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Southern CROSS

THE NEWS MAGAZINE FOR SYDNEY ANGLICANS

What God has joined together...

LIFE IN THE AFTERMATH OF INFIDELITY

- + News from Synod 2014
- & The fully formed pastor



COVER
Face it: the heartbreaking reality of Christian marriages rocked by infidelity. . . P11

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“ We must open the doors of our hearts and of our country to those who are suffering, Christians and otherwise. ”

Bishop Robert Forsyth
Synod News



Southern CROSS
NOVEMBER 2014
volume 20 number 10



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\$44.00 per annum (Australia)

Acclaim for new bishop



Smiles all round as Bishop-elect Peter Lin is welcomed by Synod.

ARCHBISHOP DAVIES HAS APPOINTED THE RECTOR OF FAIRFIELD WITH BOSSLEY PARK, THE REV Peter Lin, as the next Bishop of Georges River.

Georges River is one of five regions of the Diocese and has undergone transformation into one of Sydney's most multicultural areas. Suburbs such as Marrickville, Lakemba and Bankstown, once with predominantly Anglo-Saxon populations, are now multiethnic. Due to the ongoing effects of the financial downturn, there had not been sufficient funds to appoint a new bishop since the retirement of Bishop Peter Tasker from full-time oversight in 2009. Bishop Tasker and Archdeacon Ian Cox, also now retired, have been providing voluntary oversight to the area.

The Archbishop said in his Synod presidential address that he was able to appoint Bishop-elect Lin "owing to the generosity of some businessmen whom I specifically approached to fund this project, and who have committed themselves to do so for the next three years". Hundreds of Synod members broke into applause as the announcement was made.

Standing Committee had held a special meeting just hours before Synod began to overwhelmingly confirm the Archbishop's choice. A Georges River representative, Mr Clive Ellis, later proposed that Mr Lin be officially greeted by Synod and as he rose to his feet there was again sustained applause.

Mr Lin has been rector of Fairfield with Bossley Park since 2001. "He has overseen the growth of the congregations during that time and he knows the region well," Dr Davies said. "He is a trusted servant of Christ, an able minister of the gospel, a respected elder among his peers and one who has contributed to the strategic direction of the Diocese through his subcommittee work as a member of Standing Committee. I believe that Peter will make a significant contribution as a regional bishop as well as an assistant bishop in the Diocese as a whole."

Mr Lin said while it was "early days" and he had yet to consider his future work in detail, he would be "seeking to support clergy in whatever way I can, to help churches grow and reach their communities, plant new churches, to see lots of training happening, to recruit workers into the region and to raise up gospel workers from the region".

When Mr Lin is consecrated in May next year he will be, at 47, one of the youngest bishops in the history of the Diocese. It is the same age that former Archbishop Sir Marcus Loane was when he became a bishop in 1958, but older than Howard Mowl who became Archbishop at the age of just 43.

Redfern renewal



New life: Matt Paterson (left) baptises David (centre) and Uncle Jack in May at La Perouse.

NICK GILBERT

A GROWING CHURCH PLANT IN THE REDFERN AREA IS CONTINUING AFRESH THE WORK OF ministry to Aboriginal people in the inner city.

The Rev Matt Paterson, the non-indigenous lead pastor at the Living Waters Community Fellowship, is working under Evangelism and New Churches and the mentorship of the Rev Ed Vaughan at Darlinghurst.

Mr Paterson said the ministry came out of conversations he had with indigenous friends and mentors that highlighted a need for a new urban ministry where Aboriginal people in particular would feel welcomed and accepted.

"At college church planting was never something that crossed my mind," he says. "Myself and others just saw a need and God put it on my heart to fill that need."

The church began in February with a core of people that included Aboriginal Christians. It has quickly blossomed to the point where the church is already considering future locations for meeting, away from its current home.

The church meets on Sundays for a public meeting and lunch, and again on Wednesday for Bible study. Next year the plan is to start special men's, women's and youth ministries, and to contribute more to its own financial needs, in addition to assistance from ENC and private supporters.

"We started with eight people," Mr Paterson says. "We didn't follow the usual model where we meet together as a core group to start. We knew that wouldn't work. Instead, we thought if we just started doing things people would come, and they did."

The church now has 30-40 adults and 20 children, and has seen a number of people come to Christ. In May Mr Paterson baptised two recent converts at La Perouse and 12 children from Christian families.

One of the key objectives of the plant is to empower and train Aboriginal people in leadership. This includes a desire to involve women in scholarship programs at Mary Andrews College while working part-time at the church, as well as employing a male student minister from the Aboriginal community. However, the indigenous members do not want a "separate" church.

"Most of our members are Aboriginal people, which is good, but from the beginning [they] weren't keen to call it an Aboriginal people's church," Mr Paterson says. "Instead we are a church where anyone's welcome. It's actually our indigenous members who are often the best at welcoming non-indigenous people to our gatherings."

Mr Paterson works a few hours a week as a secular youth worker and plays basketball twice a week, in both areas meeting with Aboriginal people outside formal church. With any ministry, but particularly with indigenous ministry, he says it is important to be committed.

"My personal perspective is that this isn't a job for me where I'm going to find something else in a few years," he says. "I'm not even looking to make it a stepping stone towards being a rector in a church somewhere else. God willing I'll be here with these guys for a lifetime."

Youthworks for Salier

RUSSELL POWELL

THE REV DR BILL SALIER WILL LEAVE his post at Moore College to become principal of Youthworks College and director of theology.

Dr Salier (right) has been a lecturer at Moore College since 1996 and, more recently, vice-principal. He takes over from the Rev Andrew Nixon as principal at Youthworks College but moves into an expanded role that includes the post of director of theology for the organisation.

"I am delighted Bill will be leading our college," said Youthworks CEO Zac Veron. "He has vision, energy and leadership abilities to lift the college to a new level, but he will also play a key influential role in continuing the theological excellence of our Christian Outdoor Education ministries, conferences and our publications and resources.

"Bill understands the importance of growing leaders of character and conviction who are equipped to provide faithful, biblical ministry to children and teenagers at the time in their lives when so many come to faith in Christ."

The appointment comes at a time when Youthworks and Moore College have been exploring options for closer co-operation, including the possibility of the college campus, currently at Loftus, relocating to Newtown.

Moore's principal, the Rev Dr Mark Thompson, said, "Bill Salier is one of the finest teachers I know. He combines scholarly depth, technical skill and the ability to communicate effectively to a wide range of people. "His 18 years at Moore, the last seven as its vice-principal, have seen him become a much loved and highly valued member of our community. His departure will be a genuine and deeply felt loss.

"However, as Moore College and Youthworks College grow closer together, we are thrilled that such a man will lead the training of men and women for youth ministry in our Diocese and across the country. This is not the end of Bill's association with Moore College but simply the beginning of a new kind of partnership."

Dr Salier described his new position as a "time to look forward, to be used by our Father in a new context and continue growing the complementary and mutually supportive relationship between Moore and Youthworks".

"I leave Moore College profoundly grateful to our Lord for its teaching and shaping of me over many years," Dr Salier added.

"I am very aware of the challenges this new responsibility brings as we seek to prepare people for Christian ministry in the contemporary world. I would therefore value your prayers for the ministry of Youthworks College and my new role there.

The Rev Dr Colin Bale, the academic dean of Moore College, will replace Dr Salier as vice-principal when the two roles are joined from January 1, 2015.



Amazing racers

TWO NURSES WITH SYDNEY Anglican connections were the winners of this year's TV series of *The Amazing Race*.

Ryan Thomas and Daniel Little, often known on the show as "Team Jesus", are both intensive care nurses at Westmead Hospital in Sydney's west, and decided to take on the world-travelling challenge of the Channel 7 show as an adventure.

"I mentioned the show to Daniel in the ICU one shift," Mr Thomas said. "He said, 'You know what, I reckon you and I would make a good team'. I hadn't really thought about it but just said, 'Sure, let's do it'. We went and applied for it and things just went from there."

Mr Thomas is a regular attendee of St Paul's, Castle Hill. Mr Little, who was unavailable for interview at the time of writing, was also a parishioner at St Paul's and a former student of William Clarke College in Kellyville.

In the world of reality TV, though, being a Christian about being thought of as a Christian is being thought of as a Christian about how your faith will play into your actions on TV and how others might view you.

"There was a lot of thought and a lot of prayer," Mr Thomas says. "There wasn't really an agenda where I was wanting to say this or that about being a Christian or whatever. I was more hoping that the way I acted, how I carried myself, would be a testament to my character, and my faith, and the church that I was representing. "

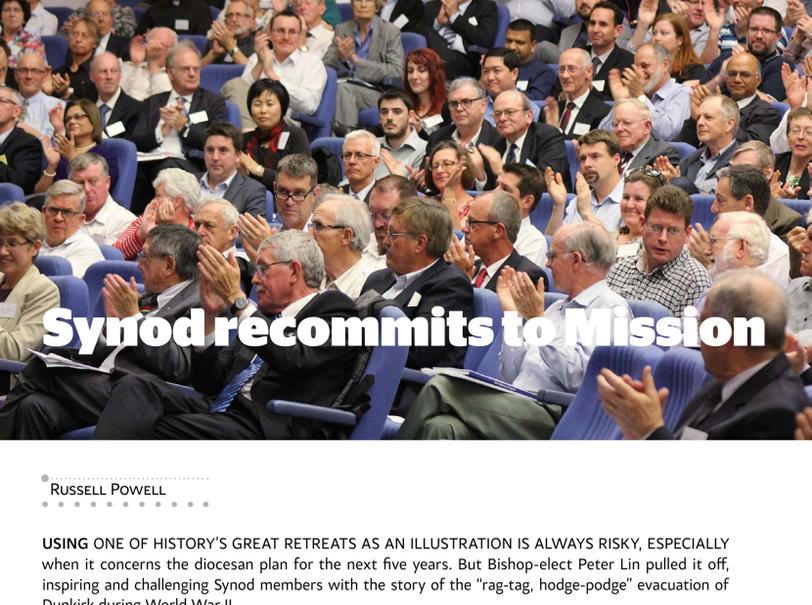
The payoff for Mr Thomas, apart from the cool \$250,000 in prize money the team received, has been the chance to have conversations with fans and find connections with other Christians because of his appearance on the show.

"Only yesterday, I was talking to a girl at Westmead," Mr Thomas says. "Obviously, Westmead is a very large hospital, so you know quite a few people only by face. This conversation started just because she recognised me from the show.

"We chatted about it and then she brought up my City Aight T-shirt and asked which church I went to. She'd obviously tracked down some of the music, listened to it and that blessed her, and she then recognised me as a fellow Christian. That was a nice connection that came up because of it."



Daniel Little (left) and Ryan Thomas celebrate taking home first prize in *The Amazing Race*. PHOTO: courtesy Channel 7.



Synod re-commits to Mission

RUSSELL POWELL

USING ONE OF HISTORY'S GREAT RETREATS AS AN ILLUSTRATION IS ALWAYS RISKY, ESPECIALLY when it concerns the diocesan plan for the next five years. But Bishop-elect Peter Lin pulled it off, inspiring and challenging Synod members with the story of the "rag-tag, hodge-podge" evacuation of Dunkirk during World War II.

To be fair, Mr Lin's first illustration had been the great vision of a multitude of believers "from every tribe, nation, people and language" in Revelation 7:9-10 – those united in their praises to God and the Lamb.

Mr Lin, a member of the What's Next committee (now renamed the Strategic Research Group), charged with formulating a new Diocesan Mission, was speaking in order to move "Mission 2020" – the document outlining vision, mission and priorities for the Diocese.

"What will we do under God?" he rhetorically asked Synod members on the first night of debate on the most significant issue on the 2014 agenda.

Mr Lin then outlined the priorities of the Mission, which he said would be measurable according to information gathered from the National Church Life surveys (NCLS).

A series of graphs followed on church growth, multicultural mix and the number of newcomers in congregations. While churches were growing and the growth had kept pace with population increases, "We are not breaking new ground if newcomers are not coming to church," Mr Lin said.

Likewise, churches needed to reflect recent immigration. "God has brought the world to us. He has brought the world here. But we need to be reaching more of them."

