

APRIL  
2015

THE NEW ZEALAND ANGLICANS

# Boomer Breakout

THE NEXT MINISTRY STEP FOR AN AGEING POPULATION

+ Sydney at Gallipoli

& In the Father's hands at Easter





**COVER**  
Jump into ministry – the opportunities for service by and to older people.. P11

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“ We have to recognise that  
gay and lesbian people are  
actually our people ”

Dr Wesley Hill  
Sydney News



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# Moore students, and rubble



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● RUSSELL POWELL

AN INCREASED INTAKE OF FULL-TIME STUDENTS IS HARD AT WORK AMID THE MAJOR CONSTRUCTION work on the new main campus at Moore College.

The start of the academic year saw a 20 per cent increase in the number of first-year students. In total there are 90 men and women studying full-time and, with almost as many part-time students, the total student body is now more than 370. Their studies began at the same time as work intensified on demolishing the old administration centre at 1 King Street in Newtown.

"This year has already seen remarkable answers to prayer," says Moore's principal, the Rev Dr Mark Thompson. "Not only is the building work proceeding apace, but we have a very significant increase in our first-year enrolments. Around the college morale is high and there is a wonderful excitement surrounding the annual missions."

The college's governing board gave formal approval for the building project in November and awarded the design and construction contract to Kane Constructions. Major parts of buildings have now been demolished and materials removed, in some cases brick by brick.

Also removed was the sky bridge between the old main building and the Upper T.C. Hammond Room in the adjacent dining room building.

Hoardings have since been erected around the full perimeter of the new building site, which provides a barrier and a roof above the footpath and allows safe access for students and other pedestrians. Full demolition of terraces 5-7A and 1 King Street will commence before excavation of the site, while the front side of the terraces at 9-11 King Street will remain (see photo).

Dr Thompson says the present fundraising target is \$5 million, as 75 per cent of the \$20 million overall cost has already been raised – a real answer to prayer.

"We have much to thank God for as the year begins," he says. "We are also very grateful to those who have worked so hard, and given so much over many years, to bring this dream to reality. I am confident that very soon we will have the facilities we need to continue the extraordinarily significant work God has given us to do."

## A life beyond "No"



Wesley Hill addresses the audience at the Liberty Conference.

A CONFERENCE HOSTED BY LIBERTY CHRISTIAN MINISTRIES, WITH AMERICAN SEMINARY PROFESSOR and self-identified gay Christian Dr Wesley Hill as the guest speaker, has called for homosexual Christians to seek God's spiritual path for them and also for churches to love them more fully.

Dr Hill, who is the author of *Washed and Waiting: Reflections on Christian Faithfulness and Homosexuality*, spoke on two separate days last month at the Village Church in Annandale about living as a homosexual man in the church, Christian celibacy and how the church can become better at loving and serving same-sex-attracted Christians.

"I want to say to gay and lesbian people, 'Please don't leave the church. Please stay,'" Dr Hill said. "But I also want to turn right around and say that this is not that individual's problem. It's our problem, as the church. We have to recognise that gay and lesbian people are actually our people, and it's our responsibility to become the kind of community that will make them safe, and make them not lonely."

"Part of why I haven't spent that much time alone is because of friends who have made efforts to say, 'You belong to us' and that makes a huge difference."

Dr Hill referred to a letter written by C.S. Lewis to his friend Sheldon Vanauken in which he shared his thoughts on homosexuality. Dr Hill said that while homosexuality is part of fallen human nature, it also represents an opportunity for God to be served in unique ways.

"It's not an abnormal state in a fallen world," he said. "It's very normal, and very expected in a fallen world, to be gay or lesbian. But in terms of the big picture of creation and redemption, to pursue a sexual coupling with a member of the same sex is to go against the original created design of male and female given in Genesis and reaffirmed by Jesus in Matthew 19."

"Lewis's point in this letter is that same-sex-attracted people are called to discern how... their fallen condition, their 'thorn in the flesh' if you will, conceals their calling and vocation in the church. What is the particular sympathy or role they have been given by their unique circumstances and the Spirit working in their life, that only they can play in the church?"

A key part of Dr Hill's academic contribution to the subject has been the idea of "spiritual friendship". It's an idea he says is rooted in the theologies of several historic churchmen that goes beyond the kind of friendship in our societies today into a deeper relationship that is platonic, intimate and self-sacrificial.

"One of my friends in the U.S. is Eve Tushnet, who is a lesbian and a celibate woman because she is Roman Catholic and she wants to follow Christ with her sexuality," Dr Hill said. "She speaks on these topics like I do and she has a phrase she repeats: 'You can't have a vocation of No'."

"If you try to build your life of sanctification around gritting your teeth and your willpower, and just say 'No' to gay sex, that's not any way to live as a Christian."

"Your calling is to look to God for what he has for you to do. He has not called us to simply say 'No,' he has called us to say 'Yes' to something."

## A biblical vanguard



Governor Hurley, Allan Dowthwaite and Bible Society CEO Greg Clarke hold a Bible containing a bullet, which saved the life of Lance-Corporal Elvas Jenkins at Gallipoli. This Bible will join the exhibition late, after being taken to Gallipoli for Anzac Day.

● JUDY ADAMSON

AN EXHIBITION OF BIBLES AND INTERACTIVE TALES OF AUSTRALIAN CHRISTIANS IN WAR IS ABOUT to begin a national tour in time for Anzac Day.

Called *Their Sacrifice*, the exhibition opens on April 20 at Westfield shopping centre in Sydney's CBD before moving on to Westfield in Miranda and Warringah, then travelling interstate.

While the particular focus is the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Gallipoli, there will be bibles and stories in the exhibition from conflicts as early as the Boer War and as recent as Afghanistan.

The Governor of NSW, General the Honourable David Hurley, launched *Their Sacrifice* at Government House, holding up the New Testament he carried when commanding Australian troops in Somalia in 1993.

"From my time in the services there are many, many men and women who reached for the Bible in times of trial," he said. "It is not the cliché of 'no atheists in the trenches'; rather, it is a search for meaning".

The complete exhibition will not be shown in every location because of space restrictions, but the full display contains 10 bibles – along with the stories of the men who carried them – plus an interactive video and a short film about the value of the Bible in wartime.

Allan Dowthwaite, the national campaigns manager for The Bible Society of Australia which put together the exhibition, says it shows the importance of the Bible in the life of Australia's Defence forces for more than a century.

"The Bible has a place in our society regardless of what you think of it," he says. "A non-Christian might say the Bible is irrelevant, but people who have defended our nation and the freedoms we have, have looked to the Bible for encouragement, strength and solace in tough times."

A book, also titled *Their Sacrifice*, has been prepared along with the exhibition. It contains the stories of each person whose Bible is on display, plus a range of essays, poems, hymns and prayers, all linked to war or remembrance.

Among the stories shared is that of the Rev David Broughton Knox, well before his Moore College years.

In 1944 he was a chaplain in the Royal Navy Volunteer Reserve serving on a ship anchored off Normandy as D-Day approached.

His diaries speak of how a service was interrupted by heavy shelling. Those at the service were soon joined by many others, singing to God and receiving comfort from Psalm 23 and the gospel story of Jesus calming the storm.

"I have seen for myself how the promise of God is the only source of strength and comfort in times like this," Knox wrote later. "Men willingly listen and are eager to hear. The fear of what comes after death is also strong with many. Many have said so. May I never forget the lessons learnt."

For more information see [www.theirsacrifice.com](http://www.theirsacrifice.com)



This 100-year-old communion cup, held in the archives of the Garrison Church at Millers Point, commemorates the death at Gallipoli of Private Claude Hilfred Hansen. A Dawes Point boy who signed up in September 1914, Private Hansen joined the 2nd Australian Infantry Battalion and was killed in action on April 25, 1915 – the first Anzac Day. He is remembered with a headstone at the Lone Pine Memorial on the Gallipoli Peninsula.

## Navigating parenthood



THE SUCCESSFUL PARENT ENCOURAGEMENT PROGRAM, OR PEP, RUN BY THE MOTHERS UNION in Sydney for more than a decade, has now been updated for a new generation of parents.

Renamed Families Equip, the course aims to offer "parenting tools for all seasons" – recognising that parents are in real need of information, strategies and encouragement as they help their children navigate the tricky path to adulthood.

One of the teachers or facilitators of the five-session course, Ann Cunningham, says the format and general contents are basically the same. However, the revised version has been tweaked to bring it up to date with the latest parenting expertise, also adding YouTube clips, blog links and details about things such as helicopter parents.

"It's a great course because it doesn't make you come away thinking, 'Gosh I've totally failed at that, I'm a terrible parent'," Mrs Cunningham says. "It's a lot more empowering as we consider what we should be aiming for, and giving people things to think about."

The sessions build on each other, starting with the participants' parenting styles (as well as how they were parented themselves), moving on to a child's developmental stages and how to build their resilience, then listening and encouragement – with the addition of the five "love languages" – followed by discipline, and a celebration showing the value of making and strengthening family traditions and connections.

Mrs Cunningham says she has taught the course to "single mums, divorced mums, people with a serious illness in the family, blended families, pregnant women and parents of children at all parts of the age range". She adds that input from each participant is important as the group considers practical ways to improve relationships with their children as well as parenting skills.

While the course is obviously prepared and run by Christians, Mrs Cunningham says non-Christians can easily take part because the content is "in line with traditional parenting understanding".

"Each session has a Bible verse that underpins it, but that's a five-minute segment of each session," she says. "This is not a Bible study. Everyone's own beliefs and ideas come out in each session, and Christianity will come out as much as anybody's ideas would come out because it's a facilitated discussion. Faith is there, but in a nice, gentle way."

Upcoming courses will be held in May at St Stephen's, Normanhurst and St Jude's, Bowral, and in July at Pennant Hills, with more to be arranged in coming weeks. For more information contact the MU Sydney office on 8030 8970.

## Anglican Aid on Bible tour

● NICK GILBERT

ANGLICAN AID HAS EMBARKED ON A TOUR OF THE DIOCESE IN ORDER TO RAISE AWARENESS OF, and funds for, the training of Christian workers around the world without access to theological resources.

The lawless tour, which began on April 1, will take in every parish in the Diocese with Anglican Aid inviting locals in each place to get involved by joining them to read sections of the Bible – celebrating the access to God's word as well as other theological material and training we have in Australia.

"The idea of the tour is first of all to give thanks for what we've been blessed with in Sydney: access to the Bible and a tradition of faithful biblical preaching and teaching," says Anglican Aid CEO the Rev David Mansfield.

"We also want to draw attention to the fact that what is so easy to access here is, in many parts of the world, quite difficult to get hold of. We want people to support the spread of the Bible, and good teaching from the Bible, to those places."

The tour continues until the end of the month, with the Bible being read in about a dozen different parishes each day from 7am until 7pm. The entire Bible will be read by the conclusion of the tour, finishing with Psalms 105 to 108 at St Andrew's Cathedral on April 30.



partnership with local dioceses and other organisations.

In the meantime, though, Anglican Aid will have its work cut out just reading the Bible.

"We'll be looking forward to the first of May when we can put our feet up and continue reading from Psalm 109 in our loungerooms!" Mr Mansfield says.

Lawless was launched by former South African test cricket captain Shaun Pollock (left), who attested to the support reading the Scriptures had given him personally during his globe-trotting career.

"Pollock spoke of the way the Bible has guided and sustained him during some years where he spent only 51 days in his own home," Mr Mansfield says. "With the pressures and temptations that face elite sportspeople, a daily reflection in the Bible and prayer to God helped Pollock remain true to his wife and daughters and has continued to provide a clear witness to the faithfulness of God."

Anglican Aid has provided funding to evangelical colleges and other initiatives across the continent through its Overseas Ministry Fund, often in



# Inner-western Mandarin



Fellowship: members of the Mandarin congregation prepare lunch together.

NICK GILBERT

A MANDARIN CONGREGATION FROM CHRIST CHURCH INNER WEST IS LOOKING TO REACH AND minister to Chinese people in parts of Sydney's inner suburbs.

The congregation, which was begun last year, operates out of CCIW's Ashfield premises and is evangelistically focused, with only a couple of members of the core group being previous members of the church.

"The plain fact is a significant percentage of people living in this area have, as their heart language, a Chinese language," says the rector of CCIW, the Rev Andrew Katay. "They might be able to function in English but they often find it difficult to confess sins and praise God in anything other than their heart language. So to fulfill what we see as God's purpose for us as a church, to make disciples of all nations, there's really no option. It would be negligent if we weren't looking to do things like this, to reach Chinese people in Ashfield in their own language."

