or anxiety, especially those who are middle-aged as they are much more likely to act upon any suicidal thoughts they might be having. I am much more likely to intervene quickly – even on first consultation – with medication, psychotherapy or a combination.

Sometimes as I get to learn more and more about a patient it becomes obvious to me that they are suffering from

anxiety or depression. It's here when tools and screening tests... help to provide an objective measure of their mood. Websites are also useful. I may gently suggest the possibility to the patient and suggest some homework (like research on the net and surveys regarding behaviours/thoughts within recent times). Generally once they have done some research it becomes obvious to them what has been going on.

Treatment options are varied but I always insist that a combination of options will bring about the best of outcomes. Psychotherapy and medication have important parts to play, tailored very specifically to the patient's needs and circumstances. But just as important are the basics of good health – sleep, good diet and exercise.

Ultimately all these things will only take a person so far. There is many a time when I will come away from a consultation thinking, "If only they knew God; if only they were in a church family, dealing with this would be a lot easier!". Although there are times when we can be hurt and let down by our Christian brothers and sisters, they are also one of our most powerful weapons in combating depression. Rely on your church family, open up to those you trust in and never underestimate the power of prayer.

"Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." Philippians 4:6

« from previous page  
sin. Sometimes preachers overlook the other things that might feed depression. The result is that people weighed down by depression become further troubled by guilt in feeling that their illness is their own fault.

Paul Grimmond believes we have to acknowledge that "sometimes there is no clear moral, spiritual, emotional or cultural reason why someone has been cut down by depression. I know first-hand that Christians

are not immune to suffering and therefore not immune to depression. I also know that mental illness is not just the same as any other physical or medical condition.

"Some people, GPs often, will say, 'Depression is just something that goes wrong with your body, like a broken leg or bad eyesight'. That's partly true – a broken leg might happen to any kind of person and so might depression. However mental illness isn't just physical – it eats at the very core of

who we are, why we matter, what are we here for.

"For Christians, this existential confusion can distort our faith base and make us feel that we are insignificant and unloved – the antithesis of what the Bible says we are. When our churches also talk about depression in terms of unforgiven sin or spiritual weakness, we are condemning people who ultimately need to know, and keep hearing, that Jesus loves them unconditionally."

The Rev Dr Andrew Cameron, the director of the Centre for Christian Living, recently preached at a workshop on depression run by the Healing Ministry of St Andrew's Cathedral. He observes that "Depression is an indication not of personal sin, but of human brokenness. God continually uses the experience of suffering, and a life of chronic illness involves a lot of suffering, to refine us and to grow our reliance on him.

"What all Christians, and especially the depressed, need to hear is that they are safe in Christ, even if everything is telling them otherwise."

Although depression seems to get in the way of being able to effectively achieve things for God, the opposite is actually true.

"Western Christians fall into a real trap thinking that God can only use them if they are 'successful' or 'accomplished' in their own right," Cameron says. "We all need to learn that the Christian life is not performance-based. God chooses broken people to do his work. Mental illness falls into that plan as much as anything."

That is encouraging, considering the number of full-time gospel ministers affected directly by depression – if the number of books written on the subject is any indication. Dr Arch Hart, dean emeritus of the Fuller Seminary School of Psychology, has produced several works around the issues of stress, anxiety, depression and burnout for ministry families. Many of his titles are listed in the autumn 2008 newsletter available on the Sydney Diocese Ministry Wives website, <http://sdmw.anglican.asn.au>.

Mel\* is a Sydney Anglican serving in an AIDS health ministry in central Africa. She manages her depression with medication, relaxation and physical exercise.

"I was in counselling for several years and have been hospitalised once as a result of depression and anxiety," she says. "Since about 2009 I have become more used to my condition and have been on a good dosage of medication, letting me feel that I can finally move forward as a Christian.

"I always wanted to serve God in another culture but I never thought I'd be able to do that with my illness. Now, I work in a team that includes two doctors and a counsellor, so I know that there are places I can go if I need to get help. Being in a foreign culture, amid death and poverty and terrible hardship, is a great leveller. We all know that, whatever our weaknesses and strengths, without God we can do nothing."

\*not her real name



Canon Chris Allan addresses Healing Ministry attendees.

### HEALING THE BODY

The body of Christ has a lot to deal with as it represents Christ in the world. Certainly the local church has a difficult task ahead if it seeks to be able to extend the love of Christ to every person and to transform every situation.

“The Healing Ministry is important for its pastoral care of people in pain and also as a resource for churches that want to understand these issues more clearly,” says Canon Chris Allan, who leads the ministry services and workshops.

“We teach a practical theology of important topics such as depression to ask

what the Bible says about it and how we are to make sense of it in our lives.

“Essential to our workshop format was the personal testimony from someone who is directly affected by depression; who has suffered and recovered from it several times and who has learned how to move forward with God.”

Andrew Cameron knows that local churches can't possibly become expert at every aspect of ministry and encourages ministers to make use of what he calls 'scaffold' resources to add to the skills and experience of the local congregation.

“The Healing Ministry, like the Centre

for Christian Living, can provide training and insight for one or two to take back to share with their local church and Bible study,” he says. “When a person walks into church suffering from a depressive illness, they will get a positive and loving welcome from someone who may have no personal connection to the disease but has thought about how to show love to someone in that situation.”

If there is a bright side to an illness like depression, it is likely that it can bring people together even though the condition tries to drive people apart.

“Depression is terrible but it can teach us great things about God,” Allan says. “It can also literally stop us in our tracks, making us more able to listen to things we have been too preoccupied to really grasp before.

“God really is in control – and we certainly know that we are not. God loves us to pray – to come to him, as Jesus says in Matthew 11:28. And God uses us, even when we are feeling most useless.”

SC

### ONLINE

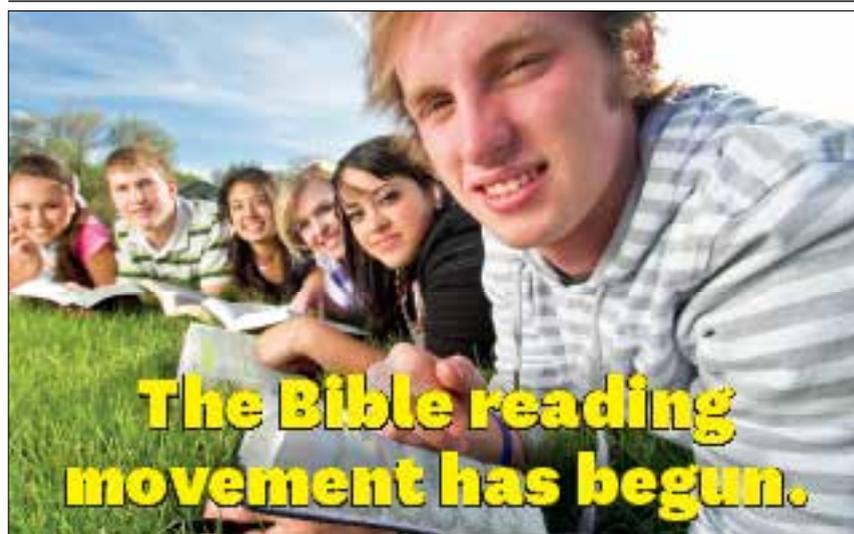
#### Resources for sufferers, carers and pastoral workers

The Black Dog Institute – [www.blackdoginstitute.org.au](http://www.blackdoginstitute.org.au)

Beyond Blue – [www.beyondblue.org.au](http://www.beyondblue.org.au)

SANE Australia – [www.sane.org](http://www.sane.org)

The theme of this year's World Suicide Prevention Day on September 10 emphasises the importance of instilling hope that this drastic outcome can be prevented in almost all cases. See [www.wspd.org.au](http://www.wspd.org.au)



## The Bible reading movement has begun.

Want to change your Bible reading habit?