Despite the Archbishop's warning that no mission document could include everything, a prayer of questions and amendments followed on subjects ranging from salvation to ministry strategy and strategy.

Key amendments included two changes, which several Synod members proposed as being "part of our DNA as Sydney Anglicans". They were the addition of "and Saviour" in the vision statement and, in the mission section, the inclusion of the phrase "calling people to repent".

The mission was discussed over three nights of the five-day Synod, with Mr Lin describing it as "Not an edict but an encouragement. You may not agree with all of it but our hope is you will agree with the heart of it."

The point of the bishop-elect's Dunkirk illustration was not that a retreat but that a motley collection of fishermen, mums and dads and ordinary people saved 340,000 soldiers who were facing death or imprisonment. "Our churches are a bit of a hodge-podge, too," he said.

The final form of the Mission was passed overwhelmingly on the last night of Synod. "In a wonderful family like this, we can't target every single thing – otherwise nothing is targeted," Mr Lin said. "It doesn't mean you can't be creative. We want you to be. There are probably a thousand things you can think of to do that will bring glory to Christ that are not in this document. Please do them!"

MISSION 2020

DIOCESE OF SYDNEY

Our Vision

To see Christ honoured as Lord and Saviour in every community

Our Mission

We commit ourselves afresh, in prayerful dependence on the Holy Spirit, to glorify God and love our neighbour by proclaiming the Lord Jesus Christ, calling people to repent and living lives worthy of him.

Our Values

Our values flow from our identity in Christ. We are created in God's image and redeemed by Christ's blood for the glory of our Heavenly Father.

We therefore value and cherish:

- God's word, the Bible, as our ultimate authority and guide
- the reading and explanation of the Bible as the basic method of our ministry
- the centrality of the cross of Christ and his resurrection in our proclamation and in our lives
- lives of holiness and humility that adorn the gospel
- prayerful dependence on the Holy Spirit for power to speak and hearts to change
- an urgent love for people who, apart from faith in Christ Jesus, face certain condemnation under the righteous judgement of God
- selfless flexibility and creativity to reach the many different peoples in our communities with the gospel
- partnerships between and among individuals, churches, Anglican schools, diocesan organisations and faithful members of the Anglican Communion
- repentant hearts and renewal by God's grace.

Our Priorities

- 1 Reach all the lost in our Diocese with the life-giving gospel of Christ
- 2 Deepen spiritual maturity among our members
- 3 Equip our members to exercise their gifts
- 4 Respond to the changing face of our society

Read and download the full statement at: sydneyanglicans.net/mission

Focus on faith

JUDY ADAMSON

ALUMNI REPRESENTATIVES ON ALL DIOCESAN SCHOOL COUNCILS WILL BE REQUIRED TO SIGN A statement of personal faith from July 1, 2020, after Synod passed a motion to this effect on its second day of sittings last month.

Following a contentious debate on the issue last year as part of consideration of a draft governance policy for diocesan organisations – which passed by a mere six votes – the mover of the motion, Dr Laurie Scandrett (left), acknowledged the division in the house and brought this element of the policy back to the Synod for separate debate.

The new draft included the provision of a six-year transition period so that the seven schools which do have alumni representatives on their councils have time to find appropriate replacements. At present, alumni council members are simply required to sign a statement of support for the Christian ethos of the school.

Dr Scandrett, who is also CEO of the Sydney Anglican Schools Corporation, assured Synod that the new requirements were "not intended to be a blunt instrument – we live in relationship".

He said the chairmen and chairwomen of diocesan schools were "godly Christian people who want to make their schools more Christian", but added this was more difficult with non-believers on the council. That meant compromise, "and compromise leads to a watering down of the effective proclamation of the gospel". This was why there needed to be a requirement for alumni members to sign a statement of personal faith.

Speaking against the motion the rector of Turramurra, the Rev Dr Michael Stead, noted that the details provided by Dr Scandrett showed each diocesan school already had at least 70 per cent Christian representation on its board, so their faith focus was assured.

He said a school council was "not a parish council on steroids", adding that non-Christian representatives brought a wide range of expertise and were often willing to do "a lot of the heavy lifting because they are passionate about their school and want to see it flourish".

Echoing this sentiment the Rev Ian Millican, rector of Berowra and chairman of the Abbotsleigh council, asked, "Are we so scared of a minority voice who are already supportive of our ethos that we think we need to silence them?"

However, speaking for the motion, the Rev Nigel Fortescue said that on the school councils where he served all members were Christian. He agreed it was harder work to find Christian people with the appropriate skills but argued that it was worth it.

"It's not a matter of arrogance, it's a matter of integrity, so we can say 'We want you to work out who can stand with us in the gospel work to continue the good governance of our schools,'" he said.

The rector of Malabar, the Rev Simon Roberts, agreed. "Governance is about much more than financial accountability and risk management. They all flow from our commitment to our aim. [This] explicitly includes a commitment to education, specifically Christian education. How can you lead towards a goal that you don't believe in?"

The final vote that approved the motion was taken by secret ballot. The results were 114-76 (clergy) and 229-160 (laity) with two informal.

The full policy was approved in the second week of Synod.



God's work blessed: the rector of St Hilda's, Katoomba, the Rev Ray Robinson.

Katoomba changes hats

NICK GILBERT

ST HILDA'S, KATOOMBA IS SYDNEY'S newest parish, having been returned to full parish status by Synod.

The rector of St Hilda's, the Rev Ray Robinson, said he was thankful to God for the growth he has seen, and for many supporters in the Diocese – mentioning in particular former Archbishop, Dr Peter Jensen and the Bishop of Western Sydney, Ivan Lee. Mr Robinson also thanked his parishioners for their desire to see Katoomba reached for Christ.

"When I first sat down with the parish council, before I'd even committed to going to St Hilda's, I asked them what they would do if they had unlimited money," Mr Robinson said in a speech to Synod members. "They enthusiastically spoke about all kinds of things – getting rid of the pews, changing the services. I then asked if that was the perspective of the congregation as a whole and they were honest. They said no, but they also said people were keen to see the gospel go forward. So that is what has happened. People have been willing to sacrifice their preferences for church so that others might come and know Jesus."

Some new approaches for mission have included partnerships with the local Anglicare shop, a soup kitchen, art exhibitions, the covering of the church tower in gift wrap as a message of love to the area and increased involvement with the annual Winter Magic Festival.

"Winter Magic is a good example of the way people have been prepared to take risks for Jesus," Mr Robinson said. "Many Christians felt getting involved with the festival was actually promoting the occult. We took a C.S. Lewis spin on it and spoke about a 'deeper magic', and built bridges with the community and organisers, without condoning any of the things we didn't support. It worked and Winter Magic is a different thing these days. With the involvement of many churches, we're doing some good things there. The people of St Hilda's took the risk and God blessed it."

The growing church recently took on another part-time staff worker, with their first year of employment secured through the desire of members to make it happen.

"The challenge is, wherever will we find [the money] next year?" Mr Robinson asked. "But God has been so good to us and we look to him for the future and recognise it's all his work. We praise him for such an incredible gospel we have to share and we rejoice that we get to share it in such a needy place."



God's work blessed: the rector of St Hilda's, Katoomba, the Rev Ray Robinson.

Synod strong on Syria, Iraq

THE SYNOD OF THE DIOCESE OF SYDNEY HAS PASSED TWO MOTIONS ON IRAQ AND SUPPORTED THE Archbishop's call for refugee limits to be expanded to cope with Christians and religious minorities fleeing the region.

The first resolution expressed "its dismay at the horrific persecution of Christians throughout Iraq and Syria in recent months" and solidarity and support for those affected.

The motion asked people to share reports of what is happening in the trouble spots and encouraged "all Christians in Iraq and elsewhere in the Middle East to stand firm in the faith, to proclaim the gospel, to trust in God – who is our constant strength and refuge – and to pray".

The second motion built on a call earlier this year from Archbishop Glenn Davies for the Federal Government to raise the overall refugee intake because of the crisis. The government has set aside 4400 places in the Special Humanitarian Program for Middle Eastern refugees. However, the total ceiling for all refugees remains at 13,700.

Archbishop Davies wrote to the Prime Minister asking for the cap to be lifted. "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," the Archbishop said in his letter.

The Synod motion supported the Archbishop's call.

"We commend the Federal Government on its actions to date," the motion read. "But noting that other Western democracies – including Germany, Norway and Sweden – have increased their overall intake of asylum seekers in order to accept additional numbers of Iraqi and Syrian refugees, [Synod] calls on the Federal Government to temporarily increase the places available in the 2014-15 and 2015-16 Special Humanitarian Program. [This would] allow for additional resettlement of Christians and other persecuted groups of people from Iraq and Syria and take any necessary steps to process all applications for asylum in Australia as expeditiously as possible."

The Bishop of South Sydney, the Rt Rev Rob Forsyth, told the Synod that "we must open the doors of our hearts and of our country to those who are suffering, the Christians and otherwise".

Members also overwhelmingly called for the release of children in immigration detention.

In a resolution qualified by what was described as "the difficulty of framing a just refugee policy in a war-torn and poverty-stricken world", the Synod called on the Australian government to end the immigration detention of children and committed to pray for the Prime Minister and for the Minister for Immigration in their work.

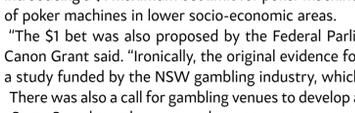
The mover, the Rev Dr Michael Jensen of Darling Point, told Synod: "Even were it the case that the asylum seekers held in detention on Christmas Island and Nauru are there as the result of their own illegal activity, their children are not. And yet, as of September, there remain 603 children behind the wire of Australia's secure immigration detention facilities. This situation cannot be just."

The motion noted "the intention of political leaders to achieve a just outcome in trying circumstances", yet also "the concern of bodies like the AMA for the mental health of children of asylum seekers in immigration detention".

Said Dr Jensen: "The children in detention do not live in my street. And yet they are my neighbours. I am – we are – responsible for them."

Gambling disinvestment

SYNOD WELCOMED A KEY PARLIAMENTARY REPORT ON GAMBLING AND ASKED THAT SYDNEY Anglican-affiliated organisations divest of investments in a company whose gambling revenue exceeds either 10 per cent of their total or \$50 million per annum by the end of the year.



In a debate led by Canon Sandy Grant, the senior minister of St Michael's Cathedral in Wollongong (left), Synod was told the state's gambling expenditure totals \$7.15 billion a year and \$2 billion in the Illawarra alone.

Canon Grant compared the rate of problem gambling to the rate of those hospitalised in car accidents.

"Even though car accident hospitalisation occurs at a rate five times lower than problem gambling, we approve all sorts of limits on our roads: seat belts, speed limits, speed cameras," he said.

"We need harm minimisation measures recommended by experts independent of vested interests such as pubs and clubs, who will not act against their profit motive but have dominated the debate. In particular, we need to put air bags and seat belts on poker machines!"

The motion proposed a \$1 maximum bet limit for poker machines to reduce the impact of problem gambling, including introducing a \$1 maximum bet limit for poker machines and stopping the disproportionate concentration of poker machines in lower socio-economic areas.

"The \$1 bet was also proposed by the Federal Parliament's Select Committee into gambling reform." Canon Grant said. "Ironically, the original evidence for \$1 bets in an Australian context even came from a study funded by the NSW gambling industry, which they now run a mile from."

There was also a call for gambling venues to develop an intervention scheme to assist problem gamblers.

Some Synod members wanted stronger measures, such as shedding investments in any company which profited in any way at all from gambling, but the 10 per cent limit stands.

Child care

SYNOD HAS PASSED AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND A RANGE OF DIOCESAN LEGISLATION WITH regard to the protection of children.

The Discipline Amendment Ordinance adds the offences of grooming; possession, production or distribution of child exploitation material; and inappropriate pastoral conduct involving a child – all things that are "inconsistent with the standards and guidelines of Faithfulness in Service".