While designed to cater particularly to Mandarin-speaking Chinese people, many of whom are first-generation migrants, the congregation is heavily integrated with other congregations at CCIW.

The Internationals Minister at CCIW and the leader of the Mandarin congregation, Leo Chen, says the church operates one kids' program across all congregations, and many other events and service elements operate in tandem as well.

"We do Communion together [with the English-speaking morning congregation], we do morning teas together and once a term our congregation hosts that in the hall," Mr Chen says. "And we also do things together for big events, such as Christmas, hosting election booths... we very much look to work together on a range of things."

Mr Chen says the congregation has struggled to grow recently, with a core of about 10 adult regulars and a larger number of attendees who come intermittently, often through friendships or personal connections. He says they are looking to find ways to retain visitors, particularly through fellowship groups.

"It has been hard being an evangelistic church plant, because you start from making disciples, rather than finding 30 or so disciples when you begin," Mr Chen says. "But we've made connections with the local primary school which has many Mandarin-speaking families. About six families come from there – some more regularly than others."

"We haven't had exponential growth in numbers, but it's never been a situation where there's nothing going on. We had someone baptised a couple of weeks ago in our congregation and it was good to hear her testimony."

"There is growth happening in different ways. Now we're just looking to work on helping people who visit us to stay connected and be able to tell similar stories in the future."

# New CMS youth resource



Mission here and there: taking a look at the new You Are Here pack.

NICK GILBERT

THE CHURCH MISSIONARY SOCIETY (CMS) HAS LAUNCHED A NEW, FREE RESOURCE DESIGNED to share news of overseas mission work with young people and encourage them to support missionaries around the world.

The resource, called You Are Here, is a physical pack including missionary biographies, general information about mission work, media and themed activities.

The Rev Mick Hyam, Youth and Children's Co-ordinator for CMS NSW & ACT, says the pack focuses on developing awareness in Christian youth of work done by missionaries among people of different cultures.

"The unique thing about this pack is it's geared towards educating kids about mission, but particularly cross-cultural mission," he says.

"A lot of people still think about mission mostly in terms of mission at school, mission in the workplace and that sort of thing. But we're particularly interested in getting people to think about... going beyond the places you typically spend your time. We want young people to be thinking about mission overseas, and also thinking about cross-cultural mission in Australia, particularly to Aboriginal people."

"Our young people are here, but we want them to also think about how they might be able to go over there."

Activities in the materials include a complete running sheet for a missionary youth group night, as well as video material, memory verse games, a Bible study from Revelation and an A3 map of the world including the locations of CMS missionaries. The pack is designed to be used either as a whole or piecemeal, depending on the needs and activities of youth groups.

"There's a section on how to connect with missionaries, how to pray, and specific ways to do that individually or in groups – thinking about how to do Skype chats, or ways you can invite missionaries who are home on deputation to your youth group," Mr Hyam says. "We also talk through money stuff, helping teenagers think about how they could potentially support financially in various ways as well."

The resource is designed for individual kids and teens to receive a pack each, but also be able to share in the activities together at youth group or in other ways.

*The You Are Here pack was launched on April 2. For information contact CMS on 9267 3711.*



# New fellowship underway



Archdeacon Richard Condie welcomes delegates to the Anglican Future Conference.

**AN AUSTRALIAN BRANCH OF THE FELLOWSHIP OF CONFESSING ANGLICANS HAS BEEN LAUNCHED** in Melbourne, watched by delegates from across Australasia at the Anglican Future Conference.

The conference brought together 460 leaders, including 40 from New Zealand, to consider ways to strengthen what the organisers describe as “positive contemporary orthodoxy” in the Anglican Church.

The chairman of the conference and the new FCA branch, the Archdeacon of Melbourne Richard Condie, welcomed conference guests – including the Primate of Australia Archbishop Philip Freier and the chairman of the Global Anglican Future Conference (GAFCON) primates’ council Archbishop Eliud Wabukala of Kenya.

Archbishop Wabukala spoke at the launch of the Australian FCA branch, mid-way through the conference. “Faithful, persevering and gospel-centred Anglicanism has been foundational to the identity of Australia and I believe that the initiative we are taking today... will be seen by future generations as a strategic moment for church and society,” the Archbishop said. “I long to see all orthodox Anglicans united in a common commitment to pioneering a new wave of evangelism which will have a deep and lasting impact on this nation.”

Archdeacon Condie, as chairman of FCA Australia, echoed the theme of renewal.

“The Fellowship of Confessing Anglicans in Australia is a reform movement within our denomination to enable us to reform ourselves by the biblical gospel,” he said.

He added that in some parts of the Anglican Communion secular pressure to modify teaching had seen the Church “cave in as key teaching gives way to all kinds of error. It would be foolish to think that the Anglican Church of Australia was immune to these pressures and that we will not also see the biblical faith eroded by the world and end up in a similar place.”

The organisation began signing up members on the launch night, with Archdeacon Condie saying he would welcome people who “love the Scriptures and want to submit to them as the final authority in doctrine and morals, who are not afraid to stand against the world to honour Christ and his word, who are prepared to call out error in the Church and press for its reform, and who want to be in fellowship with other Anglicans who, together with us, hold to this historic faith.”







## MARRIAGE CLARITY

Thank you for the excellent summary of the Diocesan report on the issue of same-sex marriage (SC, March). The comments on context were particularly relevant.

It seems to me that the campaign has always been about “normalising” homosexual behaviour. In Australia, this concerted campaign has been running since at least the 2007 federal election with vehicles such as the ABC TV program *Q&A* being used to place the issue well and truly on the national agenda.

Many Christians do seem to think that same-sex marriage is an inevitability or struggle to address the issue because of their caring relationship with homosexual friends or family members. We need to remain faithful to God’s revelation of his good creation and the redeeming and transforming power of Christ’s death to deal with the corrupting influence of sin, pay the cost for every human frailty and pave the way for eternal life with him in the renewed and restored creation.

This is the gospel of grace and freedom for all, with which God has entrusted us. May we never be ashamed of it.

**Philip Cooney**  
Wentworth Falls

The “Beneath the surface” article was helpful and of course there is much more to be said. Unfortunately too many people on both sides of this discussion do not fully understand what is really going on.

Christians engaged in defending marriage need to realise they are defending the institution, not just an English language noun; and that they are not *anti* anything, but are *pro* marriage. They are defending the value to society of the most important institution of all: the union of a man and a woman, exclusively entered into for life. It is the revisionists who are anti-marriage and who are running the campaign of hatred. They hate marriage because marriage enshrines the importance of things outside of homosexuality.

The whole point of marriage is to value the male-female union. The whole point of same-sex marriage is to devalue the male-female union.

Gay activists claim they are campaigning for rights, but they would gain nothing more than naming rights; and the enforced pretence of equality (that has to accompany an unravelled definition of marriage) bans everyone from valuing anything precluded by homosexuality. So stating the importance of motherhood and fatherhood becomes “anti-gay hate speech”.

Same-sex marriage leaves marriage as collateral damage in the attempt to have homosexual behaviour morally vindicated.

**Josh Crockett**

## PUBLIC SUPPORT

Archbishop Davies needs to show more empathy for Christian parents who prefer a public education for their children. In his recent article “Educate the whole person” (SC, March) he gives a brief acknowledgement of SRE in public schools while singing the virtues of exclusive Anglican and low-fee Anglican schools.

There is a false perception in the wider community that exclusive Anglican schools show our Church to be for the wealthy. These schools with their extensive resources do not reflect the life and teaching of Christ. He associated with the disadvantaged and outcast.

Public schools cater for all socioeconomic groups, which include the disadvantaged and outcast. These schools provide a quality education that is often talked down. The majority of practising and nominal Anglican parents choose public education. The SRE teachers working in these schools deserve more than a token paragraph.

I do hope that Archbishop Davies finds the time to properly recognise public schools and their devoted SRE teachers. My awakening to Christianity can be traced back to the Scripture teacher who taught me at my local public school.

**John Cotterill**  
Kingsford

## DIVISION CONCERNS

The previous issue of *Southern Cross* (March 2015) has three very connected articles. David Mansfield’s article on “The devil and the deep blue blue” offered very practical advice on handling division within the Church. The world news article on the win in the South Carolina court reported on a consequence of division within the Church. And the article on a “Whole church” movement within the Anglican Communion provides a possible sign of coming division – unless of course we know more about this “Whole church movement”.

For clarity, it would be helpful if the Ven Dr Richard Condie provided further information about the Global Fellowship of Confessing Anglicans (GFCOA or FCA). When he states the FCA is looking for “dioceses, parishes and individuals” to join GFCOA is he suggesting in doing so they leave the Anglican Communion? When he states the “FCA puts us in fellowship with faithful Anglicans” is he saying there are no faithful Anglicans outside the FCA with whom to fellowship?

When he states members of the FCA must assent to the Jerusalem Declaration, where does this put the Archbishop of Canterbury in terms of authority among Anglicans? When he states “The FCA allows us to recognise them as true Anglicans” is he saying the FCA will be the authority within the Anglican Church that makes these judgements?

**Geoff Ellis**  
Smithfield, Qld

## GOSPEL RICHNESS

In reference to your article “BCP, old and new” (SC, Feb), this deeply resonated with me. I have often reflected on how meaningful the prayers in the *Book of Common Prayer* are and how instrumental these prayers have been in forming and sustaining my Christian faith.

As a young girl I attended church and became familiar with the various services in the *Book of Common Prayer*. Oh, how the biblical depth and richness of the gospel reached out to my young soul!

I would not allow my mind to wander for that treasured hour in which I met so closely with our precious Saviour, where I received his grace, his forgiveness and his empowering strength at the beginning of each week.

Even all these years later, as a grandmother, words from the *Book of Common Prayer* continue to form part of my daily prayers and, by God’s grace, continue to strengthen my relationship with our dear Lord.

I too hope that the *Book of Common Prayer*, as suggested in the article, is used, discussed and protected and that through it others may hear the gospel, be saved and come to love our Lord Jesus Christ.

**Glenda Bolitho**  
Carlingford





# Magna Carta and Christian religious freedom

ROBIN SPEED

THE MAGNA CARTA IS ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT documents in Australian history. It was granted by King John 800 years ago on June 15, 1215 and has been described by Sir Gerard Brennan, a former Chief Justice of Australia, "as living in the hearts and minds of Australian people, an incarnation of the spirit of liberty in Australia, becoming the talisman of the spirit of a society in which tolerance and democracy reside, a society in which power and privilege do not produce tyranny and oppression".

In this 800<sup>th</sup> anniversary year, it is timely to examine the relevance of the Magna Carta today and, in particular, its relevance to Australian Christians.

The Roman Catholic Archbishop of Sydney, Anthony Fisher, has recently described the Magna Carta as a "very religious document". Indeed it was. Not that you would think so by reading the only paragraph in the charter that deals with religion:

"We have, in the first place, granted to God and by this our present charter confirmed for ourselves and our heirs in perpetuity that the English Church is to be free and have its rights in whole and its liberties unimpaired..."

The revolutionary nature of this declaration by the King can only be understood in light of the times.

What dreadful times they were; the Christian church was in mortal danger from the King, who was universally denounced as incredibly bad. Matthew Paris, writing at the time, said, "Hell itself is defiled by the presence of King John". So bad was his reputation that no subsequent English king has borne his name.

King John stole Church land. He refused to accept Stephen Langton as the Archbishop of Canterbury. He allegedly kidnapped people and starved them to death. In short, he regarded himself as all-powerful, choosing to do what he wished.

Stephen Langton was of a different mind. Born in Lincolnshire he believed kings had been sent by God not as a reward to the people of Israel, but as a punishment for their sins. Kings who taxed their people beyond absolute necessity were tyrants and so were kings who ignored the teachings of the Church (for further details see the marvellous book *Magna Carta: The Foundation of Freedom 1215-2015* by Professor Nicholas Vincent et al; Third Millennium Publishing).

In considering the relevance of the Magna Carta today, the following needs to be kept firmly in mind by the modern reader:

1. It was not a recognition of different religious views. It simply speaks about the Christian church, the Christian religion and the Christian church institutions at a time when they were under attack from the King.
2. It does not prescribe the rights and liberties that were not to be "impaired" i.e. the right of the Church to control its own affairs.
3. It does not detail what was an "impairment" of those rights or liberties. It says nothing of Christian employer-employee relationships, discrimination against someone for his or her religious beliefs or physical practices, or other matters which are contentious today.

