

Southern cross

AUG
UST
2014

THE NEWS MAGAZINE FOR SYDNEY ANGLICANS

A beautiful friendship

UNIVERSITY MINISTRY AND THE LOCAL CHURCH

+

What to expect of heaven

&

Building a real multiethnic church



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It was good...

to join a church family myself,

not just go because my

family went. ”



Paul Russell
Sydney News

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A multiethnic church



PETER TASKER

FROM EARLY 2002, WHEN I BECAME BISHOP FOR THE GEORGES RIVER REGION, MY PRAYERS AND thoughts have centred on this multiethnic heart of Sydney. Over the years since, parish after parish in our region have been coming to grips with what it means to be God's people seeking to make Christ known in the multiethnic heart of Sydney. We have learnt we needed to pray that the Lord of the harvest would raise up the labourers needed for this particular part of his harvest field. We praise the Lord that he has been doing this.

However, of late I have been, with others, assessing how we as a Diocese think of, speak about and minister in our increasingly multiethnic society. As humans we all tend think of "us" and "them" whether in regard to race, country or even families. We think me first, and then other people. I believe that the Bible refers to this way of thinking as sin! Our first thought is "How does this work for me?" We are happy for people of other cultures to join us as long as they are prepared to become like us!

If we are in Christ shouldn't our thinking and behaviour be more as Paul expresses in 1 Corinthians 9:22? He says, "I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some. I do all this for the sake of the gospel that I may share in its blessings".

Many of our congregations reflect multiethnic. However, I want to suggest they tend to be a church *for* multiethnic. Our form of worship is grounded in an Anglo mindset.

You go a church and they will say, "Oh, we've got people from X number of countries worshipping here". Sound familiar? There might be multiethnic people in the congregations, but overwhelmingly the minister, the wardens and so on will be Anglos. But this, I believe, will run out of steam.

After World War II most immigrants believed they were migrating to a Christian country. Churches were on every street corner and most found their particular denomination or church was already here. Over many years, the greatest percentage of immigrants was from Commonwealth countries. English language and culture was a known way of doing church and secular life generally. Many found it easy to join our parishes and enhance our spiritual life together. Those from European countries had a Christian background and found ways to fit into the Australia they found.

However, last month an article I read in *The Sydney Morning Herald* highlighted that another change is already with us. It said that one in three Sydney residents speaks a non-English language at home, and a total of 237 languages are spoken in Sydney! When I read the list of languages it was clear the majority of people no longer come from Commonwealth countries or Europe with that knowledge of English and English culture – or even Christian culture. Christian churches are few in the places the majority of migrants are now coming from, and it cannot be assumed that many have ever heard of Jesus.

In the regular diocesan bishops Bible study a few days after I read this article we were looking at Acts 14. Its message is a profound one to which I believe we need to give careful thought.

When Paul and Barnabas arrive in Iconium they find and attend the Jewish synagogue, where they open the Old Testament Scriptures and proceed to explain how Jesus is the Christ. When they then went on to Lystra there was no synagogue – no knowledge of God as revealed in the Scriptures. Where do you start to share the gospel in this situation?

Paul started by saying: "we are bringing you good news, telling you to turn from these worthless things to the living God, who made heaven and earth and sea and everything in them. Yet he has not left himself without testimony".

As we look at suburbs like Bankstown today I believe we are looking at Lystra! Many of our suburbs are quickly becoming like Bankstown. Yes, we need to pastorally care for the church members who have lived all their lives here. We also need to care for those from Commonwealth countries. However, we need to look to the Lord as to how we now reach out with the gospel to the ever-growing number of people from countries where the Christ is not known. Places like Lystra.

We are now praying the Lord of the harvest to raise up these new labourers. When people ask me "What are you looking for?" I give as an example that I am looking for people who go to Town Hall railway station and just see people. They don't see Chinese or Middle Eastern – they just see people. What do you see when you look around Sydney? Or your church?

We've got to start working through how it looks to plant a *multiethnic church* where its DNA is multiethnic – not simply Anglo welcoming multiethnic. And we need to pray that those of us in established churches can see more clearly that we are, indeed, all one in Christ Jesus – and that the field is ready for harvest.

Bishop Peter Tasker was Bishop of Georges River from 2002-2009 and is now acting bishop in the region. Since 2009 he has also been the Diocese's Bishop for International Relations.

Archbishop Davies welcomes ACNA Primate



Archbishop Davies and Archbishop-elect Beach, soon after the election was announced. PHOTO: Andrew Gross, ACNA

RUSSELL POWELL

THE ARCHBISHOP OF SYDNEY, DR GLENN DAVIES, HAS WELCOMED THE ELECTION OF A NEW Primate of the Anglican Church of North America (ACNA).

The Rt Rev Dr Foley Beach of the Diocese of the South was elected at the conclusion of a three-day conclave in Pennsylvania. He will succeed the Most Rev Robert Duncan, the first Archbishop for the Anglican Church in North America. The new archbishop will serve a five-year term and is eligible for re-election.

"I am delighted by this election and how the College of Bishops, after much deliberation and prayer, came to a unanimous decision," Archbishop Duncan said. "This is a happy day for the Anglican Church in North America, a happy day for the Anglican Communion, and a happy day for the Christian Church."

Archbishop-elect Beach served as the rector and pastor of Holy Cross Anglican Church in Loganville, Georgia, from its founding in 2004 until last year. In 2010, he was consecrated in Atlanta as the first Bishop of the Anglican Diocese of the South in the Anglican Church in North America.

Dr Beach is a graduate of Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, the School of Theology at the University of the South, and Georgia State University. He has served in ministry with Young Life, the Episcopal Church and the Anglican Church.

Dr Davies attended evensong with the ACNA bishops in Pennsylvania, where the decision was announced. "Bishop Foley will be a strong conservative voice within this newly formed province, among the GAFCON primates and throughout the Anglican Communion," he said. "He is a man who has stood firm for the gospel in difficult circumstances, and has not been afraid to contend for the faith once delivered to the saints."

In his first sermon before the ACNA assembly, Archbishop-elect Beach encouraged the church to move boldly forward into the future, and asked for prayer as he began a new season of ministry. "I count it a privilege and a sacred trust to have been elected as your next archbishop, and I ask your prayers for Allison and me as we begin this new adventure together in our obedience to Jesus Christ," he said.

"Our responsibility is to be faithful and diligent in preaching the word; it is up to the Holy Spirit's timing for that word to bear fruit. Some of us will preach the word with sermons. Some of us will do this with service. Some of us will do this with sacrifice."

A formal service of investiture will take place in Atlanta, Georgia in October, with leaders of the Anglican Church from throughout the world in attendance.

Zulu bishop dies at 41

A KEY BISHOP OF THE REFORMED EVANGELICAL ANGLICAN CHURCH OF SOUTH AFRICA (REACH, formerly known as CESA) has died after months of battling tuberculosis and pneumonia.

The Rt Rev Edwin Ngubane, the area bishop for Johannesburg and Pretoria and rector of Christ Church, Hillbrow, suffered a series of strokes and died in late June at the age of 41. Bishop Edwin made visits to Australia in 2011 and 2013, giving his testimony at many churches.



Bishop Ngubane speaking at a Johannesburg church. PHOTO: Peter Greisdorfer

"Edwin's journey of grace was a remarkable one," said his friend, Anglican Aid director the Rev David Mansfield. "Born into an ancestor-worshipping Zulu family, putting himself through teachers' college while living rough under a bridge in Durban, a dalliance with Islam in his early twenties, homeless again on the streets of Johannesburg before being cared for, provided with shelter and introduced to Jesus by the very church that he was the rector of for his final 18 months."

Bishop Ngubane had been rector of another Johannesburg parish for only a short time before being appointed to Hillbrow, in the heart of Johannesburg's red light district.

"The area was dangerous," Mr Mansfield said. "The parish was not financially viable. But Edwin believed he had been prepared for this ministry, given his background, ethnicity and life experience."

Mark Dickson, the principal of George Whitefield Theological College in Cape Town where Bishop Ngubane trained, said, "Edwin's remarkable story is a reminder of God's goodness and gospel power".

Women bishops vote in England

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND VOTED TO ALLOW WOMEN BISHOPS AT ITS GENERAL SYNOD LAST month. Similar legislation was voted down in 2012, with many conservative and evangelical delegates saying it didn't contain any provisions to safeguard those who conscientiously objected.

Dr Philip Giddings, the chairman of the house of laity who had previously opposed the move, said he was satisfied with the fivefold package – which declares that for those who can't accept female bishops "the Church of England remains committed to enabling them to flourish within its life and structures".

The chairman of the evangelical group REFORM, the Rev Rod Thomas, says the decision was sad but not surprising.

"Regrettably none of our proposals were accepted and we are now faced with a prolonged period of uncertainty about the ways forward for our congregations," he said. "However, we can continue to minister to each other and our wider communities with confidence because God's word hasn't changed."

What makes a Christian school Christian?