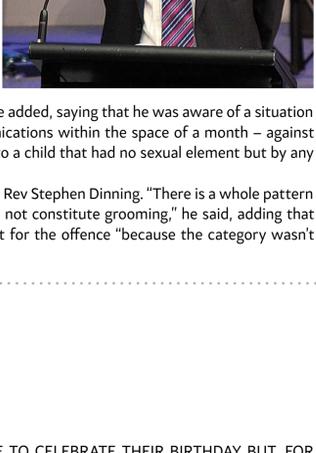
The amendment ordinance includes new offences for threats and intimidation or breach of a suppression order and provides for a new streamlined process to deal with complaints made against unpaid lay church workers.

The most contentious addition, the new category called "inappropriate pastoral conduct involving a child", was the subject of much debate among members – a number of whom were concerned that it was too broad and could easily leave church workers open to charges.

Mr Gareth Blake SC (right), one of the movers of the motion, responded that the definition sought to catch "a pattern of conduct" rather than a single breach and was "clear enough when applied with commonsense".

"We're concerned about children, not just about sex," he added, saying that he was aware of a situation in another diocese where there had been "400 communications within the space of a month – against the specific wishes of a parent – from a church worker to a child that had no sexual element but by any standard constitutes inappropriate pastoral conduct".

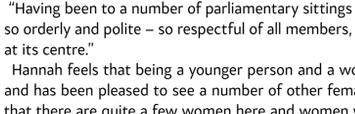
His view was supported by the rector of Austinmer, the Rev Stephen Dinning. "There is a whole pattern of behaviour that is inappropriate for children but does not constitute grooming," he said, adding that with such cases in the past no charge could be brought for the offence "because the category wasn't available".



Synod starter

NATASHA HARRISON

IT'S NOT THE WAY MANY PEOPLE WOULD CHOOSE TO CELEBRATE THEIR BIRTHDAY BUT, FOR Hannah Blackwell, the first day of Synod 2014 was a fine way to mark her 30th birthday – and begin a hands-on role in diocesan decision-making.



Hannah (right) was elected as a Synod representative by the parish of Summer Hill earlier this year. She's excited about her new role but wasn't fazed by the idea of five days of meetings, speeches and votes in an auditorium of 600 people.

"My parents and members of my family have been involved in the Anglican Church over the past 20 years," she says. "So I'm fairly conversant in the issues and the procedures to do with Synod."

The Synod topics of most interest to Hannah were the Mission 2020 statement, support for the persecuted church in the Middle East and children in detention.

Coming from a political science background, she has found the focus on national and international politics particularly engaging and a welcome contrast to secular politics.

"Having been to a number of parliamentary sittings it is actually quite a delight to see a debate that is so orderly and polite – so respectful of all members, having the faithful service of our Lord Jesus Christ at its centre."

Hannah feels that being a younger person and a woman was influential in her own election to Synod and has been pleased to see a number of other female representatives actively involved. "I appreciate that there are quite a few women here and women who are happy to speak out in the debate and ask questions," she says. "I find that really encouraging and inspiring."

The typical responsibility of a Synod member is to be an active participant, which involves listening and asking questions about the discussions, voting on particular matters and reporting back to their local congregations. Hannah takes this very seriously, believing that Synod members should "pass motions and validate reports that have the Lord Jesus at their centre; that enable us a Diocese to serve him faithfully within the Anglican Church of Australia and also within the public realm to all the world".

This year is just the beginning of the new Synod session and Hannah is eager to see what will take place between now and Synod 2016.

"I think it will be really interesting to track the issues over a three-year period, see what ground we make and the different issues that come up throughout the years," she says.

Clergy checks

CLERGY WHO HAVE NOT DONE THE NSW GOVERNMENT'S WORKING WITH CHILDREN CHECK (WWCC) can now be delicensed by the Archbishop, following a successful Synod motion.

The diocesan registrar, Mr Doug Marr, said all clergy currently licensed in the Diocese had applied for a WWCC before the deadline in March this year – and any new clergy would be required to obtain a WWCC number before being licensed in future.

However, Mr Marr said the number is only valid for five years and given that clergy are effectively employees of the Archbishop of Sydney, it was important he had the power to suspend a licence to ensure he remained in compliance with government WWCC requirements.

Mr Marr also reminded Synod members that all existing church volunteers working with children were required to have applied for a WWCC by the end of March 2015.

Horn of Africa growth



Bishop and Dr LeMarquand at Synod.

THE BISHOP OF THE HORN OF AFRICA HAS spoken at Synod about the needs of local Christians and non-Christians, and the work being done in clerical training, church planting and humanitarian support.

The Rt Rev Dr Grant LeMarquand has been the Area Bishop of the Horn (which covers Eritrea, Djibouti, Somalia and Ethiopia) since 2012. One particular hotspot of mission activity is the Gambela region of Ethiopia, home to many refugees who have fled Sudan at various times since the second Sudanese civil war began in the late '80s.

"We are trying to encourage a new culture, one that includes decision-making that does not just come from the bishop but that includes clergy and laypeople," Bishop LeMarquand said. "These are not easy things to learn but we're getting there. There's a saying in Amharic which translates as, 'Bit by bit, the egg learns to walk'."

Part of that process has involved translating the Bible into indigenous languages. Developing a written language for the Opo people in Ethiopia only came about because of the need to have a shared Anglican liturgy. A Bible translation project which recently completed the gospel of Mark represents one of the first written works in the Opo language.

"Ten years ago there were no Opo Christians," Bishop LeMarquand said. "Seventh Day

Adventists had tried to reach them and the Opo were very interested. They listened to the preaching... and because they were so grateful, they went off and prepared coffee as a gift. When the Adventists refused it, the Opo reasoned that any religion that forbids the drinking of coffee was not worthwhile.

"A couple of years later an Anglican deacon preached to them and they said, 'We have one question. Can we drink coffee?' The deacon told them that was fine and so the Opo decided they would be Anglicans."

Bishop LeMarquand's wife, Dr Wendy LeMarquand, also spoke to the Synod about the humanitarian relief and community development work she has been involved in, particularly through the Mothers' Union in Gambela. Dr LeMarquand is a physician and has devoted much of her time to training local women in hygiene and food safety skills. Much of this work has received funding from the Archbishop of Sydney's Anglican Aid.

"When small changes that can affect health and wellbeing are introduced by... women who have the respect of others, they can have huge impacts," Dr LeMarquand said. "The Union chose representatives... and they would come and be trained in Bible studies, in prayer, in life skills and be sent back to their churches to share this information with those in their pre-existing communities."

Ministry to farmers in northern NSW



Listening: Ranald and Jenny Mitchell support struggling fellow farmers through BCA.

NICK GILBERT

TWO FARMERS ARE WORKING WITH ANGLICARE NORTHERN INLAND AND BUSH CHURCH AID IN northern NSW, ministering to others like themselves – farmers doing it tough in drought-afflicted regional areas.

Ranald and Jenny Mitchell, North Star locals who have lived in the region most of their lives, have been recently engaged as Drought and Family Support Workers by Anglicare Northern Inland (formerly the Armidale Diocese's Anglican Counselling Service), and are on an 18-month assignment working with individual farmers and regional churches. They are financially supported by BCA.

Mr Mitchell says much of the work he and his wife do is simply being a presence in the lives of regional farmers, many of whom have been without a source of income for months or even years due to the ongoing drought conditions in parts of NSW.

"We've been visiting people but also making a lot of phone calls and just being there," he says. "I've gone around to the local agents and suppliers, asking if they know people who are doing it tough. I've gotten some names of people to contact through that. Because we've been in the district all our lives, we know a lot of people personally in the area."

Adds Mrs Mitchell: "One thing we did early August was to go to Barradine as a follow-up to work we had done earlier in the year after the fires. Those kinds of visits usually entail – where there is no vicar – Ran taking a church service at the beginning or end of our visit, and we will visit farms and spend time talking to people the rest of the time."

The current conditions, with very little harvest for farmers to reap for a second successive year, mean many families have little to no income. Some have taken the difficult decision to sell their properties. Even for those who can earn some money, budgets are often tight with little to no discretionary income. The Mitchells themselves are expecting a weaker than average harvest from their own biological farming set-up this year but say they are better off than their neighbours further west.

"It's not all grim, of course, because people here are very resilient," Mr Mitchell says. "There are things that are still happening. It is difficult, though, for people to leave home. They don't always have money for petrol or just don't feel motivated to get out and go to places. That's usually where we step in, get in contact and see whether people would like us to drop in. People never ring us or say they are feeling down but we've never had someone turn us down because they wouldn't like a visit."

"Some people are more open than others, of course," Mrs Mitchell adds. "You just play it by ear and you don't say too much. Silence is one of the very first things they tell you to look for in counselling. People often just need someone else there who is listening."

President and Pope welcome ACNA primate



Archbishop Eliud Wabukala (second from left) leads the investiture of Archbishop Beach, together with other GAFCON and Global South primates.

THE LEADERS OF THE MAJORITY OF THE WORLD'S ANGLICANS WERE PRESENT AT THE INVESTITURE of Archbishop Foley Beach as Primate of the Anglican Church in North America last month.

Global Anglican Future Conference (GAFCON) chairman Archbishop Eliud Wabukala joined deputy chairman Archbishop Nicholas Okoh of Nigeria and the leader of the Global South grouping Archbishop Mouneer Anis at the Church of the Apostles in Atlanta, Georgia.

Archbishop Wabukala, who was among those who led the service, said it was very significant and "a sign of great hope for the gospel in the world. It is not a small thing that has happened".

The Anglican Church of North America (ACNA) was officially recognised by the GAFCON Primates Council in 2009 following the actions of the Episcopal Church in the US (TEC) in disregarding the 1998 Lambeth resolutions on human sexuality.

TEC launched lawsuits against orthodox churches and leaders, as did the Anglican Church in Canada, which threw out the congregation of its largest church, St John's, Shaughnessy. That congregation, led by former Sydney minister the Rev David Short and theologian J.I. Packer, now comes under the authority of ACNA.

ACNA has embarked on a program to plant 1000 churches in five years.

During the 3½-hour service greetings were read out from President Obama, US senators, governors and the leaders of other denominations. The Bishop of Argentina, Archbishop Gregory Venables, brought personal greetings from Pope Francis.

In his investiture sermon, Archbishop Beach paid tribute to Archbishop Venables, who originally provided Anglican oversight for the fledgling ACNA. "His leadership, his courage and his foresight – all the way from Argentina – created a way for biblically faithful Anglicans in North America to remain Anglican and under spiritual authority by inviting us to come under the Province of the Southern Cone in South America," he said.

Archbishop Beach went on to thank the GAFCON primates and Global South leaders such as Archbishop Mouneer and the Archbishop of Myanmar for their support of Anglican ministry in North America.

He described the role of the first Global Anglican Future Conference in 2008 in the formation of ACNA. "This gathering produced the Jerusalem Declaration," he said. "This declaration not only stated in clear terms what faithful biblical Anglicanism is now in the 21st century but it also called for the creation of a new Anglican province in North America."

In assuming the mantle of leadership, Archbishop Beach described ACNA as "united but not uniform". "We don't all agree on everything but we agree on the essentials of the faith," he said. "We agree on the authority of the Bible. We agree on the person of Jesus Christ. We agree on the means of salvation. We are all in the same boat, travelling in the same river, headed in the same direction."

Iraqi refugees' winter fears



An Iraqi woman and two children at a checkpoint near Erbil after walking from Mosul for four days. PHOTO: ACNUR/R. Nuri

REFUGEES, INCLUDING PERSECUTED CHRISTIANS, ARE FACING A NEW THREAT AS WINTER LOOMS in Iraq.

More than 120,000 Christians are estimated to be taking refuge in the Kurdish capital of Erbil after being driven out of their homes in Northern Iraq around Mosul and the Nineveh Plain. Aid agencies, including the Archbishop of Sydney's Anglican Aid, are providing for the homeless who are sheltering in schools, on construction sites and church grounds.

Chaldean Archbishop of Erbil Bashar Warda has called for the US military intervention to be stepped up. "I could see that my people are really dying," Archbishop Warda said. "It's terrifying, it's painful; we have to defend ourselves."

He also warned of the bitter winter ahead, saying that overseas groups are the only ones who have helped. "The reality is that Christians have received no support from the central [Iraqi] government. They have done nothing for them, absolutely nothing."

