

Southern CROSS

THE NEWS MAGAZINE FOR SYDNEY ANGLICANS

OCT
OBER
2014

Through the bars

THE LIGHT OF THE GOSPEL IN PRISON

- + The Ministry of Game
- & Saving "Hope" for refugees

CONTENTS



COVER

Chaplaincy work bringing the truths of the gospel into our prisons. P11

Sydney news	3
Mission news	4
Australian news	5
World news	6
Essay of the month	7
Changes	8
Letters	9
Archbishop writes	10
Cover feature	11
Moore is more	12
Events	13
Culture	14

“ MoG is a happy, safe place for people of any belief or no belief, openly run by Christians and operating on Christian values. ”



Ben Carpentier
Mission News

Southern CROSS
OCTOBER 2014
volume 20 number 9



PUBLISHER: Anglican Media Sydney
PO Box W185
Parramatta Westfield 2150

PHONE: 02 8860 8860

FAX: 02 8860 8899

EMAIL: info@anglicanmedia.com.au

MANAGING EDITOR: Russell Powell

EDITOR: Judy Adamson

ART DIRECTOR: Stephen Mason

ADVERTISING MANAGER: Kylie Zahra

PHONE: 02 8860 8850

EMAIL: ads@anglicanmedia.com.au

Acceptance of advertising does not imply endorsement. Inclusion of advertising material is at the discretion of the publisher.

SUBSCRIPTIONS: Garry Joy

PHONE: 02 8860 8861

EMAIL: subs@anglicanmedia.com.au

\$44.00 per annum (Australia)

Planning for relief



The Rev Greg Peisley (right) with members of Oakville Bushfire Brigade.

● NICK GILBERT

AFTER MUCH PLANNING, PITT TOWN ANGLICAN CHURCH IS ENACTING A NATURAL DISASTER Policy to enable a more pre-planned and comprehensive response to events such as bushfires and floods.

The senior minister of the parish, the Rev Greg Peisley, says the location of Pitt Town, just above a flood plain and on the edge of Hawkesbury bushland, means natural disasters are very much an ongoing issue for the church and the wider community.

"Disasters and disaster relief are things people are concerned about here, so it's a natural point of connection, and something we could contribute to," he says.

The catalyst for drawing up a formal policy was, in part, the tragic death in February of an eight-year-old Pitt Town girl after a tree fell on her and three others at the local primary school.

"That probably spurred us on quite a bit," Mr Peisley says. "We'd organised a prayer meeting and I'd flicked out an email just to church members asking them to come along. That somehow went viral and the next day 120 people came, including the parents of the little girl, and we basically had to make it up as we went along. So, in our policy, we're not just thinking of disaster relief but also of community tragedy, and trying to find ways to be prepared for those things before they happen."

Ray Fabris, a church member who has worked as an Emergency Management Officer for local government, has played an active role in developing the policy. He says much of the work has been on preparing people, rather than working on ways to implement recovery programs after the fact.

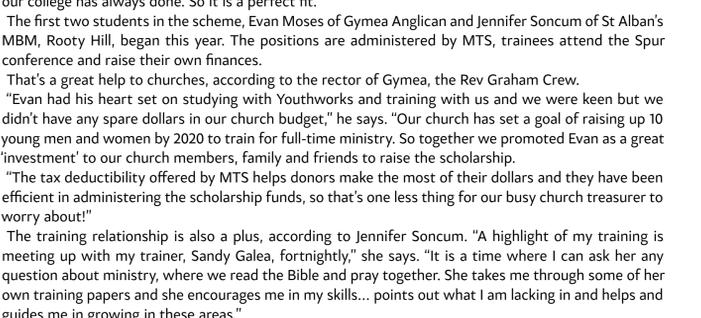
"Pitt Town is undergoing major regrowth and lots of new people are moving in," he says. "Many of them haven't experienced a flood – we haven't had a flood in the Hawkesbury for some 20 years now. However, there have been threats in the past and we're encouraging people just to be aware of that."

Mr Peisley says he hopes the policy may also be of use to other churches, providing a template from which to plan, in advance, ways to approach disaster relief.

"We're hoping that, if we end up doing this well, we can share it with other churches in a way that makes it easy to adapt to their own situations," he says. "In some ways, though, the most important element is simply to be thinking ahead."

SEPTEMBER 2014
Southern Cross

Training partners



Evan Moses speaks to youth group members at Gymea Anglican. PHOTO: Yolande O'Donnell

A GROUND-BREAKING TRAINEE SCHEME HAS BEGUN WHICH WILL LINK CHILDREN'S AND YOUTH ministry trainees with parishes through the Ministry Training Strategy and Youthworks College. The scheme utilises the MTS "hybrid" timetable, under which trainees spend half their time at college and the other half working in parishes.

"It's a boost to parishes to have trainees available," says the Rev Andrew Nixon, principal of Youthworks College, "and it strikes a 50-50 balance between study and on-the-job experience, which is exactly what our college has always done. So it is a perfect fit."

The first two students in the scheme, Evan Moses of Gymea Anglican and Jennifer Soncum of St Alban's MBM, Rooty Hill, began this year. The positions are administered by MTS, trainees attend the Spur conference and raise their own finances.

That's a great help to churches, according to the rector of Gymea, the Rev Graham Crew.

"Evan had his heart set on studying with Youthworks and training with us and we were keen but we didn't have any spare dollars in our church budget," he says. "Our church has set a goal of raising up 10 young men and women by 2020 to train for full-time ministry. So together we invested Evan as a great 'investment' to our church members, family and friends to raise the scholarship."

"The tax deductibility offered by MTS helps donors make the most of their dollars and they have been efficient in administering the scholarship funds, so that's one less thing for our busy church treasurer to worry about!"

The training relationship is also a plus, according to Jennifer Soncum. "A highlight of my training is meeting up with my trainer, Sandy Galea, fortnightly," she says. "It is a time where I can ask her any question about ministry, where we read the Bible and pray together. She takes me through some of her own training papers and she encourages me in my skills... points out what I am lacking in and helps and guides me in growing in these areas."

There are also advantages at the end of the trainee program. "Instead of coming out of MTS and having no qualification, at the end of the two years I will have the Diploma of Theology/Diploma of Ministry and from that would be able to secure a job or enter into second year Moore College," she says.

Mr Crew says the experience has also been positive in his parish. "We've been wonderfully blessed through having Evan minister and train with us," he says. "Our church has seen him growing in his ministry skills, his character and in his knowledge of God's word. He's been a pioneer for us and I hope others will follow his example in years to come."

Urgent appeal for Hope

● JUDY ADAMSON

AN ANGLICARE SERVICE THAT PROVIDES SPECIALISED COUNSELLING TO TRAUMATISED REFUGEES is set to close because its funding has been cut by the Federal Government.

The Hope Counselling Program, which operates mainly in south-western Sydney, needs more than \$250,000 by January to keep paying its small band of counsellors, or it will be forced to close. The Anglicare Christian Refugee Appeal has been set up to try and raise the funds before that date.

"There is a desperate need for services like Hope to help settle refugees and humanitarian entrants into our Australian community well, to help them transition from fear and grief to a fulfilling life in a new country," says Grant Millard, CEO of Anglicare NSW.

Jean Daher, Hope's senior counsellor, is very anxious that the people they care for will continue to receive the help they need.

"Other counselling services... don't have face-to-face interpreter services and our clients don't speak English – or not enough to counsel or do this sort of work in – and we're all bilingual," she says.

"This service is not just about listening. It's guidance, support, education, parenting, relationship skills, guidance to access other services... it's advocacy, it's everything. Mainstream counselling services do not do that, full stop. Plus there are no limits here on the number of sessions you can have and we are specialised to help refugees, asylum seekers and humanitarian entrants."

Mrs Daher might seem passionate but she knows her clients' needs only too well. She mentions Yasmin, an Iraqi woman from a Christian minority group, who was gang raped by some Muslim men and left for dead on a garbage tip. Found by a passer-by, she was taken to hospital where her family decided that her experience – and the persecution of their religious group – meant the best option was for her to flee to Jordan with a family member.

Yasmin did this but not long after she discovered she was pregnant as a result of the rapes. She attempted suicide more than once and then the family member connected her with a man from their minority group, who knew the history and offered to marry her and bring up the child as his own.

The family came to Australia about three years ago with the help of the United Nations but Yasmin now suffers a mental illness and has struggled to move forward. Her past traumas continue to cause difficulty in her relationship with her husband, yet they love each other dearly and Mrs Daher has been supporting them both.

"All sorts of struggles continue to emerge," she says. "I started to do some work with her so she wouldn't be so traumatised in talking about her past and that's gone very well. She felt safe here. But every time she sees a different doctor I have to fill them in on the story because she can't do that. It's like reliving it."

Yasmin, speaking about the service through Mrs Daher, says, "It's not just normal work you [Mrs Daher] do. You give more than work and help – you give of yourself. You have given me much more than hope: you have given me back my soul."

Adds Mrs Daher: "She wants to get better and she wants to learn and I love that about her... but when I said we might not be around after December, you should have seen the panicked look on her face."

To donate go to www.anglicare.org.au/get-involved/latest-appeal

Chinese school takes off



Back to school: Chatswood senior minister the Rev Steve Jeffrey inspects progress in the new building.

● JUDY ADAMSON

A BOLD PLAN TO DEVELOP A SMALL BILINGUAL PRIMARY SCHOOL IN THE GROUNDS OF ST PAUL'S, Chatswood has received final approval and the school set to open at the start of the 2015 academic year.

A two-storey building with classrooms, offices and an exterior play area for the International Chinese School, as it will be known, are now being constructed after Standing Committee gave approval earlier this year for \$760,000, raised from the sale of a parish property, to be used towards the project.