Join Bible Society Australia (BSA) 'Live light in 25 words' Bible reading campaign this October.

In partnership with Australian churches and Christian organizations, BSA wants to help you build a Bible reading habit starting with 25 words and letting it grow from there.

Resources for the campaign include:

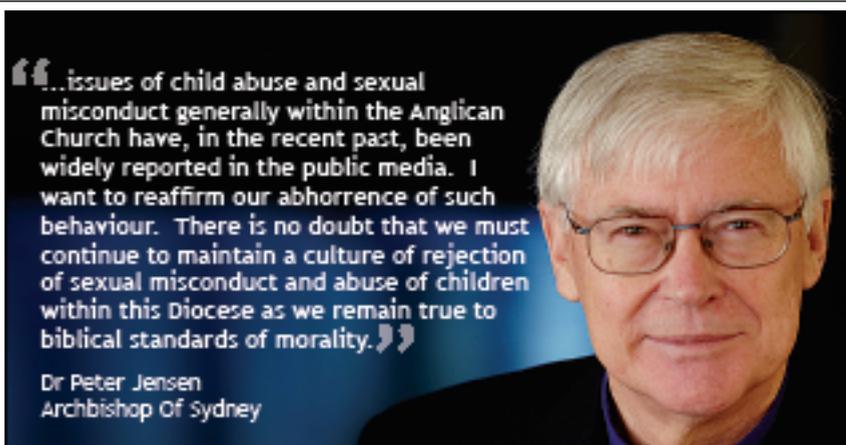
- Daily reading plans
- The Good Book talks: talks from leading Aussie Christian leaders on the Bible
- Read the Bible with ... devotions with Aussie Christians
- As well as many recommended resources from our partners.

Come to Bible reading and this campaign by going to [www.biblesociety.org.au](http://www.biblesociety.org.au) to sign up



**BIBLE SOCIETY**

Live light  
in 25 words



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

Dr Peter Jensen  
Archbishop of Sydney

## ZERO TOLERANCE for Misconduct and Abuse

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

A pastoral Care and Assistance Scheme is available to provide counselling and

other support to victims of misconduct or abuse.

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

Anglican Abuse Report Line

1800 77 49 45

web: [www.anglican.org.au](http://www.anglican.org.au)

email: [abuse@anglican.org.au](mailto:abuse@anglican.org.au)



# In Christ



Do we really understand the importance of being spiritually united with Christ? CON CAMPBELL explores the implications.

**A**RE YOU 'IN CHRIST'? WHAT DOES it mean to be 'in Christ'? Is being 'in' him a literal description, a metaphor, or what? And what difference does it make?

The interesting thing about these questions is that once we begin to understand their answers, we see that being 'in Christ' is not a question to be answered, but is, in fact, the answer to life's questions.

Observant readers of Paul's letters in the New Testament will notice the frequently used phrase, 'in Christ', and others related to it, such as 'in him', 'with Christ/him', 'through Christ/him', and so on. The first 12 verses of Ephesians 1 are packed with such language:

<sup>1</sup> Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by God's

*will: To the faithful saints in Christ Jesus at Ephesus. <sup>2</sup> Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>3</sup> Praise the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavens. <sup>4</sup> For He chose us in Him, before the foundation of the world, to be holy and blameless in His sight. In love <sup>5</sup> He predestined us to be adopted through Jesus Christ for Himself, according to His favour and will, <sup>6</sup> to the praise of His glorious grace that He favoured us with in the Beloved. <sup>7</sup> We have redemption in Him through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace <sup>8</sup> that He lavished on us with all wisdom and understanding. <sup>9</sup> He*

*made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure that He planned in Him <sup>10</sup> for the administration of the days of fulfilment – to bring everything together in Christ, both things in heaven and things on earth in Him. <sup>11</sup> We have also received an inheritance in Him, predestined according to the purpose of the One who works out everything in agreement with the decision of His will, <sup>12</sup> so that we who had already put our hope in Christ might bring praise to His glory.*

Ephesians 1:1–12 (HCSB)

According to my count, Paul uses 'in Christ'-type language no fewer than 11 times in 12 verses. Clearly this is something Paul cares about. The problem for most interested

readers, however, is: what does it mean?

'In Christ' language is related to one of Paul's big ideas, normally labelled 'union with Christ' (actually, Paul got the idea from Jesus, but that's for another time). Union with Christ is also communicated through a series of metaphors, such as body, building, temple and marriage. Paul's theology of union with Christ permeates his thought at every turn and is connected to virtually everything he talks about. If we are unclear about what union with Christ is – and that may be an understatement for many of us – there would seem to be a problem. How can something so important to the great apostle, mentioned by him more than anything else, be so poorly understood by Christians – or not understood at all?

There have been many different attempts to explain what union with Christ is all about and what 'in Christ' means. This is not the place to rehearse them. Instead, I want to suggest that the concept of union with Christ is best understood through four related terms: *union, participation, identification* and *incorporation*.

## UNION

'Union' is a useful term to convey the idea that believers are united to Christ through faith and by the Spirit. Christ indwells us by the Spirit and we, too, are 'in him'. Our 'union' with Christ is depicted by the metaphor of marriage, as seen in Ephesians 5:22-33. At the conclusion of that passage Paul cites Genesis 2: 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two will become one flesh'. This text is foundational for the Bible's teaching about human marriage but in an extraordinary move Paul says it is actually about something bigger than that: 'This mystery is profound, but I am talking about Christ and the church' (Eph 5:32). Yes, that's right – Paul is saying that Christ and the church are *one flesh*, joined together in marriage. Our union with Christ means that we are one with him. We are united to Jesus through the personal, spiritual bond of marriage.

## PARTICIPATION

Another useful term is 'participation'. This gives expression to the language that Paul uses for our participation with Christ in the key events of his death, resurrection and ascension. Christians died with Christ (Rom 6:8), were buried with him (6:4), were made alive with Christ (Eph 2:5) and were raised into the heavens with Christ (Eph 2:6). It is remarkable that believers share in these events with Jesus in a spiritual way. When he died for our sin we were there, being put to death with him. When he rose to new life, our spiritual selves were resurrected to eternal life with him.

## IDENTIFICATION

The third term, 'identification', expresses the idea that believers are no longer identified under the realm of sin, death and the devil.

In Christ we died to our former way of life and are now resurrected into a new reality. Christians exist under the realm of life, forgiveness and love, ruled by Christ. Colossians 1:13-14 sums this up well: 'He has rescued us from the domain of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of the Son He loves. We have redemption, the forgiveness of sins, in Him'. We belong to Christ and live under his dominion and authority, which must profoundly shape our identity.