Meanwhile, the Anglican minister of St George's Baghdad, Canon Andrew White, was at the centre of security fears as the ISIL forces neared the capital. He has now been assigned a military bodyguard.

Speaking on an overseas fundraising tour, Canon White said the ISIL persecution has now left Iraq's Christians "a million times worse" than they were under ousted dictator Saddam Hussein.

"I think it could be one of the worst persecutions of Christians in history," Canon White said.

Driscoll quits Mars Hill

SEATTLE MEGACHURCH PASTOR MARK DRISCOLL WILL NOT RETURN TO MARS HILL CHURCH after a self-imposed suspension, having tendered his resignation last month.

The well-known preacher had been on a leave of absence for nearly two months while a group of elders investigated a series of formal charges brought against him. The board has now reported that although it found some allegations unfounded, it did find he had "at times been guilty of arrogance, responding to conflict with a quick temper and harsh speech and leading the staff and elders in a domineering manner". "Pastor Mark has never been charged with any immorality, illegality or heresy," the Mars Hill board's statement continued. "Most of the charges involved attitudes and behaviours reflected by a domineering style of leadership."

Mr Driscoll then submitted his resignation saying, "I readily acknowledge I am an imperfect messenger of the gospel of Jesus Christ. There are many things I have confessed and repented of, privately and publicly, as you are well aware." His resignation letter said the decision was taken with "profound sadness but also with complete peace".

There was no plea on his next step but the letter noted the board found nothing that would disqualify him from future ministry.

Mr Driscoll noted in his statement that aspects of his personality and leadership style "have proven to be divisive within the Mars Hill context and I do not want to be the source of anything that might detract from our church's mission to lead people to a personal and growing relationship with Jesus Christ".

During a visit to Sydney in 2008 Mr Driscoll famously gave 18 points of criticism of local ministries, including that our culture "struggles with a lack of entrepreneurialism" and that Australian Christian men were "immature".

God as a punchline

BRAD EMERY

IT'S PROBABLY HAPPENED TO YOU. YOU'RE WATCHING YOUR FAVOURITE COMEDIAN OR COMEDY show on telly, laughing away as the gags roll thick and fast. Then it happens: the ubiquitous mocking of Christians, Christianity, Jesus, God or all of the above.

Whenever it happens my heart sinks. My anticipation of the next knee-slapper slams into a wall of disappointment and often anger. "Why did they have to go there?" I grumble as I reach for the remote to see what else is on the box.

It's an interesting question, though. Why *do* so many comedians seem to go to great lengths to attack and belittle Christianity and our king, Jesus Christ?

Seth MacFarlane's *Family Guy* portrays God as an all-powerful, hedonistic philanderer and Jesus as a quiet religious guy – the type that always dies first in any war movie. Christianity itself is depicted as a blight on world history, one that has kept society from advancing.

Standup comedians at home and abroad proudly mock Christianity. Comedian Tom Ballard has performed at the Australian Atheist Convention, ridiculing Christianity as fantasy. Josh Thomas is a proud atheist who believes all religion has no basis in reality. A regular at Australian comedy festivals, Danny Bhoj, often bags Christianity in his routine, while Tim Minchin refers to the "two-millennium-dead Middle Eastern Jewish magician-preacher we call Jesus".

Having dabbled in the difficult art of standup comedy I often wonder why, out of all the things that are humorous about our day-to-day lives, our world and the broad spectrum of culture, Christianity is so often attacked by comedians.

Perhaps because it's such an easy target. You don't have to look far to find examples of those who have used Jesus' name to justify their actions and yet misrepresent him dreadfully. There is, sadly, ample fodder for comedians. However, there is also a sense that Christianity is an easy target because comedians know we will generally take it on the chin. We might blog about our disappointment, fire off an angry tweet or send a letter of complaint but that's about it. We're used to being the object of derision, so we just shake our heads and change the channel.

That being said, you won't hear any of the comedians I've mentioned makes a crack about Allah. You won't see an episode of *Family Guy* that pokes fun at the Islamic prophet or make a single pun about the Qu'ran. A cartoonist in Denmark tried it once. It resulted in a wave of angry Islamic protests across the globe, from the Middle East and Europe to Indonesia. Christians are much "safer" to mock.

Our faith also fits neatly with a key ingredient of standup comedy: cynicism. It's a basic tool used to formulate a quip on any given topic, from politics and the shenanigans of celebrities to aspects of everyday life.

Christians step outside the bounds of ambivalence, planting their feet firmly under Jesus' banner. We believe it's by the grace of God alone, offering up his Son to die as the payment for our innate state of rebellion, that we are made right with God and will see him face to face in glory. But any system that claims an absolute answer to our search for meaning in life will draw the mockery of comedians like flies to a picnic!

What's also interesting about anti-Christian comedians is they seem to think they're original, representing the enlightened in a new age of tolerance. Yet poking fun at Jesus is as old as our faith itself. Some of the first to mock him to get a laugh were the soldiers who struck him repeatedly and taunted him in Matthew 26. Followers of Christ know that being the subject of mockery is par for the course. In John 15 Jesus tells us that if we were like the rest of world, we'd be loved. But because he has called us out of the world to be set apart for him, we'll be hated.

So what should our response be to this constant ridicule? I confess my first emotion is anger: "How dare they mock my King?" And given many of the psalms of David express a deep jealousy for the glory of God's name, a feeling of anger when our God is mocked is somewhat justified.

But then I remember there will come a day when those who have mocked God all their lives must stand before him and give an account of themselves. What a fearful day that will be. What sadness for those who don't know him.

So perhaps our first response should be to pray for these comedians. Pray that, like the Apostle Paul, they will have an encounter with the Lord Jesus that rocks them to their core and sends them to their knees in thanks and praise as his love and forgiveness wash over them.

Next time you hear a comedian mocking Christians or telling the world God doesn't exist, pray for them. Before you voice your outrage and reach for the remote, as I so often do, send a quiet prayer to our loving God that the Holy Spirit will change their heart, that they will meet Jesus and that they will turn to follow him.

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

Bishop Ken Short AO, former missionary, military chaplain, Dean of Sydney and Bishop of Wollongong, Parramatta and the Australian Defence Force, died on October 19 at the age of 87.

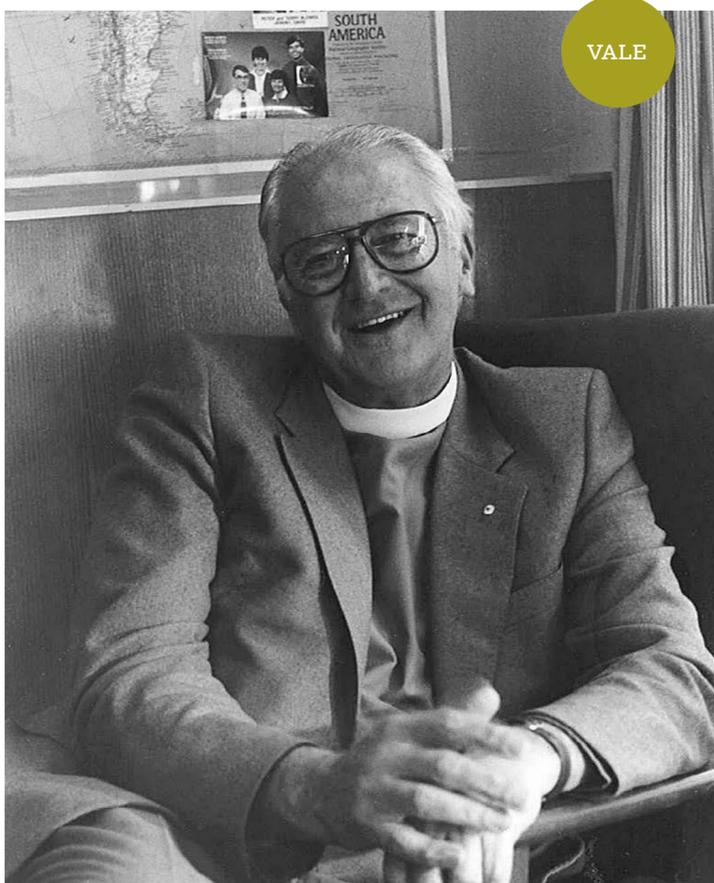
Archbishop Glenn Davies described Bishop Short as "a faithful pastor, a gracious leader, and an elder statesman of the Sydney Diocese. He had international experience and was greatly respected around the world. He had a significant impact in all the ministries in which he was involved, whether in parish, chaplaincy, missionary service or diocesan leadership."

Born in 1927 as the son of a well-known clergyman, Kenneth Herbert Short was ordained in 1952 and served in Mosman and Pittwater before offering himself for missionary service in Tanganyika (later Tanzania). On his return, he served as General Secretary of CMS and then had an influential ministry as rector of Vacluse. Archbishop Loane appointed him as Bishop of Wollongong in 1975 and he was later made Bishop of Parramatta.

"Ken also served as the last Chaplain General (Major General) in the Australian Army and as the first Bishop to the Defence Force," Dr Davies said. "He had a significant and lasting impact on the forces and in particular on highlighting the value of military chaplaincy."

"Ken was an evangelist at heart and loved to see the gospel going forward. He was a great supporter of Evangelism Explosion and other evangelistic ministries."

Bishop Short has three children, all involved in ministry, including Canon David Short, who has been working in Canada for more than 20 years. Archbishop Davies asked for prayer for Bishop Short's widow Gloria and their family. "We pray for Gloria who has been an outstanding woman of God and woman of faith in her own right, as well as in the support she gave to Ken throughout their lifelong ministry," he said.



VALE

O'BRIEN TO HEAD MT & D

On the first evening of last month's Synod, Archbishop Glenn Davies announced the appointment of the rector of West Pymble, the **Rev Gary O'Brien**, as director of Ministry Training & Development (MT & D).

"This is a very strategic position in the life of the Diocese as the director oversees the development of all clergy and lay ministers from their departure from Moore College to their retirement," Dr Davies said.

"Currently MT & D is largely focused on the first three years after college, due to limited resources – a situation that the Synod will need to address if MT & D is to fulfil its mandate under its ordinance."

Mr O'Brien has been the rector of West Pymble for the past 22 years and, the Archbishop said, "during that time he has exercised a fruitful ministry which has seen God's blessing upon the growth of the congregation, an increase in ministry staff, a steady flow of members entering Moore College for full-time ministry and an ambitious building expansion on the property. Gary has a well-deserved reputation for mentoring other ministers and these gifts will be invaluable in his new role."

Mr O'Brien said he and his family "had travelled through many different chapters of life and ministry [at West Pymble], and to do so alongside so many gifted and willing people has been a great joy".

"It's a wrench to step down from this role," he said. "However, I have always had a desire to do all I can to help equip people in our church and ministry peers so I am excited about this opportunity to help equip men and women for healthy and fruitful gospel ministry as my full-time role."

next stop nowra

The **Rev Geoff Thompson**, the assistant minister at Figtree, will become the new rector of Nowra next year. After what he describes as a "late career move" into full-time ministry – which saw he and his wife Anne work under David O'Mara in Broome for four years before going to college – the Thompsons have spent five happy years at Figtree and are now ready to be "stretched further and differently" in ministry service by taking on their first parish.

"We love and adore Figtree and the people of Figtree and it's always an exciting ride here," Mr Thompson says. "There are lots of great ways and opportunities to think strategically, be adventurous and think outside the square... but we didn't want to leave Figtree and go to another Figtree!"

He says the prospect of Nowra came up in conversation "from several directions" earlier this year and jokes that "we were probably a little slow in cottoning on".

"We've got a daughter about to sit her HSC and so it's a tricky time with a lot happening, but a few months ago we went down and visited Nowra, had a meal with the nominators and we felt very compelled," he says. "As we thought about it, there really wasn't any reason why we shouldn't go, and we fell in love with the idea."

"It'll be a different set of challenges, but we're really looking forward to the opportunity of serving the people there."

Mr Thompson will take up his new position in March.



MOVES

CITY TO CITY



After five years as a national communicator and trainer with the City Bible Forum based in Sydney, the **Rev Ian Powell** last month became priest-in-charge of the parish of Wanniasa in the Diocese of Canberra-Goulburn.