JOHN SCOTT

I WRITE FURTHER TO MY COLLEAGUE BOB GRANT'S ARTICLE "WHAT IS A CHRISTIAN SCHOOL?" in the June 2014 issue of *Southern Cross*, which commented on the recently published *Teaching well: Insights for educators in Christian schools*, in particular about school policies regarding the appointment of Christian teachers.

Faith-based education is a live issue in Australia. In her 2010 report for the Centre of Independent Studies, Jennifer Buckingham observes that religious schools are "transmitters of values and culture", going so far as to say that "one of the defining changes in the educational landscape in Australia over the last two decades is the growth in the number and variety of religious schools". This has been accompanied by a growth in size and numbers of Anglican schools, as Mr Grant recognises.

I argue that teacher appointment policies in our schools will reflect their different understandings of their Christian character. Some different ways in which an Anglican school might see itself as "Christian" are: The school may be committed to particular values, which are based on a Christian ethic.

The school may see its faith-based character best expressed in liturgical/sacramental terms.

Some Anglican schools describe themselves as "Anglican by tradition".

Anglican schools may operate under an ordinance of their diocese's respective Synod. The composition of the governing body may then have consequent implications for policy setting.

The school may seek to integrate Christian perspectives into its teaching programs.

Schools that locate themselves within these different categories might be expected to have differing policies in a number of areas, including that of staff appointments. Given such a spectrum of understanding as to what makes a school "Anglican" or "Christian" (a distinction some schools, but not all, may regard as significant), I suggest that any particular school may benefit from clarifying its own particular understanding, and the implications that may follow for staffing and professional learning.

My research into faith-based education across Christian, Jewish and Muslim schools lends support to the position that schools frequently adopt a "dual" curriculum. In this structure the religious teaching and activities, and the "secular" curriculum, operate as separate, complementary entities with no apparent inter-relationship. There are two points I would like to make.

First, in a dual curriculum structure the appointment of Christian staff may be seen as less pressing for teachers of the secular curriculum. Such schools may see a policy of neutrality, or preference but not requirement, as appropriate responses to the question: "Should the school, as a Christian school, seek to appoint staff who are Christian?" From my observation, many Anglican schools adopt such policies.

Second, in my experience the dual curriculum does not recognise adequately the complexity of the school's teaching and learning program. Although the traditional school subjects (such as English, science, mathematics or history) may at first be seen as neutral to matters of faith, in practice there are faith-related issues which impinge constantly in the classroom. Examples include the choice of texts in English; how to handle the evolution/creationism debate in science; how to teach probability and games of chance in mathematics; and understanding Western European history at the time of the Reformation.

It follows that Anglican schools might commit themselves to professional learning which seeks to help teachers understand the complexities of the subjects they teach, and in particular the intersection of subject and faith. An examination of the (publicly available) annual reports of our schools will reveal the extent to which they do, or do not, address this need. To date, this has not seemed a high priority in the school websites and annual reports that I have examined.

I am pointing to the strategic place that professional learning programs have in schools. As a concluding comment, I would argue that developing a deliberate and careful understanding of the nature and differing dimensions of professional learning is essential. In particular, understanding what constitutes effective and appropriate professional learning is important, especially in these times where the requirements of standards-based frameworks are so far-reaching (and, in my view, limiting). I did not find such a discussion in *Teaching well* – or, at least, if it is there, I did not find it easy to discover.

Dr John Scott is an honorary associate in the Faculty of Education and Social Work at the University of Sydney. He was principal of St Luke's Grammar School, Dee Why from 1991 to 2004, and has published and given presentations in the area of faith-based schooling.

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

MOVES



Waitara to Eastwood

A move was the last thing on the **Rev Bruce Stanley**'s mind when he was contacted by nominators, but after nine years at ALL Saints', Waitara he and his family will begin a new ministry at Eastwood in January 2015.

"Heather and I have always had a position where we're happy to sit down and talk to nominators... [then] pray about it and listen to God, so that's the way we do it," he says. "We weren't considering moving, but Eastwood seems to be where we feel God's leading us to use our ministry gifts."

Mr Stanley says the family has close friends in Waitara so it will be hard to leave, particularly for their boys (aged 11, 10 and six), who will have to change schools as well as church and suburb.

"But we couldn't be happier with the way God has led the parish," he says. "Right up till now we've grown every year, in every way. More than half our members are from non-English-speaking backgrounds and that's continuing to grow. God has looked after Waitara so well and it's in a really good place at the moment, with really great lay ministers and staff. That's why it's so hard to leave – it's a beautiful parish to work in!"

They expect to help multicultural work in the new parish continue to grow, as "the vibe from the nominators is to see Eastwood develop its multicultural approach to ministry and its outreach to new families... and they've got a great staff team there.

"It's daunting, making a change," he adds. "But we know it's the right time, because when you still feel convinced you're being called to move to another parish when everything else is set up well, you know it's what God wants!"



New chapter for St Matthias

After 10 years in Adelaide, the **Rev James Harricks** returns to Sydney in December to become rector of St Matthias', Centennial Park.

Mr Harricks has spent the past seven years working for the Trinity Network of churches (linked to Holy Trinity, Adelaide), becoming the senior pastor of the Trinity North East church plant in 2009 – which has grown since then from 60-70 people to more than 230.

"It's been an extraordinary five years," he says. "We're rejoicing in people coming to faith and growing in their faith and persevering through many trials... so there's lots to give thanks for, and [now that we're leaving], much to grieve. It was a big shock. I knew it would be, so prior to making the announcement I rang at least half the congregation to let them know what was coming – and that was a good way of doing it, just in terms of caring for people well."

Most years the family goes to CMS Summer School, and each time he and his wife Karen ask, "Lord, where do you want us to be?" That being the case, he says moving to St Matthias was not at all the answer they were expecting.

When approached by nominators their first response was one of "genuine surprise – both that this could be a possible next step for us, and that they would want to consider us for this kind of role.

"But the thing that excited us about it was the clear evangelistic vision, working with other Christians so that every man, woman and child in Sydney's east could come under the sound of the gospel. Our hope is that under God we might use some lessons we have learnt from evangelism and church planting in Adelaide to help God's people with this great task."



Lionel Windsor joins Moore

The governing board of Moore College has approved the nomination of **Rev Dr Lionel Windsor** to the faculty from January 1. Dr Windsor is a graduate of the college who currently serves as assistant minister at St Augustine's, Neutral Bay.

He completed a PhD in New Testament studies at Durham University in England last year, with a thesis that examined how Paul's Jewish identity informed his apostolic ministry. He has been teaching Greek this year as a visiting lecturer at the college and has been well received by students and faculty alike.

The college says Dr Windsor brings strong intellectual gifts to the faculty and a pastoral approach to theological education.

"I am very excited about the contribution Lionel will bring to the faculty in New Testament studies and more broadly," says college principal the Rev Dr Mark Thompson. "We can't wait for him to join us in a more full-time capacity and for his family to become, once again, a vital part of the college community."

Dein farewells Northern Region

Archdeacon Terry Dein officially retired at the end of last month, after spending 10 years assisting the Bishop of North Sydney – first as Archdeacon of North Sydney, then from 2009 in a reduced role as assistant to the bishop.

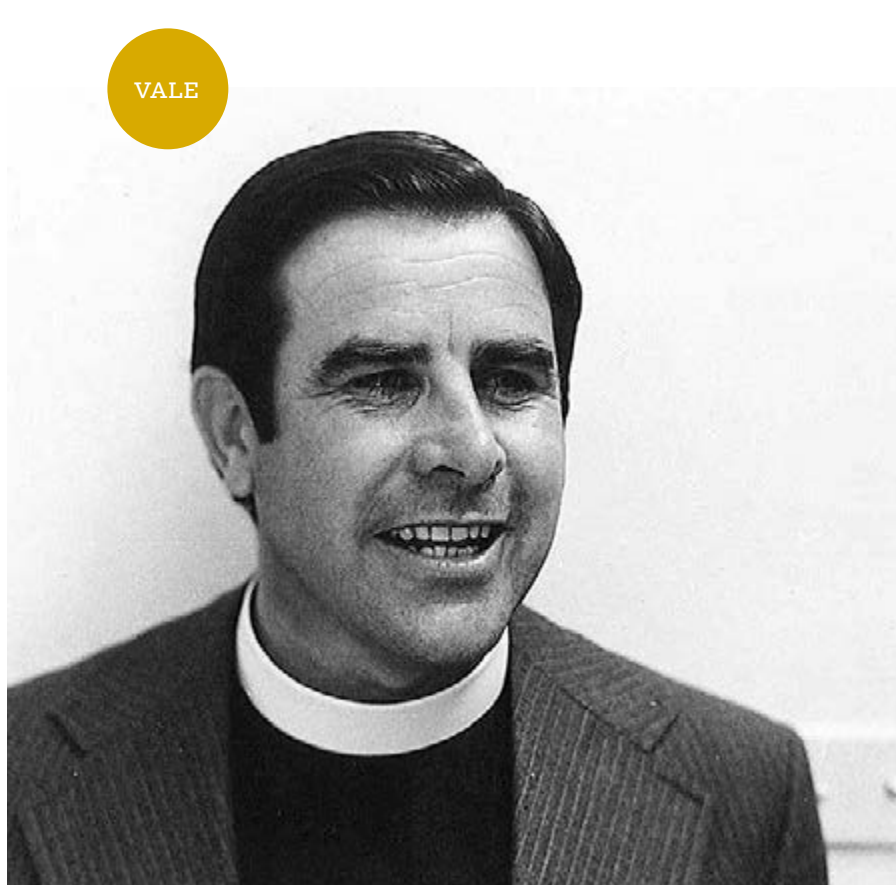
He says he will still be "seeking to find opportunities for ministry that will fit this age and stage of life", including opportunities where his experience as an archdeacon might "assist parishes at points of need".