## INCORPORATION

The fourth term refers to the fact that all people who are united to Christ are also united to each other. Each person 'in Christ' is a member of his body and therefore is connected to each other person who is 'in Christ'. Romans 12:4-5 captures this idea: 'Now as we have many parts in one body and all the parts do not have the same function, in the same way we who are many are one body in Christ and individually members of one another'. Union with Christ is not just about Jesus and me. It is about Jesus, me and every other Christian; we are members of his body together. We are united in and through Christ.

## IMPLICATIONS OF BEING IN CHRIST

This is but a small snapshot of the four key dimensions of our union with Christ. But even a snapshot demonstrates the profound importance of being in Christ. Christians are spiritually bonded to Jesus through faith and by the Spirit. He lives in us and we in him. This means our relationship with Christ is not simply a transaction: he died for our sins; he is the way to get right with God. No, he is so much more than that. We are united with our Lord and Saviour in a permanent relationship of mutual indwelling that is regarded as a cosmic marriage between Christ and his people.

Our participation with Christ means that we were not simply on the sidelines when Jesus died and rose again for our sakes. He took us with him through the cross and into new life. We contribute nothing to this but are carried through death to new life by the powerful work of the Son of God. Once we recognise that we have truly died to our old way of life, we are free to live now for heaven and share in a radical new experience of life.

Having been transferred into Christ's kingdom, our identity is shaped by our union with him. First and foremost we are 'in him'; that is who we are. He



The Rev Dr Con Campbell lectures in Greek and New Testament at Moore College. His book *Paul and Union with Christ: An Exegetical and Theological Study* is due to be released later this year by Zondervan.

has carried us through death to new life, and brought us out of darkness into the domain of his rule, marked by love. We are to be shaped by this reality, which has implications for every aspect of life – our priorities, our speech, our actions, our thoughts and our relationships.

Speaking of which, union with Christ transforms our relationships with each other. Not only is it the case that the God I pray to is the one you pray to, but the body of Jesus that you are a member of is my body, too. We share together in the one bread, that is, the body of Jesus. By bringing each one of us to him, Christ has brought us to each other.

As we read the Scriptures and think about our Christian selves, let us come to grips with the extraordinary privilege of being in Christ. Allow this reality to shape the way you think about your relationship with Jesus and all that he has done for you. Allow it to affect your sense of identity. Allow it to change the way you think about others. God has richly blessed us in Christ. **SC**



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Department of External Studies



# Real gospel music

In the second of a two-part series on the role of singing in church life, **ROB SMITH** looks at singing as prayer and proclamation.



## PRAYER

### Prayers can be sung

**I**T MAY NOT HAVE OCCURRED TO US before but singing can be a form of prayer. This is not just an obvious truism (inasmuch as anything said can also be sung) but an observation from Scripture. A large proportion of the Psalms, for example, are actually prayers (e.g. Pss 3-8, 9-10, 12-13, 16-18, etc). And if there's one thing we know about the way psalms functioned in the life of the people of Israel it is that they were sung. They were also sung by the New Testament churches (Eph 5:19; Col 3:16; Jam 5:13).

Consequently, exhortations to sing psalms are effectively commands to sing prayers. This, of course, does not mean psalms must only be sung as if they should never simply be read, recited or chanted. But it is instructive to realise that they were sung – the laments as well as the praises.

The great value of singing our prayers (and indeed of singing in general) is that it helps us to engage with the emotional dimensions of the truths we are saying or the requests we are praying. In other words, singing plays a critical role in helping us to bridge the gap between 'cognitive knowledge' and 'experiential knowledge', and (as many of the lament psalms illustrate) in helping us process our emotional pain and so bring us to a point of praise (e.g. Pss 3-7).

The way in which music and song minister

to the affective dimension of our humanity is something Martin Luther understood well. "Next to the Word of God," said Luther, "music deserves the highest praise. She is a mistress and governess of those human emotions... which control men or more often overwhelm them... Whether you wish to comfort the sad, to subdue frivolity, to encourage the despairing, to humble the proud, to calm the passionate or to appease those full of hate... what more effective means than music could you find."

Singing the psalms, then, is an immensely powerful thing to do. Not only are we praying as we sing, we are praying divinely inspired words. More than that, the singing of these words helps us to engage and express not simply the conceptual dimensions of the truths we are articulating but their emotional dimensions as well.

### Hymns and songs as prayer

Of course, we don't have to restrict ourselves to just singing psalms. Not only are there other biblical songs but Paul urges the singing of 'hymns' and 'spiritual songs' as well. While it is difficult to make hard and fast distinctions between the terms 'psalms', 'hymns' and 'spiritual songs', taken together they seem to cover the whole spectrum of Christian congregational songs, from canonical psalms (at one end) to spontaneous songs (at the other).

Clearly, then, the Scriptures themselves do not restrict us to singing and praying only Scripture. Provided we are singing scriptural truth we are on solid ground. Therefore, we ought to feel free to draw on the rich

treasury of musical and liturgical resources developed by former generations to help us in our prayers. This includes many paraphrastic translations and metrical versions of the Psalms, as well as a plethora of hymns going all the way back to Isaac Watts.

So again, if you stop and think about it, many of our traditional hymns, as well as many contemporary songs, are quite obviously prayers. Think, for example, of 'May the mind of Christ my Saviour' – that is a personal prayer. Or 'Let your kingdom come' – that's based on a famous Puritan prayer and, of course, the Lord's prayer.

### Implications

What all this means is that often when we are singing we are also praying. We are asking God for things in song, both personally and corporately. However, it's clearly good for us to be aware of what we're doing and saying; to pray and sing with our minds fully engaged (1 Cor 14:15). So don't be surprised if next Sunday the service leader introduces a song by saying, "Let us lift our voices together in prayer as we sing this next song". For often that is precisely what we're doing.

It also means that our times of singing and praying in church are never neatly partitioned off from each other. They may appear this way on the 'run sheet' but they are not this way in reality. Once we recognise this, it opens up all sorts of new possibilities for deliberately intertwining the two, perhaps interspersing spoken prayers with sung prayers and vice versa. So why not get creative here and see if there are other ways



# PROCLAMATION

## A form of word ministry

**A**S WELL AS being a form of praise and prayer, singing is also a form of proclamation. For the Scriptures reveal that the life-giving word of God is ministered among the people of God not only by Bible reading and biblical preaching but also by the singing of 'psalms, hymns and spiritual songs'. This does not mean the sung word is meant to eclipse the spoken word, or that singing should replace the public reading of Scripture and preaching and teaching (1 Tim 4:13). Far from it. The sung word is not to rival the spoken word but is designed to function as its handmaid and complement.

Nevertheless, the singing of God's word is a vitally important and uniquely powerful form of word ministry. This fact has not always been adequately appreciated – some have regarded congregational singing as little more than a way of getting people's blood pumping so they might listen more attentively to the reading and preaching of the Scripture. This, however, was not Luther's view; he saw music as a powerful, God-given vehicle "for proclaiming the word of God".

