

Southern CROSS

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THE NEWS MAGAZINE FOR SYDNEY ANGLICANS



Chapel plus

THE MULTI-LAYERED ROLE OF SCHOOL CHAPLAINS

- + The cult of Beautiful People
- & Rescuing the poor in Pakistan



COVER

In our church communities there are women and men being physically, emotionally and spiritually abused by their spouses right now. Think it doesn't happen? P10

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“ I am looking forward to working together with churches as we seek to proclaim the good news of salvation through Jesus Christ ”

Rev Dr Michael Stead
Sydney News



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NCNC has designs on Stanhope Gardens

Outstanding in their field: Steve Reimer (left) and Geoff Bates, the rector of Life Anglican Church at Quakers Hill, which oversees Stanhope Gardens.

ARCHITECTS HAVE BEEN APPOINTED TO DESIGN A MULTIPURPOSE AUDITORIUM ON A 1.8-HECTARE site at Stanhope Gardens in Sydney's north-west.

The site has been at the top of the priorities of the Mission Property Committee (MPC) which is charged with acquiring land in newly established or "greenfields" areas of the Sydney Diocese.

The job of fundraising for the site now falls to New Churches for New Communities (NCNC), which has been established by Archbishop Davies to help fund infrastructure on MPC sites.

Stanhope Gardens is within The Ponds greenfield land release area, where 4200 homes have been built or are nearing completion, and construction will begin on another 4500 in the next two years.

Ivan Lee, Bishop of Western Sydney, says a ministry centre in this area will be vital.

"While a church is not the building good facilities do help, which means we can then run ministries during the week," Bishop Lee says.

A church plant involving members of the adjoining Rouse Hill parish and others, began in 2006 at the Stanhope Gardens Leisure Centre.

The church plant has steadily grown with the surrounding population to more than 100 adults and children, and outreach events have already been held in a marquee at the site.

"The interesting thing is when [Rouse Hill] was only 70 members they still took eight out and started the plant at Stanhope Gardens," Bishop Lee says. "So our plants already have plants and that's very exciting to see."

Church planter Steve Reimer believes the site is strategically located. "It is fantastic, on the main road right next to the ARV and the shops," he says.

The New Churches for New Communities executive director Glenn Gardner says NCNC is "delighted to be involved in what will be the first of its joint projects with the Mission Property Committee.

"The challenge the Archbishop has given us to raise funds to provide facilities for Christian ministries in the growth corridor of south-west and north-west Sydney is as strategic as it is daunting. To raise the \$2.5 million needed for the Stanhope Gardens project will be a challenge but one which, with the support of our diocesan family, is achievable."

Plans are being drawn up for a multipurpose auditorium to seat 250 people, including facilities to meet the needs of children and families in the community. A development application will be lodged with Blacktown City Council in November and it is hoped construction will start by October next year.

Southern CROSS AUGUST 2015

The bells of St Hilda's



Bells will ring: the Rev. Ray Robinson outside St. Hilda's, Katoomba.

WHEN PARISHES THINK ABOUT OUTREACH, GETTING A SET OF BELLS ISN'T USUALLY HIGH ON the list. But when someone offers to get you some, well, that changes things.

And that's how the Rev Ray Robinson at Katoomba is looking at the provision of a set of six bells – otherwise known as a "peal" – for his church.

"I frankly wasn't all that interested at first," he admits. "But when I reflected on it, we saw it as an opportunity for a gospel ministry and things developed from there."

The bell story began when Ron Shepherd from the Australian and New Zealand Association of Bellingrings (ANZAB) asked Mr Robinson a few years ago if he could visit to have a look at the St Hilda's belltower. He was excited by what he saw and offered to source some bells for the church.

Mr Robinson says that after he got his head around the concept, "I made it clear that the church's financial priorities were such that we really couldn't contribute any money to such things, but he said ANZAB would be happy to be the fundraising body.

"We really didn't have any trouble at all raising funds for the bells because people like the idea," he says. "People from England have donated money for this – they'll never hear the bells but they have happily given money for them! Locals have also started hearing about it, and they're getting very excited because many people are from a European background and they love church bells."

The six bells – four new and two second-hand (including a 298-kilogram 19th-century bell from a fort near the mouth of England's Humber River) – have been made and/or bought for the church. But they can't simply be installed as many thousands of dollars worth of work needs to be done on the belltower first.

One of St Hilda's churchwards, Sue Stones, explains that "the engineering part of the tower is fine, but the internal wooden structure has rotted and also it leaks, and water will damage bells".

She says the church has applied for a NSW Government Community Building Partnership grant to help things along, but even with church members providing free labour the total cost is estimated at \$40,000. "Everything from the ceiling needs to be replaced, and the floors need to be replaced, and there needs to be an opening in the floor for the bells to go in and for the sound to travel," she says. "But a major part of the cost is making it safe for people."

So there is no certain date yet by which church and community members will be trained in bellringing, the bells will be installed and the sound of them pealing will ring out from St Hilda's. But Mr Robinson is thinking ahead.

"I'm keen for it not just to be a novelty," he says. "Bellingrings will be invited to join the Bible study that will be part of the bellringing practices because we're keen that the reason we have a church is not lost in the activity."

"Katoomba is an arts community and it would be another aspect of the arts program we run at St Hilda's to engage our community in celebrating what God has given us in the arts and discovering more of the blessings he has for us – particularly the greatest blessing of all, the Lord Jesus."

Archbishop backs plebiscite plan

THE ARCHBISHOP OF SYDNEY, DR GLENN DAVIES, HAS CONGRATULATED THE PRIME MINISTER and the Coalition for backing a plebiscite on same-sex marriage.

The Federal Coalition party room rejected a free vote for Liberal and National MPs in the parliament, with Prime Minister Abbott saying that any change should be "the people's decision" by plebiscite or referendum.

In a statement released after the coalition vote in Canberra the Archbishop said, "I believe that marriage is a foundational concept to our society and indeed to human civilisation as a whole, in accordance with God's own plan for all people, and it is intrinsic to the continuation of the human race as the bedrock of the family from which succeeding generations are born.

"Despite the relentless campaign by some sections of the community, it is only now that other views are starting to be heard in the media, not just from the churches. The discussion must include the implications for children and the family unit, not just sloganeering.

"Mr Abbott has been consistent and forthright on this issue, and it is clear he recognises the national importance of a debate about the definition of marriage as well as the strength of feeling on both sides. Yet the debate has been unhelpfully politicised, which is why it should be decided by the people directly. "If the majority of Australians desire a change to the time-honoured understanding of marriage, then so be it. The Prime Minister is graciously offering this option so that we, the people, may have our say on the future of marriage in Australia."

Surry Hills churches link up



Team work: Toby Neal (centre) with Bishop Rob Forsyth and Surry Hills wardens. PHOTO: Glenn Wilmington

ST MICHAEL'S, SURRY HILLS AND A LOCAL ENC CHURCH PLANT, VINE CHURCH, ARE JOINING FORCES under the leadership of Vine Church's pastor, the Rev Toby Neal.

The move comes as the previous rector of St Michael's, the Rev Francis Chalwell, moved into a new role with Anglicare as a lead chaplain with Chesalon. Mr Neal was formally inducted as rector of St Michael's in early August.

"Vine Church has been an ENC plant that has grown and we were on our way to becoming a recognised church," Mr Neal says. "With Francis leaving for a new role, Rob [Forsyth, Bishop of South Sydney] suggested that we join with St Michael's, bringing together our different resources into one church."

St Michael's, a parish church for 161 years, has always tried to be a church for all people in Surry Hills, according to Mr Chalwell.

"Recently that's been characterised by an inner city style of ministry in a very secular and tribal environment," he says. "In the community there is not always a lot of connection; the big dogs don't mix with the little dogs. My hope for the church, now with Vine and its people, is to continue reaching out to the people of the inner city who are otherwise lost to the gospel."

Mr Neal says the union will allow ministry to expand, particularly in terms of increased mid-week work based out of St Michael's, with Sunday services continuing in Vine Church's current location at a local school hall. The Sunday attendance of the new combined church is about 200.

"Vine Church was on about reaching people in the city, making disciples and then growing them," he says. "We still want to do that in the parochial context but, together with St Michael's, we're adding more demographics."

"We're bringing in ministry to the marginalised, which we haven't really done before at Vine for lack of resources and facilities. We're also looking to further reach families, and do more international ministry. But with all those different people, the idea is always to continue making and growing disciples."

Mr Chalwell says that, while the original planting of Vine Church in the parish was a difficult time for St Michael's, he is genuinely looking forward to seeing the next step in ministry for the new combined church in Surry Hills.

"When Vine came into the area I originally spoke against the ordinance, to tell the truth," he says. "But over time, I've come to respect, and not only that, to also like Toby. He's been consistent in his ministry, obviously, and I've also seen Toby grow in his leadership and character as well.

"When the Bishop brought up the possible union I was actually pleased, because both Toby and I have worked hard to develop their ministry in the inner city. They've had to put a lot on the line for that and I really look forward to seeing that kind of commitment continue in a parish context."

Says Mr Neal: "I am thankful to God for the faithful leadership over 15 years of Francis Chalwell. He is a man whose compassion and love has set a high bar for me to aspire to.

"To me, the big story is that people in Surry Hills are getting saved. Sure, there's a new joining of a church, I'm in charge of a parish, but I think the big story is that ministry has grown in an area that is very secular, very stratified, but by God's grace he has gathered his people together."

Riding for Seafarers



On the road: the Rev Ian Porter puts his bike through its paces ahead of the ride.

A CHRISTIAN MINISTER IS RIDING HIS BIKE FROM MELBOURNE TO SYDNEY TO HELP RAISE MONEY for the Mission to Seafarers.

The Rev Ian Porter, currently senior chaplain to the Mission, who has also previously served as the rector of Ermington Anglican, says he's undertaking the ride in order to help support the work the Mission does among ship crews.

"One of the ideas I came up with among our fundraising group – which must have been in a moment of wild fancy – was to ride a bike," he says. "I originally was thinking of doing Sydney to Hobart, but it was a nightmare logistically, so I ended up settling for Melbourne, which is still over 1000km. It'll be me, and my wife in the ambulance as it were. The idea is to try and raise some funds to help sustain the ministry."

Much of the ministry of the Mission is to support seafarers when they are in port, often through very practical means such as transport, arranging ways of contacting families and providing chaplaincy services either on shore or on decked vessels. Mr Porter says the main reasons for the decline in funding have come about because of a decreased interest on the part of shipping companies in supporting the work, and a larger number of locations to try to service.