Church members have pledged almost as much again to get the school built, with the remaining \$450,000 provided by a loan from the Finance and Loans Board.

The general manager at St Paul's, David Lawrence, who is also project manager for the school, says, "We see this very much as local mission, so it's not just a straight selling of a property so we can put capital into an asset. We feel this is a really positive step and... lines up with our core objective here."

The ICS will be a not-for-profit independent Anglican school and follow the NSW Board of Studies curriculum – usually in English, but with at least one hour of Mandarin each day.

"Our target is that the students will be proficient in both languages – not just knowing simple words," says Anthony Tse, the school's registrar. "They will know how to read and write in both languages."

The ICS started its marketing campaign in August and has had six confirmed enrolments in the first six weeks (the school has a maximum of 20), with many more interested families.

Mr Tse says parents have "expressed keen interest, and although the building won't be finished until late November enrolments have continued to come in."

Some St Paul's congregations have been relocated offsite for the duration of the build and these congregations – as well as those that have remained in the church – are continuing to grow.

"Everyone's very supportive and interested," Mr Lawrence says. "Even with the programs during the week, people have been very understanding of the disruption that a massive building program can have."

"I've put a hard hat on some of our parishioners, taken them through the site and shown them our timber hall – that's the oldest thing on the site – and shown them how we are keeping it but reusing it and they've been very positive about that."

Mr Lawrence says that the International Chinese School holds an information morning tea each fortnight and has received inquiries or registrations each time.

"A couple of people have even rung who had children born in July and they've registered for 2018!" he says. "So the waiting lists are growing and the momentum behind the start next year is growing as well."

ARV expands on all fronts



Growth: newly built villas at the ARV village at Caddens near Kingswood.

● RUSSELL POWELL

ANGLICAN RETIREMENT VILLAGES (ARV) HAS BOUGHT NEW LAND AND BUILDINGS, INCLUDING another former hotel, to expand its network of villages as well as accommodation for older people at risk of homelessness.

ARV's first housing assistance project was the transformation of the former Thurles Castle Hotel last year in Chippendale. "Providing for older people at risk of homelessness is a key element of our expression of Christian mission," says ARV's CEO Rob Freeman.

A new purpose-built housing assistance village at Penrith is now on the drawing board. Land has been purchased and a development application granted on a block near the Penrith CBD and, once construction begins this year, it is expected the site could house 20 people within 18 months.

In addition another former hotel, a guesthouse and a bank building will add another 60 housing assistance places in the next two years. ARV has purchased the Taverners Hill Hotel in Leichhardt, old guesthouse The Cecil in Katonoba and a building in Botany that used to be a bank.

"We have begun the planning process to reconfigure these buildings for our purposes," Mr Freeman says. "Our hope is to build a network of such services across areas of particular need," adding that the organisation receives no government assistance for this initiative.

The network of ARV villages is also expanding. After the announcement of plans for a new village in Rooty Hill (SC, April), enlargement of the village in the new suburb of Caddens near Kingswood in western Sydney is under way – as is construction of a new village at The Ponds, adjacent to Stanhope Gardens.

A significant feature of the Rooty Hill village is that half of the units will be offered on a rental basis, ensuring there are no financial barriers to entry.

ARV's general manager for governance and communications, Ross Pendlebury, says the new centres will be integrated with existing Anglican ministry.

"Discussions are already under way with local parishes at Rooty Hill and The Ponds on ways to partner in ministry to older people, with a view to seeing seamless integration between village ministry and wider ministry to seniors in the area," he says.

"A partnership has been in place with Kingswood for some time," he adds, "and we expect this will be further expanded as Caddens becomes operational."

Land has also been secured for a village in Milperra and design work will commence shortly. In all, the new and expanded sites will cater for more than 900 people in retirement living and residential care.

"All our new villages will offer the continuing of care and a service for which ARV is renowned," Mr Freeman says. "Most importantly, like all our existing villages, these new villages will be vibrant communities that provide a platform for the expression of Christian love, be it through practical care or ministry of the word."

Awards for SC

SOUTHERN CROSS WAS RECOGNISED with five prizes at the 2014 awards ceremony of the Australasian Religious Press Association, held in Canberra early in September.

Members were also celebrating the 40th anniversary of the ARPA conference, which recognises the work – in print and online – of Christian publications from a range of denominations in Australia and New Zealand.

In the category for Best Faith Reflection the Dean of Sydney, the Very Rev Phillip Jensen, was given the gold award for his feature "A Muslim teaches us" (right) – about the courage of Australian cricketer Fawad Ahmed and others

to risk national selection because of their beliefs – which appeared in the October 2013 edition of SC.

The citation with the award said the feature "raises questions about non-compromise which might make many Christians uncomfortable", and was "a thought-provoking and cogently argued article, based on a timely issue".

SC received the silver award for Most Improved Hard Copy Publication, with judges mentioning the more attractive covers, and saying the change in format and style from the previous year gave it a "more contemporary feel" – noting in particular the "careful use of colour for background and impact".

Moore College lecturer Dan Wu received a silver award for his September 2013 feature "From the naughty chair to the knowledge of God" in the category of Best Theological Article. The judges said the story "blends humour, theology and the grounded messiness of life to offer insights into the nature of God's love and faithfulness and how it can be mirrored in our own parenting styles".

Southern Cross editor Judy Adamson awarded a bronze prize in the Best Review category for her story on the comedy apocalyptic film *This is the End*, while SC art director Stephen Mason won a Best Headline bronze for his witty "How Hauer was how-to wowed the house" – which topped an October 2013 news story about the visit to Australia of US theologian Professor Stanley Hauerwas.

The major prize of the awards ceremony, the Gutenberg Award, was presented to *Aurora* – the Catholic magazine of the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle – which is distributed monthly inside six regional Fairfax newspapers, including *The Newcastle Herald* and *The Maitland Mercury*.



North for the community

● NICK GILBERT

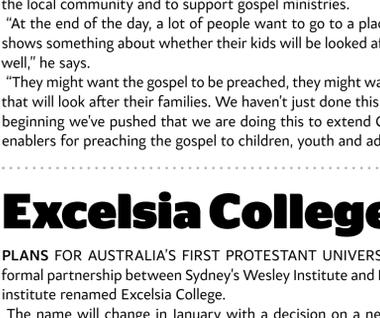
TWO ANGLICAN CHURCHES IN THE NORTHERN REGION OF THE DIOCESE HAVE COMPLETED MAJOR renovation and construction projects and are already seeing the fruit of their work in ministry to their local areas.

The Rev Colin Watson, the rector of Normanhurst, says the work at his church, which is valued at nearly \$2.7 million, was brought on by the growing needs of the parish – especially the big increase in children at their services and ministries.

"Particularly at our 5 o'clock service, we've gone from having about 30 children to having 120 children on the roll," he says. "So basically we found ourselves needing about five or six meeting rooms – plus a lot of those kids are now teenagers that also meet in the afternoon, and then we have the senior high kids who meet before 7 o'clock. So having space for that was a big need and we're now enjoying the fruits of that as well."

The work consisted of connecting up some of the facilities and having a large central hall that could be partitioned. Openable walls allow for one big space or five smaller breakout areas. There is also a new storage space, an office complex and toilets.

"I think we've actually made about double the use... of the space that we have, which is frankly amazing," Mr Watson says. "In three weeks... we've had five new families turn up as well, I think partially because of the new facilities and look."



Similar work has been conducted at St Luke's, Hornsby Heights, and with the senior minister the Rev Christopher Pears saying the renovations were needed partially to improve ministry opportunities and partially to resolve safety concerns about the aging fibro hall.

"It was separate from our regular church building, across the carpark and in a poor state of repair," he says. "We saw that this was an opportunity to upgrade our facilities to do ministry better. When we came up with it a church hall with a nice high ceiling, a breakout room for meetings and particularly children's work."

"But the best feature of all is that it's all on the one level and it's connected to the existing church with a foyer and kitchen. That creates a hub of sorts. The street aspect of it... has a whole series of glass doors that we can open for events and have a spill to the car park."

Mr Pears sees the new facilities as ideal for children's work and for big events such as the church's annual Christmas carols, with the ability to open up a side of the church to the air, allowing people to be inside and outside in a way that is connected and comfortable.

Mr Watson's view is that good church facilities are a useful way to remove barriers to connection with the local community and to support gospel ministries.

"At the end of the day, a lot of people want to go to a place that is looked after – I think because that shows something about whether their kids will be looked after, and whether they will be looked after as well," he says.

"They might want the gospel to be preached, they might want good music but they also want something that will look after their families. We haven't just done this because we want better facilities. From the beginning we've pushed that we are doing this to extend God's kingdom, and to use these facilities as enablers for preaching the gospel to children, youth and adults."

Excelsia College debut

PLANS FOR AUSTRALIA'S FIRST PROTESTANT UNIVERSITY ARE GAINING MOMENTUM, WITH A formal partnership between Sydney's Wesley Institute and Indiana Wesleyan University that will see the institute renamed Excelsia College.

The name will change in January with a decision on a new site and relocation later in the year. The partnership will also expedite the group's application to the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency for Excelsia to become a university college and then seek status as an Australian university.

"As part of the process to earn accreditation as an Australian university our course offerings will expand over the next few years, with a range of new courses already under development and due for launch from 2016," says Indiana Wesleyan University's vice chancellor for Asia-Pacific, Professor Bridget Aitchison.

"This is an exciting time in the realisation of our vision and we are tremendously grateful to the Australian community for the overwhelming support for our efforts so far," Professor Aitchison says.

The CEO of Wesley Institute, Dr Greg Rough, is upbeat about Excelsia's prospects now and into the future. "With Christian schools being the fastest-growing school sector in the country, there is opportunity in higher education for students to continue holistic education in a Christian environment," he says. "We intend to fulfil this need."

The motto of the new college will be "Participare lumen", which means "to share the light".