"I'll take the opportunity to spend more time with my wife Barbara and family and take time out to 'smell the roses' – until it gets boring!" he jokes.

Archdeacon Dein has spent 44 years in ordained ministry in parishes from Wahroonga to Yagoona, as well as being director of the Anglican Youth Department in the 1970s. He was made a canon of St Andrew's Cathedral in 1995 and an archdeacon in 2004.

Says Archbishop Davies: "It is hard to believe that the indefatigable Archdeacon Terry Dein is officially retiring from diocesan duties. Over the past 10 years Terry has been a wise companion, a sage counsellor and a trusted friend, sharing my load as the Bishop of North Sydney.

"He has continued in his role beyond the normal date of retirement at my request, and I am very grateful to him and to Barbara for their generosity of spirit and their willingness to serve the cause of Christ as an advisor and confidant to both me and latterly Chris Edwards."



VALE

The **Rev Dalba Primmer** died on April 30, 2014.

Born on January 13, 1939, Dalba John Primmer grew up in Wollongong and was a carpenter and joiner before training for the ministry in the early 1960s.

He was ordained in the Diocese of Canberra-Goulburn in 1965 and undertook curacies at Queanbeyan and Junee before becoming priest-in-charge at St John's, Canberra in 1968. Two years later, he was invited to become rector at Holbrook, where the family stayed until Mr Primmer joined Bush Church Aid in 1976, travelling to the Diocese of North West Australia as priest to the parish of Newman.

In 1979 Mr Primmer returned to the Canberra-Goulburn diocese as rector of Bega on the NSW south coast – a position he held for 15 years. After other work in the Canberra-Goulburn area

Mr Primmer then moved to Sydney, where he was acting rector of the Sydney parish of St George from 2001-2004, and locum for a number of other diocesan parishes before retiring officially in 2009.

A memorial on the Bush Church Aid website remembers Mr Primmer as "a man of strong personal conviction as to Christ's reconciliation of all things and an active supporter in God's mission".

Pornography at home

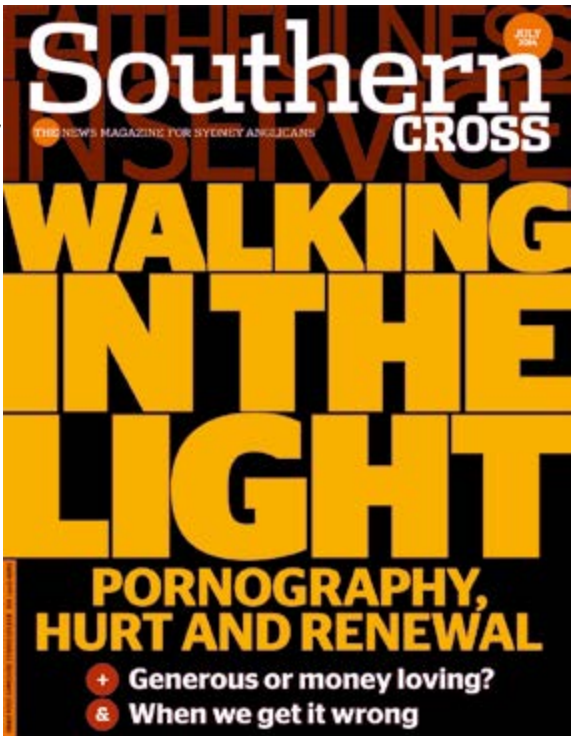
Regarding your cover story “Sex on the Brain” (SC, July), my husband brought another love into our marriage – his love for pornography.

Over time he collected magazines, followed by videos, DVDs and finally he started using his computer to satisfy his addiction. Confronting him only succeeded in me trying to let go of my feelings of humiliation and being worthless.

My husband’s addiction continues today. I would never humiliate him by disclosing his “secret”. I attend church regularly and believe prayer and forgiveness are so very important. However, after 40 years, one feels trapped in a meaningless relationship in which we have inevitably grown apart.

I am sure many people are in my situation.

Name withheld,
Wollongong



Further to your pornography feature, I have often wondered why the Church does not run its own internet service provider business, and place a mandatory web filter as part of the service. This service could be supplied at low cost to Christian families – and, dare I say, ministers! It would be an income stream and show the Anglican Church is doing something concrete about the problem.

Chris Sherlock
Georges Hall

Easter Day or Easter Sunday?

I have just got around to reading the June *Southern Cross*, and I note with dismay that there is an article in which you refer to Easter Day as “Easter Sunday”.

It is perhaps a small concern as it doesn’t really matter what we call something, but what is wrong with referring to the day on which Jesus rose from the dead as “Easter Day”, as we have been doing for centuries? Until recently, that is. I have noticed that even in church bulletins this day has become “Easter Sunday”. In the news media, on the internet, everyone seems to call it “Easter Sunday”.

Yes, Easter Day is a Sunday, so there’s nothing wrong with this practice on the surface. But I think we as a society have fallen into the practice of calling the day “Easter Sunday” in the same way as we refer to “Easter Saturday”, “Easter Monday” – the day which was tacked on to Easter years ago to give us all a holiday – and (oh, the horror!) I even hear people talking about “Easter Friday”.

Calling the day “Easter Day” sets it apart from any other Sunday and makes people think about its significance. We have Good Friday and Easter Day; no other labels are necessary. And we want to avoid, if possible, using the same descriptions as the world does. I think “Easter Sunday” differs little from calling Christmas “the festive season”, as some now do.

Please, I implore you, do not refer to “Easter Sunday” in your publication. As Christians we need to let unbelievers know that Christianity and its special days are something set apart from the world, because we want to encourage people to find out about Jesus and why Christians are also set apart. Using traditional but meaningful descriptions of Christian festivals are one simple way in which we can do this.

Stuart Horsburgh
Richmond

Wrong elephant

I read with interest your article “Elephant in the Music Room” (SC, May), but can’t help feel that the author hasn’t quite nailed the elephant. “(M)usic is the elephant”, he muses; and yet by definition of this idiom the elephant has to be clearly there but thoroughly unacknowledged or ignored. Church music is certainly neither of these – it’s constantly talked about and complained about. Surely the elephant is (and the author gets oh-so-close to seeing this) the unequivocally true reality that most Christian churchgoers loathe most church music most of the time.

As a longstanding church minister I have spent many years observing from the front the utter reluctance of huge swathes of all congregations I have served to make anything more than minimal effort at joining in the singing, never seeming to enjoy it, and never exhibiting anything of the supposed celebration of Christian truth that singing is. Is this because they are all lukewarm spiritually? No; it’s because they hate the whole edifice of church music – every genre thereof.

A senior Aussie Anglican minister said to me once, “You know, if there were a church somewhere in town that made a decision never again to sing, there would be a queue a mile long at its doors”. Hmmm.

Vernon Wilkins
Jordan (visiting Australia)

When the faithful disagree



DR GLENN DAVIES

WHILE WE CAN EASILY TAKE THE LETTERS OF PAUL FOR GRANTED, THE first time a letter from the apostle was read out must have been a special event in the life of a first-century church. All the more so if it was a personal letter to the church. Thus we can only imagine the excitement in Philippi when news spread that Paul, their founder and first pastor, had sent a letter from Rome.

Epaphroditus, one of their own, had been sent by the church to deliver aid and assistance to the apostle in his missionary endeavours (Philippians 4:4-20). This had been much appreciated by Paul and now he was sending, by the hands of Epaphroditus (2:25-30), a letter of thanks to the congregation for their partnership in the gospel.

At the Sunday assembly, the saints of Philippi meet to hear Paul's letter read. A hushed tone descends as Epaphroditus slowly reads the epistle. They hear of the affection in which he holds them all and of the encouragement they have been to him in his imprisonment (1:7). He reminds them they are to be Christ-minded in their relationships with each other and count others better than themselves (2:3). The Philippians are to shine like lights in the world among a crooked and perverse generation (2:15). They are to imitate Paul in his encounter with suffering, knowing their true citizenship is in heaven (3:17-21).