"A lot of the support we used to have from companies in terms of assisting with the costs of buses and things like that has dried up," he says. "It now costs us a lot of money to run that sort of thing. We don't charge the seafarers for it, because of all the services we provide that is the single one they prize most highly, mostly due to the cost of cab fares and the like. We want to be able to continue do these things, to continue to open doors for the gospel in this area."

The ride will take place across 12 days, firstly from Melbourne to Albury, then through Wagga Wagga and northwards before Mr Porter makes his way eastbound over the Blue Mountains and into Sydney.

Mr Porter says he hopes the ride will make a significant contribution to the work of the Mission.

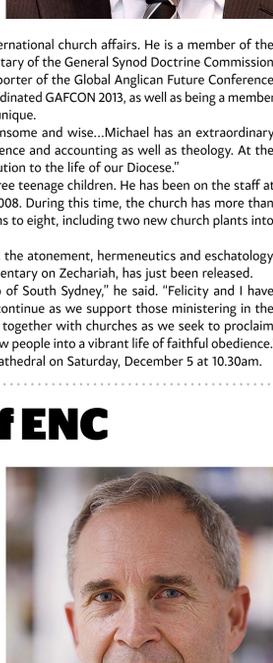
"I suppose I would hope, and that people would pray, that it would be worthwhile," he says. "Also, when it gets unpleasant, which over 1000 kilometres it's bound to, that'll be able to keep the big picture in mind. This is an important ministry, both as an opportunity to share the gospel with people who otherwise typically have no exposure to it during their working lives, or with others who spend long stretches of time away from their family and their churches."

The Mission to Seafarers, originally the Mission to Seamen, is an Anglican local Sydney begun in the 1850s. The Sydney branch grew out of both the C of E Mission and the earlier local Sydney Bethel Union.

Sth Sydney's scholar bishop

THE ARCHBISHOP OF SYDNEY, DR GLENN DAVIES, HAS ANNOUNCED HE HAS CHOSEN THE REV DR MICHAEL STEAD to be the next Bishop of South Sydney.

Dr Stead (right) will replace Bishop Robert Forsyth, who retires in December after 15 years in the position. Dr Stead holds a Bachelor of Commerce degree from the University of NSW, is an honours graduate of Moore College and was awarded a PhD by the University of Gloucestershire in 2007. He is also a part-time lecturer in Old Testament at Moore.



The Standing Committee of the Diocese of Sydney confirmed the appointment late in August.

In a speech to the committee commending his new bishop Archbishop Davies said, "For the past 60 years a scholar has adorned the ranks of the college of bishops in the Diocese of Sydney, including Marcus Loane, Donald Robinson, Paul Barnett and Peter Jensen. To my mind this is an admirable tradition which has served our Diocese well, and I believe that Michael's appointment as an assistant bishop will enhance our episcopal leadership in the Diocese, in the national church and beyond."

Dr Stead has extensive experience in national and international church affairs. He is a member of the General Synod Standing Committee and has been secretary of the General Synod Doctrine Commission for the past decade. Internationally he is an active supporter of the Global Anglican Future Conference (GAFCON) and was a key member of the team that co-ordinated GAFCON 2013, as well as being a member of the writing group that produced the Nairobi Communiqué.

The Archbishop described Dr Stead as "intelligent, winsome and wise...Michael has an extraordinary mix of skills and competencies, including computer science and accounting as well as theology. At the age of 46, he has already made an outstanding contribution to the life of our Diocese."

Dr Stead is married to Felicity, and the couple have three teenage children. He has been on the staff at St James', Surramurra since 2000, becoming rector in 2008. During this time, the church has more than doubled in size, growing from four Sunday congregations to eight, including two new church plants into local primary schools.

Dr Stead's research interests include biblical theology, the atonement, hermeneutics and eschatology. He has written four books and his latest work, a commentary on Zechariah, has just been released.

"I am humbled and honoured to be appointed Bishop of South Sydney," he said. "Felicity and I have always had a passion for parish ministry and this will continue as we support those ministering in the South Sydney Region. I am looking forward to working together with churches as we seek to proclaim the good news of salvation through Jesus Christ and draw people into a vibrant life of faithful obedience."

The consecration service will be held in St Andrew's Cathedral on Saturday, December 5 at 10.30am.

New director of ENC

THE BOARD OF EVANGELISM AND NEW CHURCHES (ENC) HAS ANNOUNCED THAT THE REV PHIL WHEELER will be its new director, continuing its work of evangelism and church planting.

Mr Wheeler (right) replaces the Rev Bruce Hall who has directed the organisation for the past four years.

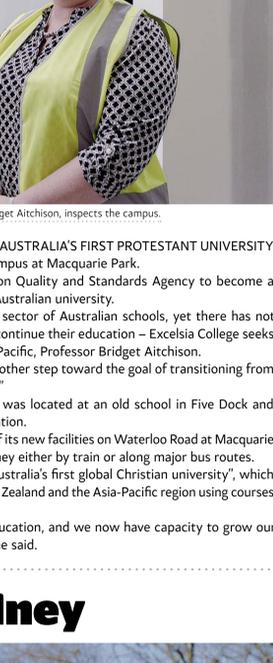
ENC grew from the well-established Department of Evangelism, run by the late evangelist John Chapman over four decades in the 20th century.

As well as providing and training evangelists, ENC also took on the task of raising up church planters, planting new churches and working alongside parishes in their church planting with a special focus on ethnic ministry opportunities.

Chairman of ENC the Rev Archie Bruce paid tribute to the outgoing director saying, "Bruce Hall has been tireless in calling us to gospel opportunities, especially among the changing population of our Diocese, and has been relentless in enabling us to commence new ministries. He has excited a whole generation for evangelistic church planting through his personal advice and constant challenge to honour Christ."

The Archbishop has asked Mr Hall to continue as a cross-cultural ministry consultant for the Diocese.

Phil Wheeler comes to the role after 12 years as rector of Gladsville. Prior to that he was involved in university ministry. He currently sits on the boards of Katoomba Christian Convention and Anglican Deaconess Ministries.



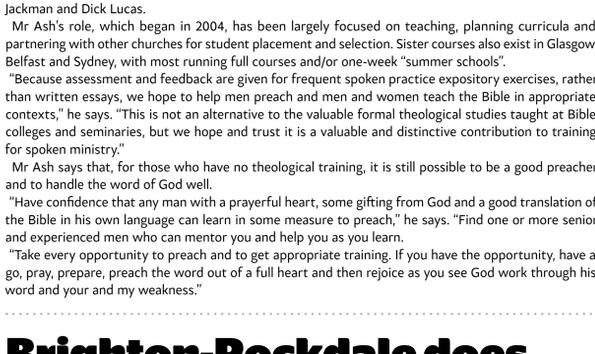
"The entire board of ENC is convinced of the importance of the ministry of ENC and we prayed fervently that God would raise up the right man for the task," Mr Poulos said. "We are absolutely delighted and thankful to God for Phil's acceptance of this position. Phil brings to ENC years of wise ministry experience, sharp evangelistic gospel thinking and an outstanding ability to gather people together in mission."

The new director said he believed it was imperative for ENC to be developing "new and bold, risk-taking initiatives in mission across the city. The biggest resource we have, apart from the Lord Jesus himself and his Spirit and word at work, is to thousands upon thousands of Christians in every church, every week," Mr Wheeler said. "We've got to work at the basic, evangelistic and missional reach of every person. We need a lot of encouragement because it is getting harder and harder to do, especially as our culture increasingly regards us as weird and doesn't want to hear from us."

Mr Wheeler also signalled his predecessor's priority on cross-cultural mission will continue.

"We have done quite well with Chinese churches, and some reaching those of Korean background, but there are whole new untapped cultures and subcultures from South-East Asia and the Middle East," he said. "ENC is one of the key organisations promoting mission and outreach in a city that in 25 years' time will have a million more people and be even more culturally diverse."

Christian campus opens



New facilities: The Vice-Chancellor of Excelsia College, Professor Bridget Aitchison, inspects the campus.

EXCELSIA COLLEGE, WHICH IS BIDDING TO BECOME AUSTRALIA'S FIRST PROTESTANT UNIVERSITY, HAS relocated to a purpose-built 5000 square metre campus at Macquarie Park.

The college last year applied to the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency to become a university college in its journey towards becoming an Australian university.

"Christian secondary schools are the fastest growing sector of Australian schools, yet there has not been a Protestant Christian university where they can continue their education – Excelsia College seeks to change all this," said its vice-chancellor for the Asia Pacific, Professor Bridget Aitchison.

"The move to our new campus at Macquarie Park is another step toward the goal of transitioning from a higher education provider to an Australian university."

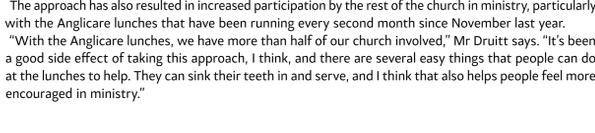
The venture grew out of the Wesley Institute, which was located at an old school in Five Dock and offered courses in counselling, music, drama and education.

At an open day on August 29 Excelsia College showed off its new facilities on Waterloo Road at Macquarie Park, which is accessible for students from across Sydney either by train or along major bus routes.

Professor Aitchison foreshadowed what she called "Australia's first global Christian university", which would have the capacity to expand across Australia, New Zealand and the Asia-Pacific region using courses and programs developed in Australia.

"There is no longer any need to separate faith and education, and we now have capacity to grow our courses and our student numbers to meet demand," she said.

Ash to visit Sydney



Heading down under: Christopher Ash, with his wife Carolyn.

THE REV CHRISTOPHER ASH, THE RECENTLY RETIRED DIRECTOR OF THE UK CORNHILL TRAINING Course, is in Sydney this month as part of Sydney Missionary Bible College's biennial preaching conference.

Mr Ash, who has stepped down from his role after 11 years, will preach – and teach others how to preach – from John's gospel, which has been a recent focus of his in the UK Cornhill program.

"As I have studied and preached from John, the strongest theme that keeps coming to the forefront is the wonderful and unique relationship between God the Father and his one and only Son," he says. "The beauty and majesty of this relationship is worthy of our careful meditation and worship – quite a bit more attention and care than perhaps we usually give to it."

The Cornhill course was begun in 1991 in the UK by the Proclamation Trust, under the headship of David Jackman and Dick Lucas.

Mr Ash's role, which began in 2004, has been largely focused on teaching, planning curricula and partnering with other churches for student placement and selection. Sister courses also exist in Glasgow, Belfast and Sydney, with most running full courses and/or one-week "summer schools".