Are you game?



Cosplay: Ministry of Game members suit up.

LEA CARSWELL

INSIDE THE WAITARA ANGLICAN CHURCH HALL EACH TUESDAY BATTLES ARE RAGING, ENEMIES are vanquished and alliances are formed. And no, it's not parish council.

Ministry of Game (MoG) attracts more than 50 people each week, male and female, who sit down at trestle tables and get busy role playing with no weapons except maps, a pen and paper or a computer for recording details. It's low-tech but it's high drama.

Ben Carpentier is one of six people who, in 2010, floated the idea of a gamer group "in the Hornsby area" through an online forum. He received 35 expressions of interest. The group originally met at St Ives Community Church but is now well established at Waitara.

"Most members would not consider themselves followers of Jesus but MoG is a happy, safe place for people of any belief or no belief, openly run by Christians and operating on Christian values," Ben says. "We have very clear rules for the way church property is to be treated and a stated code of conduct that speaks of mutual respect, a lower age limit of 18 and only using authorised purchased game product."

He now devotes one day a week to the group's administration and says, "As friendship evangelism, Ministry of Game really works. People spend time together, share a meal, see Christian love in action, share their hobby and bring their friends. They accept invitations to other church events and they hear the gospel."

Stacey and Carl starting coming to MoG in 2010 and were married at Waitara in November last year, choosing clothes and images that reflect their love for East Asian culture (MoG group members almost never dress in costume but they all enjoy it when they do).

Stacey says, "Coming to Ministry of Game really has been an amazing blessing for us. Carl identified as a Roman Catholic Christian. I didn't know where I sat at the time. It wasn't until after being involved with a community of Christians who were also gamers that I had to consider my life and my beliefs and all of those important questions."

Dave Morgan, a former youth minister at Merrylands Anglican Church, started an offshoot of the group called Ministry of Game (West), which is smaller but has also seen people connecting to Christ.

MoG (West) member Joshua says, "After a few meetings at MoG, Dave asked me if I was interested in church. Before that, I had pretty much been ignoring the issue of God entirely. I was raised Catholic and think I did believe in Christ during my childhood but over time felt abandoned or lost interest so I starting focusing purely on studies and video games. I have been a regular church member ever since and am also a part of a Bible study group. I am definitely closer to Jesus."

Now serving with Bush Church Aid, Dave Morgan says MoG isn't for everyone. "Role-play gamers are a niche group of people who, for the most part, have little contact with Christians. However, there are real opportunities for sharing Christ across the game table as well as across the dinner table and MoG has really proved this.

"I would love to see churches putting much less effort into 'event evangelism' and much more effort into 'friendship evangelism', in line with the interests of people that God has already assembled in his church."

Is gaming sinful?



There are Christians at every point on the spectrum regarding role-playing games (like *Dungeons and Dragons*, for example) whose responses range from utter disinterest to strenuous opposition, or from passive enjoyment to serious passion.

Whether you think it's a matter of spiritual danger or personal taste, gamers are, by nature of their hobby, able to understand some of the biggest biblical concepts there are. They understand king and kingdom and absolute authority, as well as goodness, evil and atonement. They know about redemption and sanctification and salvation. They just don't necessarily know that the key to it all is Jesus.

Choose life



Georgette Forney speaks last year at a debate in Washington DC.

JUDY ADAMSON

WHILE GOVERNMENTS IN AUSTRALIA DEBATE EUTHANASIA, AND ABORTION IS CONSIDERED A right and rarely questioned, international group Forward in Faith is seeking to grapple with the issues in a public forum.

"Australia faces real challenges with preserving the God-given sanctity of life," said Anglican Benedictine Brother Ned Gerber, the vice-president of Forward in Faith International (Australasia).

"About a third of all Australian women have had an abortion and there is pressure to legalise 'assisted suicide' as well. Both of these are sadly contrary to the teaching of Scripture. Yet... our response is not to condemn but rather to provide compassionate and practical help."

The keynote speaker at next month's FiF conferences in Australia and New Zealand will be Georgette Forney, the president of US organisation Anglicans for Life.

Speaking from her home in the US, Mrs Forney said, "abortion and euthanasia are difficult for people to talk about because we get stuck in political arguments... Anglicans for Life believes the discussion must focus on the people who are at a place in their life that death becomes an acceptable solution. We choose death because we are afraid of the suffering associated with choosing life."

Mrs Forney, who had an abortion at 16 and struggled with the consequences for almost 20 years, has found that when she shares her story the overwhelming response is gratitude.

"They appreciate hearing from someone who has personally experienced the pain of abortion telling them the reality of it and how it impacted my life," she said. "They want to understand why we have abortions, so they can be better prepared to help women."

She has also spent years considering euthanasia issues and last year, when her mother died after a stroke, "I saw first hand the reality of what was previously just theory. So now I passionately advocate for life at both ends of the spectrum, when life is most vulnerable."

Brother Ned observed that "many people have never heard these issues clearly discussed... Sydney Anglicans should take our stand with the many other believers around the world who still faithfully support the sanctity of life."

Sydney's FiF event will be held at St Philip's, York Street on November 8.
For details see <http://fifinternational.org/>

Trying times for Bathurst



Grace: Archbishop Davies speaks at the Synod opening service. PHOTO: Lew Hitchick

THE SYNOD OF THE DIOCESE OF BATHURST MET LAST MONTH, AMID THE MOST FORMIDABLE economic challenge in its history.

The Commonwealth Bank has launched legal action to recover \$24 million it says it is owed by the diocese. Earlier this year, a fund to defend this action was established with a target of \$1.5 million. The High Court has authorised the diocese to raise money from trusts to help in the defence.

Bishop Ian Palmer told the 90 Synod delegates the amount needed to continue funding the operation of the diocese had increased sharply and doubling parish assessments is one measure being considered. A process of consultation with parishes has now begun.

Bishop Palmer said the financial difficulties were having a wide impact on diocesan operations. Macquarie Anglican School in Dubbo and Orange Anglican Grammar School have already been sold to the Sydney Anglican Schools Corporation to repay debt.

The bishop also used his Synod address as a challenge. "How does your church, your parish, our diocese, serve our communities, towns, rural areas and cities?" he asked.

He foreshadowed further asset sales but expressed confidence that the diocese would survive the challenge. "I believe passionately that it will come through as a servant church. It will serve these communities of the central west better than it has done before."

Speaking at the Synod opening service, Archbishop Glenn Davies quoted the Apostle Paul's words to Timothy, urging Anglicans in the central west of NSW to "be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus".

Dr Davies said the church needed reliable people with "brains as well as backbone... If you have brains but no backbone you will just waffle on, whereas those with backbone but no brains will stand firm but won't know what they are standing firm on," he said.

"God has given you such richness in Christ to share with those in your communities, that the name of Christ might be honoured in all the towns and communities across the Diocese of Bathurst and that you might be known as a people of God who stand and withstand."

Iraqi Christians still in limbo



Defiant in faith: Iraqi Christian refugees declare their beliefs on tent roofs. PHOTO: Open Doors

IRAQI CHRISTIANS ARE CAMPED IN CONSTRUCTION SITES, CAR PARKS AND CHURCHYARDS AS the world struggles to deal with militant Islamists sweeping down from Northern Iraq.

Sydney Anglicans have raised more than \$300,000 to help the refugees and Archbishop Glenn Davies has written to Prime Minister Tony Abbott asking for more asylum seekers to be allowed into Australia.

The city of Erbil, in Kurdish-controlled north-eastern Iraq, is the safe haven for Christians fleeing cities such as Mosul, Karemlesh, Qaraqosh and other Christian villages in the Nineveh region. The Chaldean church is overseeing a mini city of refugee tents and building sites are being turned into makeshift accommodation. At least 700 families are living in the courtyard of Mar Elia Chaldean Catholic Church.

In Baghdad there is a looming crisis, according to the so-called 'Vicar of Baghdad', Anglican Canon Andrew White, who estimated there were 1.8 million internally displaced people in Iraq.

"Though all these people have lost everything, they are convinced they will never return to their former home in Nineveh/Mosul under any circumstances, so they are left as totally poverty-stricken refugees in their own land," he said. "Many who fled Baghdad are now returning. We are facing the problem of... many people crowded into each home without the sufficient funds to feed the people who have fled to them."

Canon White's Foundation for Relief and Reconciliation in the Middle East is receiving money from the Archbishop of Sydney's Anglican Aid. "Thank you for your continued support for the persecuted Christians in Iraq," he said. "What we have been able to do in relief and reconciliation has truly been outstanding and more than we ever thought was possible."

Archbishop Davies said Christians and other religious minorities had been "persecuted, threatened, dispossessed and, in many cases, killed for their beliefs. Some are not yet safe as it is reported there are 'hidden cells' of terrorists who may be activated and pose a further threat to Christians [in] the north".

The Archbishop wrote to Mr Abbott saying, "Although I applaud the inclusion of the persecuted within the quota of Australia's humanitarian intake of 13,700, I respectfully request that you increase this quota even further, as the Howard government did when boat arrivals became negligible.

"Given that boat arrivals under your government have slowed considerably, a level of 20,000 would not be unsustainable and would reflect a country whose values include compassion for the vulnerable and dispossessed. As a Christian leader, I appeal to you to show hospitality and generosity to those who have suffered more than we can imagine."

Dr Davies also supported the declaration of November 2 as a special day of prayer and support, titled "Solidarity Sunday". It is also the International Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Church, which many Australian churches mark.

The Australian Christian Lobby, which is organising the event, said Solidarity Sunday is being supported by the Sydney Diocese as well as Baptist, Catholic, Antiochian, Coptic and Syrian Orthodox churches, the Salvation Army, Open Doors and the Barnabas Fund.