And then comes the gentle but public rebuke, when he makes reference to a personal dispute within the congregation. Worse still, he names the two people who are in dispute (4:2-3)! Imagine what it would have been like sitting next to Euodia or Syntyche that Sunday (or being one of them!). That the knowledge of their disagreement had reached Paul in Rome suggests the dispute had become very public. Paul deliberately mentions the sisters by name, not to shame them, but to encourage them. Note he pleads with each one personally (4:2) that they are to agree in the Lord. He even encourages the true yokefellow to assist the sisters in achieving such a reconciliation (4:3).

What should Christians do when they disagree? Following the apostle's counsel to Euodia and Syntyche, we should work towards agreement. While this may sound trite and simplistic, it is worth remembering. All too often Christians make no effort to resolve disputes, preferring to harbour resentment and ill will towards a brother or sister. Worse still, they use Facebook to vent their critical remarks, throwing theologically laden grenades and hoping to score a point, yet somehow "love" rarely seems to transcend the text on the screen. This surely is not the way of Christ.

If a third party is needed, that should be pursued. Sometimes a trusted friend or elder can bring objectivity and wisdom to a situation. It is always best if these matters can be kept private, though it is surprising how difficult it is to keep private a dispute between two congregational members!

Sometimes disputes are resolved because one side recognises their error. Such a case was Paul's dispute with Peter in Antioch (Galatians 2:11-14; cf 2 Peter 3:15-16). On this occasion Paul needed to make the dispute public because of the significance of the disagreement, which was compromising the gospel. On another occasion, when Paul disagreed with Barnabas about taking Mark on their second missionary journey, the dispute was resolved by going their different ways (Acts 15:36-41). While Luke's record of this event is tantalisingly brief, it would appear Paul could not agree with Barnabas about Mark's suitability. That Paul later commended Mark to the Colossians (4:10) demonstrates this earlier disagreement did not prevent him from changing his mind about the value of Mark's service (although Mark may have matured in the meantime). Moreover, the disagreement with Barnabas and Mark did not prevent ongoing contact and mutual respect.

So what can we learn from Scripture? First, we need to acknowledge that disagreements happen from time to time between Christians. Second, we should aim for agreement in the Lord, possibly seeking a third party to assist us. Third, if we cannot find agreement in the Lord then we should still seek peace. However, in all this the grace of humility ought to adorn us. It is significant that Paul's reflections on Christ's humility and the need to have the mind of Christ (2:2) preceded his exhortation to Euodia and Syntyche in Philippians 4.

While fellowship will always be challenged by internal disagreements, we ought not to allow our disagreements to fracture the unity of the Spirit. Rather we should be eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (Ephesians 4:3). There is a charitable way to express disagreements with each other, whether within a congregation, a Diocese, or indeed, the Anglican Communion. For some, it may be necessary to express the disagreement publicly, yet this does not diminish our responsibility to pursue peace with each other.

Sadly, for others, it may mean their necessary withdrawal from the fellowship of those with whom they disagree. Yet this should only be on primary matters relating to the gospel, not secondary matters. While this is regrettable, it still behoves us to pursue peace with an eye to reconciliation, for that is our calling.

SC

MISSION PRAYER

Almighty God,

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

In the name of our Saviour Jesus Christ,

Amen.

Kingdom links

Going deeper (from left): Sam Thomas, Lissa Le, Kate Fellows, Steve Xie, Bec Thompson and Elizabeth Fong dig into the Bible.

Universities are, in a way, a kind of parish. But they need support – and flourishing tertiary ministries almost always have a local church behind them, writes DAVID MCINTYRE.

HE SUN SHINES AND THE BIRDS ARE SINGING IN THE KURRAJONG BUSH ON A WARM winter's day. But, right now, no one is outside. Instead, students from the University of Western Sydney are in discussion groups indoors, laughing and talking, trying to understand the prophecies in the Old Testament that point to Jesus as high priest, king and the servant of God.

While uni students often use the winter break as an opportunity for travel, rest or extra work, many students in Christian groups devote a week to studying the Bible and theology. It is probably one of the most intense opportunities to deepen an individual's understanding of God and his word outside Bible college.

There are about 80 students gathered at Kurrajong this year – mainly from UWS, with a few also from the Australian Catholic University – and during the morning each campus group goes to a separate room for in-depth discussion.

"This is where a lot of the hard work happens," says the Rev Richard Blight, rector at Padstow Anglican, who also acts as chaplain to the UWS Bankstown campus. The students are being challenged to think deeply about God's truth and taught to find the answer themselves from the Bible.

Heather Moorhouse, who is part of the student leadership team at UWS Bankstown's Campus Bible Ministries (CBM), says being part of the group has challenged her to read the Bible a lot more, even as her understanding of theology has deepened.

Moorhouse says that CBM staff worker Kate Fellows, who started full-time at UWS Bankstown this year, has helped her understand the Bible and see the application to her life much more clearly.

"She won't give me the answer straight away, which forces me to find it for myself," says Moorhouse, who is in her third year of studying community welfare.

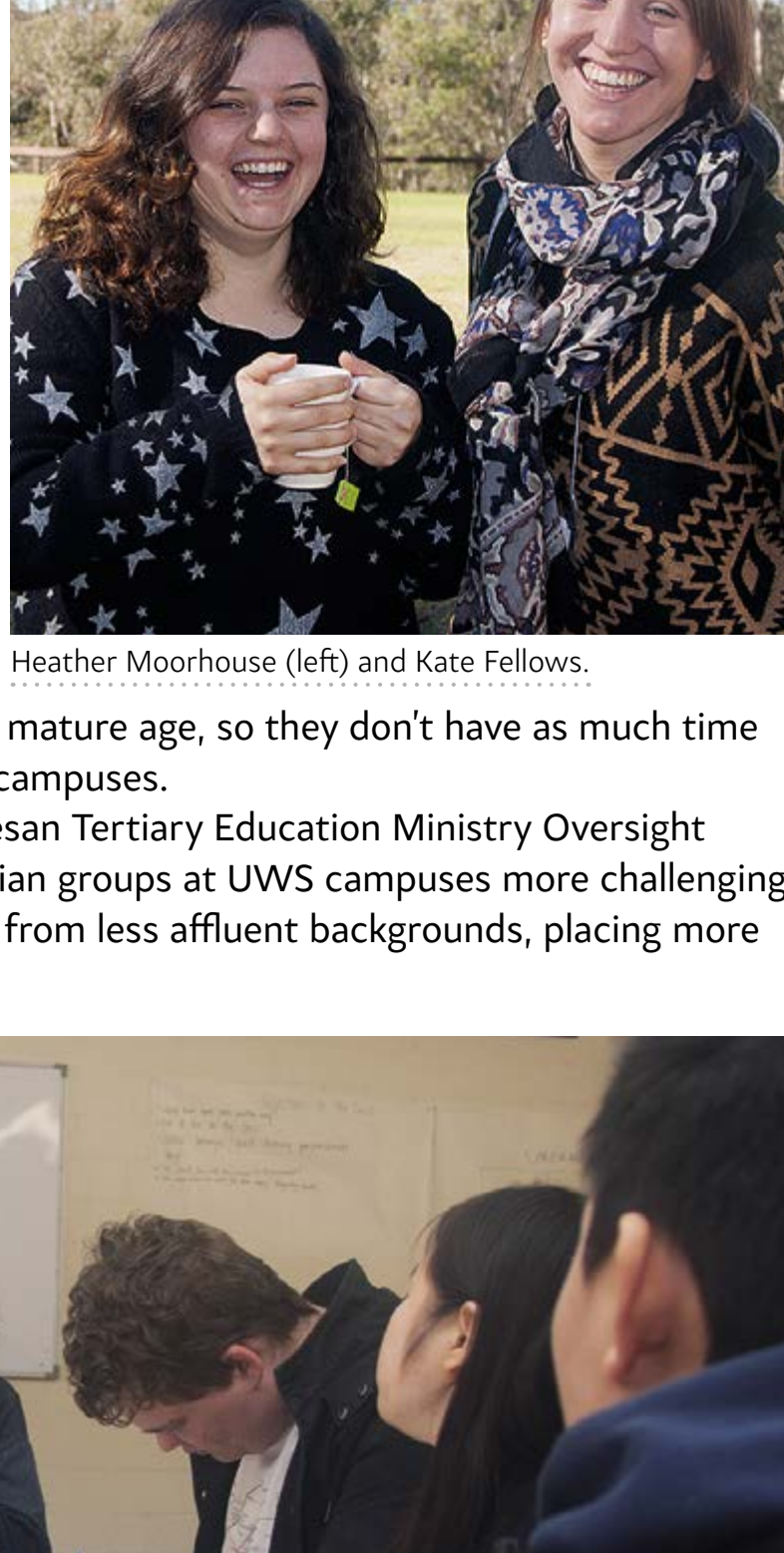
Moorhouse adds that she now feels much more equipped to speak to the non-Christians around her about the gospel, and encourages all Christian students to join a campus group because university is a unique time and place where people are actually questioning life.