"Because assessment and feedback are given for frequent spoken practice expository exercises, rather than written essays, we hope to help men preach and men and women teach the Bible in appropriate contexts," he says. "This is not an alternative to the valuable formal theological studies taught at Bible colleges and seminaries, but we hope and trust it is a valuable and distinctive contribution to training for spoken ministry."

Mr Ash says that, for those who have no theological training, it is still possible to be a good preacher and to handle the word of God well.

"Have confidence that any man with a prayerful heart, some gifting from God and a good translation of the Bible in his own language can learn in some measure to preach," he says. "Find one or more senior and experienced men who can mentor you and help you as you learn.

"Take every opportunity to preach and to get appropriate training. If you have the opportunity, have a go, pray, prepare, preach the word out of a full heart and then rejoice as you see God work through his word and your and my weakness."

Brighton-Rockdale does community ministry

BRIGHTON-ROCKDALE ANGLICAN CHURCH HAS BEEN CONNECTING WITH LOCAL COMMUNITY NGOs and agencies in order to serve the local area and open doors for the gospel.

The assistant minister at Brighton-Rockdale heading up much of this work, the Rev Marcus Druitt, says it grew out of his original role as an evangelist at the church.

"Originally I was fishing with a rod but there were problems, mostly that it was slow and difficult to incorporate the whole church into it," he says. "Instead, I've tried to take a net approach and have linked up with community agencies in the area, working out what their clients need and what we as a church can provide. The two key areas have been people dealing with domestic violence, and separate support for families."

One of the key connections has been with Anglicare. Brighton-Rockdale has acted as an emergency relief station for Anglicare, which the agency uses to provide supplies to people in the surrounding areas. This opens up opportunities for further connections by the church.

"We also run Anglicare lunches every couple of months, where we invite people who've come through the emergency relief program to lunch, to a program for kids and where the adults can have a break and hang out," Mr Druitt says. "We're also looking to try and get a playgroup up and running, and from there hopefully also link people into small groups as well. We've had one practice meeting of that playgroup and most of the people who are involved in getting that going are contacts we've made through the lunches."

Mr Druitt says, however, that it is easy in this kind of "community chaplaincy" work to only make superficial contact, and he is working hard to ensure the church makes meaningful, long-term contact with the community in a way that encourages people to join small groups and other similar programs run by the church.

"For instance, the emergency relief works well but we don't want to just fall into a transactional model where we're saying, 'Alright, here's your stuff, see you later,'" he says. "We want to keep in contact long term and make sure it has a face and fosters relationships. We're constantly trying to work out how best to encourage people to move along a path to discipleship of Jesus."

The approach has also resulted in increased participation by the rest of the church in ministry, particularly with the Anglicare lunches that have been running every second month since November last year.

"With the Anglicare lunches, we have more than half of our church involved," Mr Druitt says. "It's been a good side effect of taking this approach, I think, and there are several easy things that people can do at the lunches to help. They can sink their teeth in and serve, and I think that also helps people feel more encouraged in ministry."

MAG ministry prepares to close its doors

Help across the miles: Tanzanian Christians unload a container supplied by MAG. PHOTO: CMS

THE CHURCH MISSIONARY SOCIETY'S MISSION AID GROUP (MAG) IS PREPARING TO WIND UP ITS ministry in east Africa.

MAG exists to help support churches and other organisations in Tanzania in particular times of economic hardship, mostly by providing practical goods such as bibles, stationery, tools, toiletries and materials.

"I've only been involved in recent years because my husband and I were serving in Tanzania for a time," says MAG's chairwoman, Wendy Reed. "But I think, having seen the ministry from both ends, the legacy of MAG is simply that it has encouraged the church, provided material resources the church in Tanzania has used in its work, and also reminded the Christians there that they are not forgotten."

MAG began in 1981, 20 years after Tanzania gained independence from Britain. The late 1970s saw Tanzania experience severe economic depression, largely due to the conflict with Uganda under Idi Amin and subsequent factors that only began to lift in the mid- to late '80s. Tanzania has also been a haven for African refugees for many years.

According to Mrs Reed, a number of factors came into play in the decision to wind MAG back at this point, including the increasing self-sufficiency of the Tanzanian church and Tanzania in general, the increasing difficulty and cost of importing goods into Tanzania, and the declining volunteer workforce available in Australia.

"Tanzania today is quite different to the way it was then, so MAG needs to rethink its position as to what the future holds," she says. "When I returned from Tanzania and was asked to join the committee, I soon realised how much MAG depends on a few faithful people, who mostly are not getting any younger."

Over the years, several missionaries serving in Tanzania have returned on deputation to work and share with MAG personnel and increase the connection between the ministry and its beneficiaries.

The ministry has been a volunteer-run group since its inception and has been supported by the use of the basement at St Thomas', Kingsgrove as a depot. Typically, more than 20 volunteers turn up on a Tuesday to help pack containers, most being retirees.

"Just after I retired, I was thinking 'What does God want me to do with my life now?'" says MAG depot supervisor Rod James. "I ended up going along to one of the MAG celebration days, spoke to people there and they encouraged me to come along to the Tuesday packing days... On a typical day we'll pack boxes of various goods from 10 in the morning until 2 in the afternoon, and we send three containers a year to different dioceses in Tanzania."

The final MAG container to Tanzania is due to be packed and sent in November this year.

Couples head to new Gregory Hills church plant



From left to right: the Rev Gavin Oram, Shaun and Julia Bostock, Dan and Belinda Tooma, and the Rev Ray Galea at the commissioning.

TWO COUPLES FROM ST ALBAN'S MBM IN ROOTY HILL ARE HEADING OVER TO THE NEW GREGORY Hills church plant to help as that church heads into its next phase this year.

Shaun and Julia Bostock, and Dan and Belinda Tooma, were formally commissioned at Rooty Hill in mid-August and are already involved as part of the core team of 18 adults at Gregory Hills.

"They are really going out from us, with our support and we commissioned them at each service," says the rector of MBM, the Rev Ray Galea. "We started as a church plant ourselves in 1991 and the same thing was done then by Kurrajong Anglican when a couple was commissioned from there to here. I've always thought that was beautiful."

Gregory Hills Anglican is a relatively new church plant begun by Harrington Park Anglican, itself planted 13 years ago. The Rev Gavin Oram, who's heading up the plant, says it has been very much a multi-church venture.

"This is a high growth area, so going to Gregory Hills was kind of the first cab off the rank in terms of plants from Harrington," he says. "We've been gathering people, a couple of people each from a few different other churches as well, and we've been getting underway with outreach events. The plan is to start regular Sunday services before the end of the year."

He says that being able to attend the commissioning of the Bostocks and Toomas was a joyful experience "It was a blessing to see this whole church wanting to be behind us," he says. "It's also humbling, of course, because MBM is a happening kind of church and here are people willing to leave that to serve in a situation that's risky and small compared to where they've been."

Belinda Tooma and her husband Dan became Christians through a Christianity Explained course run by MBM six years ago. They and the Bostocks live in the Gregory Hills area and came into contact with the church plant at one of its local outreach events.

"We chatted with Gavin [Oram] about how we could be involved, but at that point Dan and I didn't really view ourselves as potentially joining that church permanently," Mrs Tooma says. "But the more we prayed about it we realised that God was putting it on our hearts to be involved in this church plant."

Mrs Tooma says that, while in some respects the move has been difficult, it has also been encouraging that she goes with the blessing and ongoing support of her first church.

"MBM was where I came to faith and I haven't really had exposure to other churches before," she says. "But Ray also mentioned that while we're leaving the building, we're not really leaving the church. The church is where God's people are, and we're still going to be doing God's work with them."



Sydney backs miracles

Morning at the Miracle School.

THE ARCHBISHOP OF SYDNEY'S ANGLICAN AID HAS TAKEN ON LAHORE'S MIRACLE SCHOOL AS one of its official aid projects.

The move comes after a six-year link between the school and Sydney Anglicans Rob and Sue Webb from the parish of Bulli. On a short-term mission with CMS in Pakistan in 2010, the pair was introduced to the school and assisted in the work among bonded child workers at Lahore's brick kilns.

"Brick kilns in Pakistan are terrible places where the workers are bonded to the owner by debt," Sue Webb told *Southern Cross*. "Often debts have been originally incurred by parents or even grandparents. The whole family works moulding bricks up to 12 hours a day, seven days a week. Even then they do not earn sufficient money to feed themselves."

The school was established by Pakistani Christians to give education and hope to the child workers, as well as the city's orphans and destitute children.

"The Miracle School teachers are completely committed to their work," Mrs Webb says. Their aim is to educate the children so they can escape bondage, earn a viable living and grow in Christian maturity."

School runs from 7am to lunchtime Monday to Thursday, allowing the children to return to work in the afternoons to earn their living. In keeping with the timetable in Muslim Pakistan, Christian worship is on Fridays, although each day of lessons starts with prayer and praise.

Mrs Webb explains that "the school provides immunisations and tries to support the families with rations to help them through the monsoon season. I quickly understood the school's determination to make Christmas and Easter a special time, with a big celebration of worship, a plate of rice and some little gift – perhaps a pencil or a ruler. Joy is a wonderful thing to share in the name of Jesus."

Rob Webb says the couple were "amazed and inspired" by the transformation in children's lives and the commitment of the teachers, as well as their dependence on God under trying circumstances.

"This is how God works so amazingly at this school, where they do indeed see miracles as they depend on him," he says.

The ministry has grown exponentially, from a class of 30 children in a living room to more than 400 students in Lahore and another 200 at the brick kiln school.

Anglican Aid project manager Eddie Ozols visited the school this year and describes the main school as having "children crammed into every nook and cranny possible, including under outside eaves".

He was told of a Christian couple seized by a mob, accused of blasphemy against Islam. "They were then thrown alive into a brick kiln where they died, leaving three children being cared for by the Miracle School," Mr Ozols says.

Anglican Aid moved to endorse the school as one of its official projects after being told another source of funding had dried up, leaving the school in crisis. "We had no hesitation," Mr Ozols says.

Anglican Aid has named the project Exodus 5, a reference to the biblical account of Hebrew slaves making bricks in Egypt.

Sue Webb, who led the children in singing Colin Buchanan songs when working at the school, believes Sydney can give prayer and financial support as well as music.

"There is no big multinational backing, but rather serious prayer and relentless love for the children," she says.

<http://anglicanaid.org.au/projects/exodus-5-project>

Piper joins Planned Parenthood protests



PROMINENT CHRISTIAN PREACHER AND AUTHOR JOHN PIPER HAS JOINED THOUSANDS OF PRO-life supporters in the US protesting about the Planned Parenthood company amid a scandal over the sale of body parts.