Most importantly the charter was, in 1215, an injunction on a King who regarded the church as ultimately subject to his rule. That was a revolutionary notion and is easy to gloss over in the words of the paragraph.

The charter was far from perfect but generally satisfied the concerns of the leaders of the church in 1215 about interference from the state. We should learn from its compromising nature for it was a masterful legally written declaration of the Christian church's historical rights and liberties – without stating them, but requiring recognition and respect of them by the King.

I believe the relevance of the Magna Carta for Australian Christians today is to encourage them to stand up for their beliefs as Stephen Langton, the Archbishop of Canterbury, did 800 years ago, and equip them to join in the debate on the extent to which Australian law should express their liberties to practise their Christian religion and not infringe upon those liberties.

Christians generally equate living in a modern civilised society with the Australian society, which allows religious freedom. But that is not the view of many societies in the world today, which regard themselves as civilised societies but in which Christians are regularly persecuted, murdered and jailed for their beliefs. How are we to deal with those societies and with our own, when we see our religion is constantly attacked?

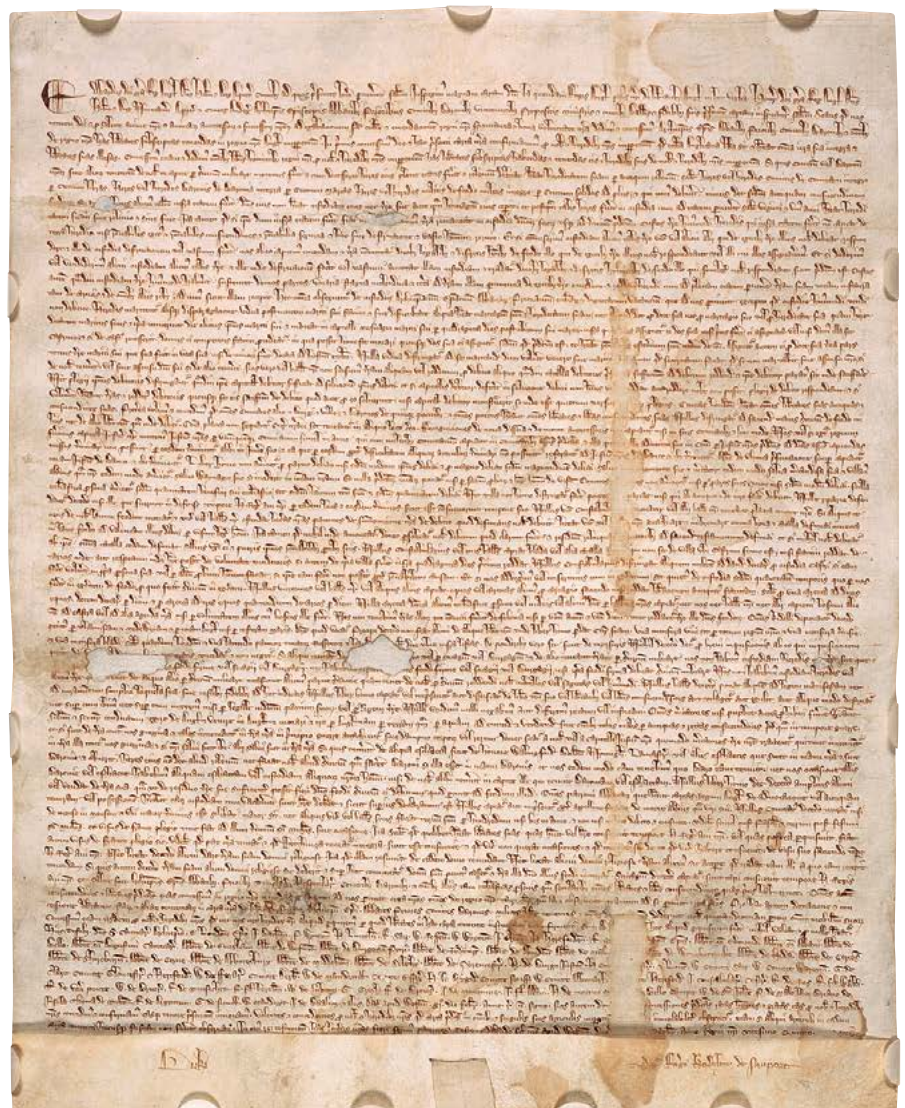
I think it is necessary to keep the two issues quite separate. My particular focus here is how to deal with Australian society.

The principal matter is to recognise the historical fact that Australian society, its beliefs and institutions, are largely based on the Judeo-Christian inheritance. The challenge is to try to work out how our society can be preserved and respected by all those who choose to live in it.

If there is a role model from 1215 it is Stephen Langton. He was instrumental in the Magna Carta and his goodwill and moderation were essential in having the charter granted. He might have demanded all sorts of rights but instead obtained a simple statement from the King that existing Church liberties and rights were to be honoured.

If the Australian society as we know it is to survive, Christians need to stand up for their core beliefs and liberties. To the extent to which other religions wish to co-exist in our society, they must demonstrate their willingness to be a part of that society.

*Robin Speed is vice chairman of the Magna Carta Committee, president of the Rule of Law Institute of Australia and a member of Warrawee Anglican.*



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## WEST TO EAST

After seven years as rector of St Matthew’s, Windsor, the **Rev Aleks Pinter** becomes rector of St Mary’s, Waverley later this month.

“After college we were keen to minister beyond suburban Sydney, which took us to Gerringong-Shoalhaven Heads – where we spent 5½ years and loved it,” he says. “When we came to Windsor, I said this was the closest to Sydney that I ever wanted to get... but people change and circumstances change... and when the possibility of Waverley was raised, our interest was piqued.”

Mr Pinter says when he was first approached by nominators from St Mary’s he thought his style might not suit them, and that they would prefer a rector with a “higher churchmanship”. However, “in conversation with the nominators and the bishop it became clear the parish recognises its need to change in order to grow... we were encouraged to consider that we would be able to manage the more traditional aspects of the church while hopefully also bringing the innovation it needs. After much prayer and discussion Susannah and I felt it was the right move to make for ministry and for us.”

He acknowledges that there’s always a cost when moving as a ministry family, as many strong and close relationships have to be left behind. “That’s hard, and it’s sad, but we know that we’re going with the blessing of many people from here,” he says.

“There are just so many opportunities for outreach and for gospel growth [in the eastern suburbs]. I’m excited to be part of that and to see St Mary’s, Waverley be part of that.”

Mr Pinter will be inducted at Waverley on April 22.



## BURGESS BACK IN THE SADDLE

Following an exceptionally short “retirement”, the **Rev Chris Burgess** has become episcopal assistant to the Bishop of North Sydney, the Rt Rev Chris Edwards.

The part-time role began in October, just a few months after Mr Burgess retired from his final parish in Eastwood.

“I’m still getting into things and getting a feel for how it works,” he says. “But it’s very interesting – a lot goes on and there’s a mix of responsibilities. I’ve been contacting new assistant ministers and the plan is to come out in their first year... several of them are involved in church plants. They’re under the auspices of the senior minister but they’re given a lot of freedom, so I’m helping make sure they get the support they need.”

Mr Burgess has also joined a number of committees for parishes planning to develop their sites and is involved with a range of other administrative and pastoral issues.

Bishop Edwards describes Mr Burgess a someone with “a passion for wanting to help people come to know who the Lord Jesus is... he’s also a very wise and godly man, and so gracious. A lot of our guys who are new in ministry haven’t seen some of the things that will be coming their way [whereas] with Chris’s decades of parish experience he’s seen it all and been involved in it all.”

The part-time role leaves Mr Burgess and his wife Cathy with plenty of time to help out in their local parish. “A Christian serves Jesus ‘til they die,” he says. “We still do some of the stuff we did in parish... you want to do it, because if you’ve gained skills over such a long time, why put them out to pasture if they can be used?”

The **Rev Vicki Waid** died on February 19.

Born Vicki Lynn Waid on September 2, 1947 in Los Angeles, California, Miss Waid grew up and went to school locally, eventually obtaining a music degree from California State University in 1971.

Having met educational recruiters from Australia shortly before her graduation, Miss Waid chose to move to the Illawarra to work as a teacher, which she did for the next decade before going to Moore College. She graduated with a Bachelor of Theology in 1985.

Miss Waid worked as a parish sister to Ruse, Airs and Kentlyn for three years, was made a deacon in 1989 and then remained in the parish until 1991 as assistant minister. A further two years were spent as assistant minister at Riverwood, after which she spent the next 14 years on the staff at Macarthur Anglican School, also volunteering at one of the local aged care facilities.

From 2004-2006 Miss Waid was honorary assistant minister at St John’s, Camden before moving back to her first spiritual home in Australia – Christ Church, Kiama – where she was honorary assistant minister from 2008 until her death.

Miss Waid struggled with illness over many years. Her good friend Lesley Errington, whom she met at Moore College and who gave the eulogy, said Miss Waid’s goal each week was “to get to church and she often did, O² and all. She enjoyed planning the Spanish Fiesta to promote Moore College in South America (MOCLAM), leading services, book club, morning tea, lunch and parties with friends.

“Her generosity knew no bounds. Her devotion to Jesus as her Lord and Saviour was an encouragement to us all. She did not lose heart. Though outwardly she was wasting away, yet inwardly she was being renewed day by day.”

**Deaconess Lynn Gigg** died on March 11, aged 90.

Born Joy Lynn Gigg on April 29, 1924, the young Joy’s faith was shaped and strengthened by experiences of the Depression and World War II. She trained for ministry in the early 1950s and was made a deaconess by Archbishop Mowll in 1954.

Known to friends as Lynn but to family as “Aunty Joy”, Deaconess Gigg worked in the parish of Newtown, then Yagoona with Villawood & East Fairfield from 1955-60, and Campsie with Harcourt for another five years.

After this she began a long chaplaincy ministry, spending 15 years at Canterbury-Bankstown Hospitals before moving to Westmead Hospital (1979-1983) and St Vincent’s (1983-84).

Dss Gigg was passionate about music, family – particularly children – but Jesus most of all. This was highlighted when the Rev Patsy Dahl, a former ARV chaplain who gave a eulogy at her funeral, related a story told by the Rev David Tyndall, one of her former Scripture students:

“I never saw boys actually doing work in their books in Scripture before. She [Deaconess Gigg] was a great example to me as a courageous person who stood firm for the gospel in an unfriendly environment. She was prepared to take on high school boys for the opportunity to tell them how to get to heaven.”

Officially retired in 1984, Deaconess Gigg spent the next nine years as honorary deaconess at St Andrew’s Cathedral where she led services, took baptisms and did pastoral care until bad eyesight made the drive too tricky.

Said Patsy Dahl: “She has gone home to be with the Lord she loved... [Lynn] is experiencing life in the fullest possible way, and we who also follow Jesus will be there to share it with her”.





# In the Father's hands

DR GLENN DAVIES

THE SEASON OF EASTER IS AN ANNUAL REMINDER OF THE VICTORY OVER SIN AND death that Jesus won for us by his own death and resurrection. While it is true that this is properly a focus of our regular meetings on the first day of the week, the period of Lent – with its anti-climax on Good Friday and its denouement on Easter Day – provides opportunity for reflection upon the events of those three days in Jesus' experience.

Our Good Friday services naturally focus on Jesus' death upon the cross, his "seven last words" and his cry of dereliction: "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Matthew 27:46). By contrast, Easter Day celebrates his mighty resurrection where death is defeated and a whole new world order enters in. But what of Easter Eve, the Saturday between these epochal events?

Of course, on this particular Sabbath, Jesus is at rest. Well, at least his body is at rest, having been wrapped in a clean linen cloth and placed by Joseph of Arimathea in his own new tomb. However, two gospel accounts record Jesus' dismissing his spirit, prior to breathing his last breath. Luke even records Jesus' last words as: "Father into your hands I commit my spirit" (Luke 23:46). The best explanation of these words is that Jesus in his death experienced the dissolution of his body and spirit – the same separation experienced by all who have died since the sin of Adam. His human body was dead; but his human spirit was alive.

Some theologians have questioned such a separation as reflecting the Greek dualism of body and soul, citing Plato's famous dictum that the "body is the prison house of the soul". However, the Bible does not see the human body as inferior to the soul; in fact, humans are created as a holistic duality of body and soul, comparable to Paul's description of the inner and outer person (2 Cor 4:16; cf 2 Cor 5:8; Eph 3:16). While body and soul (or spirit) comprise the wholeness of the human image bearer, the two are not indistinguishable (as Jesus asserts in Matthew 10:28). In fact, part of the penalty of death for sinners is the very separation of what was meant to remain whole.