CBM at UWS, which is one of the Christian groups affiliated with the Australian Fellowship of Evangelical Students (AFES), is younger and smaller than the other groups in Sydney – particularly compared with the Evangelical Union (EU) at the University of Sydney and Campus Bible Study (CBS) at the University of NSW.

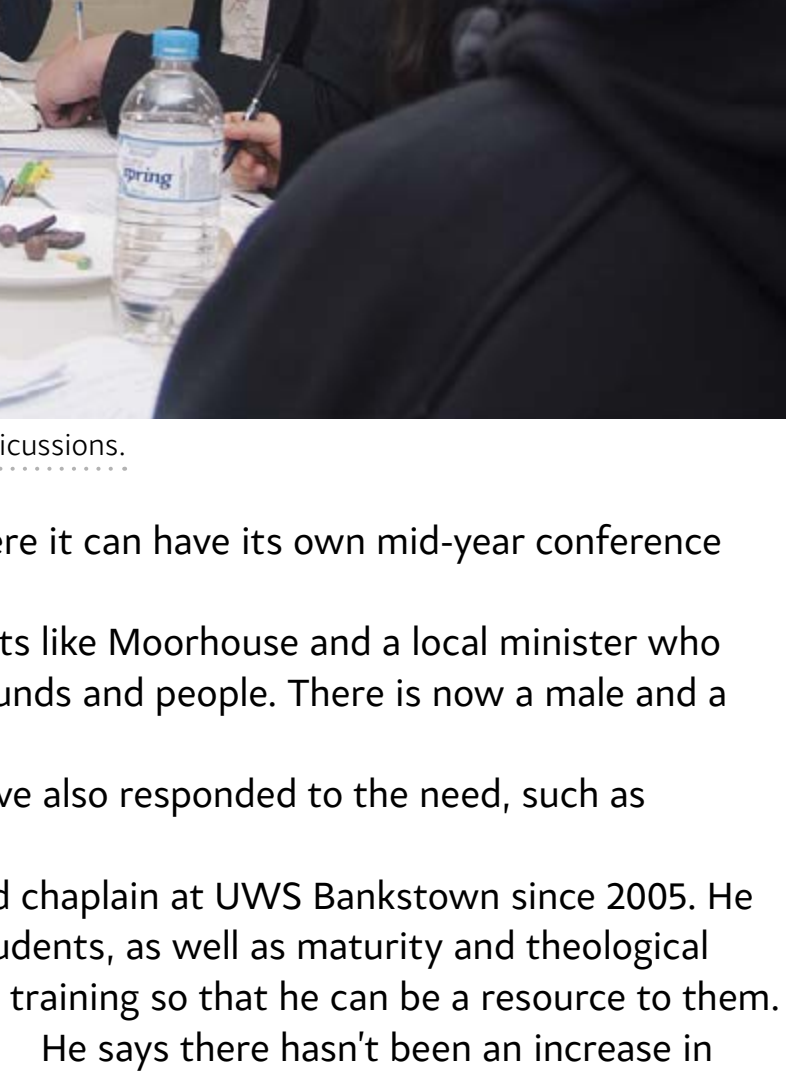
UWS itself is younger than other universities in the Diocese, and is made up of six teaching campuses spread across western Sydney in places like Richmond in the north-east and Campbelltown in the south-west, as well as the more central Parramatta and Bankstown campuses.

This means there are fewer students at each centre, and many of the students at UWS are part-time and/or mature age, so they don't have as much time on campus as students traditionally have at the bigger campuses.

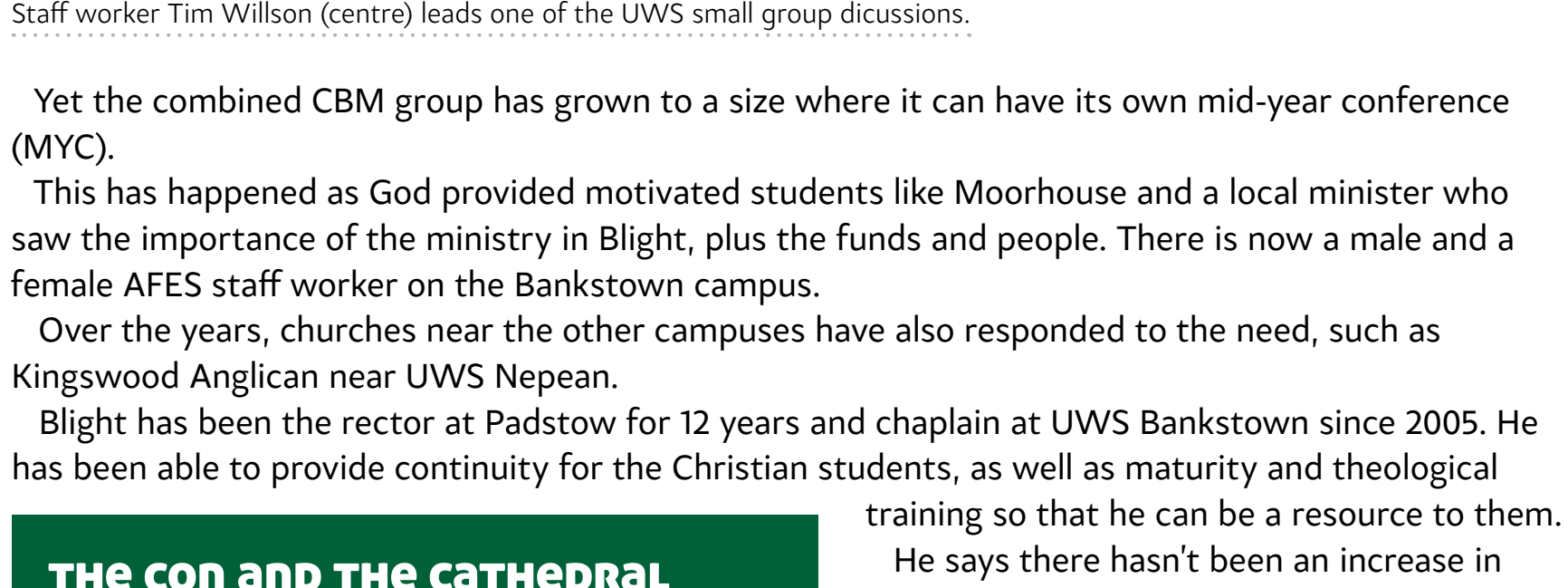
According to Blight, who is also secretary of the diocesan Tertiary Education Ministry Oversight Committee (TEMOC), this has made establishing Christian groups at UWS campuses more challenging. There is also the reality that many UWS students come from less affluent backgrounds, placing more time and financial pressures on them.



Linked: chaplain and Padstow rector Richard Blight.



Heather Moorhouse (left) and Kate Fellows.



Staff worker Tim Willson (centre) leads one of the UWS small group discussions.

Yet the combined CBM group has grown to a size where it can have its own mid-year conference (MYC).

This has happened as God provided motivated students like Moorhouse and a local minister who saw the importance of the ministry in Blight, plus the funds and people. There is now a male and a female AFES staff worker on the Bankstown campus.

Over the years, churches near the other campuses have also responded to the need, such as Kingswood Anglican near UWS Nepean.

Blight has been the rector at Padstow for 12 years and chaplain at UWS Bankstown since 2005. He has been able to provide continuity for the Christian students, as well as maturity and theological training so that he can be a resource to them.

He says there hasn't been an increase in numbers at his own church because of his work on campus, but that's not why he is working there.

"The congregation at Padstow have been very supportive of me by subsidising me to be involved," he says.

Moorhouse says it's really helpful to have not only Blight but his church supporting the group, including the availability of the church building as a place to meet.

Blight says he spends roughly two days a week at university-related activities during the semester, with flexibility based on the needs of the parish and campus group.

But he says the benefit for the congregation of being generous and supportive is significant. He says congregation members have become more prayerful and mission-minded in their own lives as they bless the campus work through prayer, Blight's time and the use of church facilities.

"Our goal is not to grow my church but the kingdom," he says.

Blight has also been able to work with AFES and the Diocese to get Tim Willson and Kate Fellows as staff workers, and then act as their mentor.

While Fellows is not the first female staff worker at UWS Bankstown, she is the first full-time worker, although she is not yet paid a full-time wage. As Blight sought a full-time theologically trained female staff worker, the Diocese was able to provide a \$20,000 grant as seed funding to help get the person started.

Fellows says the money meant she could be there five days, rather than working elsewhere one day a week. It also gave her time to raise further support after she started work at UWS.

She says it has been "really encouraging to see the girls who have become Christians from other backgrounds" remain strong in the face of family persecution. "I'm hoping that as I share those stories people will respond," she says.

Fellows is also grateful for the leadership and guidance of Blight and the prayer support given by congregation members at Padstow. She tells how one of the women from the congregation she didn't know contacted her

through Facebook to encourage her.