"I have a bit of a soft spot for Canberra," he says. "Since I was in my twenties I've wanted to work outside Sydney but it hasn't happened. About a year ago I felt in my bones it was time to go and do something else, and there was a possibility that Stuart [Robinson, the bishop] and I chatted about, but now Wanniasa has come up and Alison and I are excited."

"It's a church with fine Christian people, and there's a school next to it which is a great relationship to have and build on. It's a very exciting opportunity."

Mr Powell will work part-time in the role until the beginning of 2015.

PARISH WEST

The rector of St Peter's, Watsons Bay, the **Rev Cliff Parish**, retired last month after 13 years in the parish. Originally from country Western Australia, all of Mr Parish's appointments prior to Watsons Bay were in the Diocese of Bunbury – but he says that when he was invited to Sydney in 2001 by the Watsons Bay nominators he and his wife Nola didn't hesitate.

"It was really the Lord's prompting, and through prayer and consultation, that we believed this was the right move for us," he says. "The Lord wanted us here."

"It's been a great time. We've enjoying ministering here in Sydney and to the people of Watsons Bay parish. There are a lot of transient people that visit us and it's like any other place you go to in that what you get out of it depends on how much you put in."

While they're happy with how they will leave St Peter's for its new rector, "it's always hard to say goodbye and we are finding it hard".

He says the real role he and Mrs Parish played at the church was to guide, encourage and equip the congregation to use their gifts in different areas of ministry and engage with the community. "Sharing the gospel – that's what it all about," he says.

The Parishes have returned to WA to live in Perth, and have no intention of watching the grass grow in retirement. "There's quite a lot of work around," Mr Parish says. "I won't just stop working because I'm retiring! We look forward to taking on new things on offer."

IN BRIEF

An assistant minister at Church by the Bridge in Kirribilli, the **Rev Simon Jackson**, will move to Adelaide next month as senior associate minister of St Matthew's, Kensington.

Prison outreach

I read with interest Nick Gilbert's article "My Chains Fell Off" (SC, October). It is encouraging and exciting to see the increasing opportunities for the church on the outside to bring the gospel to those on the inside. As the first female Anglican chaplain appointed in Sydney to women in prison in 1994 this has been of vital concern to me for many years.

When I first began to serve as prison chaplain the Kairos movement was also in its early development. I have watched with thankfulness the growth and acceptance of this ministry since then. However there is another main Christian interdenominational group with a significant involvement in prison outreach, predating Kairos in Australia, and that is Prison Fellowship.

At the beginning of my seven years I was presented with a team of dedicated volunteers from this organisation and over my time in prison ministry there was always a group of women available for me to call upon. They were an integral part of my Sunday services and they undertook the faithful and time-consuming responsibility of one-to-one visiting and letter writing.

It was greatly encouraging to me to observe how my ministry was enlarged by this team of helpers. My involvement could not have been as extensive without their additional service and support. When the demands on me became too great I was able to assign a particular volunteer to a particular inmate knowing that she would undertake to visit, encourage and pray for her. I saw many positive results from this.

Both Prison Fellowship and Kairos have different roles in prison outreach and, as Nick pointed out, there are also individual churches taking initiatives. A reminder of the importance of our response to those in custody, in God's sight, is always brought home to me in the parable of the sheep and goats in Matthew chapter 25. Jesus pointed out that at the final judgement God will take into account not only those who feed the hungry, provide clothes for the naked and shelter for the homeless, but those who visit the imprisoned – this help to those in need being regarded as if it is to Christ himself.

Deaconess Meryl Broadley
East Ballina

Post-quake prayers

Following on from your article "Christian Quake Care" (SC, October) I was in Geraldine, a small country town approximately 140km from Christchurch, when the first earthquake hit on September 4, 2010 – my bed was jumping off the floor!

Little has been heard about the impact the quakes have had on areas surrounding Christchurch, however it really hit home when I went back to Geraldine to farewell my 94-year-old mother in July this year. The local St Mary's Anglican Church had been closed a few weeks beforehand because it did not meet the "50 per cent" earthquake standard required of public buildings – some parts of the building only achieved 5 per cent, while other parts met 20 per cent. It was built in 1882.

This leaves the parish with quite a dilemma, as there are only about 3500 people in the town. The parish has five churches and another historic one was badly damaged by the same earthquake and is also closed. The costs to these small communities and the diocese are enormous – the large St Mary's church in Timaru, 35km to the south, is also closed for similar reasons.

Thanks to the generosity of the local Presbyterian church, my mother was farewelled from her hometown but not from her "home" church.

Please pray for the people of Christchurch and the wider Canterbury area as many are struggling with a wide range of issues that have prevented them from getting things back to normal.

Colene Taylor
East Blaxland

Stand up, stand up

Joshua's powerful statement, "But as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord" (Joshua 24:15b), is a powerful clarion call to Christians amid the ongoing activity of groups such as Islamic State (SC, October).

Our secular democracies have been rendered weak and flabby. They have forgotten the God of the Bible due to the inroads of atheism and left-leaning civil libertarian ideologies. Yet without the strength and rigour of a spiritual base our much loved, but much abused, democratic society will become more and more impotent and easy pickings for Qur'anic Islam.

To date, the voices of Christian leaders have been largely absent in debates. There is an urgent need for Christians – and Christian leaders particularly – to tell national leaders, politicians and the man in the street that secular democracy needs to repent, get its house in order and re-engage with the God of the Bible.

Unless secular democracies can demonstrate that the God of the Bible is important to them they have no leverage to convince the many concerned, uncertain, confused and just plain scared Muslims that the God of the Bible is a better option for their present and eternal future than the God of the Qur'an. Force of arms alone will not win the day – now or ever.

Of course we Christians can sit on our collective hands and say, "So what, we're OK. It's just that we are somewhere in the book of Revelation. God is in control and will sort it out". But is that what we are supposed to do? At the moment the only people being listened to are Islamic apologists and media commentators who, by and large, appear to have little religious or spiritual knowledge – either Islamic or biblical. Christian leaders need to sit up, take notice and get moving.

Jim Campbell
Dee Why

English masters

In response to the Archbishop's reflections upon Reformation Day (SC, October), as one privileged recently to visit the centres of the Reformation I was given a new sense of the significance of the "masters" of the English Reformation, as Marcus Loane called them. In no way to detract from the seminal contributions of Luther and Calvin I have been renewed in my appreciation of Bilney, Latimer, Ridley, Tyndale and Cranmer. Luther and Calvin died in their beds but their English counterparts paid for their convictions by being burnt alive or strangled.

The English masters bequeathed to subsequent generations – including our own – liturgies, a confessional statement and an ordinal that are "reformed" in line with apostolic faith. Central within these are the acknowledgement of Christ alone as the saviour of sinners, the systematic reading of the Scriptures in English, careful theologically crafted prayers and the weekly use of the "catholic" creeds.

It is to be hoped that our church leaders and theological educators will have the same commitment to our reformed expression of the faith as our Protestant forebears did in the 16th century, in modern language of course. Sadly, for many today their great legacy is merely antiquarian, or worse, somehow "high church" instead of the great biblically based deposit it truly is.

Paul Barnett
Epping

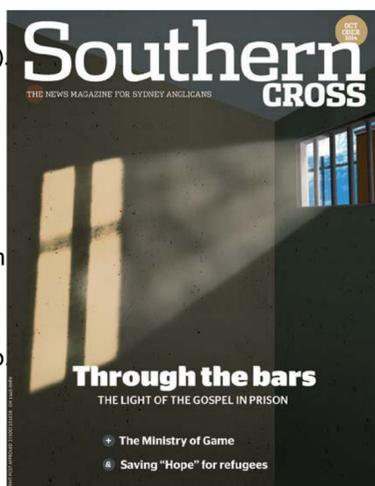
Living at a distance

While I wholeheartedly applaud the Rev David Ould's willingness to appear in the SBS documentary series *Living With The Enemy* (SC, September), I admit to being bitterly disappointed at the outset when, rather than live with the enemy, Mr Ould chose to relegate them to the caravan.

This single act undermined every other attempt at engagement. By not entering into vulnerability with all its inherent risks, Mr Ould forfeited the means of reaching "the enemy" with the love of Christ.

I wonder what Jesus would have done.

Alison Clark
Hurstville Grove



Let no one separate

When a spouse is unfaithful it's a tragedy. It breaks promises, turns lives upside down and can shipwreck faith, writes **SCOTT MONK**

THE LOVE SONG BROUGHT THE ROOM TO TEARS. GATHERED AROUND A PIANO, THE wedding guests melted as the chief bridesmaid played a piece that drew together the love of man and woman with the love of God.

When the final notes were drowned out by the applause, the bride and groom hugged and kissed. The newlyweds had every reason to be happy. The wedding was perfect. The bride looked perfect. The groom looked perfect and was full of smiles. A year after Lee-Anne* and David* had met, he'd swept her off her feet and now they were married.

And why wouldn't everything be perfect? Together, they'd promised before God and the assembled guests that they'd love each other through good times and bad. And tonight was the best of the best.

The evening reception clinked with glass and china as guests drank champagne, laughed and ate. The bride and groom worked the floor, kissing and hugging friends and relatives, some of whom were still chewing over the ceremony. It had carried an unashamed evangelistic message as the newlyweds – both committed Christians – had planned and wanted.

"It was a theme that flowed through our relationship, our commitment to one another, our marriage and our wedding," Lee-Anne says. "This is us. We're strong in the faith. We wanted it to be a real outward display of that."

After the cutting of the cake amid much jubilation, the bride and groom waltzed to another romantic song they loved. Seated guests squeezed each other's hands and the room popped with camera flashes, capturing an incredible moment that would last a lifetime.

Fifteen years later, none of these wedding photos see the light of day. They're hidden in a small box of big hurts. Lee-Anne cannot stand looking at them – or, more specifically, him.

My son, keep my words and store up my commands within you. Keep my commands and you will live; guard my teachings as the apple of your eye. Bind them on your fingers; write them on the tablet of your heart. Say to wisdom, "You are my sister," and to insight, "You are my relative."

They will keep you from the adulterous woman, from the wayward woman with her seductive words.
(Proverbs 1, here and following)

Lee-Anne discovered she'd been betrayed two days before her birthday when David was out leading a Bible study. She'd put their two children to bed and walked downstairs to the family computer. David's Facebook page was still open.

When she clicked his inbox, she had no inkling of what she'd find. Their 14 years of marriage felt solid, even though they'd experienced their fair share of bumps, like all couples. They'd even sought counselling to ensure any problems were smoothed out.

"I wasn't oblivious to the fact that we had problems but I never saw the betrayal coming," Lee-Anne says. "I was in it for the long haul. Regardless of how hard it was we were just going to keep fighting for our marriage. We had two beautiful boys. We had a family and I thought we had each other."

"Despite what we were going through, God was going to get us through it. We had wonderful friends who were supporting us. Stress was bubbling and building but I always had the sense that we'd be together forever."

David was so loved by his wife, children, parents and in-laws. He couldn't do anything wrong in their eyes. Every week he faithfully turned up to their church and even disciplined young boys in the way of the Lord.

"I would never have picked him as someone who would commit adultery," Lee-Anne says. "Never. And I don't think anyone else would either."

What Lee-Anne saw within his Facebook pages destroyed her. She won't reveal what, nor should she. A burning match is nowhere as damaging as the blazing fire that follows.

"Something made me look in the inbox, which is more of a private area, and there were just messages upon messages with this woman that were extremely intimate. A went straight into shock."

At the window of my house I looked down through the lattice. I saw among the simple, I noticed among the young men, a youth who had no sense. He was going down the street near her corner, walking along in the direction of her house at twilight, as the day was fading, as the dark of night set in.

Putting the pieces of the jigsaw together, Lee-Anne believes her husband's infidelity had begun about six months before, in one of the most innocent environments imaginable: their local school.

David had volunteered to help out at a range of school events, where he was keen to share the gospel with non-believers – but also possibly fulfil a driving need to connect with people, something he'd been frustrated with inside and outside church.