However, it is through Jesus' resurrection that he mends this rift, overcomes this dissolution and pioneers the entrance into resurrection life with a new body – a resurrected body no longer susceptible to death and decay.

Part of Jesus' identification with fallen humanity is that he, too, suffers the dissolution of body and soul in order to reverse it. As he says to the thief on the cross: "I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in Paradise" (Luke 23:43). These were no idle words of Jesus, but expressed a reality that the repentant thief would join him in Paradise that very day to await his resurrection body. For Jesus the wait would not be long, while the thief – along with all the saints – still awaits his bodily resurrection at the Last Day.

As Jesus enjoyed the fellowship of the Father (and the repentant thief) on Easter Eve, his body lay in the tomb, only to be raised to new life on Easter morn. This is a wonderful truth for all believers, especially when they mourn the death of loved ones. For we can rest assured that those who die in Christ are with him now. Though disembodied (as Jesus was on Easter Eve) they enjoy Paradise with God and all the saints. It is a conscious fellowship they enjoy, while they await their own resurrection – which is why they cry out "How long, O Lord" (Revelation 6:10) – but they are safe in the Father's hands, for Jesus has won the victory for them.

Therefore comfort one another with these words (1 Thessalonians 4:18).

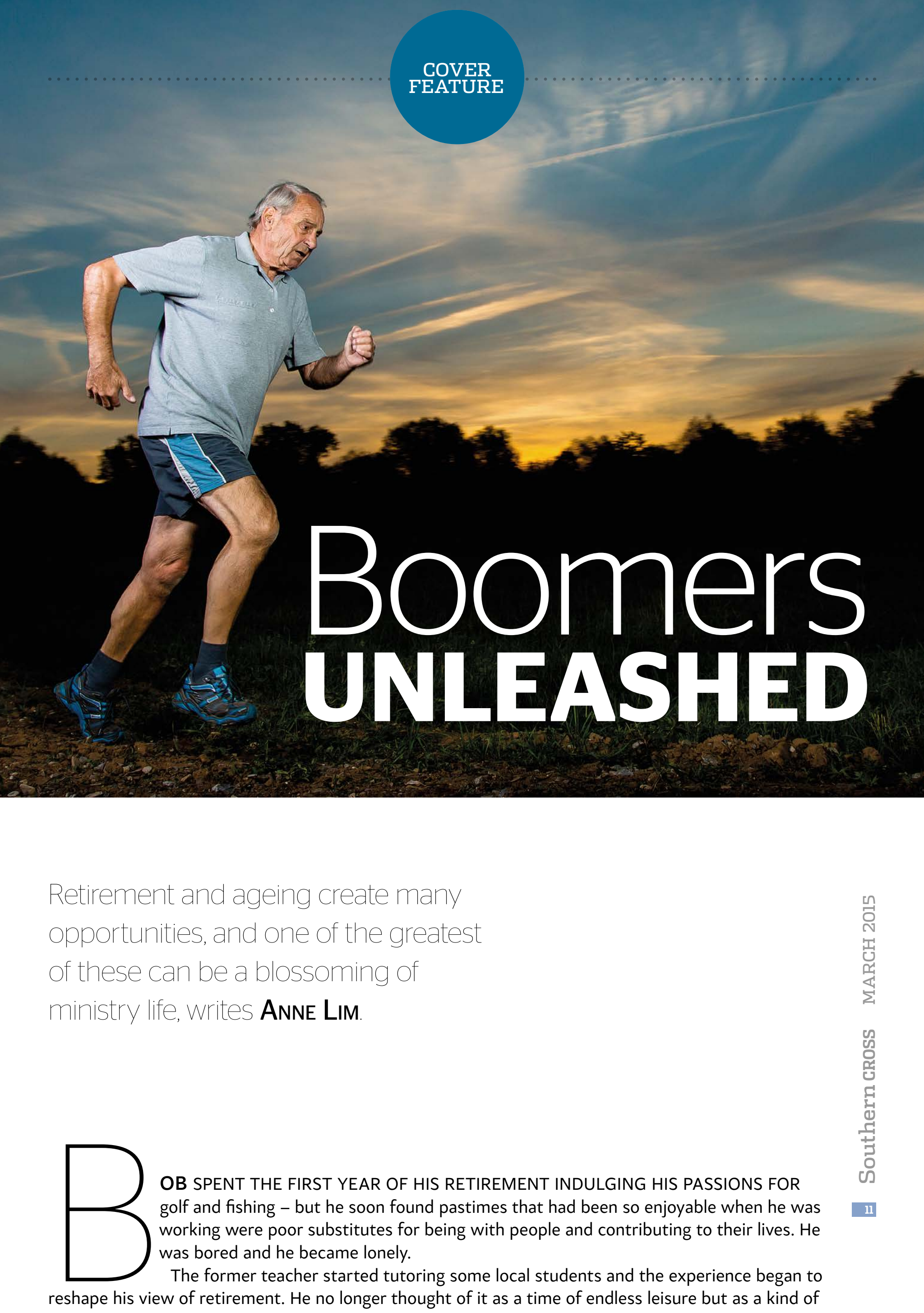
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## a PRAYER FOR MISSION 2020

Our heavenly Father, fill our lives with the fruit of your Spirit, so that we may walk in joyful obedience, share your love by word and deed, and see Christ honoured in every community as Lord and Saviour.,

Amen.





# Boomers UNLEASHED

Retirement and ageing create many opportunities, and one of the greatest of these can be a blossoming of ministry life, writes **ANNE LIM**

Southern CROSS MARCH 2015

**B**OB SPENT THE FIRST YEAR OF HIS RETIREMENT INDULGING HIS PASSIONS FOR golf and fishing – but he soon found pastimes that had been so enjoyable when he was working were poor substitutes for being with people and contributing to their lives. He was bored and he became lonely.

The former teacher started tutoring some local students and the experience began to reshape his view of retirement. He no longer thought of it as a time of endless leisure but as a kind of profession in itself, for which retraining is needed. He then developed the skills needed to run his own Bible study group and now leads a group of people in their late 70s, about a decade older than he is.

Once he started to change his focus, Bob – who lives on the south coast – also saw a need in his community to develop links with other lonely retired men. So, in association with his local church, he started a Men's Shed, where men come together in a workshop environment to build projects for themselves and others. Members sometimes migrate from the Shed to the church, and vice versa.

Bob's experience illustrates a great need and opportunity in our churches and communities – ministry to and by the over 60s. His view of retirement as a new career challenge is one that could serve as a model for that great army of baby boomers who are now approaching retirement.

In voting for the new diocesan Mission last year, Synod made "connecting with people over 60" a key element of Part 4 (which focused on responding to the changing face of our society). It was specifically spoken about and voted on as a separate point from children and youth. Yet most discussion and effort in our churches are focused on cross-cultural Sydney and youth.

As the age of our population rises and more and more baby boomers move into retirement, ministry for and by older people is an issue that will only increase in importance. Will Christian boomers buy into the secular dream of retirement as a time that's all about "me" – spend the kids' inheritance, buy the van, take to the road and be happy and free? Or will they see this new freedom as an opportunity to exercise ministry in new, creative and fulfilling ways?

The challenges and opportunities presented by the greying of the wealthiest and most travelled generation ever were examined in depth at the Living in the Next Phase conference in Sydney last July. Organised by Next Phase Ministries, a volunteer arm of Anglican Deaconess Ministries, it looked at a biblical approach to ageing and options for mission for people in the third age (60-80 and beyond who are healthy and independent) and the fourth age (the same age cohort who for health reasons are in need of care).

Former archbishop Peter Jensen told the conference that baby boomers represented a great opportunity for a gospel harvest. Brought up in stable families with some church commitment, most abandoned these features during the "greatest social and spiritual revolution of the last several centuries".

The way to reach this "unchurched" generation that was hardened to the gospel was through the same generation as they exist in our churches – "a generation better instructed and equipped than any before, because of the strategy we adopted in the 1960s".

After the conference Tony Dobson, a member of Christ Church, Mortdale in Sydney's south, agreed to undertake workshops with a spread of parishes across the Diocese that were keen to start or enhance "next phase" ministries.

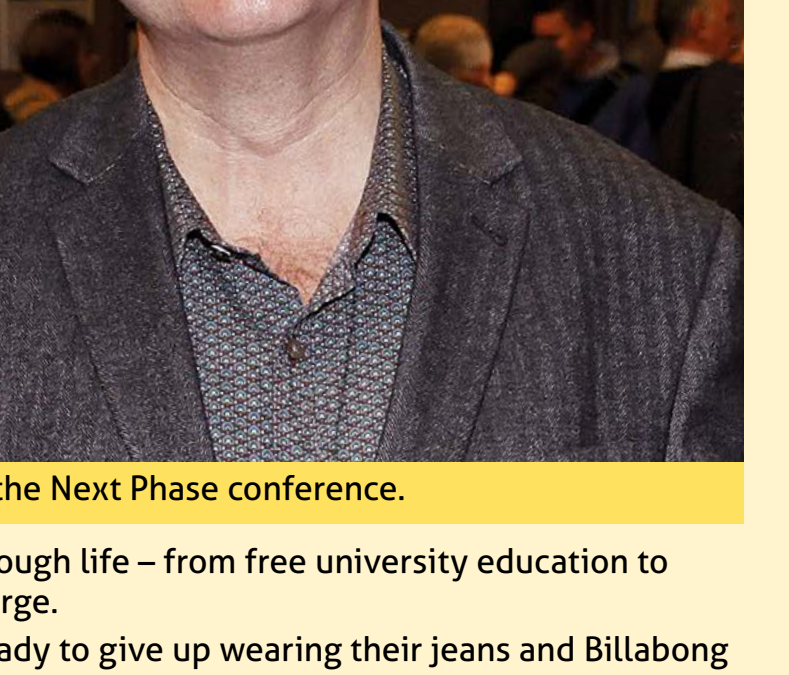
The first point in Dobson's subsequent report, drawing on his research with five parishes, stressed the need to differentiate between boomers and seniors in finding new models for ministry.

"Baby boomers don't see themselves as seniors," he explains. "So we are differentiating between adult ministry to boomers (aged about 50-70) and ministry to seniors (70 plus).

"If you call someone in their late 50s a senior, they just switch off. The boomers have different challenges in their lives. Demographers call them the 'sandwich' generation – with ageing parents at one end, and sometimes children who have come back home and grandchildren at the other end."

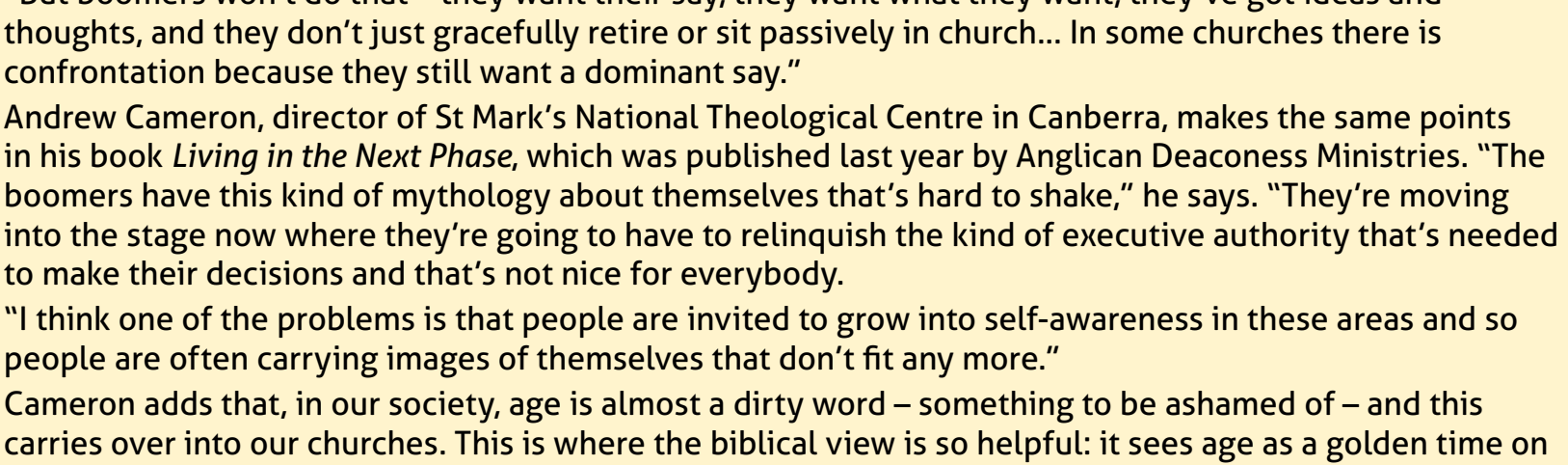
With such limits on their free time, boomers need to be motivated in a different way from seniors. "Boomers in particular want to be engaged in a meaningful way," Dobson says. "They don't want to just hand out newsletters; they want to get involved with more significant things. So the way to fit in with the mission of the parish is to get them engaged in short-term missions, intergenerational work with young people. Give them some big things and they will respond – that's the theory."