A series of covertly recorded videos appears to show discussions about the sale of organs from aborted babies, sourced from Planned Parenthood facilities. Even though such sales would be illegal, the story has attracted little attention from the mainstream media.

Russell Moore, president of the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention, America's largest Protestant denomination, said the videos left him speechless. "These children may be just another line item in the abortion industry's profit ledger but they share the humanity of our Lord Jesus – and we must plead for justice for them," he said.

Protesters gathered at more than 300 abortion clinics around the US to pray against abortion and the baby parts trade. John Piper, who attended the protest in St Paul, Minnesota, said the demonstrators were firm but respectful.

"We were asked to raise our hands if this was the first ever pro-life demonstration we had attended," Dr Piper said. "The number was huge."

Church rises in Calais camp

A makeshift church has risen in the migrant camp known as "The Jungle" in the French town of Calais. Made of wood scraps and tarpaulin, the nominally Ethiopian Orthodox Church, known as St Michael's, Calais, draws a variety of Christians from the camp. Many have faced persecution in their home countries of Libya, Syria, Ethiopia and Eritrea.

The camp has drawn criticism as inhabitants, desperate to get to Britain, have stormed the Channel Tunnel and clashed with police. The BBC religious program *Songs of Praise* recently filmed an episode in the camp, although there was criticism that the show, in the midst of a debate over asylum seekers in Britain, was political.

"The program is not a political statement on the situation or a judgement on migration," said the BBC's head of religion and ethics, Aaqil Ahmed. "*Songs of Praise* is simply reflecting the conversations going on in churches and Christian households around the country."

Further persecution in Sudan

Two pastors held in the Sudanese capital Khartoum have been freed but authorities have sentenced a teenage Christian girl to be whipped for wearing trousers.

The Rev Michael Yat and the Rev Peter Reith of the South Sudanese Presbyterian Evangelical Church were charged with undermining the constitution and espionage but freed after an international outcry.

Since then, a group of teenagers was rounded up after attending a Baptist service in Khartoum. They were taken to a police station, forced to strip and several were charged under Sudan's indecent dress code. Nineteen-year-old Fardos al-Toum was sentenced to 20 lashes. Observers believe it is another case of Christians being singled out for persecution or harsh treatment.

Good and bad in Nepal's constitution

A new draft constitution being discussed by Nepal's parliament may prove to be one step forward and two steps back for Christians. While two sections of constitutional amendments appear to give churches the right to exist in Nepal for the first time and practise their beliefs, a third section would make conversion unlawful.

TIP OF THE ICEBERG

I read your cover feature "Victim to their charms" (SC, August) with a mix of reactions. Primarily, I gave thanks to God for the sensitivity and wisdom of Anne Lim (and the team) for shining a light into the darkest of places within the Anglican Church. I was also enormously grateful for the courage of all the women and men who shared their often-harrowing stories of being a victim many times over – first at the hand of their tormentors and then repeatedly from the leadership within their church whom they turned to for help.

I was saddened, though, by the fact that it required a secular journalist to uncover this story in the first place. And disgusted in the way the church has responded to so many people desperately crying out for help. In so doing, church leaders and communities will be held to account for all the people who have remained in dangerous situations due to their unbelief and faulty theology. The reality is that these stories published are just the tip of the iceberg, as I am sure the appointed DV taskforce will begin to expose.

Finally, I was hopeful for the way God seems to be shifting the attitudes and levels of awareness of church leaders so they can respond appropriately in and outside the pulpit. The problem is not going to go away, but my prayer is that God uses this article as a stepping stone in addressing the prevalence of domestic violence within the church and society as a whole.

Cameron Smith
Kellyville

Anne Lim's article highlights aspects of the current discussion about domestic violence that has seemingly brought everyone out to join the bandwagon. While some aspects are helpful, others appear little more than gestures from ignorance.

However, Steve Wakeford's insightful comments are particularly helpful, loving and discerning. Perhaps his years of seeing DV face to face in his time as a policeman have assisted him to look carefully into God's word and apply it with Jesus' compassion. As a survivor of DV who has remained silent for many years, Wakeford's words were like cool water after years in a desert where my very church "family" has ignored my pleas for help.

Living with a partner who is abusive is frightening, exhausting and deeply lonely; but when freed from that terror, trying to navigate the new life becomes a minefield of protecting self and children from the same former partner, making ends meet when we often start with nothing, or worse, debt. We frequently have no home, few friends and great fear.

Talk of committees and further training reeks of red tape and inaction – spineless puffing up. Certainly we must have good theology, but this is already well attended to. What is desperately needed is for our clergy to call on their parishioners to reach out with loving care, and to do so leading by example.

An Anglican survivor

Congratulations for giving voice to victims of intimate partner abuse in Church circles, both female and male ("Victim to their charms", SC, August).

Christian doctrine can and will be abused by abusers. Abusive males will abuse "submission". Abusive females will abuse "love". But the problem is the abusive sinner, not Christian doctrine.

Yet the Church adds its own abuse through muddled and legalistic teaching on divorce. In its proper context, divorce is God's gracious provision of escape. If it is banned – or even attacked – by misguided but well-meaning pastors, victims of abuse are implicitly or explicitly forced to stay in their horrific situation for far too long.

When someone's partner has already destroyed the marriage, showing that they do not wish to be married, Paul (and so God) addresses a clear word. He says, if they do not wish to be married to you, then: "Let them go"! (1 Cor 7:15).

This is the way to God's "peace". Shouldn't this be the pastoral advice? The gospel medicine is there. Why is it not being used? The system seems to have its own "charms" that need to be reformed for victims' sake.

Name withheld

Reading your cover story brought tears with my heart aching as I read the hatred and horrible attitude of those involved in domestic violence towards those they say they love. I grew up in poverty from a broken home caused by my Mum's unfaithfulness and the abysmal violence Mum inflicted on every man in her life – including me.

Mum's sinful life and selfishness taught me there was a better way to live. I taught my boys to always be respectful and loving, and never abuse or use violence against women. They learnt early that, no matter what the grievance, violence or abuse is the weapon of a manipulative, misogynistic man. Love the women in your life as if it is your last day. Love your wife and be prepared to lay down your life for her – that is true love. When you're in the wrong, man up: say sorry, and I guarantee everyone will feel better. Sorry should never be so hard to say.

I do not believe any husband should force his wife to submit to his rule – as an old saying states, "You can lead a horse to water but you cannot make it drink".

Carl Beauchamp
Ambarvale

Women or men who need to talk through issues related to domestic abuse should contact the Domestic Violence Helpline on 1800 656 463. Anglicare also runs specialised counselling services across the Diocese. For information contact its Family Relationship Centres on 9895 8144 (Parramatta) or 4424 7150 (Nowra).

MARRIAGE LICENCE MOVES

I was pleased that Bishop Robert Forsyth thinks the church should "stay as engaged as we possibly can" rather than too quickly break the relationship between Christian marriage and the state ("New urgency on marriage licence moves", SC, August).

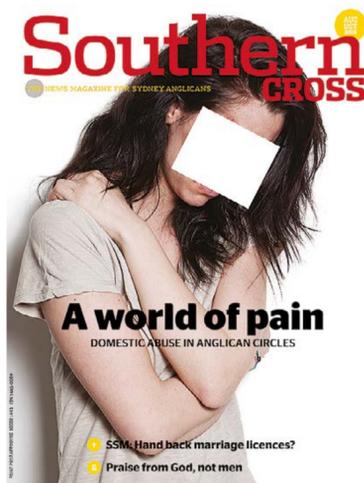
The bishop was responding to a vote of the Presbyterian State Assembly to withdraw the church from the Marriage Act if same-sex marriage is legalised. The Moderator commented that Presbyterian churches could then offer "religious marriages" after such withdrawal and said that couples "may also choose to have a civil marriage". I imagine they all would, as the Moderator does not explain how marriages not performed by an authorised celebrant would be either legal or registerable.

Marriages, baptisms and funerals have often been helpful points of contact between the church and members of the community, and it would be a backward step to sever the long relationship between Christian marriage and the state. Only 30 per cent of Australian couples now have a church wedding and this figure would decrease further if it were necessary to top it up with a civil ceremony in order to have the marriage registered.

The Presbyterians are jumping at shadows, as there is no doubt that any recognition of same-sex marriage in Australia would provide appropriate protection for those with conscientious objections.

Apparently the UK legislation exempts churches from having to perform same-sex marriages, and a similar provision could be expected if legislation is approved in Australia.

James Moore
Kingsgrove





MOVES

WINDSOR WORKER

After 5½ years as senior assistant minister to St Paul’s, Chatswood, the **Rev Chris Jones** will become rector of St Matthew’s, Windsor on September 12.

Mr Jones says that while funding constraints at Chatswood were the initial reason behind the move, he and his wife Kerry “have been asking and praying that the Lord would put us in the place where he wants us to be... we just feel like his hand is in this”.

Prior to his time at Chatswood Mr Jones was rector at Norwest – where current Chatswood rector Steve Jeffreys was his assistant, so the two have worked together for nearly 16 years. Mr Jones says it has been “fantastic” to be part of a staff team that has “a lot of unity and love within it”, and as he moves back to a rector’s role at Windsor he plans to go with the same sense of love for those under his care.

“I want to be a servant, have a teaching ministry and love the people of God,” he says. “I’m very passionate to do parish-based pastoral ministry. It’s deeply fulfilling working among the people of God, nurturing them in Christ and seeking to reach out in the context we find ourselves in.

“We’re really looking forward to meeting people and getting to know them. We’re not going with some big program worked out... we will listen and discover and work out what sort of ministry can go forward from there.”

new faces at moore

The governing board of Moore College has approved the nomination by principal the Rev Dr Mark Thompson of two new members of the faculty: **Dr Chase Kuhn** (far right) and **Dr Chris Thomson** (right).

Dr Kuhn, who recently completed a PhD on the doctrine of the Church in the writings of former Archbishop of Sydney Donald Robinson and long-time college principal Broughton Knox, grew up and studied in the US and has spent the past three years on the ministry staff at St Thomas’, North Sydney. He will be lecturing in Christian Thought and Ministry.



Dr Thomson is an Oxford law graduate who spent time in lay parish ministry before studying theology at Oak Hill College in London and the University of Cambridge, gaining a PhD in biblical studies from the latter.

He has taught Hebrew at Cambridge and Hebrew, Greek and Old Testament at Oak Hill. At Moore he will be lecturing in Old Testament and Ministry.