Churches are encouraged to pray, support financially and to display the Arabic letter "N" ن (denoting "Nazarene", a follower of Jesus) as a mark of solidarity with the persecuted.

Precious metal

DANIEL McDONALD

CONTEMPORARY CHRISTIAN MUSIC, OR "WORSHIP" MUSIC, HAS never been something I could get into. Which concerned me when I was a new Christian and lover of music. Whenever I tried to lose myself in contemporary music, it never felt natural.

I was missing something that was fundamentally a part of my character since before I met Jesus – music that I could worship to and that would make my heart soar, but my throat raw.

I was searching for hard-hitting content delivered through hard-hitting music. I needed heavy metal. I needed God-glorifying, Christ-based, heavier than heavy, metal.

Since becoming a Christian 14 years ago I have often been asked how "metal" and the Christian faith can co-exist. It seems to be a hard concept for some to grasp; how these two seemingly opposing things can somehow be reconciled. Some might say that metal has no place in a Christian's life. I disagree; as with anything – be it a book, a film, or music – you have to look beyond the surface to the item's purpose. So it is with metal. Yes, it's loud, it's angry, it's fast and it's ugly. But it's also much more.

If you listen to secular metal there is most likely some part of you that identifies with loneliness, anger and depression that allows the music to resonate with you. I first found metal before I became a Christian, and I thought it was something I had to leave behind when my life was transformed. But God blessed me through providing the Christian metal scene as an appropriate direction for my interests.

It has the power to encourage conversation between believers and non-believers through a united appreciation of metal. It is the perfect spiritual weapon to draw a secular crowd who, most likely, had not intended to find themselves at a Christian event (touring bands often appear at pubs, universities, etc), and deliver the message. To quote a recent interview with Nicholas Tautuhi (vocalist of New Zealand-based band, Saving Grace), it's a "head charge at the heart of the enemy in the middle of enemy territory".

I've always been attracted to sermons and Bible passages that not only tell it like it is, but emphasise the black and white of the issues, pull no punches and cut to the hard truth. When immersed in Christ-based metal, it enables the listener to be influenced by the right messages and not those of secular metal that mislead, cause resentment or build anger. In its directness, it cuts to the heart like a scythe through wheat. Metal is, by its very nature, raw, visceral and honest. It doesn't make excuses.

One of the reasons I love heavy music is that it requires all of you. It won't accept being played softly. It won't accept half-attempted singing or gentle swaying. Anyone who knows metal knows it has to be played loud. It is all-consuming. When your heart is in worship, it demands you give all your energy – every shred of your physical ability – to God: "I'm yours, Lord, I give you all I have at this moment". I feel blessed to be called to worship God so passionately.

Metal musicians are not polished. Yes, they're mostly tattooed, they're unshaven, they're unkempt. But those who have been truly called are not making music to be idolised or even to make money (most artists incur debt just to tour and reach their fans). They swallow their pride and bare their scars to show the power of Jesus in their lives.

Tautuhi recently spoke of wrapping up a show when a girl approached to tell him one of their songs prevented her from committing suicide. The song was "The Most Beautiful Promise" from their album *Behind Enemy Lines*, which was written about Tautuhi's exchange with God when he was in his darkest place:

"...he said he'd give to me strength I need to survive the bloodshed of this life. And the wounds I sustained would heal and leave no scars. He said he'd die for me. He'd die a thousand times. This brought tears to my eyes and I fell to my knees. I opened up my heart and let his life consume me. Consumed my heart and healed my wounds".

I do want to advise discernment before choosing to invest your time and energy into a band or album that claims to be Christian. As with any music, always prayerfully read the lyrics and trust the Spirit to guide you. A good test is the fruits of the Spirit criteria.

I also invest some time looking at the aesthetic of a band. I have chosen to avoid listening to bands that use gory imagery and zombie-like effects.

Yes, metal is aggressive and sometimes dark, but as a Christ-focused metal band they should not simply be wading through the mire and be lost in the darkness. They should be wading through the mire as Jesus did, seeking and reaching the lost while shining a light in the darkness.

God bless, Bros and Brodettes.

Daniel McDonald writes the *Christian Metal Bro Alliance* blog on Facebook.



Mountain son returns

An assistant minister and youth minister to the parish of Moorebank, the **Rev Tim McIver**, will become the rector of Blackheath this month.

Mr Iver says he and his wife Jodie were “ready for a change” after nearly seven happy years at Moorebank but while he had put himself forward to lead a parish he was also happy to let God and any interested church decide where that might be. When the nominators from Blackheath approached him, he says, he could see from the outset that it was “a pretty good match”.

“They were looking for someone with a fairly young family [the McIvers have a baby son named Rafael] to change things up a bit,” he says. “They want to attract the young families and apparently the demographic of the area includes quite a few... we just need to get them to church!”

“One of the reasons we’re excited about Blackheath is that the people in the church are clearly passionate about the gospel and keen to be reaching out so we look forward to doing that.”

While some ministers might think twice about moving to a parish further from the centre of Sydney the McIvers don’t mind the distance, as they grew up in the mountains. However, Mr McIver jokes that in moving to Blackheath they will still be the same driving distance away from his parents in Springwood – just in the other direction.

One element he is expecting to be a challenge is the far-flung nature of the parish, which includes four churches (the other three are at Mt Victoria, Mt Wilson and Hartley), making it possibly the biggest parish in the Diocese in terms of area – almost the reverse of Moorebank, which has many people in a small area. However, he is looking forward to getting started later this month, saying that the people in Blackheath “have all been very positive, so it is exciting. [The previous minister] John Gaunt speaks very highly of the place and they speak very highly of him, so that’s a good thing to be walking into.”



CCL welcomes Payne



Moore College has announced the **Rev Tony Payne** as new director of its Centre for Christian Living.

The centre was launched in 2011 under the leadership of the Rev Dr Andrew Cameron, who has recently taken up a position as director of St Mark’s National Theological Centre in Canberra.

CCL was established to “equip and assist Christians by providing them with a framework around which they can think about how to live out their faith in the world around them; about how to follow the lordship of Jesus Christ in a secular world”.

The principal of Moore College, the Rev Dr Mark Thompson, says the character and mission of the centre will not change but will be redeveloped under the new leadership.

“Tony is highly respected – not only for his keen and insightful mind but also for his capacity to communicate clearly and helpfully to Christians from all backgrounds,” Dr Thompson said. “I am glad that we have found someone so ideally suited to help us provide encouragement and help to Christian men and women across the city.”

Mr Payne will continue his writing role at Matthias Media alongside his new duties at Moore College.

“For most days of most weeks over the past 25 years I’ve been thinking and writing about how the theology I learned at Moore College applied to the practical issues of living as a Christian,” Mr Payne said. “I’m delighted to have the opportunity to do this in a new way and in a new context in partnership with the very impressive team at Moore College.”

“I think there’s enormous potential in taking the deep learning and theological wisdom that is there at the college and bringing it to bear on the many pressing issues – personal, relational and social – that confront us every day as Christians.”

IN BRIEF

The rector of Watsons Bay since 2001, the **Rev Cliff Parish**, will retire on October 14. More next month.

HEALING THOUGHTS

It is encouraging to see healing being discussed. I add a few thoughts for further consideration.

The Great Commission of Jesus commands that new disciples be taught “to observe all that I have commanded you”. Christ had commanded the apostles to heal, to cast out demons and to raise the dead, as well as preaching the gospel of the kingdom.

There is no interpretative key within any of the commissioning passages in the gospels to indicate that some of the commission will last and that some of it will disappear.

There is also no key within the epistles to indicate that any of the gifts or ministries of the Holy Spirit would cease before the second coming.

The unearned grace of God empowers us to have the supernatural faith to believe and to apply the promises of God and not allow experience or its lack to neutralise the word of God. The expectation in Ephesians 1 is that Christ is engaging within the church in an ongoing process of bringing all things towards the ultimate fulfilment of his return.

Lindsay Johnstone
Katoomba



As one who has had an involvement in healing ministry for many years may I add briefly to the letters arising from the review of Scott Blackwell's book *Healed at Last* by my colleague Christopher Allan (SC, August). I am pleased to have had an association with the healing ministry at St Andrew's Cathedral for 12 years and a longer association with the Order of St Luke.

Rather than debating whether evangelicals alone should carry out this ministry, may I suggest a better perspective would be to understand Christian healing as an essentially evangelical ministry – as an essential element of the gospel – rather than an “optional extra”. In Christian healing we are meeting people at their point of need and offering them the healing love and power of Jesus. It is an act of faith and commitment by those ministering and demands a faith response, however small, by those receiving ministry.

Your correspondents rightly point out that such ministry is often found in churches not generally regarded as “evangelical”. For example, the Order of St Luke began in Sydney in 1960, involving clergy from Christ Church St Laurence and St Andrew's Cathedral and also a Congregational minister and a Salvation Army officer. It is also, sadly, true that opposition to this ministry has come from many clergy, including some evangelicals.

So let us be grateful for the continuing practice and growth of Christian healing. May we seek to continue it with true compassion, biblical understanding and a desire to bring people to know Jesus as Lord and Saviour.

The Rev Lloyd H. George
Chaplain, The Order of St Luke the Physician
St Paul's Cathedral, Sale (Vic)

DYSTOPIA MYOPIA

Judy Adamson makes a vital point in her excellent review of *The Maze Runner* (SC, September). Dystopian themes are indeed engaging our children, even children of believers, and no wonder. Their parents' generation has remained largely silent and seemingly impotent in the face of significant moral challenges: asylum seekers, terrorism, climate change. Why? To protect our “way of life”, otherwise known as the lifestyle we feel entitled to.

No such entitlement is recognised by the gospels but I haven't heard many sermons on the subject.

Chris McGregor
Cabarita

DIGITAL SUPPORT

Thank you Scott Monk for your opinion piece “The dangers of digital church” (SC, September).