"He was very relationship-driven," Lee-Anne says. "He'd put the effort in and make connections with other peers but it didn't always feel reciprocated."

"He always had an affinity with women. I never questioned it before. I was proud of him. 'You're a good bloke. You treat women with respect.' And you are a genuine, sincere, thoughtful person. I wouldn't say that he ever crossed the line. But it felt like his desire or need to

keep up this perfect persona included saying and doing the right thing so everyone would think what a great husband and dad he was."

It was through school that they met another married mother of two whom we'll call Rose. As the months rolled on, her life became more and more entwined with Lee-Anne's. Both families would find themselves attending the same movie and David would arrange play dates between their children – on a day that Lee-Anne would be out of the house babysitting. Warning signals started going off in Lee-Anne's mind, but she trusted him. He was also playing sport regularly with Rose's husband, for the stated purpose of evangelism.

"I said to him at one point – which was hard for me but I thought it was important – that I'd noticed something that was too intimate," Lee-Anne says. "I said 'Look, I think you need to be really careful. Some of the things that I've seen on Facebook – the way you guys relate – you need to be careful.'"

"His response was: 'Bah! She's like a sister!'"

She took hold of him and kissed him and with a brazen face she said: "Today I fulfilled my vows, and I have food from my fellowship offering at home. So I came out to meet you; I looked for you and have found you!"

Infidelity is rarely a spur-of-the-moment betrayal. It's a series of small encounters that build up over time: the lingering glance, spending time with the third party, an off-handed touch and a mind ticking over with forbidden thoughts.

"Normally it's many months before it gets to the stage of actual sexual activity," says Dr Keith Condie, the dean of students and a lecturer in ministry and church history at Moore College.

Most affairs begin because one party feels their emotional needs aren't being met by their spouse, he says. "Part of our Christian culture is we have a really strong sense of the duty and responsibility within a marriage and

how commitment is at the very heart of a marriage, but I think we downplay the emotional element in relationships," he says.

"When Jesus is asked about marriage and divorce he always goes back to Genesis. Chapter 2:24 is particularly significant – 'This is why a man leaves his father and mother and bonds with his wife, and they become one flesh'."

"But we tend to overlook verse 25, which is 'Both the man and woman were naked and they felt no shame.' I think that's actually God's ideal for marriage, where this relationship is such that to be physically naked is one thing, but that's pointing to something more profound: an intimacy and a connection and a closeness."

"If you read Song of Songs 5:16 – 'This is my beloved, this is my friend' – you get that sense of having emotional needs met in the context of a marriage. When that's not happening, that's when marriages get into trouble. A person starts to form a connection with someone else – in the workplace or some other environment."

I have covered my bed with coloured linens from Egypt. I have perfumed my bed with myrrh, aloes and cinnamon. Come, let's drink deeply of love till morning; let's enjoy ourselves with love!

Reassuringly, the majority of people still find adultery offensive – both Christians and the wider community. In 2009, according to the Australian Survey of Social Attitudes, 63 per cent of Australians thought that extramarital sex was always wrong and a further 27 per cent believed it was "almost always wrong". New research conducted by the National Church Life Survey in 2011 found that 89 per cent of Protestants and Catholics agreed that extramarital sex was always wrong and a further 8 per cent said it was "almost always wrong".

However, this hasn't deterred others from turning adultery into a business. One of the more scandalous attached people find other partners to engage in adultery.

In a recent poll of its 15,560 female members about why they decided to lack on their husbands, Victoria Milan found respondents pointed to boredom (34 per cent), a lack of passion (22 per cent), a need to be desired (19 per cent), loneliness and neglect (14 per cent) and revenge for betrayal (11 per cent).

Victoria Milan's founder and CEO, Sigurd Vedal, believes that having an extramarital affair is more likely to help than hinder a relationship.

"Having a fling helps to break the monotony, making women feel desired and sexy again," he says in a September press release. "This has a positive impact on their existing relationship. More than 68 per cent of our female members say they feel much more fulfilled once they have an affair."

My husband is not at home; he has gone on a long journey. He took his purse filled with money and will not be home till full moon."

Such an inflammatory statement has little resemblance to reality. Two in three women on the Victoria Milan website appear to be justifying their deceit without disclosing whether their partner knows, while the remaining third of respondents are admittedly worse off.

Mr Vedal needs to talk to the people charged with picking up the pieces – counsellors, ministers, psychologists, families, children, congregations and indeed,

the wounded party.

On the frontline of repairing broken people is Craig Schwarze (see box, p21) who, at Village Church in Annandale, leads DivorceCare – a support group for people going through separation and divorce. It helps people heal emotionally from this major life trauma by equipping them with skills to push through the pain and give them direction again.

"I'd say that roughly 50 per cent of the people who have come through our course have been impacted by infidelity," he says.

From his discussions with participants, there were common factors that led to an affair – low levels of marital satisfaction on both sides, a lack of intimacy, poor communication, poor conflict resolution skills, avoidance of home and a lack of investment in the marriage itself.

"In the cases I've seen, the unfaithful partner often tells the other party that they've decided to leave the marriage because they are unhappy, but the truth of the affair only comes out in the aftermath," Mr Schwarze says. "Most people who commit adultery still seem to be ashamed of their behaviour, even when they think they are justified."

CARE AND REPAIR

A marriage broken by adultery is like a ceramic vase that has been dropped on the ground – repairable but with permanent cracks.

"It might be a little out of shape, look okay from a distance and hold water and flowers, but it is a fragile thing. Sometimes little pieces get lost. Some of them turn to dust."

The image is used by psychotherapist and director of the Australian Institute of Family Counselling, Mr Derek Higgs, when helping couples save their marriage after the devastation of infidelity – which he defines as both extramarital affairs and addiction to pornography.

For those affected by a recent discovery, or even still suffering years or decades later, he offers hope.

"Relationships are repairable," he says. "As a Christian, I believe God can repair anything. But in some cases that could mean a long, slow process."

"I'm very honest with my couples. When they come and see me, they have an expectation that I can fix the marriage. What I can provide is the hope that I can – with God's help and their commitment – we can restore what has been damaged. Naturally there is residue. I am reminded in the Bible of David, whom God restored and forgave, but there was still some earthly consequence to deal with."

For reconciliation to happen, couples must follow four clear paths:

1 Seek counselling. Couples need time, dedication, commitment and patience throughout this process. If one party is not fully committed, the likelihood of an effective result is rare, he says.

2 They have to remove the third party. The other man or woman involved in the affair needs to be ostracised permanently. "Otherwise, as the pieces of the vase are scattered, that third person is someone who walks through the room and stands on the broken pieces on the floor and kicks some of them into the distance, so there's less to put back together."

3 There needs to be confession and repentance, which is linked to...

4 Forgiveness. This isn't easy, Mr Higgs says. "What I've found helpful is to say to people: it's important that you want to forgive this person; that you genuinely desire to forgive them. Whether they stay in the marriage or not, the desire to forgive is important. They, as much as the perpetrator, need to understand that forgiveness is not the same as acceptance."

Craig Schwarze, who runs DivorceCare at Village Church Annandale, says there is also hope for divorcees who initially feel like there is none.

"I've seen many, many people recover from a broken marriage and ultimately thrive," Mr Schwarze says. "The road is very dark in the beginning though, and the healing process takes much longer than most people expect."

Fellow parishioners and pastors can play an important role in this process, as many victims of adultery feel let down by the church.

"They can feel judged and rejected by people who used to respect them," he says. "Some of this says more about where the sufferer is in their own heart than about anyone else."

"I think some churches have struggled to know how to support effectively people who are going through a divorce. Some pastors, possibly, find it difficult to balance their desire to make a strong statement about marital faithfulness with the needs of a hurting person in front of them. Thankfully, I've seen a lot of progress in this area over recent times."

Christians can help by affirming the victim's relationship with God, by patiently listening to their hurts and by encouraging spiritual disciplines such as prayer and Bible study. "People who have suffered a marriage breakdown are often very hurt and lonely in the early days, so genuine Christian fellowship at this point can make an enormous difference," Mr Schwarze says.

Pastors who think themselves immune to megachurches make headlines for "moral failures".

But sin doesn't need a passport. Traditionally, when ministry students start their studies at Sydney's Moore College, staff lay down a naked truth: a small percentage of them will fall away from the faith, either because of stealing or adultery.

Dr Condie and his wife Sarah run a marriage enrichment course for ministry students and their spouses with the goal of strengthening marriages.

"When couples are relating in a way that they feel safe with each other, open their hearts and make that bond together, that then makes for a safe, strong marriage where you don't want to look anywhere else," Dr Condie says.

Otherwise, as the Bible teaches, uncontrolled desire leads to enslavement.

"If you talk to a lot of people who do get caught up in infidelity you'll find that what promised freedom initially leads to dreadful consequences," he says. "For Christians, they may lose their marriage, which means they lose their children and the quality of that relationship."

"For people in ministry, they lose their job. And for many, they lose their faith because this other person captures their heart to the extent that there's no place for God."

"The early chapters of Proverbs are helpful. There's this constant warning that the way of adultery is the pathway to death. It's spiritual death to a lot of people. Of course, every sin can be forgiven and people come back from this by the grace of God but it's much better not to set out on this pathway."

With persuasive words she led him astray; she seduced him with her smooth talk. All at once he followed her like an ox going to the slaughter, like a deer stepping into a noose till an arrow pierces his liver, like a bird darting into a snare, little knowing it will cost him his life.

"Why doesn't Daddy go to church? Does he still believe in God?"

The questions from Lee-Anne's sons break her heart.

The past few years have been traumatic enough. Legally she is still married, even though David has moved in with Rose – the same woman Lee-Anne now has to share her children with and still see when she takes them to school.

She also fears that her boys no longer have a strong, daily Christian role model.

"It's really hard for me to get the boys to go to church," she says. "I don't have another person there saying: let's go. They don't see another person – more importantly, their dad – with the same values."

But what the Lucasts have eaten, the Lord will restore. Not only has Lee-Anne's faith survived, it's flourished. It's been anchored on Philippians 4:13: 'I can do all this through

him who gives me strength'.

"I didn't think [my faith] could get bigger, but it got bigger," she says. "I don't know if my knowledge of him has necessarily got any bigger, but my experience of him in my life has got bigger."

"My faith is what has carried me through. It's rock solid and it's been tested a couple of times. It's never left me. God's never left me."

Alongside her faith, the thing she's most conscious of is being obedient to God and having integrity. She has it and wants her sons to see it as she continues pushing through the most difficult period of her life.

"I did not choose this. I wanted to stay in this marriage and work at it. I did take my vows seriously and my word is worth a lot."

So is God's, which is clear about unrepentant hearts:

Now then, my sons, listen to me; pay attention to what I say. Do not let your heart turn to her ways or stray into her paths. Many are the victims she has brought down; her slain are a mighty throng. Her house is a highway to the grave, leading down to the chambers of death.

*Names have been changed for privacy reasons

SURVIVING A MARRIAGE BREAKDOWN

For people dealing with the early stages of a marriage break-up through infidelity, Lee-Anne offers these practical tips:

1 Encourage a lawyer. "The reality is I was on my own and needed sound advice to work out the things to action for the children's best interests and mine, including access to the children and settling our property and assets."

2 Equip yourself with knowledge. "I found myself standing in a Centrelink queue. All of a sudden, I was eligible and needing to receive Government benefits for single parents. Suddenly, you're the sole provider and that's a scary thing." Attend workshops and seminars which help you understand financial independence, coping mechanisms and resilience for the children.

3 Prepare for a shift in identity. You have to cope with suddenly being a single parent.

4 Be in a church. "God has used this time greatly to encourage and teach me. Being in church is not just about me, though, as it encourages the body and provides consistency for my children as they see it as an important part of relating to God and his people."

5 Be in a Bible study group. "It was such a benefit to me. It got me through. I feel really blessed. God placed me in the right group with incredible women and men. You could come away thinking 'Men suck' but I can see a real integrity in these guys and I really enjoy seeing them serve their wives, care for my kids and care for me. It's been a huge benefit for me moving forward."