Another key recommendation to churches is to develop a deliberate strategy and approach to unleash the lay adults or boomers into ministry. Dobson came across a couple of churches that were training people for leadership in this area. "They were helping them identify their passions and then trying to find something for them that [would] fit into the mission of the church," he says.



Tony Dobson speaks at the Next Phase conference.

## BOOM OR BUST



Preparing the ground: Ray Smith and Andrew Cameron at the Next Phase conference.

Resented by Generation X for their privileged passage in life – from free university education to affordable housing – the boomers are used to being in charge.

Now this massive army is greying fast. But most are not ready to give up wearing their jeans and Billabong T-shirts to don the beige slacks and cardigan. And they resent being lumped with the "seniors", who belong to what is called the "builder" generation (born before 1945).

In some churches there is conflict between the boomers and the younger generations, says Bishop Ray Smith, 79, who has chaired the Next Phase Ministries committee since 2011. He points out that ever since they were young, the boomers have been the dominant group – movers and shakers with church life organised around them.

"Seniors have never been able to throw their weight around as much," he says. "So while they may have hated change in church life, and some of the stronger ones might have made themselves difficult, in the end they lacked the influence to order church life in the way they preferred.

"But boomers won't do that – they want their say, they want what they want, they've got ideas and thoughts, and they don't just gracefully retire or sit passively in church... In some churches there is confrontation because they still want a dominant say."

Andrew Cameron, director of St Mark's National Theological Centre in Canberra, makes the same points in his book *Living in the Next Phase*, which was published last year by Anglican Deaconess Ministries. "The boomers have this kind of mythology about themselves that's hard to shake," he says. "They're moving into the stage now where they're going to have to relinquish the kind of executive authority that's needed to make their decisions and that's not nice for everybody.

"I think one of the problems is that people are invited to grow into self-awareness in these areas and so people are often carrying images of themselves that don't fit any more."

Cameron adds that, in our society, age is almost a dirty word – something to be ashamed of – and this carries over into our churches. This is where the biblical view is so helpful: it sees age as a golden time on the way to our Father's house.

"It frees people to go, 'Oh, there's no problem thinking about growing older'. There are some things to be sad about, but there are some things to be glad about as well."

Cameron believes that when boomers cling to an outdated view of themselves and their influence in society, it is bad for everybody.

"It does a profound disservice to the young," he says. "There are people in our churches in their 30s and 40s who we should be mentoring into the next engine room for what we do. And every time an older member has this hang-up about their self-image and their relevance, it's a lost opportunity to guide someone who has got the energy and the years to make a difference. But if we reconceive ourselves as those that are equipping people who really are young, that would be good for them and good for us."

He says it's possible the biggest age group in churches will soon be over 60, meaning the next generation of theological graduates will either have to avoid older people or discover more creative and interesting ministries for them. In addition, "preaching and teaching need to be more acutely developed to touch upon the confusions, concerns and fears of older people".

Rather than add to the rector's burdens, though, he proposes that every parish aim for at least one theologically trained facilitator of later-life ministry. Following the model of Youthworks for youth ministry, this later-life minister would then equip volunteer leaders in the third age to conduct aged care ministry, including evangelism and pastoral care.

He also recommends that Next Phase Ministries employ a "professor" of later-life ministry to train and develop third-age volunteers and later-life ministers. All of this could be partly funded, he says, through an endowment grown mainly through bequests from Christian supporters in the third age supplemented by a small but ever-increasing tithe from Synod.

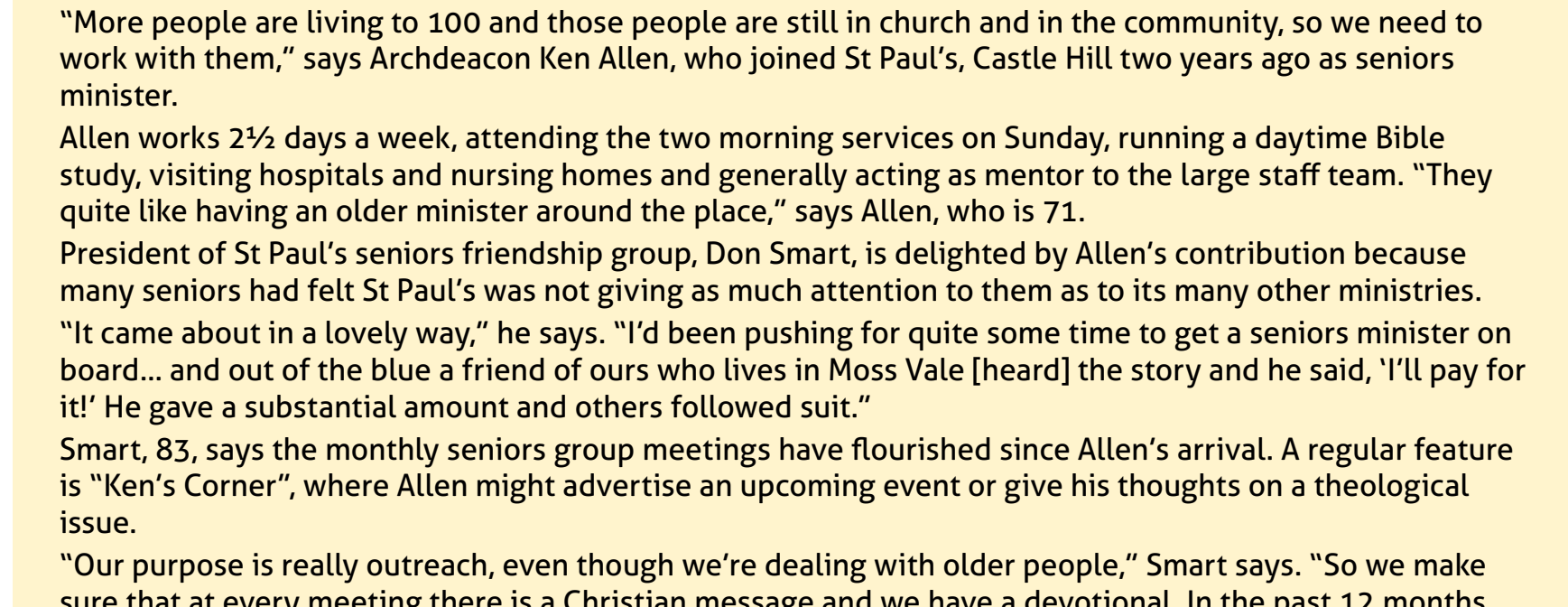
He predicts it will take five years to develop pilot schemes, 10 years for them to have serious traction and 20 years to develop a comprehensive culture and practice of later-life ministry.

St Luke's, Miranda has had a so-called "BB" group for 10 years. Last spring, the group went away for the weekend to formulate plans for broadening its ministry.

"It was the first time as a baby boomer group we had a house party," says pastoral care minister Jennie Everist, who at 53 sees herself as being at the younger end of that cohort.

"They were harking back to the house parties of the '70s, I think. They wanted a weekend away so we organised that, and while we were there it was very much a thing of the Holy Spirit's leading. We were breaking up into discussion groups, of course, and on the last day each group came back saying some sort of regional mission would be a fabulous thing to do."

Everist is now making preparations for a BB mission to Narromine, near Dubbo in NSW's central west, from August 22-30. Team leader Jack Normand, 70, emphasises that they are going at the invitation of the Narromine and Trangle Anglican Church to encourage local parishioners. The group will join in wherever they are required, from helping out at services on Sunday and in nursing homes to activities as varied as a golf day, a "Sticky date and stories" dessert night and an event in a local pub.



Ministry opportunities: Jack and Vicki Normand with Jennie Everist.

"When I turned 65 my thinking was that [the] decade between 65 and 75 is quite an important one," Normand says. "After 75, who knows? But probably you will not be as able to be involved."

While leading cross-generational Bible studies at St Luke's, Normand and his wife Vicki have not sacrificed their love of travel, having been around the world three times in the past few years. "We are going off again twice this year," he says. "I'm teaching some pastors in Rwanda the Moore College Preliminary Theological Certificate. So we are globetrotters as well."

Of course, not everyone has the funds or the liberty to go on short-term missions overseas, as grandparents become more and more enmeshed in the care of their grandchildren, which is why the regional mission to Narromine has caught the imagination of the BBs of St Luke's.

Everist sees baby boomers as a "force of nature" which the church needs to harness. "We want them to be gospel-minded and reaching out to their friends," she says.

## TAKING OFF



Ken Allen (left) and Don Smart (right) go over an evening's program with guest speaker David Claydon.

When seniors ministry is taken seriously in a church not only can it produce blossoming, happy groups, it can encourage those in them to reach out to their peers in the local area.

"More people are living to 100 and those people are still in church and in the community, so we need to work with them," says Archdeacon Ken Allen, who joined St Paul's, Castle Hill two years ago as seniors minister.

Allen works 2½ days a week, attending the two morning services on Sunday, running a daytime Bible study, visiting hospitals and nursing homes and generally acting as mentor to the large staff team. They quite like having an older minister around the place," says Allen, who is 71.

President of St Paul's seniors friendship group, Don Smart, is delighted by Allen's contribution because many seniors had felt St Paul's was not giving as much attention to them as to its many other ministries.

"It came about in a lovely way," he says. "I'd been pushing for quite some time to get a seniors minister on board... and out of the blue a friend of ours who lives in Moss Vale [heard] the story and he said, 'I'll pay for it!' He gave a substantial amount and others followed suit."

Smart, 83, says the monthly seniors group meetings have flourished since Allen's arrival. A regular feature is "Ken's Corner", where Allen might advertise an upcoming event or give his thoughts on a theological issue.

"Our purpose is really outreach, even though we're dealing with older people," Smart says. "So we make sure that at every meeting there is a Christian message and we have a devotional. In the past 12 months I've been trying to get our older group to meet all our ministry team. We have seven ordained people there and they're all youngish, so one way is to get them along as a speaker, so they can't escape!"

Allen also helps organise an annual seniors conference to which neighbouring churches are invited. The first one last year, titled Wisdom and Wellness, featured former Deputy Prime Minister John Anderson and attracted about 250 people. This year, on May 5, the second conference will have the theme Making the Most of your Retirement, with former Archbishop Peter Jensen slated to speak.

Other ministries by St Paul's include a close connection with ARV Castle Hill next door, where it financially supports the chaplains and runs combined activities, plus a busy ministry to older women that draws in many from the community.

Bishop Ray Smith, 79, who is chairman of the Next Phase Ministries committee, sees a great need to recruit this demographic for evangelism and ministry.

"Many of them are the most spiritually mature people in our churches," he says. "They've been disciplined, ministered to, had wonderful teaching and many of them are quite well-off financially and they've also got time on their hands. They need somehow to be recruited for mission and ministry and not just buy into the secular view that retirement is just for doing your own thing and enjoying yourself. By all means, enjoy sport, your hobbies and look after family members but don't just buy the worldly model holus-bolus."

In fact, enjoying sports and other hobbies is a natural way of addressing the great unmet need for evangelism among boomers.

This is why Dobson's report recommends BB people in the parish be encouraged to develop friendships in the so-called "third" place where people spend time outside home and work – in sporting and book clubs, cafes or gyms – and invite them to an offsite event a few times a year. The advice is to ensure the event is not too "churchy" but has a Christian speaker, maybe some wine and cheese, and just starts people thinking about Christianity and where their life is going as they head towards its last quarter.

"This is all about getting around people who don't know Christ and in a natural sort of way engage them and pray for them and leave it to God to do the rest," Dobson says.