While I agree that the internet contains an unpoliced library of digital sermons, I cannot accept that the library undermines the local pastor. I have benefited greatly from having a local pastor nudge me towards John Piper's extensive digital resources. The nudge came when the pastor recognised a yearning for more than my local congregational life could reasonably offer.

Local pastors are not superhuman – they cannot preach to every congregant's need. Quality digital resources can offer their flock supplementary spiritual food.

The local parish model was designed to suit horse-and-cart transportation. Parish pastors need to embrace technologies that have caused the horse-and-cart to become largely redundant.

David Mitchell
Lane Cove

TOO WESTERN MINDED?

Your article “A multiethnic church” (SC, August) had many good things to say, encouraging us to be less Western minded in our thinking about church and embracing of other cultures.

However, I am completely at a loss to explain the choice of accompanying picture with the article. Clearly, Bishop Tasker is critical of the mindset within our Sydney Anglican churches that “We are happy for people of other cultures to join us as long as they are prepared to become like us!” and that “our form of worship is grounded in an Anglo mindset”. Could it be that the choice of picture is deliberately ironic in this regard or is this mentality so ingrained that the *Southern Cross* editors have missed the whole point?

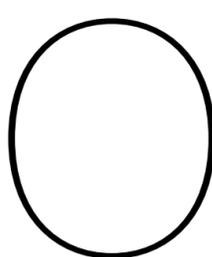
The picture is of happy people of a variety of cultures but all Westernised in their dress. Maybe they're all second- or third-generation Australian but the article does not suggest this. A confusing message by *Southern Cross* editors to those who have read the article, but a blatantly wrong message to the large percentage of readers who scan this paper for articles that interest them and look no further than the heading and picture.

Katie McDonald
Riverstone



Reformed reflections

DR GLENN DAVIES



OCTOBER 31 IS USUALLY DESCRIBED AS REFORMATION DAY, RECALLING THE posting of 95 Theses by Martin Luther on the door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg in 1517.

The occasion for Luther's posting was the arrival of the Dominican, Johann Tetzel, who was selling indulgences in Germany in order to raise money for the completion of St Peter's Basilica in Rome. Indulgences were sold with the claim that remaining unforgiven sins at death (presumed to be "worked off" through purgatory) could be remitted for a sum of money and certified by the Pope's agent.

Luther's act was not necessarily dramatic or provocative, as posting such notices was a regular part of university life in Wittenberg, and Luther had assumed he would have papal support once he had exposed the evils of the traffic of indulgences. However, this assumption proved false and Luther's posting sparked the beginning of the Reformation. In fact, the opposition to Luther from the leadership of the Western church only cemented Luther's conviction that the church needed reforming so that the gospel of God's grace, grounded in Scripture and received by faith in Christ alone, might be recovered.

We shall be celebrating the 500th anniversary of this day and the Reformation in a little over three years' time. I know that Moore College already has some plans in store for this celebratory year but I trust that every church will give some thought to marking this movement of the Spirit of God – which reformed not only the Continental church of Europe but the Church of England which, under the leadership of Thomas Cranmer, brought about a spiritual revival and renewed interest in bringing the teaching of the Bible in the language of the people.

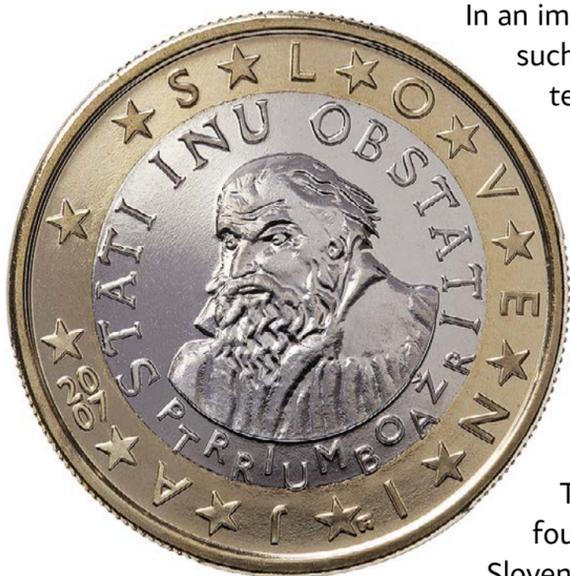
A lesser-known figure of the Continental Reformation is Primož Trubar, who was born in a village just south of Ljubljana. His surname comes from the term "trumpeter" or "herald" and Primož Trubar lived up to his name as the "first herald" of the Reformation in Slovenia.

Ordained a priest in the Catholic Church, Trubar gave himself to the study of the gospel and through his study he became emboldened to preach Christ alone as the only way of salvation. In 1548 he was threatened with jail and went into exile for a time. He fled to Germany where he continued to be a defender of the faith and, upon returning, published his *Church Order*, which was banned by the ruler and all copies burnt. Seemingly only one copy survived – although another was discovered in Germany earlier this year.

In an important sermon on faith Trubar famously stated that with such faith a Christian can "stand and withstand" the troubles and temptations that surround us. The Slovene 1 Euro coin now bears a portrait of Trubar surrounded by the words: "stand and withstand".

During his period of exile he wrote the first book to be published in Slovene, *The Catechism*, and is credited with developing the Slovene literary language and national consciousness. Yet his purpose in so doing was not nationalistic pride but a fervent desire to see the word of God published in the language of his own people. More than 20 books followed, including the translation of the New Testament and the psalms in Slovene. During his life Trubar founded the first Bible Society in Europe, publishing bibles in Slovene, Croatian, Serbian and Italian. He was also the organiser of Slovenia's evangelical church and founder of the first general Slovene school system for all children.

While Slovenia today is a country in need of further reformation, a growing evangelical church continues to preach faith in Christ alone. The first Slovenian to graduate from Moore College, Peter Novak, is now the pastor of one such church, and CMS missionaries have been working in the country since 1995. As we reflect upon Reformation Day at the end of this month, may we remember that the dangers of complacency and forgetfulness can easily undermine the work of the Reformation, as it has in so much of Europe, and that we might well remember Trubar's motto: to "stand and withstand".



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.

My chains fell off

The seeds of the gospel are being sown in Australia's prisons, writes **NICK GILBERT**.

IT'S NOT A PLACE MOST PEOPLE WOULD CHOOSE TO BE IN BUT AN INCREASING NUMBER of Australians are finding themselves in prison. Our nation's correctional centres are packed, with more than 30,000 people in full-time incarceration around the country – the highest number ever.

There are more than 30 correctional centres in NSW alone for men, women and those under the age of 18.

Then there are the people who work in these prisons in order to keep them operational. Wardens, guards, doctors, teachers, cooks, cleaners. And chaplains. We mustn't forget the chaplains. It's perhaps easy to imagine the job of a prison chaplain as relatively straightforward – clock in on a Sunday, run a service, hang around on the other days and pray that some of the inmates might come and knock on your door. But the personalities of the prisoners, the nature of the prison system and the impact of incarceration beyond the doors of our jails make this ministry one of the most abundant prospective mission fields imaginable.

WORKING WITH THE GRAIN

Suzes Johnson is a full-time Anglican chaplain at the Dillwynia Correction Centre for women in Windsor, in Sydney's west. She describes herself as something of a "rebel" earlier in life but, as a Christian, has come to develop a passion for other rebels – those that found themselves behind bars. Her particular attraction to prison ministry came about because of early contact with Kairos, an interdenominational parachurch organisation working inside, and in tandem with, the prison system.

"I was a volunteer and went into Berrima prison, just as part of a team of volunteers," she says. "Over those three days that I spent there I really felt called to go into prison ministry. I was a horticulturalist so it was really a different direction to consider.

"I went to SMBC... doing one subject at a time. Bit by bit the Lord helped me through – it took me nine years part time but I kept going, trusting in the Lord and his direction."

There are precious few full-time positions available for chaplains in correctional facilities. Many chaplains work part time or in sessions by appointment, with the Roman Catholic and Anglican churches essentially the only denominations with full-time positions.

The nature of the work means the greatest fruit often comes over a long period of time, so many chaplains work in the same position for years until retirement. When a position opened up, Ms Johnson jumped at it.

She says the particular characteristics of prison chaplaincy can seem hard – at least to start with. "I think at first you could feel that you're working against the grain, but we aren't going in our strength, we're going in God's strength, and he will make a way for things to happen that he wants to happen," she says.

"At the end of the day, we are only visitors within the system... I have found that there is a way to work through that and with that if you follow the rules and ask. I've done a lot of asking, and I've found that builds trust with people and staff. They're more forthcoming with different things you want to do. I mean, I never thought I'd be able to run a Bible study in one of the more locked-down units here, but I got a 'yes' to that. I can see how little different things might make it look difficult... but our God is greater than that."

One of the particular features of most chaplaincy programs, in particular prison chaplaincies, is that chaplains are required to work for the spiritual wellbeing of all inmates – including those from other faiths. This means that people like Suzy Johnson, as part of their job, might need to facilitate contact between ministers from other religions and prisoners, or provide religious materials from those faiths. Ms Johnson says this can be a difficult thing to have to do but it can also prove more fruitful.

"There was an interaction I had with one particular girl, who was looking [for spiritual answers]," Ms Johnson says. "One week she came and asked for a Qur'an, a couple of weeks later she came and asked 'Does Buddhism have a Bible?' She went through this journey to find the truth and then came to chapel and the light just went on. The others can't give her the truth and fill the need that only the gospel filled.

"It was very hard as a chaplain to allow that to happen. I could have just told her not to read the Qur'an or whatever, but I knew because she would be with us for a year I could go on a journey with her. When she did finally understand the Christian message, I think it made that realisation more real for her than if I'd tried to force it on her. I don't think that would have worked, anyway."