## Teaching one another

The apostle Paul was of the same mind. One of the chief things we are doing when we sing together, Paul says, is instructing and exhorting one another. This is clear in Ephesians 5:19 where he speaks of our 'addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs'. The same thought is expressed in Colossians 3:16 where he writes: 'Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God'.

Such statements surely make singing integral to the spiritual life and health of the church. Far from being a leg-stretching exercise before and after the sermon, it is part of the sermon. It's the part where we all preach – both to ourselves and to each other. And the fact is – a humbling fact for those of us who are preachers – that the songs we sing are often remembered long after the sermons have been forgotten.

## Making it work

So what does all this mean in practical terms?

First, we must sing truthfully – sing God's truth. It helps if the tunes are appropriate, enjoyable, singable and memorable. It also

helps if the words have a certain poetic flair. But nothing is a substitute for a faithful articulation of God's word. Indeed, if a song is not true, we're better off not singing it for only the truth will set us free and make us strong. Likewise the balance and focus of Scripture ought to be reflected in our songs so the things of 'first importance' remain central in our singing. Therefore, both our songs individually and our songs collectively must pass the test of Scripture. Only that will ensure we are singing truthfully.

Second, we must sing clearly. This point is really an extension of the first, highlighting the need for our songs to communicate to those singing and hearing them. This doesn't necessarily require a 'lowest common denominator' approach or the removal of all archaisms but if the word of Christ is to dwell richly among us, we need to make sure the songs we sing are appropriately related to the other elements of our gatherings and communicate effectively to, and can be sung with understanding by, the people gathered.

Third, we must sing fervently. This is the reason Paul adds the word 'richly' in Colossians 3:16. For it is clearly possible to let Christ's word dwell in us poorly or ineffectually, not only by singing songs which are untrue or unclear but by singing them feebly or half-heartedly; that is, without either a profound sense of thankfulness or the intention of teaching and encouraging others. Paul makes the same point in Ephesians 5:19 when he urges believers to sing and make melody to the Lord 'with all your heart'. As we saw with praise, this requires deliberate engagement and exertion on our part, for communication takes effort. John Wesley's exhortation on this point is apposite: "Let not a slight degree of weakness or weariness hinder you. If it is a cross to you, take it up, and you will find it a blessing."

## CONCLUSION

In giving us the ability to sing and make music God has given us a very great gift. In calling us to utilise this gift in our church gatherings he has provided a way of praising him, praying to him and proclaiming his word to others. This not only unites us together in our prayers and praises and helps us teach and remember his word but assists us (personally and corporately) to embrace the emotional dimensions of the truths we sing so we might love and serve God in the fullness of our humanity with heart, soul, mind and strength. This, then, is a gift to treasure dearly, use wisely and protect carefully.

The words of Bishop J. C. Ryle form a fitting conclusion to all that we've seen: "There is an elevating, stirring, soothing, spiritualising effect about a thoroughly good hymn, which nothing else can produce. It sticks in men's memories when texts are forgotten. It trains men for heaven, where praise is one of the principal occupations. Preaching and praying shall one day cease for ever; but praise shall never die".

SC

of doing things than the way we've always done them – ways that may help us to be more intentional and heartfelt in our prayers.

## Thanksgiving

Before we leave the subject of prayer let me also say something about singing and thanksgiving. For whenever we ask God for things we should also thank him for what he has given. That's why in Colossians 3:16 Paul urges the singing of 'psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God'. Likewise in Ephesians 5 he follows his instruction to sing in v19 with the words: 'giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ' (v20).

While thanksgiving (like prayer and praise) doesn't have to take the form of singing, singing is a very natural way of giving thanks – particularly because of the deep connection between singing and joy (e.g. Pss 5:11; 63:7; 65:13; 67:4; 71:23; 84:2; 92:4; 98:8; 149:5). Indeed, as we see repeatedly in the Psalms, thanksgiving is normally inseparable from praise and often expresses itself in song (e.g. Pss 7:17; 28:7; 30:4; 33:2; 57:9; 92:1; 108:3).

So again, if we stop and think about it we'll realise many of our hymns and songs are expressions of thanksgiving, such as 'Now thank we all our God' or 'Jesus, thank you'. Let us, then, be conscious of what we're doing when we sing such songs, and thank God with the depth of gratitude and gladness that ought to accompany the prayers and praises of those who have been saved by grace through the blood of Christ, and adopted as the children of the living God (Eph 2:8; Rom 8:15).

**Far from being a leg-stretching exercise before and after the sermon, [singing] is part of the sermon.**

ARV 2013

## Chaplain Castle Hill Villages



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### NORMANHURST CHRISTIAN EDUCATION ASSOCIATION INC.



## CHRISTIAN STUDIES TEACHER

The Association invites applications from suitably qualified teachers to teach Special Religious Education in Years 7-10 at Hornsby Girls High School and Normanhurst Boys High School, on a full time basis with the possibility of 2 part time positions being considered. The position(s) will commence in Term 1, 2013.

Applications, including a detailed CV and at least two references, one of which must be from your church minister should be sent by 5<sup>th</sup> October, to The Chairman, NCEA, PO Box 2061, Normanhurst, NSW 2076.

Further information, including a job description, is available from Ian Batey, email [2012ncea@gmail.com](mailto:2012ncea@gmail.com) or phone 0428 054 550.

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Contact: Chris Dwyer 9624 1678 or [chris@stphil.org.au](mailto:chris@stphil.org.au) by October 15th.

**Notice to all intended job applicants**

It is an offence under the NSW Child Protection (prohibited Employment) Act 1998 for a person convicted of a serious sexual offence to apply for a position which involves contact with children or young adult people. Relevant checks of criminal history, apprehended violence orders and previous disciplinary proceedings will be conducted on recommended applicants to such positions.

to advertise in  
**Southern Cross**  
call **02 8860 8888**  
or email  
[ads@anglicanmedia.com.au](mailto:ads@anglicanmedia.com.au)

# DIARY

Saturday, September 1  
**MOORE COLLEGE EXTERNAL STUDIES**  
Term 3 of the Moore College Preliminary Theological Certificate (PTC) begins. For more information visit <http://external.moore.edu.au>  
LOCATION | Churches and homes across Sydney

Saturday, September 8  
**YEAR 13 INFO DAY**  
A day to share as much information as we can to help you decide if Year 13 is for you. A time to really "taste and see" Year 13, and have your questions answered by Youthworks staff. Sessions run at 10am-1pm (ending with lunch) or 12pm-2.30pm (starting with lunch). RSVP to the day on 8093 3412.  
LOCATION | Camp Wanawong, 11 Fifth Ave, Loftus

Sunday, September 9  
**BRING A MATE: MEN'S MINISTRY WORKSHOP**  
Learn how to build great men's ministry and how to identify and use your interests as your natural mission field. Register at [www.meninaction.com.au](http://www.meninaction.com.au)  
LOCATION | Rouse Hill Town Centre, Room A-1-1, opposite the library | 3.30pm-5pm