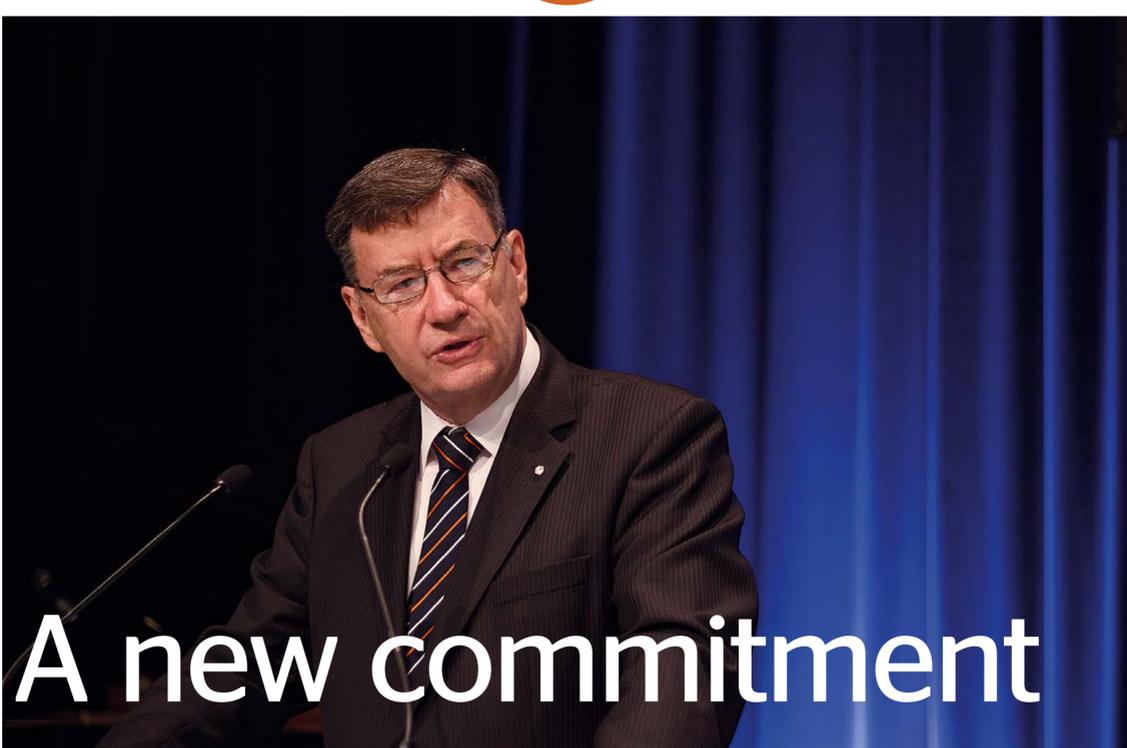
6 Encourage your church to talk about adultery. "It needs to love the widow and the orphan. When this message comes from the top, it filters down and everyone gets on board with it."

7 Pray – cry out to God and ask others to pray for you when you can't.

8 Self care is really important. Be kind to yourself. "Often I need all the emotional energy I can muster to get through each day. A day at a time, one foot in front of the other. Enjoy a nice meal with friends, see a movie, go for a walk and look up at the trees."

9 Fight for joy: "I was reminded recently to trust that God will bring joy back. Recognise that he is on your side". Romans 8:28.

10 Have hope! Jeremiah 29:11.



The world may have changed but our mission and message to the people of Sydney is the same, says **ARCHBISHOP GLENN DAVIES**.

WE LIVE IN A VERY DIFFERENT WORLD TO THE ONE IN WHICH SYDNEY Anglicans lived, when Bishop Frederic Barker presided over the first session of this Synod on December 5, 1866 at Church Society House in Phillip Street. It is hard to imagine gathering members of Synod so close to Christmas – and possibly even harder to imagine members sitting for seven days over two weeks, let alone the record sitting of 13 days over three weeks in 1868!

Yet the concerns of my predecessor and of yours in that first Synod are not so different from ours. We wish to see Christ honoured as Lord in our world as they did in theirs.

If we truly want to see Christ honoured as Lord in every community by 2020, we need to work as partners in mission to bring the gospel to all in our Diocese. We need to mobilise ourselves in prayerful dependence upon the Holy Spirit to meet the challenges of being “salt and light” in a world where Christ is not honoured as Lord. Our mission requires a fresh commitment to glorify God and love our neighbour.

Such a commitment, of course, is not new. It reflects what should mark out all Christians seeking to be faithful to God’s calling. To love the Lord our God with all our heart, soul and mind, and to love our neighbours as ourselves, encapsulates Jesus’ own summary of the law and the prophets.

Yet how shall we love and glorify God? How shall we love our neighbour? By proclaiming the Lord Jesus Christ and by living lives worthy of him. This inseparable twofold word and deed of Christian living was characteristic of Jesus’ earthly ministry (Acts 10:36-38). Our opportunities for proclamation will differ in accordance with our gifts but we all have a part to play in promoting the gospel. In so doing we glorify God and show true love to our neighbour. Likewise, as our lives express the obedience of faith, we not only glorify God but demonstrate love to our neighbour by doing the good works that God has prepared for us.

It is no doubt the case that in the eyes of the public the revelations of child sexual abuse among the clergy of Christian denominations have had a severe impact upon our own reputation. While we cannot undo the past, we can declare our abhorrence that servants of Christ have acted in such un-Christlike ways and we can show compassion to the victims of abuse. Although our commitment to safe ministry among all church workers has a very high priority in our training and professional development we must be ever vigilant, both institutionally and personally, so our behaviour adorns the gospel and is pleasing in the sight of our Saviour.

JESUS BRINGS

The *Jesus Brings* campaign has been a shared mission initiative across our Diocese, enabled by funds from the Synod. While not all our parishes have been involved, a great many have used the resources produced, with over 140,000 *Search Luke’s gospels* being distributed to churches, together with 40,000 QuizWorx children’s DVDs.

None of us will imagine this has been a breakthrough campaign, or has seen significantly greater fruit than any other. There is much work in mission still to be done. However, it is our combined strength as a network that enables initiatives like this to take shape and it is our combined strength as a network that will ensure we have a continued and powerful impact upon the cities of Sydney, Parramatta and Wollongong and their surrounds for the cause of Christ and the honour of his name.

Within our organisations and schools the important role of chaplains as agents of mission ought not to be underestimated. While we can sometimes take our organisations for granted, the changing ethos of our schools and organisations as places where the love of Christ can be heard and experienced is a cause for much praise.

In particular, in 2008 Anglican Retirement Villages appointed its first director of mission, then in 2012 Anglicare appointed the Rev Dr Andrew Ford as director of pastoral care and mission development, while Youthworks recently announced the appointment of the Rev Dr Bill Salier as not only college principal but director of theology. These are very welcome developments in the lives of our organisations.

THE CHALLENGES OF GROWTH

One of the problems that besets large organisations is that of inertia, where we too quickly become content with the *status quo*. This symptom is often seen at the parish level as well, where often (but not exclusively) older members in response to the rapidity of change they encounter in society, cherish the security of a church experience that does not change! Yet we must always confront change: looking for ways to improve our church life; seeking new ways to interact with unbelievers and win them for Christ; and exploring ways to grow in the knowledge of our Saviour so that by his Spirit we might be changed from one degree of glory to another.

The wise pastor will seek the common good for God’s people and steer a congregation through the process of change so that the more conservative-minded members are not disenfranchised, nor the more adventurous members disregarded. After all, the gifts of the Spirit are given to the church for the common good (1 Corinthians 12:7), not merely for the benefit of the individual to whom such gifts are given.

At General Synod this year a landmark report was received from the Viability and Structures Task Force. The report pulls no punches, with an abundance of statistical data that is chilling reading for those who think the Anglican Church of Australia is in good shape. Yet rather than proposing strategies to address the issues raised, it recommends a steering group be appointed to develop and implement such strategies.

By contrast, I am reminded of Bishop Barker’s presidential address at the second session of our first Synod:

“If the number and beauty of our churches, and the order and propriety of our services, and even of our large congregations and liberal subscriptions are regarded as the end of our efforts, we shall certainly fail of the great purpose the Church should have in view. The terms of our commission are not changed – ‘Preach the gospel’, ‘Preach the word’, that men may believe and be baptised and be saved.

“All our efforts are to have this in view, ‘that by all means we may save souls’. Let this be our high and noble aim and we shall find it giving a true direction to all our efforts and animating us with constraining motives patiently to wait and labour even unto the end. If the clergy and laity are of this mind then the progress of our Church will be a national blessing.”

Structurally, we have a greater responsibility to our own province, as the Archbishop of Sydney is also the Metropolitan of NSW. This additional responsibility is not often acknowledged nor understood by the average Anglican in our Diocese but it provides an important link to the other six dioceses in the province. By the end of next month I shall have visited all six dioceses this year. We have already placed the Viability and Structures Report on our agenda for the Provincial Standing Committee in November and are looking at ways in which we can harness our collective resources to see Christ honoured as Lord across the state.

In particular, I have had a number of discussions with the Bishop of Bathurst in light of the financial crisis facing his Diocese, which he inherited when he was consecrated in early 2013. I am encouraged by the bishop’s confidence in the gospel to change lives and to change structures. Without such a confidence all would be lost.

Two years ago this Synod took the courageous and costly step of agreeing to a levy on parish net receipts to raise \$2 million per year towards the purchase of new land in areas of rapid population growth. This has already borne fruit with the recent purchase of land at Leppington, which is projected to have a population of 50,000 people over the next two decades. I am grateful to the Synod and the parishes for their sacrificial commitment to this levy, even when I know that such a financial contribution comes at a cost to local initiatives.

However, by purchasing land we are only part of the way there. The supply of godly ministers from Moore College provides the personnel but land without buildings is of little help in the rain! I have therefore begun to draw together a small group of businesspeople under the chairmanship of Mr Philip Bell OAM, to become a fundraising committee for the erection of church buildings and rectories on land purchased by the Mission Property Committee.

IRAQ AND SYRIA

As we approach this first session of our Synod, we cannot be ignorant of the suffering of thousands of Christians in the Middle East as the forces of the so-called Islamic State attack any religious grouping that does not accord with their own particular and militant view of Islam.

The witness of such champions as Canon Andrew White in the city of Baghdad, itself under threat of invasion, should give us all cause to ponder how blessed we are in this country. We are horrified at the barbaric behaviour and unadulterated evil of such militants and others such as Boko Haram, who have kidnapped 200 schoolgirls and recently torched 185 churches in Nigeria.

I am grateful for the Archbishop of Sydney’s Anglican Aid which is raising money to assist the displaced Christians in Northern Iraq. I commend their appeal to you. I also commend to your prayers all those who are suffering due to the brutality of these vicious attacks upon the weak and vulnerable, especially our fellow Christians.

This is an edited version of the Archbishop’s Address. Read it in full online at bit.ly/synodaddress2014



The fully formed pastor

No one expects to be perfect this side of heaven, yet do we expect too much of our clergy as their skills develop, asks **ARCHIE POULOS**.

OUR EXPECTATION IS THAT OUR PASTORS AND CLERGY WILL BE AT THE TOP OF their game from the moment they begin serving us. We want them competent in everything. We hope they have the character that exemplifies the life of faith and is worthy of imitation, and we also expect them to have the conviction that befits the renewed mind of people bought by Jesus.

I can understand this expectation. After all, they are our leaders. The New Testament calls on shepherds to be blameless, to watch their life and doctrine closely so that others may imitate their lives and none be caused to stumble. Added to that is the cost of clergy. With rents in Sydney the way they are, it is a considerable cost to churches to have ministry staff and so we need them to have high-functioning competency immediately.

But is the expectation reasonable? As individuals don't we rejoice that while God calls us to change, and change immediately, he also gives us time to develop? The Scriptures tell us this is true of our leaders as well. Paul's command to Timothy is to devote himself to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation and teaching so that others may see his progress (1 Tim 4:13-15). Timothy is given time to develop.