Mark Thompson said of the new appointments: “I am delighted that both Chase and Chris are able to join us. Chase is a very fine preacher as well as an engaging teacher and keen theological thinker. Chris is an insightful exegete and a very promising scholar who has exercised a valued ministry in his local church in the UK.

“These men will both make significant contributions to what is already an enviable faculty team. I can’t wait for them both to be in place. I know the students will really appreciate them.”

IN BRIEF

The **Rev Antony Barraclough** will become the rector of West Pymble in November. More in a future edition.

The **Rev Grahame Defty** died on July 24. More in a future edition.



VALE

The longest-serving headmistress of St Catherine’s School in Waverley, **Miss Faith Patterson AM**, died on July 5 aged 89.

Dorothy Faith Patterson was born on November 3, 1925 and grew up on Sydney’s north shore, where she attended Hornsby Girls’ High School. She studied science at the University of Sydney, graduating with honours, and then taught science and geography at Newcastle Girls’ High.

In 1955, at the age of only 28, Miss Patterson was invited to become headmistress of St Catherine’s – a position she would hold for the next 33 years until her retirement in 1987.

She valued the Christian ethos of the school and her background with the Inter-School Christian Fellowship in Newcastle, Scripture Union and her work in drop-in centres reinforced her belief in the need for a socially focused, caring perspective on education.

During Miss Patterson’s time at St Catherine’s enrolments grew from 200 to 900, and she was ahead of her time in offering scholarships to indigenous girls as well as sponsoring students from Fiji, Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands through the Colombo Plan.

Miss Patterson served three times as president of the Association of Heads of Independent Girls Schools in Australia, representing the association at UNESCO from 1964-73. She also served on various NSW School Commission committees, the Sydney Diocesan Education Board and was a member of Sydney Synod for many years – well into her retirement. In 1980 she was made a member of the Order of Australia for services to education and, earlier this year, a new school house – Patterson – was named after her.

The archivist at St Catherine’s and an old girl of the school, Evangeline Galettis, says the students valued her as “a friend to whom they could always go for counsel that would not only be wise but friendly, frank and understanding.

“She once was asked why she became a headmistress – her answer was that it was God’s calling to minister, and she did to so many,” she says. “Miss Patterson changed my life and the lives of many generations of women, and opened us to opportunities we would never otherwise have known.”

Aged care sowers

BEN BOLAND

ONE OF THE PRIVILEGES OF WORKING IN AGED CARE MINISTRY IS THAT WE, AS CHAPLAINS, ARE often praised by staff and, more particularly, by residents and family members.

This praise rarely comes for proclaiming Christ crucified, but more often is for the love we show those in our care. We sit quietly with relatives and friends as they grieve because a loved one suffering dementia no longer recognises them. We pray gently with a couple married for more than 65 years as they walk in the valley of death. We chat with "Mary", whose conversation no longer makes sense in terms of the reality we live in.

However important this is, as gospel workers our goal is not merely to comfort and console but bring glory to God by proclaiming Christ's message of salvation. This rarely results in praise.

Lack of praise for proclaiming the gospel is hardly surprising. One cannot expect those who do not know the hope and joy of salvation to see its significance. Furthermore, staff and family members often fail to realise we are working hard to minister to them as well as to residents. We are proclaiming Christ in word and deed as we journey with them through what can be the most difficult times of their lives.

This dynamic of praise for little things and silence for big begs the question: what really is our function? As humans we crave praise and our role, as chaplains, is tough. Praise can be a ray of light in a painful space where grief and confusion reign.

However, as gospel workers we want to see God's kingdom grow and be single-minded in our service to him. This can complicate our role. While we want people to hear the good news, we recognise that "Bible bashing" is not biblical. We take our example from Jesus' response to the sick and grieving. So we are constantly looking for opportunities to share Jesus, but recognise people often do not want to hear or cannot hear this message. This can be due to medical issues such as hearing loss, cognitive impairment and pain, as well as spiritual issues such as pride and selfishness.

Since reading the Rev Dr Lionel Windsor's article "Praise from people or praise from God?" (SC, August), I have been reflecting on the parable of the sower as an image for aged care chaplaincy.

The sower's function is to plant the seed of the good news, but he or she is not responsible for its germination and growth. We should, and do, try to present the gospel powerfully and appropriately, but salvation and growth are always miracles of God. We recognise that in order to sow we must be in the field.

We also recognise that people – particularly those who do not know Jesus as Christ – often see our loving action as that of a gentle walker who wanders the "fields" comforting the "plants", many of whom are frail in body and mind. But ultimately we walk the fields with purpose. Our frequent pauses are not signs of aimless ephemeral niceness but evidence of our endeavour to effectively and lovingly proclaim the faith to all we meet.

We need our Father to give us an undivided heart so we can love as he loves and not be blown and tossed about by well-meaning praise. We long that we might love, in word and deed, for God's glory alone and in his strength. We need to pray the good news of Jesus will reach all people, including those to whom we minister, so his kingdom might grow.

Ben Boland is a chaplain with ARV.

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

Great mission



DR GLENN DAVIES

IN "ARCHBISHOP WRITES" LAST MONTH I STARTED TO OUTLINE THE WORK OF AN Archbishop. The breadth of the task, and the desire to fully inform you of all the responsibilities I undertake on your behalf, has led me to a second column. I have already written about the dual calling, given to parish clergy as well as bishops, to be both teachers of God's word and pastors of God's people. This is true of my visits to parishes around the Diocese and, in a wider sense, in my role as president of many Anglican schools and most diocesan organisations. I attend some of the councils or boards of these organisations regularly (Anglicare, Cathedral Chapter, Moore College, Ministry Training & Development, Property Trust) as well as preside over Synod and chair the monthly meetings of Standing Committee. These are important roles for the Archbishop as they keep him connected with the various aspects of the Diocese. Where time does not permit regular attendance at all school council meetings or all diocesan organisations, I schedule occasional visits to these boards and councils as my diary permits.

The office of Archbishop also carries with it the title of Metropolitan. This is a more ancient term than archbishop and reflects the position one "chief bishop" has over a number of dioceses. In Anglican polity a group of dioceses form a province and the chief bishop (hence archbishop) presides over provincial synods and consecrations of bishops. As Metropolitan the Archbishop has no jurisdiction over other dioceses in his province as the position is largely ceremonial, yet the title still carries with it a measure of respect and deference.

In the province of NSW there are seven dioceses and I maintain regular contact with each bishop as well as chairing the Provincial Synod's Standing Committee each year and visiting the dioceses from time to time. In the past 18 months I have spoken at conferences in Armidale and Goulburn; addressed the synods of Bathurst and Grafton; consecrated the Bishop of Riverina and an assistant bishop in Canberra & Goulburn; and welcomed the new Bishop of Newcastle at his installation.

By virtue of being both Archbishop of Sydney and Metropolitan, I have opportunity to represent the concerns of Anglicans at high levels of government. This is a very valuable ministry and one which the Archbishop is able to exercise on behalf of the Diocese and the province of NSW. Whether it be matters concerning refugees, SRE or same-sex marriage, upon each of which I have variously written to the Prime Minister and other ministers, we fortunately still live in a society where the Archbishop of Sydney's voice is able to be heard and media opportunities continue to be offered.

Space has not allowed me to cover everything that an archbishop does, as the issues that come across my desk are diffuse and unpredictable – including people who call upon me to advocate for their particular cause. The national church, through its General Synod and Standing Committee, plus other international issues also comprise significant commitments of my time.

Yet while the responsibilities of the office are frequently daunting, I am constantly encouraged by those who say they pray for me regularly. It is easy to become so distracted by the details of administration that one loses sight of the main game – to see Christ honoured as Lord and Saviour in every community. That is one reason why I am excited by the New Churches for New Communities initiative which will help to see our vision become reality in new areas of growth in the north-west and south-west sectors of Sydney. This initiative was officially launched last month and will go hand in hand with the generous contribution from every parish to the acquisition of land in these growth corridors of metropolitan Sydney.

Complacency is not an option for a Christian – and certainly not an option for an archbishop! The task of glorifying God is ongoing, sometimes difficult, often demanding, but always rewarding as it brings pleasure to our sovereign Lord: "for God is at work in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure" (Philippians 2:13).

Mission 2020 reminds us:

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

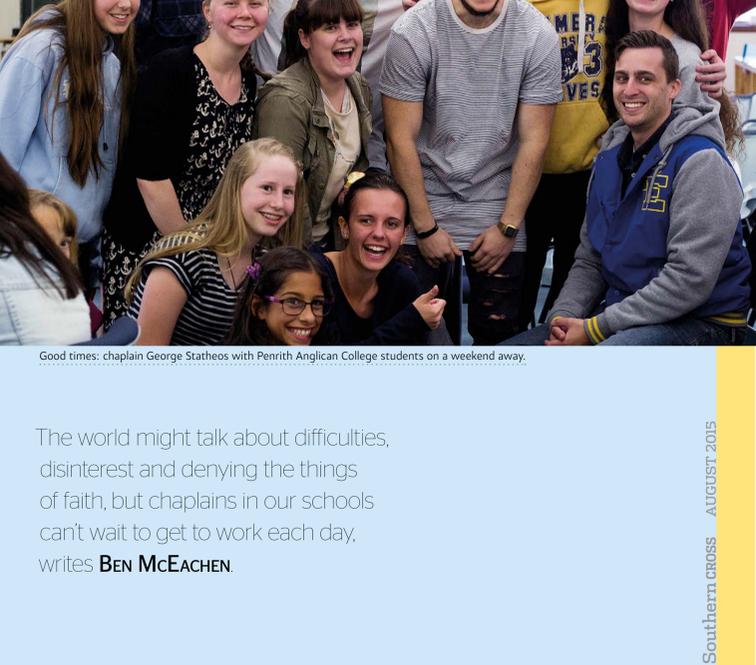
Please join me in prayer and action so that we might all glorify God through this great mission.

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.

School's in



Good times: chaplain George Statheos with Penrith Anglican College students on a weekend away.

The world might talk about difficulties, disinterest and denying the things of faith, but chaplains in our schools can't wait to get to work each day,

writes **BEN MCEACHEN**

AUGUST 2015

Southern Cross

18

VERY SCHOOL DAY ACROSS OUR DIOCESE PEOPLE SUCH AS GEORGE STATHEOS and Jenni Stoddart are on the mission field. A mission field that provides these Christian workers with incredible access to the future of God's kingdom. For Statheos and Stoddart are two of the chaplains at Anglican schools in Sydney, invested in helping young people learn to love Jesus Christ.

Depending on the day for Stoddart at Abbotsleigh – a pre-Kindergarten to Year 12 school for girls at Wahroonga – her chaplaincy role covers vast terrain. "What it might look like is preparing a Bible talk for chapel," begins Stoddart, who left parish-based ministry six months ago to join the school.