Monday, September 10  
**YOUTHWORKS COLLEGE OPEN DAY**  
Come and experience a day in the life of Youthworks College. Sample a lecture, take a tour of the campus and meet the staff and students. For more information, email: [college@youthworks.net](mailto:college@youthworks.net)  
LOCATION | Camp Wanawong, 11 Fifth Ave, Loftus

September 12 & 13  
**MOORE COLLEGE SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY 2012**

Stirred by a noble theme: exploring the Psalms. The event will take a creative and original look at a part of God's word that speaks equally to minds, hearts and bodies: an experience not to be missed! For more information visit <http://external.moore.edu.au/schooltheology/>

Wednesday, September 12  
**CANTERBURY-BANKSTOWN MISSION AREA PRAYER MEETING**

Let's come together to pray for the churches of the Canterbury-Bankstown Mission Area and to seek God's mercy on our part of Sydney.  
LOCATIONS | St Clement's, Condell Park, 195 Edgar St | 7.30am-9am | St George's, Earlwood, corner Minnamorra Ave and St Georges Pde | 7.45pm-9pm

Various dates in September  
**YOUTHWORKS HSC STUDY CONFERENCES**

Are you or your friend in Year 12 ready for the HSC? There is no experience quite like the Youthworks HSC Study Conference to help. Prepare to learn, live and laugh on one of our unique conferences specifically designed for Year 12 students seeking to develop and utilise their study potential. For more information on dates and locations visit [www.youthworks.net/events](http://www.youthworks.net/events)

LOCATIONS and dates | Port Hacking Asian Australian, September 22-27; Springwood Blue Mountains, September 24-29

Saturday, 29 September  
**MOORE COLLEGE OPEN DAY AND SPRING CARNIVAL**

Come visit our Newtown campus, sample a lecture and meet faculty and students. For more information or to arrange your visit <http://info.moore.edu.au>  
LOCATION | Moore College, 15 King St Newtown

## CLASSIFIEDS

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**BLUE MOUNTAINS:** Medlow Bath. Cosy quiet retreat. Lovely views, 5 min from Katoomba. 3 BR, 2 Bath, sleeps 6-8. Details in Stayz "Kelvin Grove". 02-85440883 for discount.

**CENTRAL COAST:** House with panoramic views, quiet waterfront reserve to Lake Munmorah, comfortably sleeps 7, modern and fully equipped throughout, air conditioned, TV with home entertainment, close to surfing beaches,

safely fenced with BBQ facilities, no pets, vacancies throughout the year including school holidays, contact (02)9449 5712 or 0418 345 543 or by email at [gdpratt@optusnet.com.au](mailto:gdpratt@optusnet.com.au)

**CULBURRA BEACH HOLIDAY:** Modern townhouse. 3 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, double garage. Fully equipped. Water views from deck with BBQ. 3 minute walk to 2 stunning surfing beaches. Scenic walks, dolphins, whales. Contact 0425229192, 0247394738 or [juneqlan@bigpond.net.au](mailto:juneqlan@bigpond.net.au)

**CURRARONG & CULBURRA BEACH HOLIDAY ACCOMM:** Both houses fully self-contained with 3 br. Sleeps 8, less than 2 hours south of Sydney. Short stroll to beaches. Ph 02 9548

0567, send email to [info@putyourfeetup.com.au](mailto:info@putyourfeetup.com.au) or visit [www.putyourfeetup.com.au](http://www.putyourfeetup.com.au)

**GERRINGONG:** House in Quiet Location. Modern 4 bedrm single level home, sleeps 6. Easy 10 min walk to beach, shops, cafes, station. [pcgc\\_56@hotmail.com](mailto:pcgc_56@hotmail.com), 42284146, 0402806103

**KIAMA HOLIDAYS:** Beautiful new 2 bdrm unit, secure parking, faces main surf beach & park, 5-10 min easy walk to harbour, blowhole & shops. 02 4233 1331 or 0407 912 169

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**NOOSA:** Stylish 2 bdrm unit by river, R/C A/C,

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# MMM campers help locals

CAMP MMM, RUN BY CMS, TEACHES high school students about local and global mission both in theory and in practice.

The camp for 176 students ran from July 9-13, and is about the outworking of the gospel, encouraging young people to think about mission.

One of the aspects of the camp is Big Day Out, which sees the students go into the Katoomba community to practise what they have learnt in a number of different ways.

"We want to encourage the kids to serve the local community," said CMS NSW & ACT youth and children's co-ordinator, David Davies. "The kids went out and did some gardening, collected cans for the Anglicare Food Drive and a variety of other things."

These activities were run in conjunction with the local Anglican church, St Hilda's, and organised by the Rev Ray Robinson.

This year the students collected more than \$2000 worth of food for Anglicare that will be distributed to people who desperately need it.

"The collaboration of the church and Anglicare... enables the church



"Mountains Mission Madness": MMM campers collect food from Katoomba residents.

to more effectively care for those who come to us in need," Mr Robinson said. "Camp MMM's help is invaluable in making it all happen. We couldn't do it without these enthusiastic young people."

The mission activities that the students participate in are not only beneficial for the local community but also prove to be of great

encouragement to the students.

"They love it," Mr Davies said. "They come back with stories about people saving up heaps of cans and others chasing them down the street with handfuls of cans."

"[And] when the kids have gone back to church I get requests for help in doing stuff in their local communities as well as being involved in CMS."

Camp MMM has been running for decades, always with a mission focus, but the Big Day Out has only been introduced in the past few years.

"The camp is mission-focused," Mr Davies said. "We are looking at God's mission in the world and how we can be involved in that and one of the ways is through local expressions of that mission."

TWIST PRESENTS

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WITH **STUART TOWNEND & EMU MUSIC**

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**BRISBANE** WEDNESDAY 17TH OCTOBER  
**PERTH** THURSDAY 18TH OCTOBER  
**ADELAIDE** FRIDAY 19TH OCTOBER  
**MELBOURNE\*** SATURDAY 20TH OCTOBER

\*ALSO INCLUDES TWIST MUSIC MINISTRY WORKSHOPS

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Morling College presents:

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**2012**

**Above all, Preach Christ**

How preachers honour Christ in all the Scriptures.

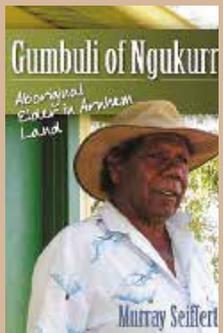
**17-18 September**

Registration Fees: \$125

To register for the conference:  
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Guest Speakers:  
 Gary Millar  
 Christopher Ash  
 Gillian Davis  
 Ross Clifford

## Ngukurr book wins award



A history of the Roper River Mission, now known as Ngukurr, and its most famous leader the Reverend Canon Michael Gumbuli AM, has been named the

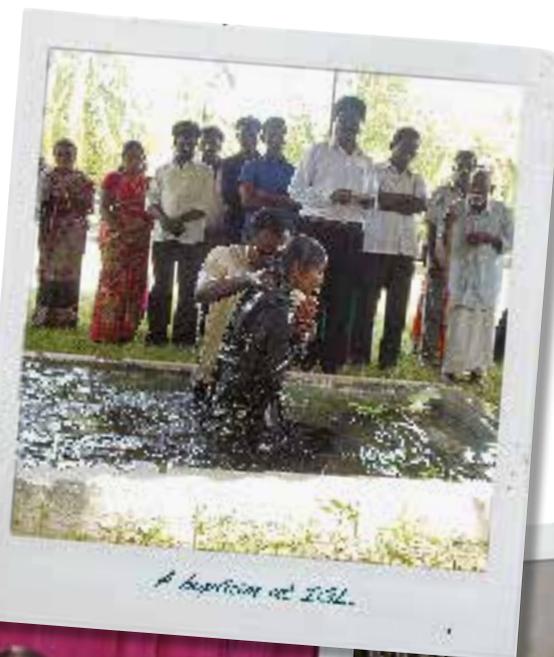
Australian Christian Book of the Year. At the Australian Christian Literature Awards late last month in Melbourne, *Gumbuli of Ngukurr* by Murray Seiffert (published by Acorn Press) won the title from more than 40 entries. The Australian Christian Book of the Year Award recognises and celebrates excellence in Australian Christian writing and carries a prize of \$2500.