LEFT HANGING

It's a similar story to that of Lynne Pickersgill, the Anglican chaplain at the Juniperina Juvenile Justice Centre in Lidcombe, housing girls under the age of 18.

"A lot of these girls haven't had anything to do with God, they only know Jesus as a swear word," she says. "So chapel is really easy. It's a bit of singing, a talk, prayer time and afternoon tea. Afternoon tea is something of a carrot at first, because we hand out Tim Tams and lemonade, but many of them then also start coming because there's something about chapel that they also find attractive."

Ms Pickersgill works part-time, spending two-and-a-half days a week at the centre. She runs two, sometimes three, chapel services on a Sunday, with the rest of her time spent with inmates in the units, as well as with staff.

Dealing with young women is often quite different to working with adults. Increasingly, young people have less contact with church and Christianity than their parents did, and the backgrounds of some of the girls, their early stage of life, all in tandem with the often stressful situations behind bars, means that while they will often make commitments to follow God, it can be a struggle to persevere.

Ms Pickersgill recalls a recent conversation with one girl who decided to follow Jesus and enjoys praying with "Chappy" but struggles on her own. She has since "been the worst kid in the whole centre".

"A lot of my work is like that," Ms Pickersgill says. "I have no presumptions about whether the girls will become Christians. What I'm trying to achieve is give them good information about God, why Jesus came, and what it is to become a Christian. So I talk about making commitments but I never really press that commitment on people. I always try to leave a question hanging in the air.

"These girls have been abused, often hurt badly by society, and I'm just another adult telling them what to do. I also have to be careful that I'm not just another nice person telling them what to do and they end up being attracted to your niceness rather than the gospel."

Of course, the chaplains aren't alone in this work. Groups like Kairos – an interdenominational organisation originally begun in the United States to help minister in prisons – work in tandem with chaplains. Kairos run two main programs: Inside, for those who are incarcerated, and Outside, for family members of those who are in prison. The Inside course is run over four days, walking inmates through a program designed to help them reflect on their lives to date, and to consider the offer of the gospel.

"At Emu Plains, for instance, they're currently getting somewhere between 30 and 50 for those, out of a [prison] population of somewhere between 120 and 150," says John Starr, a member of Kairos' board of directors.

"Bearing in mind that we're trying to create Christian communities, that is reflected hopefully by the fact that those who come to our things

also go to the chapel services on the weekends with the chaplains. The only reason we are able to do what we do is at the invitation of the chaplains and so we want to work with them and their aims.

We're not interested in creating Kairos communities, we're interested in creating Christian communities."

Many of those who participate in Kairos programs, according to Mr Starr, are people who were previously beneficiaries – either former inmates or family members.

"People who come along to Kairos Outside, in a large number of cases, are so affected by it that they want to become involved," Mr Starr says.

"The difference when you're inside, of course, is that you can't do the Inside course, leave gaol, and then go back as a volunteer, because there's usually a 10-year ban on someone who has been imprisoned being allowed to go back into a gaol as a free person."

PERSEVERE UNDER TRIAL

Some of the most startling statistics about the justice system in Australia, like in many other countries, are the rates of recidivism. According to an Australian Bureau of Statistics report from 2013, 58 per cent of the current prison population had served a sentence in an adult prison prior to their current incarceration. When counting only those sentenced in the 12 months leading up to June 2013, that proportion rose to 63 per cent.

According to a 2012 report by the NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research, about 80 per cent of juvenile offenders were reconvicted for an offence within the 15 years from 1994.

It's a trend that is not lost on Suzie Johnson and the other chaplains, who often see prisoners leave only to come back again – or even to imagine that some of the inmates previously housed in a juvenile facility are later placed into an adult facility later in life.

"I think the kind of work I do is both planting new seeds and working on things that are already there," Ms Johnson says. "Some of the girls who've come in, particularly the younger ones, have never heard the gospel before. That's different work to someone who has maybe had some kind of belief, if only a basic one, and you find your work is more to bring them to maturity.

"In essence, I think I get some of Lynne [Pickersgill]'s seeds. But then I'll sow the next seed, and hopefully when they leave I've directed them to the church where they'll be nurtured, where the minister there will grow that and perhaps plant another seed. Really, we're all being sanctified every day into the likeness of Christ."

This is a critical point – that the work of chaplains is not, in the end, to simply care for prisoners while they are in prison. If the spiritual wellbeing of the inmate is the objective not only of the Christian chaplains, but also of the Department of Corrective Services, then it follows that this wellbeing carries through when inmates leave the closed walls behind and head back outside.

WHITE COLLARS

For Cameron Watt, going inside turned his world upside down. A Christian man with a family – and working a comfortable job as an accountant – he was worlds away from the stereotypical idea of a prison-bound criminal. His record was clean and his family attended church. However, a suite of investments in an offshore scheme, and some resulting kickbacks, resulted in a criminal investigation and a conviction on the basis of using his position to gain an advantage for himself.

He was sentenced to four years in prison, serving two-and-a-half years before parole. But in that time, he discovered a side to Christian faith that he hadn't seen before.

"Basically I was an inmate and when I was there someone invited me along to a Kairos course and I was very challenged by it," Mr Watt says. "I mean, was a Christian before going in, as sad as that sounds, but I think it was a real eye-opener for me, because it was a real case of me having put God in a box and then seeing that he could do a lot more than I could ever ask for and imagine – not just in myself but with the other guys, some of whom were much more 'hardened' than me."

This period resulted in a new dimension to Mr Watt's life. Instead of the hesitant Christian man he was beforehand, the energy he saw among the chaplains, other groups like Kairos and among the Christians within the prison population, in turn emboldened him to share the gospel with his fellow prisoners.

"In the end, I saw literally hundreds of guys become believers," he says. "I got to share with very, very hardened criminals, and with officers and all of the governors of the gaol and just saw dramatic change in myself. Here I was, a Christian completely scared to share my faith before going inside. I couldn't really share with other Christians, let alone non-Christians, but in faith, praise the Lord, I was used to evangelise. I then went into Bible college [and] we started things like arranging for inmates to visit churches on weekends and things like that."

Upon leaving prison, Mr Watt studied at Sydney Missionary and Bible College and now works as a youth and young adults worker at Kellyville Anglican Church in Sydney's north-west. While he still volunteers with Kairos from time to time, he feels his present work is where he should be. Having said that, he still sees the two worlds overlap from time to time.

"Quite regularly I get asked to share my testimony," he says. "It's a great hook for youth and kids. I do a lot of high school... and here's Jesus."

He then adds with a laugh: "I also joke occasionally, because I'm officially employed as a youth and young adults minister, that prison ministry prepared me quite well for youth work – but I probably shouldn't say that!"

His involvement with Kairos has meant having contacts with families and former inmates, as well as doing talks in prison. When Mr Watt reflects on maintaining the work of chaplains outside the prison walls, however, he wonders whether we could do better.

"I don't look like an inmate, so I was welcomed into any Christian forum imaginable and people hear my story and go 'Wow, God does wonderful stuff,'" he says. "And that's fine, and I'm very thankful people react in that way. However, I had a friend I got to know in gaol, he became a believer there. He looked like a typical inmate, he was a big guy, had tattoos, spoke roughly, but had an absolute heart of gold and loved Jesus.

"On getting outside, he went to a church near where his mum lived, which was in a reasonably affluent area, and he was told by a minister that, because he didn't fit in their culture, they couldn't help him. I sat there listening to him tell this and, frankly, was furious. I actually went and spoke to the head of that church but that's the culture we live in. Because they're not 'like us', we don't know what to do with them, so we run the risk of simply doing nothing."

Suzie Johnson also believes it is important that inmates, and former inmates, are welcomed into the Christian community and supported long term – while also saying that it is important we don't go too far in the other direction.

"I think Jesus didn't just go to the prostitutes, he didn't just go to the woman at the well, or just go to the Pharisees. He went to everyone," she says. "I don't think one ministry is more valuable than the others, this is just the one God called me to. For sure, the girls here need to hear the gospel – not just for them, but also for their children's sake. There are cycles of domestic violence, cycles of family incarceration, of those patterns down the line, and by reaching the mothers and daughters with the gospel that can contribute to breaking that cycle. So that's important but not in such a way that other ministries are somehow less important, because they're not."

John Starr agrees there can be an element of culture shock for former inmates and churches alike and also suggests it can be made more difficult, by the fact that there is often a temptation to re-establish relationships with people and groups that led them into criminality in the first place.

"The whole attempt to integrate into a Christian community is a difficulty often compounded by having to try and get away from the people they were with before – because if they just go back into the same area, the same environment, they'll reoffend," he says. "That's just the reality of what happens. That's why so many of these people end up in boarding houses in the inner west, because they have nowhere else to go, especially if they have no family."

Is there a solution?

"It's us stepping out of our own comfort zone, which I think God calls us to do at any time," Mr Watt says. "No longer does 'the Christian' look like a white Anglo Saxon person who has always grown up in the church with mum and dad, who sits nicely in church and always knows what to say and that kind of thing.

"We just have to get used to ex-inmates, used to people who are struggling with depression, mental illness and people who are just not our culture.

"That is just as much 'church' as having people who all think and act in the same way, perhaps more so, because that's the kind of mix of people you see Jesus surrounding himself with in the gospels."

AND CAN IT BE?

Across the state, indeed, across the country, thousand of men and women are hearing the gospel message in the most locked-down circumstances, many for the first time. The chaplains and parachurch organisations that support and work alongside inmates on the front line are doing work that is often hidden, ministering to people who society – and perhaps even we as Christians – have deemed to have the hardest of the hearts.

But as with Paul, David and the thief on the cross, it is often those guilty of terrible crimes who are also capable of the deepest repentance. Unlike most of society, the difficulty with evangelising prisoners is not convincing them they are sinners. Most of them realise this and have been told it many times. Instead, surprisingly, the area that needs the most discussion is whether there is a God who really does love the world so much that he gives his one and only Son. Many of us may take that for granted. For prisoners, it's precious, and also scarcely believable.