We must differentiate between competencies developed over time and the characteristics that should mark a person before they begin pastoral ministry. Godliness, gentleness and humility are obvious things we can all grow in but they must be substantially in place before ordination. We should not lay hands upon anyone unless they are godly, gentle with people and humble. However, we should be willing to do so for someone who is making progress in their preaching or other ministry skills but not quite yet at their peak. The virtuous character and conviction are not negotiable. But people require time to grow in competency.

It is against this background that we sometimes hear the complaint that Moore College* graduates are not "fully formed" in conviction, character and competency. It is true that everyone is a work in progress, but we need to consider the validity of the statement and think about ways to better prepare people in ministry.

"One bad apple ruins the crop" describes any group: politicians, real estate agents, police, social services. A bad apple shapes our perception of that group. This occurs with ministers, too. Over the years our churches have been blessed by many ministers but a negative experience of one minister can easily tarnish all. So let's look at some statistics.

Through the National Church Life Survey, information from churchwardens and reports on assistant ministers, we have access to both wide and deep reflections on clergy. Without exception every survey overwhelmingly endorses clergy as "inspiring Christians" of deep Christian conviction and character who seek to align their lives to the gospel. That's great news. It confirms our prayers for clergy of character and conviction are being answered.

It's also great news that in every one of more than 100 categories concerning competency the average is above 60 per cent. But we are also aware that there exists a positive bias (the desire to be nice) and that averages also mask some poor results. So let's dig deeper.

The weakest results cluster around relational and operational capability. In the relational area it is issues such as conflict resolution, understanding another's viewpoint and seeking others' opinions – while still highly rated – that were the poorest performers. Operational capability limitations were focused on controlling the diary, tracking goals and adjusting as necessary, and helpfully assisting those who work beside them in ministry.

WHY THESE LIMITATIONS?

Given that God has blessed us with many godly, capable young people preparing for ministry, why do we observe relational and operational abilities as the ones requiring most work? We must begin by repeating that clergy of poor character and conviction are rare. We need to admit, though, that occasionally character flaws are the problem, but survey results confirm this is uncommon. Yet the impact of these pastors lingers. The experience of relationship with them is long remembered and may shape our perception of all clergy. It could cause us to wrongly identify competency shortcomings as character faults. A person may improve in competency but character is more difficult to change. Poor character is much more dangerous.

Yet we do still need to think about relational and operational shortcomings. Here are some suggestions about why we have clergy who are sometimes described as arrogant or disengaged (character flaw), when it may actually be a failure in competency:

Before clergy begin their studies they are often highly competent in their ministry activities – that's why they enter vocational ministry. When they begin leading congregations they continue to do those same good things. They become the workers, rather than the recruiters, supporters, encouragers of saints in their ministry. This can look like they are not engaged with, or concerned for developing, others. A change in how you function in church is required and this often takes time to develop.

The years of theological study require focus to deeply plumb biblical studies and theology, as the goal of this knowledge is that it will seep down deeply into character and conviction and equip pastors for the uncertainties of ministry. This deep penetration is best achieved by living in community with other students without unhelpful distractions. Graduates need time to relearn normal engagement in churches and society. This is not a sign of settled disengagement.

It is impossible to learn everything at once. Everyone is in the process of maturing. Young clergy have often not had the breadth and experience of life that shape people, which can make them seem distant when it is simply inexperience. Tim Keller calls young preachers "boney", in that they have the skeleton of what to say but do not yet have the flesh and muscle produced by life's experiences.

Expectations can hinder ministry. The pastors have expectations of themselves and the congregation have expectations of the pastors. When expectations are unmet it is common for pastors to withdraw in order to protect themselves. This can again look like disengagement when it is just a means of self-protection. As with all people, it takes time to develop the maturity to be vulnerable. The minister also often has expectations of the impact for God's kingdom they must have, and so sets about achieving that impact without thinking about engaging others or considering their own resources to achieve this. Couple this with the congregation's expectation that their clergy will immediately lead God's people to the promised land of gospel growth! These expectations can cause relational tensions.

MINISTRY PREPARATION PROBLEMS?

If theological education and shaping do not resolve these problems, should we think about jettisoning the current model? Should we follow the example of some and do theological education part-time while students spend most of their time "on the job"?

Taking into your being the word of God, which is God's authorised means of directing our lives, and the understanding of God that results from rigorous theological reflection permits us to deeply understand ourselves and our world. If clergy lose this intensive opportunity of education we do the current generation – and all future generations – no service. It is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity that sets the foundation stone for blessing congregations for decades.

Biblical studies (including the study of original languages) and theology are the key foundations for a life of ministry, and so we should do all we can to ensure that it is enacted as well as possible.

My belief is that what we currently do in our theological college development is to create the gospel equivalent of stem cells. Stem cells are cells that can become anything – for example, a kidney cell, a skin cell, a heart cell. Moore College graduates know their Bible and theology. However, they need time to develop in the specific area of service in which they will be deployed.

At Moore we teach the basics of pastoral ministry such as that we minister *with* people rather than *to* people; that all believers are at the same time to be trainer and trainee (so listen well!); that our goal is transformation of people but this occurs not merely from the pulpit but also as we work shoulder to shoulder in ministry; and that this process further forms and develops Christian character.

Sure, that is preparation and lasting. This has its downside, but to radically change what we do will lose so much that is valuable and lasting. This needs to be said because we usually notice only what is lacking, not what we have. Moore College, though, has recognised the need to help pastors in their lifelong development and so has established the Centre for Ministry Development to do this.

WAYS FORWARD

Of first importance is to remember that God is at work in his people leading them to maturity, so we should thank him for calling folk to ministry and then equipping them for the task. Our part – everyone's part – is to work together to best facilitate this. Here are some quick suggestions of what might be done and what is being done.

Make the most of student ministry days. A change in our thinking is occurring but it needs to move from "I go to college to be trained for ministry" to "I am part of college as I continue to minister". Our students need to be actively involved in church life (this is a requirement of college membership and quite rare in the theological college world). We need to work to help our students reflect on their ministry experiences and what these teach about God, themselves and the world. We need to equip supervising clergy to make the most of training students; and congregations should continue to adopt students recognising that the resources they give them will grow the gospel through these folk into all the world.

The Centre for Ministry Development (CMD) was established to offer reflective, theologically shaped, evidence-based best practice in ministry to pastors for their whole lives. Recognising it is impossible and unhelpful to give all input in the ministry preparation phase, CMD works with young graduates to develop self-understanding and competency in ministry, with "seasoned" rectors to assist them and their congregations to be as effective as possible. CMD is developing a program for new rectors to assist in the perilous transition from assistant to senior minister. It has engaged the best practitioners in ministry, the psychometric analysis and ministry partners to aid in its task.

We all need to give time and space for clergy to develop well. We need to stay calm and not demand immediate results. Most of us find this difficult but God has given us great people and a great church that will help us in our anxiety!

Finally, we should all look at how we might work to remove as many impediments to growth for the fully formed pastor as possible. Sometimes these impediments are unexpected. For example, awareness of the need for appropriate accountability and coaching is often lacking and we should put these in place. Not to have them is an impediment to ministry growth.

The fully formed pastor, like the fully formed person and the fully formed church, will be seen in all its glory in heaven. In the meantime, we work under God to keep moving towards what he is shaping us all into.

* This article considers the issue from a Moore College perspective. I note the significant contributions of MT & D and the mentoring of assistant ministers by their parish rector. ☺

HIGH TEA FOR HIGHER LOVE



Rosemeadow-Appin Anglican Churches recently held a high tea aimed at welcoming non-church women to the church community.

The high tea was attended by 40 women and girls, a large number of whom were non-churchgoers.

"We're a pretty small church compared to other places," says event organiser Helen Rodman. "We thought we'd get maybe 15 women from the churches and a couple of others. In the end, we had 32 women and eight children in total. For us, that was really something. It might seem nothing to some but here the room was packed."

Ms Rodman says the high tea was one of a series of events designed to make initial contacts in church settings with people who don't already attend church. The events are run to establish long-term relationships, with a view to helping people become comfortable enough to stick around for gospel teaching.

"It's been great because we've had workmates, friends and family come along," Ms Rodman says. "In these kinds of events, we make them non-threatening. We don't generally pray or have Bible discussions but instead make them fun days or nights where people outside feel comfortable enough to come along, get to know us and find that we're not weird or anything like that. Hopefully we can then follow that up and these people would come to more functions and perhaps even come to a Bible study or a church service."

The event involved women from both the Rosemeadow and Appin branches of the parish and, according to Ms Rodman, showcased the increasingly tight-knit nature of the combined parish church.

"The unity and the love between the Rosemeadow and Appin church is absolutely fantastic at the moment," she says. "It wasn't always like that. At one point we were just over here and they were over there and that was it, but we're so close now. The love between us, it's really and truly like being sisters in Christ now as we work for the community. We hope it takes off, the community benefits, and the love we have for each other just spills out."

Funky town



JUDY ADAMSON

Get On Up

Rated M

IT'S THE LATE 1960S, AND JAMES BROWN IS IN VIETNAM PERFORMING FOR THE TROOPS. "They tried to kill James Brown today," he announces, before adding to cheers that all was well because the Viet Cong "don't tell me when, where or for how long I can be funky".

Right on. This isn't the start of *Get On Up*, but it ought to be. Because nothing introduces you to the extraordinary presence and swagger of James Brown like this moment – and the one a few minutes earlier when he assures his fellow performers that their plane will come safely through hails of bullets to their destination. His reason? That God wouldn't have given birth to someone of his capacities to "call me home now".

Hubris? Absolutely. But it takes a lot of self-belief to drag yourself up from an impoverished, lowly educated Southern US childhood to the top of the musical tree. And given that Brown performed and recorded tirelessly from the 1950s to the turn of the 21st century – pioneering, exploring and inspiring styles (and performers) from blues and funk to hip-hop and gangsta rap, and championing the civil rights movement – he did have a point.

Arrogance does have its price, though. Brown is confident, sure, but he's also self-absorbed, thoughtless and greedy, which results in fractious relationships with just about everyone. It is well known that he fined his musicians for being late, dressing sloppily or playing one note out of tune, and he had run-ins with the law for everything from domestic violence to threatening people at an insurance seminar with a rifle.

This latter incident makes it onscreen, and it is this surreal event from 1988 that begins our film. Why, I can't imagine, except to show just how many peaks and troughs this man's life will contain, and what it's like when a famous guy goes over the edge. It's just plain weird. But at least his story hasn't been sanitised. You see pretty much every wart, from every angle.

I'm no James Brown expert so it's hard to say how accurate the depiction of his early life is – although he did spend time living with an aunt who ran a brothel, played here with knowing ease by Octavia Spencer. His is a hard childhood filled with disappointment, violence and stealing or scamming in order to get by. Yet despite all this his aunt knows he's destined for greatness? Only because the screenwriters have the benefit of hindsight, I'd say.



Speaking of screenwriters, they take us on such a constant time hop that it's pretty hard to keep up. Thank goodness for bouffant hair, "white man" clothes, '70s style and musical evolution to help us figure out where we are, along with occasional dates and album names to give us a sense of place.

Whatever the shortcomings might be in other areas, *Get On Up* certainly finds its mojo when the music starts. The driving energy, the style, the sharp dance routines and the rip-snorting arrangements are all here, and you certainly don't have to be a fan of James Brown to be exhilarated by the performances.

Chadwick Boseman is extraordinary as Brown, both on and offstage. His groove, dance skills and perfect lip-synching are only the start of what he offers as the godfather of soul. Restraint as well as boundless energy; charm and cold-blooded violence; young eagerness and confident swagger. It really is a tremendous performance, and you are totally drawn in by it.

There's less to say of the supporting cast, although Viola Davis is mesmerising, as ever, in her small role as Brown's mother. I also loved Nelsan Ellis's portrayal of Brown's long-suffering friend and fellow performer, Bobby Byrd: patient, supportive and putting his own needs to one side to further the James Brown icon. Ellis can't help but be in Boseman's shadow, but he's a fine singer and dancer in his own right, and provides an excellent foil for the Boseman-Brown whirlwind.

If you know nothing of James Brown and want an entrée into his life and art, this movie – touted as a biopic – will certainly whet your appetite. You may be less than impressed by the way he chose to live his life, but the music will get you every time. All aboard the "Night Train".

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