Of the winner, the judges of this year's award noted that "few indigenous Australians have been the subject of so rigorous a biography. This is a unique and timely contribution to the story of Aboriginal engagement with Western culture and Christianity. "This singular story of indigenous protagonism, self-determination and leadership in the face of overwhelming obstacles – hostile opposition, blind ignorance and numbing indifference – maps a way forward for the peoples of this continent," the judges said.

In second place was *A Short History of Christianity* by one of Australia's most accomplished historians, Geoffrey Blainey. Third place was awarded to the very personal book *Love, Tears and Autism: An Australian Mother's Journey from Heartbreak to Hope* by Sydney Anglican Cecily Paterson.

The full list of awards can be found at [www.spcka.org.au/NewsAwards](http://www.spcka.org.au/NewsAwards)

## What Liverpool South learnt...



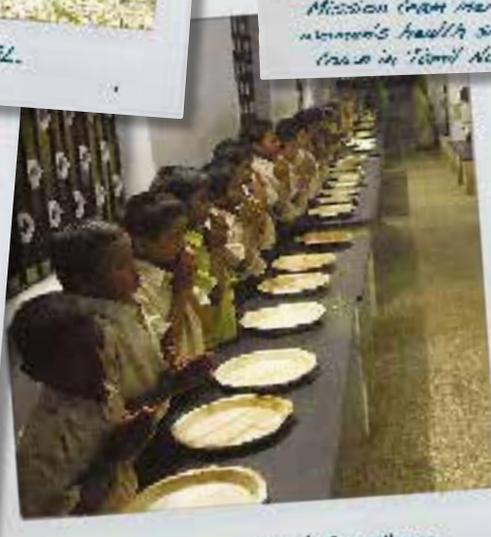
A baptism at IGL.



Mission team members (Gladys Rivers) giving a woman's health services at Neyveli, a remote area in Tamil Nadu.



A young IGL boy reciting Romans 8 (the whole chapter).



I/GL children praying before dinner.



I/GL girls.

A RECENT MISSION TRIP TO MALAYSIA and India has provided Liverpool South Anglican Church with new challenges for their ministry.

From June 20 to July 10, 14 people from the south-west Sydney church travelled overseas not to only learn from brothers and sisters but also to offer help and support.

In Malaysia the team visited

Kuala Lumpur and the Malaysian Discipleship Centre (MDC) in Johor Bahru. In India they worked with the India Gospel League (IGL) in Salem.

"We visited MDC to see what their discipleship looks like," said Liverpool South's youth minister the Rev Warren Flood. "We wanted to learn from them about how to disciple people.

"In India we worked with the IGL giving talks to pastors as well as looking at microcredit loan distribution and women's health in Neyveli."

Seeing the work of the MDC was a real challenge to the team from Liverpool South and something they hope to incorporate into their own ministry in future.

"They are all about investing in other people," Mr Flood said. "We were reminded that only two things last forever: the word of God and the souls of men. We had to ask ourselves what are you going to invest your life in? That was a big challenge, because it means making massive lifestyle changes.

"We were also challenged to invest in other people. We looked at the difference between evangelism, which is telling people about Jesus, and discipleship, which is showing them what it means to be a Christian. That comes at a big cost to us."

This visit to the IGL in Salem is the second for Liverpool South, which sent a team about 18 months ago.

"We are building up a relationship with the IGL," Mr Flood said. "We want to look at how we can support them both spiritually and practically. We want to particularly look at how we can assist with the microcredit loans in Neyveli."

The experience in Salem was a humbling one for the team as they listened to a group of 230 orphans who were passionate about the gospel despite their situation.

Said Mr Flood: "There was an eight-year-old who recited the whole of Romans 8 with only a small amount of help from his friends. Everyone was standing in awe."

### BACH'S MASS IN B MINOR:

SEMINAR: MUSICAL & THEOLOGICAL INSIGHTS

Tuesday 11 September, 6.15-7.30pm, \$30/15

PERFORMANCES by The Choir & Orchestra of St James' with Guests: Benjamin, Sally-Anne Russell, Thomas Hobbs (UK), David Hayton & Andrew Bych

Thursday 20 Sept, 7.00pm & Saturday 22 Sept, 5.00pm: \$48/44

### JUSTICE, SUSTAINABILITY & ECOLOGY

TRINITY THEOLOGICAL SCHOOL AT ST PAUL'S COLLEGE

Saturday 29 Sept, 9.00am-5.00pm, \$20/40

An exploration of these themes in the light of Scripture and contemporary Australian society.

ST JAMES' CHURCH

Visit our website at: [www.igs.org.au](http://www.igs.org.au) or call 6227 1308 for all details of ministries at St James'.

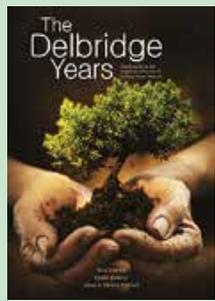
## BOOK REVIEWS

## Imaginative enterprise of youth ministry's formative days

**The Delbridge Years: Youth Work in the Diocese of Sydney from 1942–1952**

by Rex Harris, Ossie Emery, and Alan and Helen Patrick

Harry Goodhew



Not before time! The man whose work is recorded here, and the period in which he served as the chaplain for youth in the Diocese of Sydney, were both formative and outstanding. Neither

the man nor the work which he initiated, led and fostered should be allowed to slip unheralded from sight. As the tree is planted so it grows. The tree of Sydney's present impressive youth ministry was well planted in the initial decade of its life.

Graham Delbridge was a unique man with particular gifts. Something of his character and charm can be learned from this account of his ministry and from the testimonies of those who have contributed to *The Delbridge Years*. It also records something of his work outside the Diocese and evidences the confidence that Archbishop Mowll placed in him.

The story told here is one in which the hand of God can be clearly seen. He was setting in motion a movement and the facilities necessary for a ministry that would be the means of an untold number of young and older people finding new life in Christ and being helped forward in their living and serving.

As readers will discover, the work undertaken in those formative years was enterprising, imaginative and motivated by love for Christ and for people. It is exciting even now to read of it. There was an enthusiasm and commitment to getting things done which drew people who wanted to make a difference for Christ. Readers will find in this book the names of people who went on to exercise a range of ministries here in Australia and elsewhere.