Some boomers see retirement as an opportunity for a new adventure by going back to study at Mary Andrews College, which offers Ministry with Seniors as a subject in its diploma and certificate courses in theology. This semester eight people – including, unusually, two men – are taking the subject.



Skilled up: lecturer Mark Wormell (back to camera) talks to his Ministry With Seniors class at Mary Andrews College. Left to right: Jan Dower, Sharon Eliopoulos, Karina Smith, David Henderson and Hugh Langford Smith.

"It's seeking to understand how we minister to senior people but it's also about how do we encourage senior people to be ministering," says director of studies Jackie Stoneman. "So it's looking at the needs but also the opportunities that people can have to exercise that ministry."

Sue Puttock, 68, took the subject because she was looking to build up more knowledge about seniors, "heading rapidly to that age group myself". She was wanted to get more involved with senior groups at church but the birth of a new granddaughter derailed her plans and she is now involved in playgroup.

"It helped me to think through some of the different issues," she says. "I'm helping to care for my mother-in-law at the moment so I'm using it in everyday life rather than a group situation, and I'm keeping an eye on a few elderly ladies."

The take-home message, she says, is "stopping to listen, as with any pastoral care, understanding where they're at and just what their needs are. For me I just want to be able to encourage them spiritually and always hold [out] the hope for them that we have in Jesus."

Debbie Cox, 46, is doing the subject this semester as part of her advanced diploma in theology, acting on her love of chatting to older people at Heathcote-Engadine Anglican Church, which also has an active seniors ministry.

"I had been volunteering at HammondCare and their working with dementia patients, and working out how we can reach them with the gospel in their situation," she says. "And then even just at church how do we harness our ageing population to stay active?"

"More people that I know have been diagnosed with dementia, so I've been more aware of the need to actually engage them in life and find meaning and purpose rather than just sitting all day in a nursing home."

Cox feels that churches often underestimate the capacities of elderly people in their congregations. "We're not so good at tapping into their wisdom and availability," she says. "I do worry that we see them as out of date and not valuable in what they have to offer. My church has a great seniors ministry but you don't see many seniors up front doing things and I think there's no reason why they shouldn't pray or read the Bible."

"Often the emphasis is on the young and that's very important, but [we need] to see across the board that people have a part to play in the church."

## ACROSS THE AGES

If ever there was a group in touch with ageing Sydney it is Anglican Retirement Villages, which caters for the "third" and "fourth" age in independent living, higher care and in-home care. "There are 15,000 residents, families, staff and volunteers who we come into contact with," says the Rev Andrew Nixon, ARV's new director of mission. "We want to reach out to and engage intentionally and meaningfully with them."

Nixon's appointment, and that of now-Bishop Chris Edwards before him, is an attempt to raise the level and profile of Christian ministry at ARV. "Many people would consider ARV has already been a great witness to families and residents – perhaps the Diocese's great contribution to the ageing in post-war years," Nixon says.

But there's always more to do. "We want to encourage Christian residents and parish volunteers to consider the range of ministries available to them in their seniors'," he says. "Where needed we can help train and equip, as well as providing venues to host outreach events."

This fits into the Rhythm of Life ministry philosophy pioneered by ARV. The idea behind this, Edwards explains, is "recognising that people joining our residential communities have their own patterns of life and, if they are Christian, their own gifts and ministries. As we get to know them, we want to provide opportunity and outreach that is flexible and suits their needs at the time."

"For example, my mum is now living in a village. They recognised pretty quickly that she had an active ministry all her life and now, because she is 90 and not as agile, she can't do all she used to do. But she's still a keen prayer and they make sure she gets prayer points. She's praying for the local church, the local university ministry, for all kinds of things. That's a valuable ministry."

Peter Lloyd, 76, has been a member of St Matthew's, West Pennant Hills for 42 years so he feels well "ruled on". Since retiring 15 years ago, he and his wife Colleen have become progressively more involved in the church, teaching Scripture to Year 2 at a local school and being part of a prayer network. With an engineering background, Lloyd also does a lot of maintenance work inside the church and is in charge of leading and encouraging the team of male lay pastors.

"We're a husband-and-wife team; we can slog away without too much drama," he says. "We're about caring, sharing and praying. My wife is pretty good at getting alongside people and doing good things with them."



Service continues: Peter and Colleen Lloyd at West Pennant Hills Public School.

St Matthew's is a large church, which attracts 700 to its seven services on Sundays. It has made a serious commitment to later-life ministry, employing its first seniors minister 15 years ago. Soon afterwards it started holding a seniors service every Wednesday, which attracts people who do not come on Sundays.

"That commitment to a weekly seniors' service is a pretty big deal in making it all hang together," Lloyd says. "It's good to have a staff person with a hand on the steering wheel. It puts a bit of imperative into it if you have someone looking at the big picture and urging others along."

## CARE FOR THE FOURTH AGE

With the over-80s the fastest growing proportion of our population, the need to minister to the frail aged is increasing at a rapid rate.

The Productivity Commission has estimated that the number of people over 85 will rise from 400,000 in 2010 to 1.8 million in 2050, while the 65-84 age cohort will grow from 11.7 per cent of the population to 17.6 per cent, making over 65s almost a fifth of the total population. This means that by 2050, 3.5 million Australians will need access to various levels of aged care services.

Outreach to local retirement villages and nursing homes is a fast-growing area for many churches. In February St Swithun's, Pymble started a special service for those suffering from dementia and their carers on the second Thursday of each month.

Senior minister the Rev Roger Chilton says there are several people in the congregation with mild or medium memory loss. Their spouses "felt uncomfortable about taking them because of the possibility of erratic behaviour or just because they thought the service might not be accessible for the dementia sufferers".

The format of a shortened, simplified version of communion with old hymns played on an organ and a short sermon was developed as a pilot with ARV's Gowrie Village in Gordon, where Pymble staff member Chris Hollister works as a chaplain.

"We called the service 'Blessed Assurance' because we want to assure them of God's love for them, we want to assure them of God's grace and we want to assure them that they will have everlasting life," she says. "And we want to create an assuring environment for them where they can come to church and recognise things that they remember from their childhood and early adulthood, where things are familiar and people are friendly and accepting of them. That's why we've got a team of volunteers to help out at morning tea and to bring them into the service to help them feel relaxed and comfortable."



Donald and Rosemary Cameron with Chris Hollister at Lady Gowrie.

Hollister, who brought a group of residents to the Pymble service from Gowrie Village, says she is encouraging relatives to bring them or to meet at St Swithun's "so that they can come to church with mum or dad, so it can be a shared experience for the family, and I feel that would enhance the experience for the dementia sufferers, too".

Retired Bishop Donald Cameron, who lives in independent living at Gowrie, welcomed the opportunity to bring his wife Rosemary to church again. Rosemary has Parkinson's Disease and lives at the hostel.

"I think it was splendid for people to be in familiar surroundings with an atmosphere that a particular place can have, with a liturgy that carried with it all sorts of memories and recollections and yet was not over-long," he says.

"It was the first time she'd gone back to the church she was familiar with, which she'd attended for many years. The style of the liturgy and the atmosphere were reassuring and welcoming. She was very glad about it."



# Sydney at Gallipoli



Australian soldiers being towed towards Anzac Cove on the morning of April 25, 1915 and, above right, a diary excerpt describing the landing.

All gave some – some gave all. **COLIN BALE** shares the story of two Sydney Anglicans who fought at Anzac Cove 100 years ago.

Southern CROSS MARCH 2015

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**THIS MONTH MARKS THE CENTENARY OF THE LANDING AT GALLIPOLI BY AUSTRALIAN and New Zealand troops as part of a larger allied invasion force in April 1915.**

The strategy for the campaign was simple: have troops land at a number of points along the Gallipoli Peninsula and secure the strategic waterway of the Dardanelles for France and Great Britain. It was hoped this invasion would force Turkey out of the war and open the maritime passage to the Black Sea from the Mediterranean so the Western allies could supply the armies of imperial Russia in the fight on the Eastern Front against Germany and the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

The campaign failed to achieve any of the initial objectives and the invaders clung to a number of footholds on the peninsula until December 1915 when it was decided that, as there was no prospect of victory, the best option was to withdraw all troops from Gallipoli and redeploy them in other theatres of war.

Although a defeat, the Gallipoli campaign has become mythic for both Australia and New Zealand. Much has been written about the significance of Gallipoli for the two nations. In particular, the landing on April 25, 1915 has been called Australia's "baptism of fire", referring to the country's first experience of battle in World War I. Captain I. Margetts even used the term in his diary for April 25 to describe the landing at Gallipoli.

Historians have noted how the Australian involvement at Gallipoli gained Australia the right to be treated as an independent nation. Thus, Australia was allowed its own independent seat at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919 and was not simply part of the British Empire delegation.

However, Gallipoli was also a baptism in blood. Within two months of the landing the number of casualties had risen close to 10,000 – a quarter of them deaths. The reality of war and loss was not just the experience of service personnel, for the growing casualty lists impacted more and more families and communities throughout Australia as the Gallipoli campaign dragged on through 1915.

There will be understandable focus on the meaning of Gallipoli for Australia as a nation in this centenary year but it is also important to remember the numerous individual Australians who served – and especially those who died, not only at Gallipoli, but also in other theatres of World War I.

As the honour rolls/memorial boards in older parishes indicate, many from the Diocese of Sydney joined up to do their bit. Robert Linder's *The Long Tragedy: Australian Evangelical Christians and the Great War, 1914-1918* notes the large number of men from the parishes who enlisted. As it is not possible to detail each Sydney Anglican who served at Gallipoli, the story of two individuals who did so will represent all those from the Diocese who went.

Spencer Maxted was the rector of St Oswald's, Haberfield when the war broke out in August 1914. He tried to volunteer for service with the Australian forces as a chaplain but, as the quota for chaplains was quickly filled, instead enlisted as a soldier in the Australian Imperial Force in September 1914.

Maxted (right) was 32 years old and married with two children. He was assigned to the 1st Field Ambulance where he was a stretcher-bearer. He served at Gallipoli, was promoted to Lance Corporal and was evacuated to Alexandria because of illness in September 1915.

At Gallipoli he was a member of the Church of England congregation ministered to by the Rev A.E. Talbot, who was on leave from his role as Dean of St Andrew's Cathedral in Sydney so that he could take up the post of senior Church of England chaplain with the AIF. Maxted assisted Talbot with communion services and Talbot recorded that he and Maxted had lengthy theological and philosophical discussions in Talbot's dugout.

There is a very moving description of one of these services by Methodist chaplain James Green on Sunday, June 20, 1915:

"Chaplain A.E. Talbot (Church of England) had suggested a united communion service. The men gathered up in great numbers, and we began the service with the hymn 'Rock of Ages'. I read the gospel and gave the address, Chaplain Talbot reading the service. There was deep reverence under strange circumstances. Between the opening of the hills we caught a glimpse of the beautiful sunset over Imbros. A destroyer was steaming down to her position over Gaba Tepe to guard our right flank during the night. A few enemy shells soared overhead occasionally, but unmindful of these circumstances, the men in large numbers came up to the improvised communion table fifteen at a time, and knelt to receive the emblems of salvation. As the men were coming and going the rest sang softly. The hymns were 'Abide With Me', 'Hark My Soul, It Is the Lord', 'O God, Our Help in Ages Past', 'Jesu, Lover of My Soul'... they came to the communion steadily, then donned their arms and equipment for the firing line. As they sang

*'I fear no foe with Thee at hand to bless  
Ills have no weight and tears no bitterness  
Where is death's sting! Where grave thy victory?  
I triumph still if Thou abide with me'*

one could not help gazing towards our burial ground on the hillside facing the sea, where so many of our brave comrades lie sleeping."

Maxted survived Gallipoli and was reassigned as a chaplain with the rank of Captain in January 1916. He was posted as the chaplain of the 54<sup>th</sup> Battalion and went with them to France in May 1916. His battalion was part of the 5th Division of the AIF that was involved in the ill-fated attack at Fromelles on July 19, 1916.

Much has been written about the futility of this engagement, which was meant to be a diversion for the major offensive underway in the Somme region. In a 24-hour period, the 5<sup>th</sup> Division suffered over 5500 casualties, including about 400 captured by the enemy. Spencer Maxted was one of the AIF fatalities at Fromelles. He had gone forward with his battalion and was helping the wounded when a shell burst killed him.