"I might then assist a student who is going to lead that chapel service [before] teaching a Christian Studies class or two. Then, I might knock into a staff member and realise that they don't look like themselves, so chat and pray with them. Then, visit a lunchtime Bible study group and help girls understand the Trinity." All of that by lunchtime.

Stoddart is a fledgling chaplain but her experiences are already similar in scope and possible impact to what senior chaplain Statheos has had during 14 years at Penrith Anglican College (PAC). Or those experienced by Greg Webster at Strathfield's Trinity Grammar School, Sarah Browne at Hurstville's Danebank, or Paul Dudley at Shore School (Sydney Church of England Grammar School) in North Sydney.

However, while shared experiences abound, the composition of each chaplain's role at Anglican schools in Sydney can be significantly different – even across the 15 schools in the Diocese that are operated by the Sydney Anglican Schools Corporation. While a diocesan ordinance covers school chaplaincy and chapels, flexibility within the ordinance allows for a non-standardised approach. Set upon a landscape of Christian education that varies from school to school, what a school chaplain in our Diocese looks like depends on where they are, who they are and what they are tasked with.

THE FOCUS

Some schools have one chaplain; others have more. Most chaplains organise and lead chapel services, as well as teach biblical studies or other subjects. Some chaplains also head the Christian Studies department and coach sport. Shore even has a community chaplain to engage with the weddings, baptisms, funerals and Old Boy networks affiliated with the school. Chaplains provide pastoral care to students, but this often extends to their families as well as to staff members. Where all chaplains used to be ordained clergy, these days plenty of lay people also fill chaplaincy positions.

With so many approaches and facets to the role, we might expect school chaplaincy to be a poorly focused or confused ministry. Combined with the rise of technology, atheistic questioning and social/political backlashes against Christianity, being on the frontline of developing minds looks like a bewildering and intimidating place to be. But it seems the opposite is true.

Statheos, Stoddart and their peers share a palpable bond of being excited by their job. They don't hesitate or fumble for words about why they do what they do. A key reason Stoddart became a chaplain echoes the sustained sentiments of her peers: "I especially embraced the opportunity to be with a group of about 1400 girls and for them to hear the gospel and be encouraged by it."

Statheos illustrates the same point by encapsulating his long-term ministry at PAC. With clear delight he says that "this year I am seeing out a group of students in Year 12 that I taught Christian Studies when they were in kindergarten. I remember my first kindy lesson with them.

"It feels like I've had them for this key period of their lives. Like in the book of Ecclesiastes, where the writer says, 'remember your Creator in the days of your youth', I see the significance of shaping the lives of young people. Giving them a Christian worldview – that is, whether they are a Christian or not, they are able to see the way God fits into our understanding of the world we live in."

Understanding the way we live in can feel like a perpetual battle for us all, let alone for younger people and those educating them through their formative years. What must it be like for school chaplains, given our world seems to daily add to the tally of things that deny, reject or denounce Christianity?

SO MUCH JOY

When school chaplains were asked about major issues or obstacles they confronted in their work with students, they tended to not instantly list social media, pornography, atheist vitriol or similar hot-button topics. Indeed, many had to be prompted before confirming those things were significant pastoral challenges – for boys and girls.

They weren't pretending cyber-bullying, body image, mental health or "God versus Science" problems don't exist in Anglican schools, or that all students are professing Christians and they were working in Christian sanctuaries impervious to the outside world. Instead, with amazing consistency, school chaplains across the Diocese didn't think their had become notably harder. They didn't report that the first three types of soil in the "parable of the scattered seeds" (Matthew 13:1-23) had multiplied or amplified.

"Anyone who is serious about sharing their faith and seeing God's glory go further in our country feels frustration and pain," says Stephen Edwards, senior chaplain at The King's School in North Parramatta. "But at the same time what a joy it is, week after week, to declare the beauty of what the Lord has done for us and the beauty of the Christian life."

Edwards' emphasis upon the joy of gospel ministry, amid the considerable challenges, was a common refrain – whether at prestigious stalwarts such as King's, Trinity and Shore, or newer establishments.

Another refrain was the lack of notable distinctions between chaplaincy at co-ed or single-sex schools. The latter do provide environments for students to feel less awkward about raising sensitive issues. Also, chaplains are able to target their approaches to only one gender. However, while they deeply consider whom they are ministering to, the focus is more on what is important to all students.

"At school we're constantly trying to tell students that while you are here to learn we will help you to gain skills and knowledge that will equip you for life in the world," says Sarah Browne from all-girls school Danebank. "[We underscore that] your life isn't ultimately defined by your HSC mark – you are not the sum of how you go in maths, English or science. You have worth to God and it's his view of you that's truly important. And you're dealing with eternity, not the next six months or next few years."



Jenni Stoddart at Abbotsleigh.

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Understanding the way we live in can feel like a perpetual battle for us all, let alone for younger people and those educating them through their formative years. What must it be like for school chaplains, given our world seems to daily add to the tally of things that deny, reject or denounce Christianity?

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They weren't pretending cyber-bullying, body image, mental health or "God versus Science" problems don't exist in Anglican schools, or that all students are professing Christians and they were working in Christian sanctuaries impervious to the outside world. Instead, with amazing consistency, school chaplains across the Diocese didn't think their had become notably harder. They didn't report that the first three types of soil in the "parable of the scattered seeds" (Matthew 13:1-23) had multiplied or amplified.

"Anyone who is serious about sharing their faith and seeing God's glory go further in our country feels frustration and pain," says Stephen Edwards, senior chaplain at The King's School in North Parramatta. "But at the same time what a joy it is, week after week, to declare the beauty of what the Lord has done for us and the beauty of the Christian life."

Edwards' emphasis upon the joy of gospel ministry, amid the considerable challenges, was a common refrain – whether at prestigious stalwarts such as King's, Trinity and Shore, or newer establishments.

Another refrain was the lack of notable distinctions between chaplaincy at co-ed or single-sex schools. The latter do provide environments for students to feel less awkward about raising sensitive issues. Also, chaplains are able to target their approaches to only one gender. However, while they deeply consider whom they are ministering to, the focus is more on what is important to all students.

"At school we're constantly trying to tell students that while you are here to learn we will help you to gain skills and knowledge that will equip you for life in the world," says Sarah Browne from all-girls school Danebank. "[We underscore that] your life isn't ultimately defined by your HSC mark – you are not the sum of how you go in maths, English or science. You have worth to God and it's his view of you that's truly important. And you're dealing with eternity, not the next six months or next few years."



Extra service: Shore's senior chaplain Paul Dudley (centre) is also the Master in charge of athletics.

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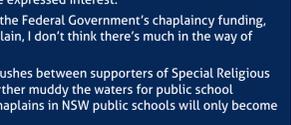
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Sarah Browne with Danebank students.

PUBLIC V PRIVATE

BEING a chaplain at an Anglican school is one thing. Another is being a chaplain at a public school – an environment where it is legally forbidden to proselytise. What could a school chaplain possibly do for God's glory when strictly bound by how they can profess?

"There are plenty of things that can be done, showing the love of Jesus in that non-evangelistic setting," says James Flavin, general manager of Generate Ministries, the largest provider of chaplains to NSW public schools.

"A number of our chaplains will help a lot of kids for whom, in the other situations, the school's next step might have been something draconian. They can often be that pressure-release valve that helps a student and gives a school something that isn't as dramatic as suspension or expulsion, to still help the student to turn their life around."

Flavin suggests such a profound impact in a student's life could inspire them, later in life, to look favourably upon Christianity. "We're playing that long game," he says about Generate's approach to chaplaincy. "If it promotes Christianity in the lives of people... I think that is a positive influence."

Providing advocacy, training, quality assurance and fundraising, Generate has 150 chaplains already placed around the Diocese, and about 300 other schools that have expressed interest.

Despite recent headlines about High Court rulings against the Federal Government's chaplaincy funding, Flavin says, "The number of folk I'm seeing wanting a chaplain, I don't think there's much in the way of opposition at all."

Along with major Federal funding cuts coming in 2018, stoushes between supporters of Special Religious Education and Ethics in school classrooms also seem to further muddy the waters for public school chaplaincy. But Flavin is confident the value of Christian chaplains in NSW public schools will only become more prominent.

One of the factors might be "bang for buck". While Flavin is happy for other counselling professionals to be involved with public schools, he speculates that they probably cost more than chaplains to train and deploy. Additionally, he considers that the results could be disastrous and far-reaching if Christian chaplains were removed from the public schooling system.

"You would see students who aren't thriving or succeeding, little matters not dealt with in a timely way, school staff members spending more and more time with kids who need that time and neglecting others," he says. "There is a whole pile of granular things which lower the quality of the community."

JESUS IN THE DNA

Hearing from schoolyard servants of Christ reveals inspiring insights into "a major arm of the Christian ministry of the Diocese" as described by the head of co-ed St Andrew's Cathedral School in the CBD, Dr John Collier. It's a ministry that, he says, reaches about 45,000 students enrolled at Anglican schools across the Diocese. Contrast that with 60,000 adults or so who attend our Anglican churches and schools and Collier's passion for considered, intentional Christian education stands on fertile ground.

St Andrew's Cathedral School has been developing its curriculum and culture to "educate students with Christian faith and not indoctrinate them". Within this progressive model of evangelical education, chaplains teach a range of secular subjects, coach sport and provide theological input across subject areas.

"We operate from a Reformed theological position," Collier says. "Because we're the Cathedral school, we understand that we're here at the centre of the Diocese and we need to be good advocates for Sydney Anglicans. We want the work of our chaplains to be transformative; that's a theological position, too. We try to manifest Romans 12:1-2 – we want to transform the minds of young people so that they don't simply absorb unthinkingly the culture and thinking around them.

"That's a strong need to work holistically with students. For that reason we are very keen that we're not party to what has traditionally happened in other schools where faith has been pushed to the margins – confined wholly to chapel and Christian development and never mentioned for the rest of the 95 per cent of contact time."

Such a compartmentalised approach might once have defined school chaplaincy. But widespread across our Diocese the core aim of the integrated approach Collier outlines is visible. School chaplains are advocates for and facilitators of Christianity being part of their school's DNA – permeating subjects, extracurricular activities and schoolyard discussions. While chaplains must not be seen as spokespeople for their school's operations, they speak respectfully and appreciatively about how their school attempts to share the gospel and its life-shaping effects.