The presence of Fellows on campus means more work can be done with the female students, who are the majority at UWS Bankstown. For instance, Fellows can meet up with the female students one-to-one, something neither Willson nor Blight was able to do.

"One of the girls said to me that 'we can talk about girly stuff without the male staff worker getting embarrassed'," Fellows says.

While the grant from the Diocese was helpful, it still only covers a part of what Fellows needs this year, and will run out in the years to come.

Even when Synod was able to allocate \$300,000 a year for TEMOC to give in grants, that was probably less than 10 per cent of AFES's staff costs in the Sydney Diocese. That money has now been reduced to about \$100,000 a year, forcing TEMOC to think even harder about where funds should go.

UWS has been one of the priorities because of the relatively undeveloped student work compared with the other campuses.

This still leaves staff workers needing to raise most of their support.

Kitty Chan, currently in her third year at Moore College, is in the process of raising prayer and financial partners as she prepares to start next year as a staff worker at the University of Sydney's Cumberland campus.

"It's daunting thinking about it because... \$70,000 is a lot of money," she says. "It's also hard when even Christian friends question where the security is in such work."

"It's fairly humbling raising support and it's such a visible way of relying on God. It is really great when supporters tell me that they've been praying for me – it really is a partnership."

She describes a conversation with a woman who got in touch with her through a friend, "who wasn't convinced initially, but at the end of the conversation saw that uni was an important mission field".

Chan herself went through university at Cumberland campus (or "Cumbo") in speech pathology, and was a student leader at the Evangelical Christian Union (ECU) there where she benefited from the ministry.

She tells of learning how the Bible fitted together as a whole, how to talk to her friends about the gospel and how to train and model the Christian life to others.

"Those four years of my life grew me and my relationship with God – [it] helped me going back to my own church," she says.

A particular aspect to the ministry at Cumbo is the chance to equip students as Christians who will enter the workforce as health professionals, so that they are thinking in a gospel-centred way about work, relationships and ministry.

Such biblical training is what often makes those who have been involved in campus Christian groups more effective members of churches after they have graduated, according to Richard Blight.

While raising support is daunting for Chan, Fellows and other campus workers, AFES national director Richard Chin says it is actually a good thing.

He says AFES used to conduct fundraising through committees on behalf of staff workers, which didn't work. Now, each staffworker is responsible for his or her own support and, as part of their ministry, spends time meeting with supporters who pray and financially support them.

"There's ownership that way," Chin says.

AFES helps its staff workers in their support-raising efforts through training, sharing the raised funds to help those in deficit, and with deficit controls that prompt staff workers to spend more time and effort on raising support.

He describes it as a "fellowship".

"We take that word very seriously," he says. "It is a self-sacrificing conformity to a shared vision."

Rowan Kemp, who leads the staff at the EU at Sydney University, describes raising support as part and parcel of the work.

"If you try and separate it out it is a theological mistake," he says.

Kemp says the EU tells its staff workers to devote about 10 per cent of their time to raising support, once established. In the lead-up period to starting campus work, which Kitty Chan is going through now, most of the work is support raising.

Kemp says it's important for EU's staff workers to understand that asking for support in prayer and finances is an entirely appropriate thing to do in kingdom work.

"That's the critical truth because it addresses the fears and shame that are inside people," he says.

While the EU has grown to have 900 students at regular meetings with 25 staff, 10 of whom are senior staff, history shows how much the EU has also benefited from the support of a local church – in this case, St Barnabas', Broadway.

The relationship can be traced back to the 1940s, when the rector at Broadway was the Rev Howard Guinness, who had previously encouraged the formation of several student groups around Australia, including the EU.

The relationship was formalised when Bishop Rob Forsyth was rector at Broadway, with the church sending its staff to work alongside the EU students.

"For many years Barney's staff came over, paid by Barney's," Kemp says. "That made the EU realise the benefit of having more mature staff to help train students and provide pastoral care in tricky situations."

This prompted the student leadership to set up the EU Graduates Fund in 1990, so former students

could give back money to support staff workers at the university. From employing one trainee, the fund has grown to support the 25 staff on campus.

This growth has meant that St Barnabas' is no longer the main parish link to the EU, according to the church's current rector, the Rev Mike Paget.

This doesn't mean the parish doesn't continue to be in partnership with the EU. But it does mean that the church has broadened its ministry focus towards the city.

St Barnabas' has employed a Mandarin-speaking pastor to work with the many students who have moved into the dormitory corridor between Central Station and the University of Sydney. That congregation has grown to 80 or 90 students, with many of these being trained up to lead Bible studies or church services.

Many of them return to China and Paget says the hope is that they will be able to continue as mature Christians because they've been taught in Mandarin.

The church has also been able to partner with Student Life, which has a group at the nearby Catholic Notre Dame University. Barney's has been able to make its facilities available, which helps Student Life members to meet without straining the relationship with the university administrators.

Similar staff changes have taken place at UNSW, and within the AFES movement as a whole, as university Christian groups saw the benefit of having the theologically trained staff workers at particular campuses to work alongside the student leadership.

AFES's Richard Chin says the student-led model in the past had morphed into student autonomy so that some campus groups were good while others were not.

He says that under national director Andrew Reid in the 1980s, the AFES moved to base staff workers on particular campuses, rather than having travelling secretaries, so they could develop trusting relationships with the students.

Meanwhile, at UNSW, the Rev Philip Jensen had been appointed as Anglican chaplain of the university in 1975 and had started Campus Bible Study. He was appointed rector of St Matthias', Centennial Park a little later.

Under his leadership, the two ministries grew to have 16 different congregations. This led to the decision to split the congregations into several smaller parishes after Jensen left, including the parish of Unichurch, which now has five services targeted at the students who live on and around the UNSW campus at Kensington.

It is through Unichurch that CBS staff workers are employed, and they train 1000 or so students for gospel work at university and beyond.

The Rev Carl Matthei, as current Anglican chaplain and rector of Unichurch, says that having the churches and the campus group running side by side is ideal.

"The more time you get to spend with people, the more ministry you can do with them," he says.

Of the five congregations, there is one for local students who have moved onto or near the campus, one Cantonese congregation, one in Mandarin, one in Indonesian and one for other international students.

It underscores one of the great benefits of university ministry that, under God, Australia is an education provider. The total university student population in Sydney is 175,000 local and 57,000 overseas student; that is, about one in four student from overseas.

"[Australia is] an education provider so the world comes here for three or four years," Matthei says. "I would love it if churches could see the strategic opportunity."

He adds that many overseas students who become Christians on campus have then gone back to their own countries to do gospel work, whether as paid ministry workers or lay workers.

One example is Sui, a former CBS member, who now teaches Scripture at an international school in Indonesia and has the opportunity to speak at youth groups and English language services.

Despite its size and successes, however, CBS continues to rely on those outside the church for prayer and financial support.

Matthei acknowledges the frustration of ministry opportunities being limited by funds but is thankful for the generous individuals who support their work. In turn, CBS looks for ways to give back directly to churches, whether through encouraging students to serve at local churches or doing missions with them.

Longer term, CBS and other campus ministries benefit churches by training students in ministry skills so they can go back and

and run kids' programs, teach Scripture, participate as wardens and parish councillors, pray, provide pastoral care or lead Bible studies, thereby supporting their church as reliable core members.

Another key part of the teaching of campus groups is in evangelism.

Gareth Watkins, who works as a missionary for Student Life at Macquarie University, says the chance to interact with Christian and non-Christian peers is one of the great opportunities at university and reasons for being involved with a campus group.

"A lot of people have not thought about how to reach people of their own age," Watkins says.

Student Life, a ministry of Campus Crusaders for Christ, was brought to Australia in 1967 by Anglican minister the Rev Geoff Fletcher, who wanted to equip Christians in Sydney and Australia to share Jesus.

Student Life has a strong focus on making disciples as something that starts with evangelism and continues as the person grows as a Christian. Watkins says he has seen so many students grow in their Christian life as they learn to share their faith on campus.

"There is a focus on learning to share the gospel and seeing people come to Jesus in any and every context," he says. This makes them more effective members of the local church in the long term.

"The people who are most involved [at university] end up being the biggest blessing to their church," Watkins says.

Back at Kurrajong, as the Christian UWS students finish up their group time and come out into the sunshine to head down to lunch, they are fewer in number than the more established groups at other universities.

However, the aim is the same: young men and women have gathered together to learn and encourage one another to be faithful followers of Christ with their whole life.

Richard Blight says he keeps bumping into people who were inspired and trained at university who are now key people in their churches.

"They're the sort of people who are often graduates of uni ministry and that's what we want to keep doing," he says.

©

PARISH SUPPORT

- Pray, because it is God's work. Pray for a local campus, for the organisations and for tertiary ministry as a whole.

- Support an individual or a specific campus through prayer, encouragement, staff, facilities and finances.