As Mr Watt says, though, that is all that is required to engage in prison ministry. "All it really needs is a concern that these people won't hear the gospel any other way," he says. "It is so difficult for them to hear the message and also it can be quite difficult for people to believe that someone loves them enough, that God loves them enough to send his Son. If you have that concern, and I think all Christians do, then I think you have all you need."

Local Church & Prison Ministry 1

St Paul's Castle Hill

A women's group at St Paul's, Castle Hill has recently become involved in supporting the work of Kairos in a very specific way, by making handmade crochet hearts for women being supported through the Kairos Outside program.

"We had two of the women who have served at Kairos share about their ministry at Castle Hill, and so we've arranged to have gifts taken to the Kairos Outside family," says group member Niki Shepherd.

"We thought it would be nice to have something personal that we made, something crafty, to give to the women in that program."

She says the group had been struck by the way prison ministry has helped inmates and family members alike, and also by how easy it was to relate to those being ministered to.

"I think it is a transforming ministry, for both families and people inside," Ms Shepherd says. "The idea to do this came from wanting to support people going and doing ministry in hard places that we would otherwise have no concept of, but are actually much closer to us than we think. I mean, there are whole families that are impacted by loved ones in gaol. We don't talk about it, we don't often hear about it, but it's actually not far from our own lives."

The idea behind the hearts was to have a simple but personal impact.

"Each heart is... handmade and it's a very personal thing," Ms Shepherd says.

"It's old-fashioned comfort but we think it is most important for the people we are making these things for to feel like they've been given something with a personal connection, that we made these for them specifically.

"It's simple, not really a big thing, not extravagant, very small and personal, but we think it's the fact that someone these people don't know has thought of them and made something for them that is most important."

Local Church & Prison Ministry 2

Jannali Anglican Church

Several churches directly support those doing work in prisons, with Jannali Anglican Church being one such example.

The associate minister at Jannali, the Rev Stephen Hooper, splits his week between his church – where he helps oversee the morning service and seniors ministry – and two days a week at the Long Bay Correctional Centre, working with male inmates.

Mr Hooper has spent 28 years as a minister, including nine as an associate at Jannali, but he only became involved in chaplaincy at the beginning of this year.

"It came out of a couple of things," he says. "Some members of our church were volunteering at the local Chesalon, and I also did a pastoral care course at the beginning of the year, which I really enjoyed. I started thinking more about chaplaincy work. I was actually thinking mostly in hospital care but a role at Long Bay came up and I took it. I've actually really enjoyed the work."

In addition to being able to work throughout the week in different places with different kinds of work, Mr Hooper also believes that working in two different contexts has flow-on benefits, particularly back into his job at Jannali.

"From my point of view, people are very supportive of me, they're praying for me and supporting me in all kinds of ways," he says. "From their point of view, they're hearing more personally about what's happening – not just at an organisational level, but about real people responding to particular conversations and hearing the gospel, so they're encouraged in a much more direct way, as am I."

He says the opportunity he has had to work both at Jannali and at Long Bay has been very fruitful, particularly in raising awareness about the worth of prison ministry.

"It's such a great opportunity," he says. "We're all in parishes, and know what happens in parishes, but people don't necessarily know a lot about what happens in prisons. But day after day, I have one great conversation after another. Sometimes they'll be directly about the gospel, other times not so direct but moving towards that – but they're great opportunities for ministry and I'm not sure people generally know what an open door for ministry it is."

Keep it simple

Those around us might have a range of views about who we are and what we stand for but how do you want to be known, asks **Bill Salier**.

THE ARTIST ANDY WARHOL WAS FAMOUS FOR PRONOUNCING THAT EVERYONE AT some point would enjoy 15 minutes of fame. The nagging fear, of course, is that you've had your 15 minutes and didn't realise it. The UK band Bros had a hit song in 1988 with "When will I be famous?" – I guess the answer, for them, was the five minutes that song was a hit. It would be nice to control it, though, wouldn't it? And, of course, many do in our world today. Perhaps not fame itself – that is often thrust upon a person – but that does not seem to stop people from trying to achieve a sort of fame through the various forms of social media... fame that is measured through a prodigious amount of "likes", all based on presenting an appealing, attractive or intriguing image of yourself.

Our culture has been described as a surface culture, obsessed with image and presentation and to a large extent this looks to be true. Our modern day celebrities – and our world more generally – are vitally interested in image control: presenting themselves and becoming known in the way they wish to be. Who are you? How do you wish to be known?

We can do this face-to-face with clothing, language and so on. As you dress for work in the morning perhaps the thought runs through your head about what your clothes will communicate to your workmates: power suit, maybe a little bit formal, a little bit casual, a tie or some other accessory that hints at a wild side...

As I understand it one of the advantages of social networking sites is that you can have a lot of control over the way you are presented to others. People choose their photos carefully to present a particular image. It could be someone they are not, or someone they always wanted to be – or, on a sinister note, someone who might be attractive to someone else, even though the reality is far from that.

I was interested to receive a brochure recently offering to help me with my personal "brand". I get as annoyed as anyone by sportspeople and celebrities referring to themselves in the third person and as a kind of a brand but I must admit the brochure caused me to pause and consider for a second or two: Brand Salier – what does that connote, what do I want that to connote... and then it all got too hard and kind of depressing, really.

What you want to be viewed as? What do you want to be known for? How do you want to be seen?

I guess this can be a corporate or community concern as well as an individual one. The brand "Sydney Anglican" – what does that connote? What about your local congregation in the midst of your community?

A little while ago my regular Bible reading focused on Paul's first letter to the Thessalonians and a very familiar phrase caught my attention. Paul begins his letter with this little phrase and ends it as well, which seems to give it some prominence in the letter.

Paul begins by giving thanks, as he usually does in his letters, for the Thessalonians. He remembers before God their "work of faith and labour of love and steadfastness of hope" (1:3). And then at the end of the letter, in a moment of exhortation, he reminds the Thessalonians that since they belong to the day and not to the night that they should arm themselves with the "breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation" (5:8).

When Paul thinks of the Thessalonians he thinks faith, hope and love; when he finishes his letter he urges them to continue to grow in faith, hope and love. And as we read through the letter we can trace the connections he makes to these three graces.

Paul reports how the Thessalonians have turned in faith to God from idols and, in fact, in the regions around them this is well known (1:4-8); they are renowned for this, we might say. He mentions this again in 3:6 as he delights in Timothy's report concerning both their faith and their love.

He speaks of the Thessalonians' love for one another – or rather, he says he doesn't have to speak to them about this because they are so good at it. Just keep at it, he says (4:9-12).

And he speaks of their hope: they are waiting expectantly for the return of Jesus to rescue them from the coming wrath of God at the final day (1:9-10). And he writes to clarify their hope; they had some timing questions about people who had already died and how it would all work out when the Lord Jesus did eventually return.

Faith, hope and love.

This little triad is familiar to us no doubt because Paul refers to it constantly in his letters. In fact, as we read through the first letter to the Thessalonians we see that Paul is exhorting his readers to follow his own model of faith, hope and love with all its consequences for Christian life, growth and service.

Simply put, faith looks backwards in trust as the gospel message is heard and believed and trusted: that Christ died for sins and was raised from the dead; that because of Jesus' death we can be rescued from the coming wrath.

If faith looks backwards, then hope looks forward to the final consummation of all that Jesus has set in train. His return, our own "rising" with him or meeting in the air, the prospect of eternity lived in the presence of the Father and Son in the new creation.

And if faith looks backwards and hope looks forwards then love looks around. The Lord has saved us into the community of his people and the love which we have been shown spills over in loving service and affection for our brothers and sisters and also to the world, for which we know our Lord Jesus gave himself and our heavenly Father loves.

Faith, hope and love.

This all sounds very basic. But it is so important. As we read Paul's words we note that these three Christian gifts are not static but productive. In 1:3 he speaks of the work that their faith produces, the labour their love produces and the endurance that their hope produces. The word of God has sounded out from them through the surrounding regions, they have persevered as a congregation under persecution and they continue to grow in their capacity to love one another.

There is not a lot of detail of what these things might look like but there are hints through the letter and for the moment we need simply to note that faith, hope and love are generative: they produce a result that is observable in action, be it testimony, generosity or endurance under hardship.

Hearing about these things is a great encouragement to Paul in his own hardships because he sees evidence of the gospel he preached taking root.

Now, not only are faith, hope and love productive, they also continue to grow and strengthen. In Paul's prayer in 3:10-13 he explicitly picks up at least two of the three again when he prays to God that the Thessalonians' faith might be completed, their love increase and abound. Hope is there implicitly as well, as he refers to their being blameless before our God and Father at the coming of the Lord Jesus.

There's probably a lot more that can be said and maybe even should be said. But as I write it is finals season in rugby league and this always reminds me of the KISS principle: Keep it simple, stupid. Rugby league is a simple game and the team that wins the grand final will do so because it does the simple things well (apologies if you are not a league fan, just substitute your own favourite sport).

One of the things I am trying to work on a bit myself this year is the KISS principle. I find I can complicate things very easily in my Christian life and thinking. So, with that in mind:

Faith – based on the truth of the gospel and looking to the person of Jesus and all that he has achieved and reveals;

Hope – looking forward to the glorious return of our Lord Jesus and the final consummation of his kingdom in glory;

Love – looking around to brothers and sisters and beyond, seeking to serve in the manner of our Lord Jesus.

The Thessalonians were known for these things. What are we known for – and not just individually?