The Red Cross Wounded and Missing Information Bureau later collected a number of eyewitness accounts that described what had happened to Maxted. These accounts also give an indication of the regard of the men for their chaplain:

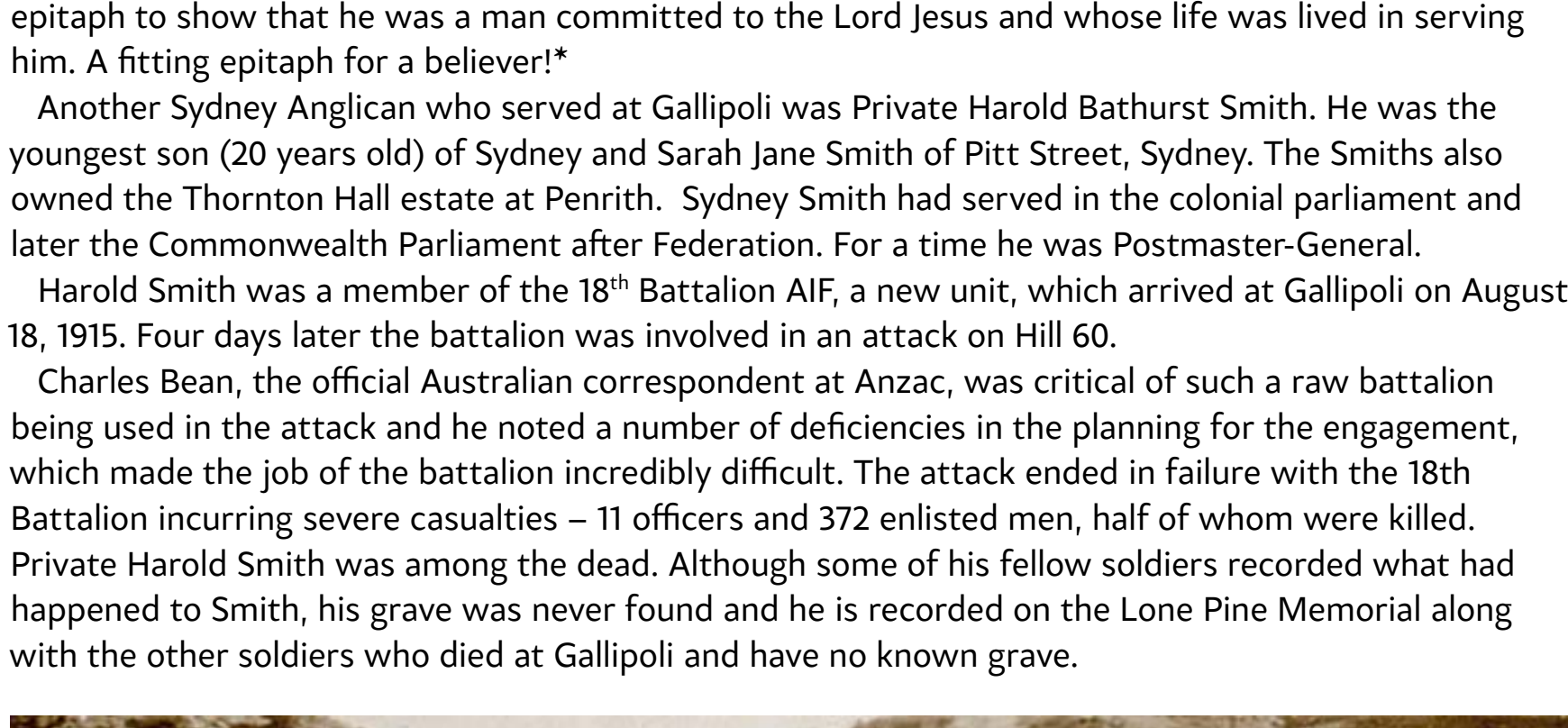
"The men all thought a great lot of him – he would come down into the line at night sometimes, have a sing-song and sometimes hymns just to help the boys... he was always down in the front line with the boys, and he need not have been. The night of the big attack at Fleurbaix he was first over the parapet with the stretcher-bearers... he was getting about amongst the wounded lads, bandaging... carrying wounded and giving water to others... someone said Capt. Hansen was wounded and he (Maxted) went through a perfect hail of fire with his bandages and water bottle... he was bandaging a wounded man when he was killed. A man among men."

Spencer Maxted is buried at Rue Petillon Military Cemetery at Fleurbaix in the north of France. He is one of the too numerous survivors from Gallipoli who later perished in the battles of 1916-1918 and are buried in the Commonwealth War Graves Commission cemeteries on the Western Front. His headstone carries the inscription chosen by his family – *A true servant of Jesus Christ*. They wanted his epitaph to show that he was a man committed to the Lord Jesus and whose life was lived in serving him. A fitting epitaph for a believer!\*

Another Sydney Anglican who served at Gallipoli was Private Harold Bathurst Smith. He was the youngest son (20 years old) of Sydney and Sarah Jane Smith of Pitt Street, Sydney. The Smiths also owned the Thornton Hall estate at Penrith. Sydney Smith had served in the colonial parliament and later the Commonwealth Parliament after Federation. For a time he was Postmaster-General.

Harold Smith was a member of the 18<sup>th</sup> Battalion AIF, a new unit, which arrived at Gallipoli on August 18, 1915. Four days later the battalion was involved in an attack on Hill 60.

Charles Bean, the official Australian correspondent at Anzac, was critical of such a raw battalion being used in the attack and he noted a number of deficiencies in the planning for the engagement, which made the job of the battalion incredibly difficult. The attack ended in failure with the 18th Battalion incurring severe casualties – 11 officers and 372 enlisted men, half of whom were killed. Private Harold Smith was among the dead. Although some of his fellow soldiers recorded what had happened to Smith, his grave was never found and he is recorded on the Lone Pine Memorial along with the other soldiers who died at Gallipoli and have no known grave.



18th Battalion, 1915: "On the way to the beach... we went through the gap, top left. Those revetted steps, at top, was to help the mules to carry ammunition to the A.I.F. artillery at Walker's Ridge." (Photographer's note on back of print)

Smith's family first received word that he was missing and it wasn't until January 1916 that an army court of inquiry determined that he had been killed in action. In May 1917 his family finally received a death certificate, which allowed them to settle Harold's estate. His will asked that his possessions be given to a Miss I. M. Dukes of Penrith. Among the items was a chestnut mare and foal. Miss Dukes may have been Harold's fiancée but this is not certain.

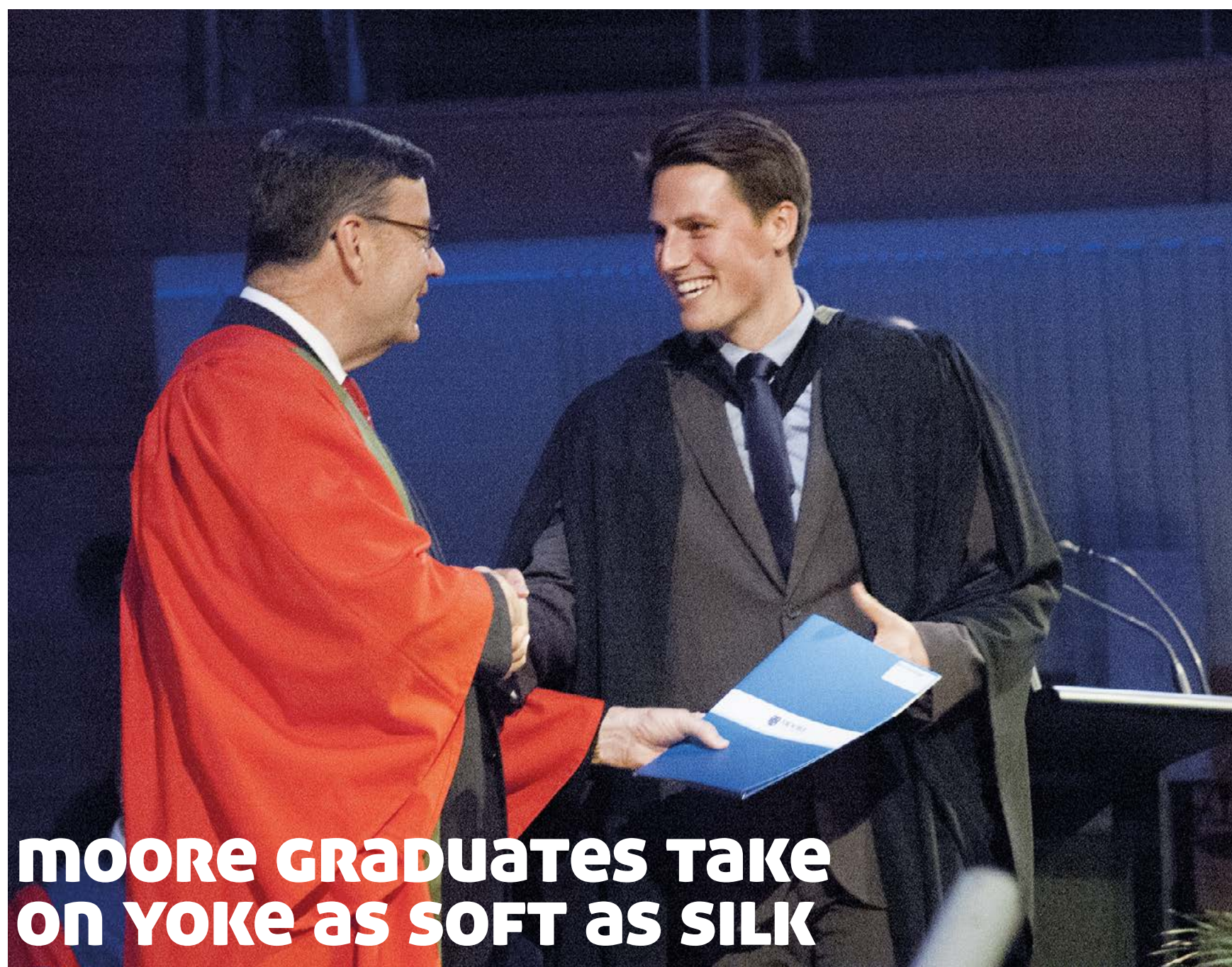
When Harold Smith's personal effects were returned to his family in 1918 three religious books were among the few items returned. Most often for an Anglican like Harold this included a Bible (or New Testament) and a *Book of Common Prayer*.

Apart from what can be deduced from his service record, not much more can be said about Harold Smith. He, like many other Sydney Anglicans, served at Gallipoli and, hopefully, was impacted by the ministry of chaplains like the Rev A. E. Talbot. Smith represents the thousands of Australian service personnel from the World War I whose names can be read on the honour boards in Anglican churches around the Diocese. Those who knew these men are no longer with us and so the names, for the most part, are simply lists that speak of the statistical impact of the war.

However, as is often stated on the graves of unknown soldiers in the war cemeteries, while they may be unknown to us they are "known unto God". The brief biographical profiles of Harold Smith and Spencer Maxted remind us this Anzac Day of the cost of war not only for the individuals who served, but for the families and friends who lost loved ones, and for the churches from which they came. In the face of the tragedy of Gallipoli we should also remember how there were those at Anzac, both lay and clergy, who took the opportunity to minister the word of God to the troops at a time of great need.

\*A book by Colin Bale, *A Crowd of Witnesses: The Messages of Australian War Grave Inscriptions on the Western Front, is soon to be published by Longmedia.*





## moore graduates take on yoke as soft as silk

Out into the world: Archbishop Davies congratulates a new graduate.

This year's cohort of graduates from Moore Theological College were reminded of the light yoke of Christ and of continuing mission work in Australia and abroad, and encouraged by words from Thomas Cranmer, former Archbishop of Canterbury and author of the *Book of Common Prayer*.

The guest speaker at the graduation, Dr Ashley Null, is canon theologian in the Episcopal Diocese of Western Kansas and in the Diocese of Egypt. He is also a scholar of the English Reformation, particularly of the life and work of Cranmer. He spoke to the 109 graduates from Matthew 11:25-30, focusing on the comforting and changing grace of God revealed in Jesus Christ, while also drawing on Thomas Cranmer's Comfortable Words for Holy Communion.

"Cranmer concluded his proclamation as he had begun, with the utter reliance on Christ's saving activity and how it meets both human needs and fulfills divine desire," Dr Null said in his address.

"Not our wealth, not our works, not our performance, not even our numbness. Nothing can give us rest but the transforming power of God's love for us known in the blood of the cross. That is the missing piece of our lives that makes us whole, that is the yoke that fits us like a silk glove. That is the gospel for which the Protestant Reformers died, and [for which] Moore Theological College has trained you to live."