As someone who shared a place on the staff of the Youth Department (now Youthworks) in the immediate aftermath of the period in *The Delbridge Years* I can bear testimony to the quality and impact of the work that was undertaken in that decade. Well done Rex, Ossie, Alan and Helen. You have left us an account that will cause us to thank God every time we read it.

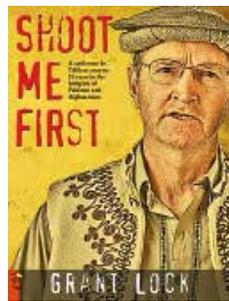
Harry Goodhew was Archbishop of Sydney from 1993–2001.

# Courage and candour



SHOOT ME FIRST  
BY GRANT LOCK

KARA MARTIN



**G**RANT LOCK IS AN AUSSIE farmer, used to tough conditions and tough people; so when he is confronted by an armed and angry mob of villagers trying to prevent his men from constructing a new school, he stares them down and says: “You’ll have to shoot me first!”

This is just one of the astonishing stories he describes in this entertaining and at times harrowing account of his 24 years working on development projects in Pakistan and Afghanistan. His bravado worked, by the way, and the mob backed off.

The book is a series of such narratives in chronological order, connected by a timeline of world events.

It begins with the fear and trepidation, and then support, of friends and family as Grant and his stoic wife Janna decide to give up their share of the farm and take their three young children to one of the most remote, confusing and dangerous areas on the planet.

A scene from a simple shopping trip when Janna is irritated by the attention of Pakistani men, and her miming of eating when searching for a restaurant is mistaken for a begging, beautifully set up the initial cultural shock.

The book also examines the intersection of religion and culture. Grant’s motivation to go and serve is his Christian conviction and a sense of calling. An early conversation with a Hindu upsets his expectations of neat boxes for religions. Grant is talking about the Bible and the Hindu says: “Look Sahib, my Bible is much more powerful than yours”.

“You have a Bible? But you’re a Hindu.”

“Oh yes, it’s on my prayer-shelf with the other gods.”

Lock’s reference to his faith is always in the context of the stories. His encounters with joy and frustration, pain and sorrow – or simply everyday connections – weave into his growing appreciation of a personal

relationship with the living God who loves all people in spite of our flaws and weaknesses and “the dark corners of our humanity”.

The book gives some great insights into the problems of Pakistan and Afghanistan, even though it does not provide many answers to those problems. Yet there is much to learn from a brief quote by a Pakistani poet:

*Life’s no life when honour has left,  
Man’s a man when honour is kept.  
Nation’s honour and nation’s fame,  
On life they have a prior claim.*

Thus the culture reinforces cycles of honour, revenge and a willingness to sacrifice one’s life on behalf of the nation.

The Locks are humble people and the details of their work are scattered rather than gathered, let alone boasted about. But their work has included building schools, managing community health projects, building a hospital, establishing democratic decision-making processes, training up local workers, supporting micro-hydroelectric schemes, empowering Afghan widows, overseeing an extensive eye care program and establishing English language schools.

The most powerful sections of the book are detailed stories of two people: Mariam, fleeing the Taliban where she risks being flogged for abandoning an abusive marriage, and Omar, a Turkish man who fortuitously enters their life in Kabul, encounters Jesus and is transformed.

The story technique is clever for covering the two and a half decades of service; however it feels contrived when recorded as dialogue, especially when dealing with controversial subjects such as the contradictions of Islam or the political situation in Afghanistan.

Overall, though, this is both a great glimpse of two difficult countries and an inspirational model of faith in action.

SC

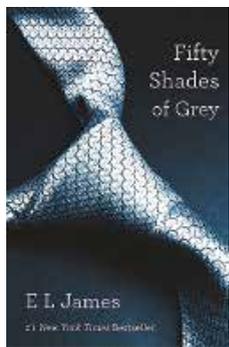
# Supermarket porn

FIFTY SHADES OF GREY  
BY E.L. JAMES

KARA MARTIN

**P**EOPLE STARTED ASKING ME ABOUT this book weeks ago. When I was travelling overseas I realised it was *the* book of choice as an airport novel. It had been variously described to me as “Mummy porn”, “erotica” and the “latest romance” – all good reasons not to read it.

Then I gradually became aware of the



extent of the book's popularity, along with the others in the trilogy. *Fifty Shades of Grey* has outsold the seven Harry Potter books on Amazon, with estimates ranging between 30 and 50 million copies. It has spawned a new

popularity for erotic romance. It's on the news. It's being discussed by our friends over coffee. Booksellers are embracing it as an industry saviour, with paper copies matching e-book sales. Suddenly it was something I needed to read and discuss, especially when it was reviewed on the *First Tuesday Book Club* on the ABC!

The author, E.L. James, is Erika Leonard, a former TV executive and mother of two children. The book began its life online written for fans of *Twilight*, as it was Erika's intention to appropriate Bella and Edward into another setting and let them run free sexually. Due to its heavy borrowing from *Twilight* some have questioned whether it is plagiarism. Obviously, readers don't care.

Like *Twilight* the heroine is submissive, naïve and breathy and the anti-hero is a monster – in this case a very rich man who is into bondage and discipline sexual activities. Like *Twilight* the relationship is obsessive, the male is a stalker and the heroine is unable to reveal the extent of what is happening to her to friends or family.

Uni student Ana interviews Christian Grey for a student magazine and he instantly falls for her, seeing her as a possible Submissive for his Dominant sexual practices. He pursues her and woos her with gifts of clothes, a computer and a car. She agrees to a non-disclosure contract and participation in his sexual practices.

I read all 514 pages but skipped the detail of the sex scenes... which means I only read 400 pages! However, many of those were

descriptions of or discussions about sex. This is not a book with *some* sex scenes – it is a book where sex is the main character. Certainly the human characters are pretty weak.

People are not reading this for the writing, characters or plot. As Alicia blogged on the *Goodreads* website: “This was a poorly written, utterly ridiculous, never-ending mess... The writing is insipid and juvenile. The characters are static, one-dimensional and unbelievably vacuous.”

As an example, Ana's most repeated articulation of her “love” for Grey is “Holy crap! He is so hot!”

People read this for the hype, the titillation and the exploration of a deviant lifestyle. Fantasy sales are up due to the global recession and books provide a romance fantasy to help women escape any deprivations, loneliness or boredom in their lives. However, *Fifty Shades of Grey* goes much further than the usual romance. The sex scenes are explicit and designed to arouse the reader. There is a wide range of sexual practices described in detail.

I bought the book for less than \$10 in Big W. Three 14-year-old girls were flicking through copies and giggled nervously when I reached for one. For young teens this book is a sexual manual.

Here are some serious concerns I have with *Fifty Shades*:

It obviously does not present a healthy relationship, in any sense. I cannot expect the rest of the world to accept Christian values but this relationship is plainly abusive. Grey uses his power, money, influence, age and physical presence to force a young virgin to participate in activities she does not enjoy. Yet it is presented as a romantic ideal. On the author's website fans beg her to reveal the true Christian Grey so they can meet him!