As a congregation of God's people, *they* were known for their faith, hope and love. What a good aspiration for a congregation, a theological college, a diocese: to be known as places where faith is nurtured, love is practised and hope sustains. All of this rooted in the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

What are we known for? Let's pray that individually and as a family of brothers and sisters, as communities of fellow learners in the deep things of God, that we will be known as those who have put the breastplate of faith and love on our chests and the helmet of the hope of salvation on our heads. And let us do this with the help that only the Lord can give.

The Rev Dr Bill Salier is vice principal of Moore College.

Toongabbie Anglican turns 125



Archbishop Davies and the Rev Raj Gupta get the jump on celebrations.

Toongabbie Anglican Church celebrated its 125th anniversary in late August, running events that sought to consider the work of the gospel in the area while also strengthening links with the local community.

The senior minister at Toongabbie, the Rev Raj Gupta, says the celebrations were focused around the current slogan of the church: "Bringing, Building and Sending".

"We wanted to run the celebrations in a way that not only celebrated the kind of work represented by that slogan... in the past, but also focused on how we could do that into the future," he says. "We had a big dinner in Parramatta with 200 people and the following morning [and evening] we had a big evangelistic service... with the Archbishop in the morning and Simon Manchester in the evening."

The events drew in many people, including current and former church members as well as locals who don't normally go to church. "We had a variety of politicians join in, particularly at the dinner," Mr Gupta says.

"We also invited the local primary school band to come and do something as part of the celebrations. We have a good connection with them and we want to improve that. The principal came along to the dinner as well, so it was just a great time of being able to continue all these links we have in the community."

Mr Gupta says the time of celebration has also brought to mind the work of past generations, which laid the foundation for ministry to an area that has changed radically in the past 20 years but which is just as much in need of the gospel message.

"We are now in a post-Christian world and where in decades gone past you just expected people to come to church and they would, you instead have people who have no connections to the church at all," he says. "So we have to work hard to make those connections, and not stop there but to also evangelise through that."

"About 20 years ago [we had] the demolition of a pretty historic church building... it was exactly the right decision to make, but it cost [the church] both financially and in relation to a community that still wanted the historic building but didn't really support it or interact with it that often. But those painful decisions just mean that we as subsequent generations can build on the sacrifices made and continue the work of the church in this area."



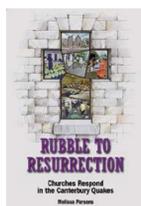
Teetering: a badly damaged house in North New Brighton, Christchurch. PHOTO: Martin Luff

BOOK

JANETTE BUSCH

Rubble to Resurrection – Churches Respond in the Canterbury Quakes

by Melissa Parsons



ON SEPTEMBER 4, 2010, PEOPLE IN THE CITY OF CHRISTCHURCH, NEW Zealand had the terrifying experience of being woken in the pre-dawn dark to find their houses rocking violently from a 7.1 magnitude earthquake. Although considerable damage occurred to buildings in the city, no lives were lost as most people were in bed at that time.

Five months later, in a city still reeling from ongoing and frequent aftershocks, another much more deadly earthquake struck at 12.51pm on February 22, in the middle of a working day. Although smaller (6.4), its epicentre was closer to the city and shallower. Tragically, there were 185 fatalities, most from two commercial buildings that collapsed in the CBD or people who were struck by various falling objects in the city, in their homes and in the outdoors.

Over the coming days the media reported extensively through word and image about the rescue of the injured, and then stories of people living in neighbourhoods where power, water and sewerage services were cut (sometimes for months). For shorter times, supermarkets and petrol stations were closed and ATMs did not work, so many people went hungry.

As Melissa Parsons – a Christchurch resident and mother of two – followed this coverage she recognised the stories of a very significant group were missing. Going under the radar was the magnificent response of church members, both lay and clergy, who stepped up to fill gaps left by hard-pressed territorial authorities struggling to cope with the magnitude of the disaster.

Initially sure someone else would be writing this important story, Parsons realised eventually that this “someone” needed to be her. Using responses from questionnaires sent to all churches in the city and surrounding area, interviews with people and information from denominational and other publications, she has written a powerful and dramatic true story about the selfless actions of Christchurch Christians – from Anglicans to Plymouth Brethren to Catholics and more.

The book is divided into three sections: The Church Responds, The Church Grieves and The Church Rebuilds, with topics such as distributing essential supplies, grieving lost worship spaces, walking with the wounded, enduring insurance woes, restoring the soul and assisting with the rebuild.

Each chapter starts with a personal story, many poignant, and ends with a list of resources. The book begins with a list of the 13 congregational members who died in the earthquakes while, at the end, appendices list all who died, the people interviewed and the names of the 95 churches whose stories are told in the book. Also named are out-of-town churches and non-church agencies that helped the community, whose “acts of generosity and courage were much appreciated by the church folk”.

In the final chapter Parsons includes two “top 10” lists for churches in disaster preparedness and disaster response, which should be essential reading for all congregations keen to be ready for whatever may come – which, in Australian terms, could be anything from a local accident to regional floods and bushfires.

This well-written book tells a moving story of the incredible and varied responses from the churches across Christchurch. Parsons writes of church people who helped in many practical and pastoral ways to restore bodies and souls. Other churches with undamaged facilities willingly opened them to groups in the community who had lost their buildings – and these relationships continue today, as rebuilding is slow.

I was particularly touched by reading about army chaplains who ensured the bodies of the dead were never left alone in the mortuary at Burnham Military Camp, where the bodies were identified – a great comfort to the grieving relatives, and a gift of God’s grace.

Janette Busch is a writer and editor who lives in Christchurch.

Rubble to Resurrection is available from www.daystarbooks.org



Quick response: Jimmy Pattinson, ministry trainee at St John’s, Latimer Square, seen on television bringing survivors out of a building after the February quake.

DEEP WATERS

Faithful (EP)
Kate Madigan

As debut EPs go, this is definitely worthwhile. *Faithful*, by singer-songwriter Kate Madigan, is a relatively small project – only two personnel appear on the album and the EP is only 16 minutes long. But this is an extremely tight record, almost perfectly produced and full of accomplished performances.

The CD sleeve quotes Lamentations 3:22-23:

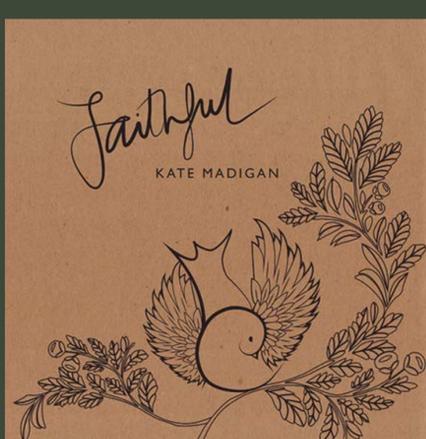
“Because of the Lord’s great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness”. It’s easy to see the influence these verses hold over the record as the focus is squarely on the faithfulness of the Lord, our need for him, his greatness compared to our emptiness. “My spirit is so thirsty, desperate for you. My soul, my soul longs for you,” choruses the opening track, “Deeper”, in a flowing, liquid movement that carries most of the way through the EP.

Faithful has a fairly consistent sound, all flickering acoustic guitar patterns and swelling keyboard pads, with Madigan’s ethereal, breathy yet crystal clear vocals leading the way. It is less a stylistic taste tester and more an impression. The sound is not neatly parcelled up into tracks, but rather washes over you, ebbing and flowing. The lyrics, while not treading any particular new ground, perfectly integrate with the mood of the record and touch on themes that are important to remember in the life of any Christian: God’s abundant goodness in taking us as we are, our inability to give God anything and he being the only light by which we can see in the confusion and messiness of life. The album’s flowing mood reaches something of a rhythmic crescendo in “Satisfied” and its rolling drum pattern, before concluding with the pensive praise of “Rise to You”, its desire to see “your name be lifted high, in all the earth”, which has some beautiful guitar work by Aiden McGovern.

This is very much a record for listening, rather than adapting for church use, although that could conceivably be done. The introspective, meditative sound of the songs, coupled with the personal, devotional lyrics, evokes the laments, without these being laments themselves. The EP is enjoyed best as a single listen rather than as individual songs and the impression one is left with is something like wading into the waters and stepping out a few minutes later, feeling refreshed for the visit.

Faithful is available on iTunes.

Nick Gilbert



SONGS OF LIFE

We Have Freedom
Revelation Music

THE inspirational power of music and lyrics created by our songwriting men and women is a God-given gift to us all and I am grateful each Sunday for the talents they have.

This CD – made by Adelaide-based Revelation Music and distributed by Emu Music – seeks to guide people to give praise to the Lord, with words inspired by Scripture, the life of Christ and our dependence on him. Playing the music at home or in the car will provide you with good teaching, encouragement in faith and tunes to sing.

The standout track on the album, for me, is “Children of his Grace”, co-written by Greg Cooper, Jamie Seyfang, Nathan Tasker and Luke Woodhouse. Its country rock-pop groove engages you from the opening bars while the snappy lyrics, simple harmonies and melodic sweetness are instantly appealing.

I found myself singing along with the opening track “Christ is Victor” (by Mike Begbie and Greg Cooper) at the second listen and “Our Only Confidence” (written by Adelaide band Men in Boats) has a cool, light rock style that would work well in contemporary services.

However, unlike most releases through Emu, there are not as many of the 10 songs that would be a natural fit for church singing, although most would be excellent as church or event items, or useful in times of reflection. A good music director can always tweak arrangements for church – although, of course, many churches don’t have that luxury.

Mark Peterson fans will be happy to hear he has written or co-written half the songs on the CD, with the strongest of these being the gentle “Safe in the Arms” and upbeat “One Word Resounding”, co-written with Jamie Seyfang and Luke Woodhouse.

I guess it now becomes the job of the singing and listening public, in their different parish contexts, to decide which of these songs will jump onto the playlists at our churches.

Judy Adamson