Between them the graduates achieved 97 bachelor degrees and diplomas and 12 postgraduate degrees – including a PhD for Dr Chase Kuhn, who received his degree from the University of Western Sydney.

Those at the ceremony also heard from missionaries in Australia and around the world of the work they have been doing, through a series of pre-recorded videos by Moore graduates.

One of the 2015 graduates, Emma Little, successfully completed her four-year Bachelor of Divinity. She recently began work as a young women's minister at St Peter's, South Tamworth in the Diocese of Armidale. She says her studies and time at Moore have been invaluable in forming her current ministry.

"I was born and raised in Sydney," Ms Little says. "I came to college to do the Diploma of Bible and Mission and was going to return to my job in administration, but was encouraged to stay and study further.

"While I was doing the course I thought it would be good to think about ministry outside of Sydney. I spoke to Rick Lewers, who is Bishop of Armidale, and I got really excited about serving in that Diocese. It's been really good, certainly an adjustment after college going into full-time ministry. But that's what we came to Moore for, to be trained [and] involved in ministry wherever we end up."

Dr Null finished his address by asking for God's power to be at work among the students as they went out in the world.

"May God be so at work in your hearts and minds, by the power of the Spirit, that the work you do, the message that you give, will not only be on your lips but in your lives," he said. "That in due course, you'll see the fruitfulness of the gospel change not only the lives of those you give it to, but yourselves as well."



The new auditorium and centre at St Jude's, Bowral, next to the church; (below) Archbishop Davies unwraps the bow.

A new Christian education centre and auditorium linked to the heritage church building of St Jude's, Bowral is now open.

The official opening was performed last month by Archbishop Glenn Davies at a combined meeting of all the church's congregations, with local dignitaries present. More \$500,000 was raised for the new complex, which was designed by Christian architect Ridley Smith.

Mr Smith died last year and did not live to see the complex complete. His widow Florence was present for the opening, where tribute was paid to Mr Smith by Bowral's rector, the Rev Stephen Fifer. "Ridley understood churches – he understood what we needed," Mr Fifer said.

The Southern Highlands congregations also celebrated progress on the new church complex in the south-western Sydney suburb of Oran Park. Parish councillor and long-term member of the project team, Peter Evans, spoke of how St Jude's had contributed almost \$450,000 to help build a ministry centre in the centre of the newly established Oran Park Town.

"The area will be home to 25,000 people, similar to the population of the Southern Highlands," Mr Evans said. "Imagine if the Southern Highlands had no church at all!"

The new Bowral buildings provide an undercover link between St Jude's church and the new auditorium as well as offices and meeting spaces for youth ministries. Archbishop Davies unwrapped a giant bow and threw open the front doors of the new centre to symbolise a welcoming church for the local area.





# The right equation

JUDY ADAMSON

X+Y  
Rated M

NATHAN ELLIS HAS SPECIAL POWERS – ALMOST LIKE BEING A WIZARD WHEN everyone else is a “Muggle” who doesn’t understand.

This is the charming way a father helps his small son grasp what his condition looks like to others. Nathan, as his doctor has just explained, is on the autism spectrum, is sensitive to light and change and also has synesthesia, in which the world and things

in it have more colours and patterns than other people see.

His mum, Julie (Sally Hawkins), struggles to relate to him while his father Michael (Martin McCann) just accepts the differences. As he and Nathan drive away from home one morning, Michael cheerfully equates his son with Harry Potter, and reassures him that while they may not understand life in his shoes, they love him. And he shouldn’t be afraid.

But he is. Because the next thing that happens is that a van runs a red light and smashes into their car, killing Michael and shattering Nathan’s world.

Nathan, played as a young boy by Edward Baker-Close and as a teen by Asa Butterfield, is clever – fearsomely clever – filling his days with mathematics and patterns and leaving his mum floundering. But Nathan is also alone. No matter how much his mum tries to care for him in the way he needs, he keeps her at arm’s length and is separated by his condition, fear and shyness from everyone else. As he says at the outset of the film, he has plenty to say but is afraid to say it.

Nathan orders his world with extreme care so he can be safe, whether it be ensuring he always sits in the back seat of the car, to having exactly the same breakfast each morning or insisting on ordering a prime number of prawn balls from the local Chinese restaurant. He has withdrawn into his own world and never comes out – which means he shows no affection to his mum, Julie, and doesn’t make any real contact with others.

Wisely, Julie reasons that the way to help her primary school-aged son thrive is through the maths and patterns that he loves, so she goes to the local high school and arranges for him to receive tutoring. This brings Nathan into contact with Martin Humphreys (Rafe Spall) – a brilliant and unorthodox mathematician whose life has not turned out as he would have liked.

Martin has MS, pops too many pills to deal with it, is an emotional shambles and swears far too much. But he is exactly what Nathan needs because his bluntness and his maths ability won’t allow Nathan to stay in his shell.

He also introduces Nathan to the idea of the International Mathematics Olympiad – a worldwide high school maths competition that he once took part in – and Nathan is immediately intent on achieving the same goal.



the sweet-natured Zhang Mei takes a wide-eyed Nathan out into the marketplaces of Taipei where she introduces him to new foods, new experiences and colours, and to his first experience of uncomplacent, non-judgemental friendship.

In the hands of the wrong writers X+Y would have become a film solely about achieving in a maths competition, but this is so much more. Each of the characters, large and small, is carefully drawn and sympathetically played, and the insights into Nathan’s thinking, memories and immediate sensory experiences are presented with great skill.

What will happen as he peels back the layers of his own shell and lets someone close to his heart? Will he remain safe, or will he allow himself to be hurt? In a clever parallel, Martin faces the same questions as he grapples with his illness and his increasing pleasure in Julie’s company.

Asa Butterfield (*Hugo*, *Ender’s Game*) shines once again as the teenage Nathan, managing to convey his character’s intelligence, inner battles and discoveries in a skilled and extraordinarily sensitive performance. He’s surrounded by a great cast, telling a simple yet emotionally complex story. We are gently challenged to ask questions of our own judgements of and responses to those around us, as well as our views of love and success.

It’s just one of those British films you’re always thankful has been made.

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## Wright on the gospel

ROB SMITH

**Simply Good News: Why the Gospel Is News and What Makes It Good**

by N.T. Wright



N.T. WRIGHT HAS DONE IT AGAIN. NOT JUST PRODUCED ANOTHER BOOK. NOT JUST another engaging and well-written book. But a book that is, at many points, profoundly insightful and immensely helpful and yet, at others, perplexing and disappointing.

As the book’s subtitle suggests *Simply Good News* seeks to articulate what the gospel message is and why it is so good. Wright does this by explaining the nature of news in general and then unpacking what the good news of Christianity is and is not. He then considers the implications of this news for both the present and the future, for our understanding of God and, finally, for the way we pray.

The opening chapters introduce a distinction between news and advice – and, with it, a warning against confusing the two. The distinction is useful for it highlights the difference between the gospel (news) and its implications or entailments (advice). The gospel, Wright says, is about something that *has happened* (Jesus’ death and resurrection) which points to something that *will happen* (his coming again to renew all creation) and, as a result, something that *is happening* (in the lives of those who believe). In short, “The good news is that the one true God has now taken charge of the world, in and through Jesus and his death and resurrection” (p. 55).

However, Wright is convinced that most churches (at least in the West) have got this all muddled. “When people talk about preaching the gospel,” he says, “they regularly mean explaining to people how they can become Christians, or perhaps explaining what it means that Christ died for their sins, or indeed telling people how to be sure of going to heaven.” While Wright assures us that all of these things are important, he is insistent that they are “not the good news, the thing itself”.

He has a point. It may be possible to explain how to respond to the good news without clearly explaining the good news itself. Nevertheless, the gospel has an intrinsic demand embedded it, such that the call to repentance and faith is actually part of the announcement. Furthermore, is it really possible to explain the meaning of Christ’s death for sins without explaining the good news? The oddness of this claim is highlighted by Wright’s own exposition of the good news via Paul’s summary in 1 Corinthians 15:3-6, where he makes clear Christ’s death for sins is at the heart of the gospel message (p. 23f). It is this kind of give-take style of arguing that is one of the more puzzling features of the book.

But give back he does. Indeed, Wright insists Christ’s atoning death is key to the revelation of the one true God and his love for sinners. Moreover, he asserts, “Paul very clearly sees Jesus’s death... as both *penal* (this was a judicial sentence) and *substitutionary* (Jesus dies, therefore we do not die)” (p. 45). However, he quickly adds that Paul does not say, “God punished Jesus... That would be an oversimplification” (p. 46).

Perhaps. Yet Paul does say that the God who “did not spare his own Son” made him “a propitiation by his blood” (Rom 8:32; 3:25). But Wright is reluctant to spare closer, advising people to stick with the big picture. He is quite candid that he has not tried to approach “the mysterious depths of meaning hidden in the shameful and cruel death of Jesus” (p. 139), yet in a book on the Christian gospel, which devotes many pages to material peripheral to it, that’s a little disappointing.

Despite these criticisms, there is much that is helpful in *Simply Good News* – e.g. Wright’s stress on the importance of understanding the gospel in the context of the biblical “backstory” of creation and covenant, his exposition of the competing gospels of rationalism and romanticism, his critique of the split-level philosophy dominating post-Enlightenment Western thought, and his exposure of philosophical assumptions of the new atheists. The book is worth mining for insights – in fact, it’s worth reading just for chapters 7 and 8 (how the gospel impacts our understanding of God and the way we pray).

Finally, I want to register my agreement that we need to get the gospel right. For, as Wright says: “Get the gospel right, and everything else will come right”.

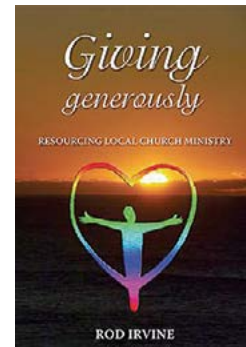
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## Excel in this grace

RAY GALEA

**Giving Generously: Resourcing Local Church Ministry**

by Rod Irvine



WHEN IT COMES TO THIS BOOK REVIEW I’M UNAPOLOGETICALLY BIASED. I HAD ROD Irvine as a mentor for three years and it transformed my thinking and my church on a wide range of issues, including giving and generosity.

Rod was “on the money” (apologies for the pun) on every issue I raised and the only time I didn’t follow his wisdom I paid for it (I’m doing it again). Last year I finally conceded and adopted his remaining suggestion and we now enjoy a much healthier budget and a more generous congregation.

So I saw the fruit of this book in my own church before it was written. I gave the unpublished manuscript to my wardens to read and we decided to play it by the numbers when it came to the chapter on the commitment series and pledge-shaped budgets. I was scared but the congregation responded far better than I or my leadership could have imagined.

There was a gap in my knowledge which needed filling between the gospel of grace, biblical principles and wise application to a church and this book fills that gap.

Part of the value of the book is that it gives very practical, specific help on the issue of how to raise finances in the local church – a perennial topic in the minds of church leaders. Rod believes that, pursued properly, this brings spiritual maturity and joy to the congregation rather than what leaders often fear, disharmony and conflict.

Rod contends that raising resources is based on four key principles. These are a compelling shared vision for the ministry, strong leadership by the senior minister, raising faith through teaching generosity and having a gracious way to ask.

The book also tells how Rod grappled with these issues at Figtree Anglican Church in Wollongong, where he was the senior minister for 20 years.

While there is a clear explanation of the specific “how to” of funding week-by-week ministry, he also uses his experience of a multimillion-dollar building program to discuss the special issues involved in other projects, including very large capital items. If you are wondering about raising money for a new building for instance, you will find very useful guidance here. There is also a very helpful chapter on how to request support from financially successful congregational members without compromising your biblical standards or alienating the potential giver.

You may think I’m appealing to the worst part of your nature by offering raw pragmatism and the magic bullet on how to avert, or manage, a church budget crisis. However, Rod’s book has thoughtful theological reflections on biblical generosity, the actual process of asking, the so-called prosperity gospel and especially on whether tithing is a biblical principle for new covenant saints.

My suggestion is, read it and get copies for your deacons, wardens and parish council to start helpful conversations. While you may not agree with everything I will be surprised if you’re not significantly impacted by its conclusions, for in the end it’s a powerful story of how one man and one church wanted to “excel in the grace of giving”.

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*The Rev Ray Galea is the senior minister at St Alban’s Anglican Multicultural Bible Ministry in Rooty Hill.*