Paul Dudley from boys' school Shore puts it like this: "One of the things we aim to do during [students'] time at Shore is we would want them to certainly know exactly who Jesus is and what it would mean to follow him. We don't expect every boy to be a Christian but we want to make it clear that they know who Jesus is and what it is to follow him."

Dudley says all students at Shore know Christianity is at the school's heart. The chaplaincy department plays a key role in this through the primary positions of chapel services and Christian Studies.

At another boys' school, Trinity Grammar, senior chaplain Greg Webster confirms a similar intent. "Part of the educational aims and objectives of the school is to encourage every single student to have a personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ," he says. "How that actually happens is massively complicated. But that is a bedrock statement."

Webster alludes to the complicated nature of how a school goes about combining Christianity within education – how biblical truths and principles inform subjects and teaching styles, as well as the function of the school chaplain.

Determining what Christian education can look like in practice lies at the heart of what David Hastie does for the Sydney Anglican Schools Corporation. An education strategist, his job is to help "map out and plan the educational future of the corporation".

Having only started in his role this year Hastie's policy recommendations are still to come, but fuelling his strategic work is "a vision that this country can experience the great gospel of Jesus Christ through the platform of education much more effectively than it can through the organised church".

This potentially controversial statement attests to Dr Collier's elevation of schoolyards as critical mission fields.

But these mission fields are not the same across the Diocese because there are always differences in how Christianity infuses a school's curriculum, or whether staff members are Christian.

Hastie is an advocate for all staff members being Christian and all taking responsibility to be "ministers" at their school. But this wouldn't mean a negation of a chaplain's role, particularly with Hastie wanting Christian education to move toward a twin focus of evangelism and assisting graduates with finding churches and Christian networks after school.

"In a lot of ways, the general idea of the chaplain in many Anglican schools is like a mini-rector, an onsite rector who does all kinds of things," he says about existing chaplaincy functions such as pastoring, teaching, mission and evangelism. "But if there was an absolute focus around how, ultimately, our goal is to see kids come to the Lord and then be given a pathway into Christianity after school, I think that would clarify a lot of what the chaplains do."

REGIONAL IMPACT

ORANGE Anglican Grammar School was purchased by the Sydney Anglican Schools Corporation in 2013. One of the associate ministers at Orange Evangelical Church, Dave Saunders, was approached to take on the school's chaplaincy role, making him one of the farthest flung chaplains in the SASC fellowship. This leads to an obvious question: what's the difference between country and city chaplains?

According to Saunders, none. "In terms of being a chaplain, students are students," he says. "Doesn't matter where they are from, be it the city or country, I can't think of any one thing that would make chaplaincy in the country much different because, at the end of the day, it's about helping students get a better handle on who Jesus is and what he's about and his answers to their questions."

Heuses for a moment, then jokes: "Maybe it's that I've got RM Williams boots on!"

Dressed for the part, Saunders initially encountered pockets of opposition when his appointment was announced. He puts this down to communication issues that extended beyond his role and into broader reactions to the corporation buying Orange Grammar from the Bathurst Diocese.

The first few months were difficult, as the understanding of evangelicalism and styles of education and worship had to be better expressed. While Saunders understands why some local people were unsettled, he has been steadily encouraged by "the majority being happy and appreciative of what is happening" at the school.

With his week divided between school and parish ministry, Saunders effectively has two full-time jobs. But he's an upbeat and excited bloke, whose love for what he does can't be missed. Besides, he can hardly believe he gets paid to be a school chaplain, given how big the rewards are.

"The great joy is being in the classroom with the students; the interaction with them and the opportunity to help kids get to know God more for who he is as he shows himself to be, through the Bible," he says. "Seeing kids latch on to ideas and, over time, that is something God can use and grow with them for the rest of their lives."

CHRIST IN THE CLASSROOM

SCHOOL chaplains across our Diocese are, indeed, already involved with the activities Hastie mentions and many more. Like Danebank's Sarah Browne running a *Christianity Explained* course this year for staff members, Stephen Edwards at the King's School telling of a student – who has become a Christian at King's – recently bringing his parents to church. Or Penrith's Statheos and assistant chaplain Lisa Lawrence supporting the evangelistic fervour of students and staff members.

The list of Christian impacts upon the lives of students, parents and staff – during their school tenure and beyond – is invariably long and ongoing, as chaplains in our Anglican schools continue to, as Webster says of his role, "stand up and communicate the truth of the gospel".

And they do so through the attributes and motivations that John Collier lists as essential for the role. "Chaplains need to be nimble," he says. "They need to be terrific communicators but, essentially, they also need to be winsome. Students need to see through chaplains and other Christian staff the aroma of Christ, in the sense that what is offered to them is very desirable; they can see the fruits of the Spirit in the people who are Christ's ambassadors in schools."

As Statheos reflects on the incredible opportunity that schools provide for reaching an enormous group of people, he longs for students to take what they learn about Jesus Christ, believe it, and help to teach others.

"I'm really prayerful that our students impact the world as they leave the school," he says. "I want them to live Christ-centred lives where they love Jesus. It's almost like when Andrew brought his brother Simon to Jesus – this picture of friends of Jesus bringing friends to Christ and seeing that as a long-term pattern for ministry."

"And we need to pray that God keeps raising up chaplains to actually keep doing this important work."

UNDER REVIEW

SCHOOL chaplains across our Diocese form a rich, multifaceted tapestry of gospel work. This tapestry has expanded from being the domain of ordained clergy to also incorporating lay people. These and other changes prompted a review of the Diocese's guidelines about school chaplaincy.

A sub-committee was appointed by Synod's Standing Committee in 2009 to present a draft of proposed revisions to the 1975 ordinance related to school chaplains and chapels, and these will be put to Standing Committee in the next couple of months.

The chairman of the sub-committee, Tony Willis, says the revised ordinance strives to place school chaplaincy in its widened context.

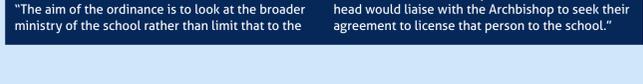
"The aim of the ordinance is to look at the broader ministry of the school rather than limit that to the

activity of the chaplaincy role," he says. "In that sense, it would include things like the teaching of Christian Studies."

The review was informed by feedback from school heads, councils and chaplains.

While the Diocese's ordinance concerning school chaplains is under review, Willis confirms that the process for being employed as a school chaplain remains unaffected.

An individual school will advertise any available position and specify whether lay people and/or clergy can apply. "Whether the person is clergy or lay, they still need to be licensed to the position by the Archbishop," Willis says. "When the head [of the school] has a short list or preferred candidate, the head would liaise with the Archbishop to seek their agreement to license that person to the school."



A student discussion group during Christian Focus Week at King's, with Old Boy Tim Hudders from the God Squad.



A church for broken people

God makes room in Christ for human brokenness, so we should challenge the worldly notion that we need to be “beautiful people”, writes **ANDREW SHEAD**.

THE OTHER YEAR, WHILE VISITING A CHURCH, I MET A WOMAN. SHE WAS ABOUT 40 years old and very attractive, both in appearance and personality. I noticed her during the first song because of the beauty of her voice, and because she sang the words like someone who loved the Lord Jesus. She told me she had until recently been a music leader at another church, but had been retired because she no longer possessed the magazine-cover beauty that church's culture of worship required. Who knows, perhaps there was another side to her story. But she certainly felt broken and discarded.

Extreme examples make good opening paragraphs; they make us feel righteous. So let us recognise how hard it is for even the most biblical of churches in this glittering city to escape the cult of the Beautiful People. We dress well, we smile and make eye contact, we smell nice and make nice conversation. We radiate health and happiness – and yes, that is no bad thing. Often it is a blessing that flows from the gospel, a symptom of lives transformed by the good news of reconciliation to God through Christ.

But when the broken people feel that they are standing unnoticed outside the circle of light, we have a problem.

At my own church we place the names of sick members at the bottom of the news sheet and pray for them in church. We cook meals for new mums, and many who suffer find themselves quietly cared for. It's a good start. But the experience of brokenness remains, for the most part, on the fringes of our common life.

When did we – when did you at your church – join our voices to the voices of Christ and his people by saying (or even singing) words like this together:

For the director of music. A psalm of David.

¹How long, LORD? Will you forget me for ever?
How long will you hide your face from me?

²How long must I wrestle with my thoughts
and day after day have sorrow in my heart?
How long will my enemy triumph over me?

³Look on me and answer, LORD my God.

Give light to my eyes, or I will sleep in death,

⁴and my enemy will say, 'I have overcome him,'
and my foes will rejoice when I fall.

⁵But I trust in your unfailing love;
my heart rejoices in your salvation.

⁶I will sing the LORD's praise,
for he has been good to me.

Psalm 13 (NIV)

Here is an individual who has put away false piety to be totally honest with a God who has failed him. He is gutted by the absence of God, he is besieged by anxious thoughts, he is crushed by depression, he is cowering in shame (vv. 1-2).

These are universal ills, and these very words have sustained many who in their dark, private pain need permission to be honest with God. And because Christ took up these words before you or I ever did, they also have the power to dignify our suffering by laying it alongside our Lord's, and to alleviate the loneliness of our grief by an awareness that Christ shares it with us. That God makes room in Christ for human brokenness is a never-ending cause for wonder.

And yet this is not, in the end, a psalm written to alleviate private pain. Its title, both in David's day and ours, places the suffering individual squarely in the middle of the congregation, bravely exposing their pain so that all may feel it, desperately begging God for a lifeline so that all may beg with them, voicing a fear of disgrace so that all may share their dread (vv. 3-4). This is a psalm that places the broken person, not the Beautiful People, at the centre. And as the congregation sings the song of the broken one, something more profound than empathy and intercession takes place. The brokenness of the one becomes the brokenness of the many.

As we enact these words together, in solidarity not just with a suffering sister or brother, but with Jesus whose life of daily struggle and daily faithfulness we see reflected in these words, our own failings are laid bare. Our daily wrestling with thoughts and yielding to sin rarely plunge us into despair, but place each of us under the shadow of death as surely as the tangible suffering of the visibly broken person in our midst. They raise the same dilemma of God's apparent absence, and we begin to see in the sufferer not just a burden to share, but a model to emulate.

Some scholars think that behind the last two verses must lie an experience of deliverance, and that the psalmist is remembering a crisis after the fact, when all is well once more. I am not so sure. It is true that the mood has changed, and the speaker is no longer straining towards a hoped-for future rescue. Instead, he has turned his focus onto the past; more specifically, onto the character of God as revealed by his past actions: his love, his salvation, his goodness.

But the consequence of this shift of focus onto God's faithfulness is not a simple “Hallelujah!”, as we might have expected had the prayers of vv. 1-4 just been answered. It is a willed change of attitude, which we witness as it happens in vv. 5-6.