It makes popular the sort of female thinking that can lead to women making excuses for abusive partners: “That is just the way he is”; “I know I can change him, help him to see the light”; “If I agree to let him spank me, he might tell me more about him”.

It popularises bondage and discipline and legitimises sexual experimentation without any warning about some of the psychological and physical consequences. The *New York Post* has reported a tenfold increase in rope sales at New York hardware stores, and a 30 per cent increase in kinky sex toys.

It makes soft porn widely available. If the book had images it would carry warnings, be restricted in sales and be covered in plastic. There is no warning on the book, except for the tiny words “erotic romance” on the back.

It encourages females to be the victim of male fantasies. The heroine is incredibly

passive. All acts are carried out on her. She is not allowed to even touch her “boyfriend”.

The book also encourages females to see obsession as a positive thing. The heroine, and even her friend and mother, see the boyfriend's stalking as “romantic” and indications of his “love” for her. The friend and mother might see things differently if Ana was allowed to reveal the true nature of the relationship.

It sets up an idealised view of sex – from a male perspective. Ana is submissive, available, willing and in awe of him. Grey is rough, persistent and dominating, yet the heroine is still able to orgasm every time. Grey can be selfish in his sexual activity and yet Ana still gets her needs met.

Porn works on stimulating physical desires in the reader/viewer but cannot satisfy those desires. The reader falls into a pattern of voyeurism, yearning for the excitement, but left unable to be fulfilled. It results in feelings of guilt and shame. It begins to impact on the way the reader/viewer looks at human beings as objects of desire, things to be used.

The book has a poor spiritual core: Ana relies on her “inner goddess” for guidance, which frequently leads to following her physical desires.

It has a very faulty and dangerous ethical mindset. It suggests that pleasure seeking is the basis on which to make most of life's decisions. Ana's mother warns her not to “overthink” but just to trust her desires.

How should we respond to the book's popularity?

1. Point out how badly written it is and the poor values expressed.
2. Offer an alternative view of real love in relationship which is about knowing and being known, mutual giving and receiving, wanting the other to be fulfilled and mutual submission.
3. Encourage people to avoid reading it and getting trapped in its snare.

For those who have read the book and want to escape its snare I found great comfort in Bible verses that remind me of true love and true relationship, such as Ephesians 2:4-5, Zephaniah 3:17 and Colossians 3:12-14.

*Fifty Shades of Grey* will be a force to contend with for some months and it could be an opportunity for discussion about the nature of real love and relationship and good ethical thinking. However, I fear it is simply another signpost on the journey into greater sexual expression as “freedom” and the accessibility of explicit material. **SC**

*Kara Martin is a lecturer with the School of Christian Studies and the Wesley Institute. She also does book reviews for Hope 103.2's Open House program.*

**This is not a book with some sex scenes – it is a book where sex is the main character. Certainly the human characters are pretty weak.**

# Born on the bayou

Gone wild: Quvenzhané Wallis as Hushpuppy in *Beasts of the Southern Wild*.

BEASTS OF THE SOUTHERN WILD  
RATED M

JUDY ADAMSON

**T**HIS IS A FILM THAT GETS YOU OUT of your comfort zone. It's wonderful, but confusing. It's heartbreaking, but also annoying. It's such a mix of styles – fantasy, documentary, allegory and apocalyptic fairytale – that at times you can feel quite bewildered.

It helps, of course, to have some idea of what you're in for, so here goes: set in a fictional bayou area off the coast of mainland Louisiana, the story of *Beasts of the Southern Wild* is complete fiction but it does contain real events and issues such as Hurricane Katrina, rising sea levels and vanishing wetlands.

The main character is Hushpuppy (Quvenzhané Wallis) – a charming, independent-minded but emotionally scarred six-year-old who lives with her father Wink (Dwight Henry) in the Bathtub – a colourful, hard-drinking subsistence-style community outside Louisiana's levee system. The Bathtub locals have water all around them, unlike the people on the dry side of the levee who, Hushpuppy tells us in one of her many voiceovers, are "afraid of the water like a bunch of babies".

Hushpuppy has a rickety trailer-style home on stilts – not with her father, but a stone's throw away from his own "house". She busies herself each day out in the natural world, and in her own imagination, until Wink calls out that it's "feed-up time". There seems to be no school, apart from the occasional teachings of an older local woman which lead Hushpuppy to the conclusion that

when the long-expected big storm comes it will bring mythical, destructive creatures of the ice age back with it. There's no-one to tell her otherwise.

And while there is great pleasure, even fun, in her life – community get-togethers, child-like enjoyment of nature and confidence in one's local surroundings – Hushpuppy longs for the mother who left when she was small. She imagines her mother in the room, or maybe she's out where that light is on the water. Somewhere. And when Wink suddenly disappears one day and Hushpuppy is left to fend for herself, you know the dreamings and imaginings are the only things getting her through.

The plot is fairly muddled, presumably because we're seeing it through Hushpuppy's eyes and with her childlike logic. And when Wink reappears wearing a hospital gown, we don't know whether he is physically ill or has been in a mental hospital because Hushpuppy doesn't. And amid her wise, poetic voiceovers we, as viewers, can see her unease, her anger and incomprehension at this latest unsettling change in her life.

Added to that, the big storm *is* coming. The Bathtub community is stoic but woefully underprepared as their homes become islands in a dirty, dangerous sea. Could it really be the end of the world? The prehistoric creatures seem to have been revitalised by the hurricane and are getting closer and closer – imagination, fear and reality all blended together as the world falls apart around them.

*Beasts of the Southern Wild* has caused quite a stir, winning the Camera d'Or this year at Cannes, as well as the Grand Jury prize and cinematography prize at the Sundance Film Festival. Anything photographic is well deserved as the cinematography is earthy and homely in style but compellingly beautiful.

The story is more open to debate. The filmmakers are communal in style and lavish in their enthusiasm for the region and a desire to tell its stories. All the actors are non-professional, committed and utterly convincing, and their performances do resonate strongly. But there's no escaping the fact that there's a vague, wandering nature to the plot and very little for viewers to go on – even simple things such as characters' names generally get lost in the rush.

Hushpuppy is the film's emotional heart. She is a damaged little soul and you long for her rescue – for her to be loved and cared for by people whose presence and emotional stability she can rely on – but the filmmakers aren't interested in that. They, and the Bathtub residents, see the "dry" people as the enemy, living in a world that is clinical, bare and devoid of life. And when these people "rescue" the Bathtub residents it's clearly seen by them as a disaster.

Through Hushpuppy the filmmakers are keen to talk of survival, conquering fears and being true to your roots. Which she does admirably. But despite your attachment to her and her strange ways you know that, were she something other than cinematic invention, it is likely her bayou life would one day appear as empty and unfulfilling as the Bathtub locals' moonshine swill.

*Beasts of the Southern Wild* certainly takes you on a journey. You are there with the Bathtub residents worrying about their future, their children and how their community will ever rebuild itself after such devastation.

You might feel puzzled, at a loss and uncomfortable at times, but that is something the director and writers have purposely done – they're leading you up an overgrown, unfamiliar garden path and expecting you to follow. Whether you want to or not is up to you.

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