- Encourage tertiary students at your church to get involved at their campus in whatever way they can. Options include AFES-affiliated or associated groups such as EU, CBS, CU, ECU, CBM, FEVA, EOC and Credo. There is also Student Life and Navigators:

AFES – www.afes.org.au (there is a directory of the groups on different campuses)

Student Life – www.studentlife.org.au

Navigators – www.navigators.org.au

- Take an interest and find out from students or staff members what is going on.

- Give some of your rector or assistant minister's time to a local campus. A minister's maturity and theological training is invaluable for teaching and training students.

- Invite campus Christian groups to work with the church for missions or kids' and youth events.

- Give overseas students, and other students, a home church.

11

What to expect...



We prepare for new arrivals in our home with great enthusiasm and care – so we should also prepare well for our future home, writes ED LOANE.

OVER THE PAST 30 YEARS, MORE THAN 17 MILLION COPIES OF *WHAT TO EXPECT When You're Expecting* have been printed. The authors tapped into a demand for a pregnancy guide that offered reliable information to expectant parents who were ignorant of what lay ahead. Amid the excitement in expecting a child there can also be a sense of anxiety because so much of what is ahead is new and strange and unknown. The natural question is "What will it be like?"

Christians can experience similar feelings as they look forward to their eternal future. There is a general sense that eternal life will be wonderful, but what will the experience actually be like? These are obviously important questions because what we think about our future shapes the way we live now.

All too often, however, people's expectations are shaped from the most unreliable sources like ads on TV, cartoons or jokes. As a minister, I have attended many funerals and have often been surprised to hear what people genuinely think life beyond the grave will be like. While the concept of eternal life, a life that does not end, is not necessarily hard to grasp, the content of what eternal life entails is elusive for many people. As such, they fill the void with misinformation and hopeful imaginings about what is to come. Christians, however, have access to true and reliable information, which has been graciously given in the Bible by the author of the future himself.

WHAT HEAVEN WILL BE LIKE

So, if we are trusting Jesus, what are some of the things we should we expect?

First, we can expect a *physical* life. Jesus had some cracking arguments with people in his day who didn't believe in the resurrection and he said they were wrong because they did not know the Scriptures or the power of God (Matt 22:29). These are the two barriers that remain in rejection of the doctrine of the resurrection. But, as Paul points out in 1 Corinthians 15, Christians are convinced that Jesus was raised from the dead and his resurrection is the "first fruits" of the resurrections of all those who belong to him (v23).

From verse 35 Paul goes on to paint some pictures of what the resurrection body will be like. These pictures highlight that there will be continuity with our present body (just like there is a continuity between seed and plant), but there will also be a transformation into a greater order of body, suitable for eternity. You will still be you, but you will be a better, transformed, more glorious you.

Second, we can expect a *productive* life. It would be easy to confuse the biblical concept of eternal "rest" with being idle – just sitting around being blobs and not doing anything. The Bible, however, pictures the Christian's future life as being a productive and active life. In Isaiah's vision of the new creation he points to God's people building, planting and enjoying the work of their hands (Is 65:21-2). Moreover, these verses show that this effort will not be subjected to the frustration and decay that is part and parcel of work in this world. This is great news for those of us who have lost work when a computer has crashed or seen something we spent a long time building quickly torn down. Working to be creative and productive is very satisfying and enjoyable when frustrations are removed.

Third, we can expect a *social* life. The biblical picture of life to come includes a city, a banquet and a kingdom and each of these pictures highlights the corporate nature of our future life. We ought not to expect a lonely quest of self-discovery and glorious solitude. Rather, we will enjoy the perfect fulfilment of humanity's natural desire to relate to one another.

Even the greatest introvert needs, and benefits from, social relations. It is a tremendous comfort when we enjoy the company and security of close family and friends. The happiest wedding reception or the most jubilant Christmas lunch is but a foretaste of the social life that will mark our heavenly experience.

Fourth, we can expect a *perfect* life. We are repeatedly told that God will wipe away every tear from his people's eyes and there will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain. All of those natural emotional reactions to the things that are wrong in this world will not feature in the world to come. They will not feature because there will be no cause for them. John tells us in Revelation 21:27 that nothing impure will enter into the perfect fellowship of this city.

But perhaps this truth might make us wonder if we will be able to enter into this holy fellowship. If you are anything like me, you will be only too aware of your failings and flaws. This sobering recollection will cause us to entrust ourselves afresh to the grace of Jesus in the knowledge that he both took our sin on himself and imputed his righteousness to us. Furthermore, we must understand that, while our present experience is beset by the ongoing presence of sin in our lives, at our resurrection our sanctification will be complete. Not only will we have transformed bodies, we will have transformed characters. You will be a physically new you *and* a morally new you!

GOD-CENTRED ETERNITY

So the biblical expectation of what is to come for those who trust in Jesus is not becoming an angel and sitting on a cloud. It is an expectation of a physical life, a productive life, a social life and a perfect life. It is a real and tangible reality that we look forward to. But as good as all this is, we have not yet touched on the greatest expectation for our eternal future. None of the things I have described so far would be any good at all if it were not for the fifth and greatest expectation.

We can expect a *God-centred* life. This is the substance of our eternal blessings... "we will be with the Lord forever" (1 Thess 4:17). The Bible reveals that the future hope for believers is to be in the direct presence of God – there is no need for a temple in the New Jerusalem because the Lord God and the Lamb are its temple (Rev 21:22).

Believers will enjoy an intimacy and directness with their creator and Saviour that they have only the faintest taste of in their present experience. Now "we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face" (1 Cor 13:12). The eternal future of Christian believers will involve a profoundly deep relationship with the one who has loved and cared for us more than anyone else in the universe. And as we live the God-centred life we were created to live, he will continue to love us forever.

Many people in our society imagine the afterlife in a purely selfish way, from surfing a wave and never wiping out to eating mountains of chocolate and never putting on weight. These are dull pictures of eternity when compared to the biblical hope of intimacy with God and a life centred on him.

The more we know what to "expect", the more these truths will impact on the way we experience life while we're "expecting". First, they will put our trials and troubles in perspective. So much greater is the glory that awaits Christians in the future that Paul said our present sufferings aren't even worth comparing with it (Rom 8:18). Physical ailments, relationship breakdown, impending examinations and even persecution for being Christian are all put in their place when considered from an eternal perspective.

Furthermore, for Christians "our citizenship is in heaven" (Phil 3:20). We belong there, not here. Having just returned to Australia from three years abroad, the concept of "coming home" is fresh in my experience. What a great feeling it is! And yet, despite what it says on my passport, I am not really a citizen of Australia but of heaven. I should be longing for a greater homecoming.

In *The Last Battle*, C.S. Lewis' unicorn captures something of the sentiment of entering eternal life when he says: "I have come home at last! This is my real country! I belong here... The reason we loved the old Narnia is that it sometimes looked a little like this".

Finally, knowing that we have this experience ahead of us, Jesus encourages us to invest in our future hope – not to store up passing treasures here on earth, but indestructible treasures in heaven (Matt 6:19-20). The return on the investment is infinitely more valuable. Also, Jesus says in the next verse that where our treasure is, there our heart will be also. So the more we invest in eternal life the more we will long to enter it. We will earnestly pray, "Come, Lord Jesus".

No wonder Paul, after explaining a little of "what to expect when you're expecting", tells the church to "encourage one another with these words" (1 Thess 4:18).

The Rev Ed Loane lectures in theology and church history.

Bula for Year 13



Seventy-eight students, 29 days, 3393 bottles of water and 6786 meals. The Youthworks Year 13 mission trip to Fiji is a massive logistical (and spiritual) undertaking.

This year, tight security ahead of Fiji's elections meant the cancellation of planned prison ministry but it allowed more time for youth training and extra help for Homes of Hope, a women's refuge for single mothers and their children. Their building project had stalled because of a lack of labour, so students were able to assist in the construction of a house.

"This was our seventh year in Fiji and the partnerships are now very strong," said Year 13 Director Andrew Nixon. "This mission opened significant ministry opportunities we never would have imagined back in 2008. We can't wait to see what 2015 brings!"

Clockwise from main: The Naimuimada Local Church Mission team with church members; heading off to an island youth group; learning about Christianity in Fiji; a Sunday School class at Naimuimada.
PHOTOS: Peter Riches





Facing the future: Samuel Woodward (Cuba Gooding, Jr, second from right) flees slavery with his family, helped by Quaker hero Thomas Garrett (Michael Goodwin).

JUDY ADAMSON

Freedom
Rated M

MOVIE

STORIES ABOUT OF THE HISTORICAL MISTREATMENT OF SLAVES IN THE American South – the violence of owners, the abuse of slave women and the abiding faith of so many in bondage, who looked toward a heavenly home as their comfort amid earthly hardships.

Freedom does draw on such history, but highlights an element well worth celebrating: the Underground Railroad. This was a network of men and women who helped escaping slaves to freedom in the northern US states – and, after a change in the law made these states no longer a sanctuary, they took escapees further north into Canada.

The Underground Railroad was overwhelmingly comprised of people of faith, who saw slaves as fellow human beings under God, rather than as property or sub-human. Lives were risked and sometimes lost, and up to 100,000 people rescued over the many decades the Railroad operated.

Freedom follows the difficult journey to Canada of one family – fictional, yet touching on elements of many real-life stories. The family is led by Samuel (Cuba Gooding, Jr) who, together with his wife, son and grandmother, flees a Virginia plantation in 1856. The family then places itself in the hands of renowned Quaker leader Thomas Garrett (Michael Goodwin) on the first leg of what proves to be a long and tricky escape.

The filmmakers could have used many specific slave stories here, but Samuel's family story has been put together to blend it with the true tale of pastor and hymn writer John Newton, through a link made with Newton's slave trading career a century earlier.

So on the one hand we have an African American family of faith (with the exception of the embittered Samuel), who are seeking to be as free in body as they are in mind. On the other we have, in John Newton (Bernhard Forcher), an ambitious young man who has little time for God until circumstances force him to his knees.

So this is, in every way, a Christian film. And that may ring alarm bells for some, who will assume that the performances, script or production values must somehow be wanting, in order for the makers to knock people about the head with the gospel – much as one wields a blunt instrument.

But there are no short cuts by the filmmakers here: it's a well-made film with strong performances. So perhaps the simple fact of dealing with a "Christian" film is the most problematic? Or perhaps we are having a moment of cultural cringe because it's an American Christian film (although the director is Australian music theatre stalwart Peter Cousins)?

While we deal with our discomfort – for whatever reason – consider that church was central to life for just about everyone in this era, steeped as they were from the cradle to the grave in the words of the Bible and the songs of faith. These words come naturally to the likes of Samuel's grandmother Adina (Phyllis Bash) and to Garrett, and we might feel slightly awkward about this, but it's worth considering whether this says more about us and our worldliness than anything else.

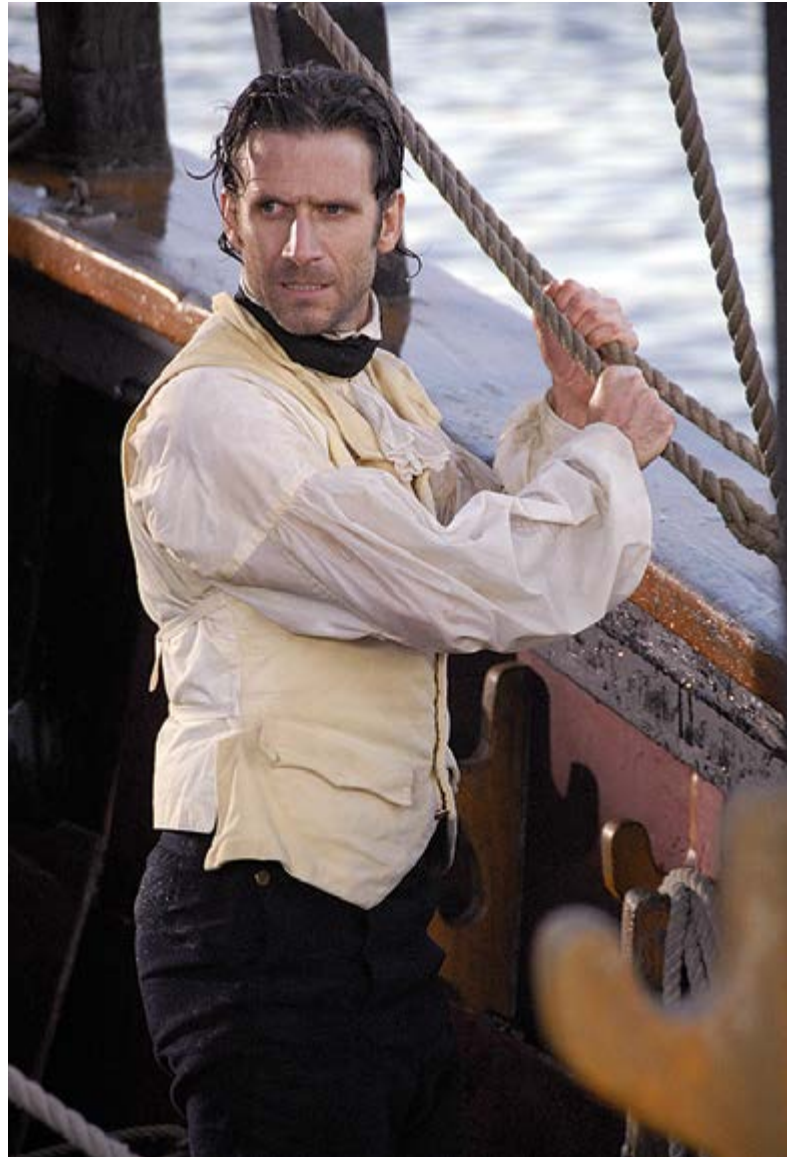
I'd certainly say some of the characters in *Freedom* are one-dimensional, and most of these are slave owners or plantation staff. They are creatures of their day, for whom the idea of conscience or doubts over slavery would have been almost incomprehensible. Those who are gentler are, like one plantation owner, mocked for their "Christian charity".

It's not all one-way traffic, but adding layers to certain story elements would have given the film more depth. The ending is a little forced, for example, and Newton's conversion experience and change have been condensed and tweaked to dovetail with Samuel's family. But historically slaves *did* trust in their Lord, Newton was brought to faith while a slave trader, and the same grace was and is available to anyone – slaves and masters, rescuers and pursuers, gentle and violent – which is a pretty good thing to share.

Cousens' love of music is all over this film, and it presents almost as a theatrical musical. Quakers like Garrett didn't sing, but most other people did, and the film is filled with song – from a travelling troupe of actors (including Aussie Tony Sheldon) to southern Christians in a horse and cart, to the soaring voice of the translator on Newton's slave ship. If you don't like music this might bother you, but I loved it – particularly the fearless theatre group and slave translator Ozias (Jubilant Sykes).

Freedom reminds us that our own freedom does not lie in where or how we are born, what we own or how we have lived. It has been bought and it is given freely to us – and others. Passing on this tale of the past is so that people can learn, grow and be moved about slavery, faith and the promises of God.

And before we finish the film by feeling warm and fuzzy about salvation and the Christian strength of those who have gone before, the closing moments remind us that more people live in slavery now than at any other time in history. So it's not just about *them*, and then. It's about *us*, and now. SC



Bernhard Forcher as John Newton.

The truth about healing

CHRISTOPHER ALLAN

**Healed at Last - Separating
Biblical Truth From Myth**
by Scott Blackwell

BOOK

WARNING: ONCE YOU PICK UP THIS BOOK YOU'LL FIND it so compelling and thought-provoking you'll find it hard to put down (don't say you haven't been warned!).

At long last an evangelical has written on the topic of healing in a way that is clear, concise and honest – but more than anything else, always seeks to ask what does the Bible say about healing?

The book is not just a theological text. It begins with Scott's own struggles with illness – both physical and emotional. Childhood meningitis has left him with a permanent limp, and he tells how Christian brothers (trying to be helpful) have asked, "You know God can heal you?" Scott's reply is, "I have been healed".

The book seeks to unpack the Bible's teaching to both the question and reply. What does the Bible say about healing now? And are we limiting what the Bible says by only speaking about healing as salvation?

In doing this, Scott doesn't tip his hat to suffering like so many other books on healing do. This book sits with suffering and the inevitable questions that all Christians, if we are honest, are confronted with.

What I found most encouraging about this book, in comparison to so much of what is written about healing, is that Scott puts God and not us at the centre: "Biblical healings are a sign, or window, through which God reveals his greater intention. Every healing is God-centred". We are reminded that God is sovereign in every circumstance and his love is personal for each of us. My experience has shown me that this is what suffering people long to hear.

This is more than a biblical survey of the word "healing" throughout the Bible. It's not just an apologetic for rightly handling this pastoral topic with careful study of the Bible instead of just through the emotions. This is a book that helps the sufferer lift their eyes and see God, who is sovereign and relational, and he has saved *me*. Scott reminds us what all people with enduring suffering must hear: "What you are now is not *who* you are". Thankfully, Scott takes us to the cross and forgiveness.

The conclusion that Scott Blackwell's book inevitably points us to is this: it is evangelicals who should run healing ministries. In fact, evangelicals are the only safe hands to hold healing ministries. There are others who, in the end, simply have nothing to say to those who are not healed. To them, the unhealed are simply failures. But evangelicals, on the other hand, have a message for everyone who is suffering. It is a message of God's love, power and wisdom that shows itself in salvation, in assurance, and in care and compassion.

All of this comes from a sovereign God who cares constantly for all his people, regardless of whether they are immediately "healed" in this world or not, and God's love is accompanied (and expressed) by support, encouragement and prayer from God's people in this world. This is what an evangelical healing ministry looks like – in this book Scott Blackwell explains why. SC

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