The first verb is a statement of present fact: “I have trusted”. But what follows next is a double expression of determination, which does not feel like the response of a person newly delivered. “My heart *shall* rejoice”, the singer exhorts himself, and “I determine to sing”. This is a person who has found the strength to trust in his Saviour, even if God remains silent for the moment. From the darkness of depression and unanswered prayer the psalmist can look back and affirm, “he has been good to me”.

And this is why we cannot afford *not* to lament when we join together as God's people. Lament is not ultimately about “weeping with those who weep”; we lament because this is where the gospel begins. What is the gospel after all, if not the living hope that enables us to lift our eyes from the encircling darkness and fix them joyfully on the risen Jesus, confident that he is God's “Yes” to everyone who calls him Lord?

In his gospel, Matthew depicts the moment when Jesus first begins his public ministry as a dramatic shaft of light piercing a dark place:

The people walking in darkness
have seen a great light;
on those living in the land of the shadow of death
a light has dawned.

Matthew 4:16 (quoting Isaiah 9:2)

John uses the same image in his prologue:

The light shines. in the darkness,
and the darkness has not overcome it.

John 1:5

Lament strips back our shiny veneer to lay bare the darkness that lies within each of us, and which most of us, most of the time, successfully conceal. And lament strengthens us to keep living and hoping – even when darkness presses in with no sign of relief – because the God we cry to in our despair is the Lord who has walked this dark road ahead of us, and who now shines a word of promise back along the path to direct our feet to safety.

The book of Psalms is filled with laments. God has given them to us to sing or otherwise perform together. For most of us this will be a counter-cultural exercise. It may be challenging and uncomfortable. But perhaps that is a sign of how much we need to begin singing them again.

A church of Beautiful People will be a hollow church, a church whose praise rings with shrill triumphalism. It takes a broken person to truly know the joy of their salvation – the joy which sings the lines “And can it be that I should gain an interest in the Saviour's blood” with a kind of amazed disbelief.

A broken person gives God their trust and hope because trust and hope are all they have to give. These are the people we need in church with us. These are the ones God esteems. These are the ones whose songs we need to sing as we learn to be broken people too.



BISHOP Passes THE TASTE TEST

First challenge: Bishop Peter Lin attempts to identify foods with help from his wife Isobel. PHOTO: Pamela Dean

It was an unusual introduction to the job, but the new Bishop of Georges River, Peter Lin, passed with flying colours at an official welcome function at the Bryan Brown Theatre in Bankstown in July. The Mayor of Bankstown, local MPs and representatives of parishes in the region attended, as well as friends and colleagues of Bishop Lin from across the Diocese.

Prominent among the crowd were Archdeacon Ian Cox and Bishop Peter Tasker, who have been responsible for the region in both paid and voluntary capacities in recent years.

As part of a "get-to-know-you" exercise, Bishop Lin and his wife Isobel were asked questions about each other and then the new bishop was subjected to a taste test of a range of foods from the multicultural region.

As well as correctly identifying various dishes, he added his own culinary wisdom, saying the Asian food "could do with a little salt...".



Comedy class

JUDY ADAMSON

D ID YOU HEAR THE ONE ABOUT THE DIOCESAN ACCOUNTANT WHO WROTE HIS own stand-up comedy show? It goes like this: a middle-aged Sydney Anglican walks into a bar...

As unusual jokes go it's right up there, but it has the unexpected quirk of being absolutely true – and it's part of this month's Sydney Fringe Festival.

When asked where on earth the idea for such a show could have come from the middle-aged Sydney Anglican in question, James Flavin (right), laughs heartily.

"When I was growing up comedy was my rock'n'roll," he says. "While my friends were going to pub bands and jazz bands and classical concerts I was going to live comedy gigs. Melbourne, Edinburgh... whenever we're on holidays one of the first things we look up is the local comedy scene.

"I've always loved comedy and the whole idea of live performance, and about 20 years ago I started thinking I should give it a go myself – then life gets in the way. You have a child, you do family things then you have another child... but now the kids are 19 and 15 there's an opportunity."

With his work hat on Flavin is the general manager of public schools ministry organisation Generate Ministries, and also chairs a number of finance-related committees for the Diocese. But behind all the management and accountancy, and the meetings and the minutes, there's been a comedian itching to break out.

The genesis for the show, titled *I'm Sorry*, came from the experience of his daughter's mid-teens. "She went from being daddy's little princess to 'Every problem in my life is due to my father' – everything was my fault," Flavin says. "Problems with her hair were due to my genes, so that was my fault. Problems with school? My fault. Problems with friends, my fault... And I want to admit I didn't pay a lot of attention... after all these years you learn when not to listen.

"So two years ago I started writing this show, just picking up snippets of things here and there, and once it struck me that the title was *I'm Sorry* – middle-aged white heterosexual male apologises for everything – I realised I've got a lot to apologise for! And the Sydney Fringe has been polite enough, or low enough in its standards, to actually accept my proposal."

The festival organisers have even planted the hour-long show in a Kings Cross bar, which Flavin finds funny in itself, especially as the content of his show will be vastly different from the crass, swearing-filled offerings that often dominate live comedy. To help underscore the point, he also calls himself a "gentleman comedian".

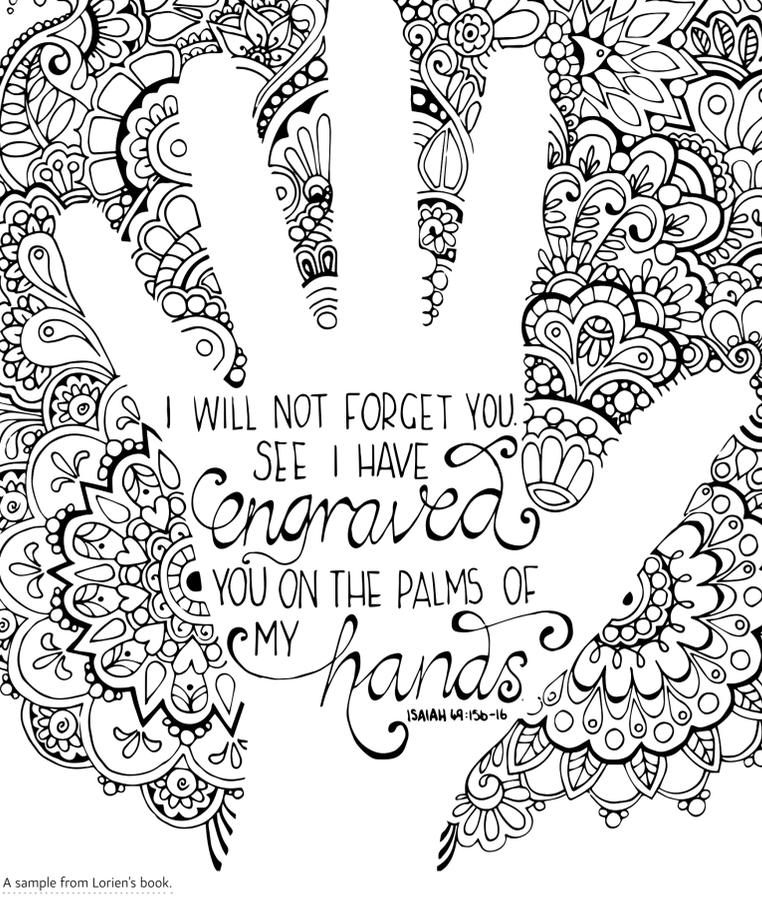
"I was trying to think of a way to describe myself – young comedian, educated comedian, edgy comedian, up-and-coming comedian, established comedian – and they all fell over," he says. "Gentleman comedian implies that I'm more old school, where a gentleman was good at everything but not expert in anything. I'm trying to bring some class to it. I'll even be wearing a suit... because I need to reinforce in people's minds the middle-class middle-age idea, and because some of it's funnier when it comes out of an old bloke's face. The white beard helps."

Flavin told his Bible study group at St George North church about his plans at the beginning of this term, and the men's response was to enthusiastically plan its social night around one of the three shows.

"It's getting out there – it's exciting," he says. "As people have found out the reaction has been somewhere between 'Really?' and 'About time'. A number of friends know I've been toying with this for a while so for them, the fact that I've finally got my act together is unsurprising."

I'm Sorry is on September 5, 9 and 12 at the World Bar, 24 Bayswater Road, Kings Cross. For information see www.jamesflavincomedy.com

Faith in technicolour



A sample from Lorien's book.

JUDY ADAMSON

W HEN LORIEN ATWOOD UPLOADED A FEW OF HER DECORATED SCRIPTURE verses into a Facebook conversation with a few friends, she was simply explaining the kind of visual decorative work she did in her private journal as part of her quiet time.

The last thing she expected was to receive 100 emails within a couple of days, all asking for copies of what she had done. Slightly stunned, she set up a Facebook group to have a quick method of uploading the artwork and within days that also began to grow, with more and more people keen to get hold of the verses – surrounded in her intricate black and white designs – to colour in, in a range of personal and group ministries.

Now, less than four months later, the group's membership has topped 4200 and Atwood is about to publish *Meditations*, a book containing 18 of her hand-drawn designs around a range of Scripture verses.

"God's been driving the project and I'm just trying to keep up!" she says. "People's responses have been incredible, and so encouraging. I had no idea it would be helpful for people at all – all this has come about quite accidentally and unplanned by me.

"I have friends overseas who run retreat days who are using them in those situations. There are other people with chronic pain issues, who have trouble sitting down for long periods of time concentrating on big slabs of Scripture, but with this they can be still, be with God's word and reflect on it. Others do it with their kids and find it really easy to talk about the meaning of the verse and other spiritual things. People use them as part of their anxiety and depression management therapy... my mother works in pastoral care and chaplaincy with elderly people and she's been using them, too."

Atwood's designs are strongly influenced by the art, architecture and culture she was exposed to growing up in Pakistan and Bahrain in a missionary family. Everything around her then, from buildings to buses, exploded with design and colour and she was particularly fascinated by the "mehendi" or henna decorations women would draw on themselves for weddings or other special occasions.

"I grew up having it [mehendi] done to me by the ladies upstairs and I loved it," she says. "When I was older I started doing it myself and practising it... that's where my design elements come from – out of that."

Over the past nine years Atwood has moved from creating "visual poems" with written Bible verses to creating artwork around the verses, praying as she goes and reflecting on what is written. She rarely colours in the decorations but knows that others do and find this helpful to their faith life.

"I guess it's like any method of devotion or worship – it will suit some people and not others," she says. "I've been passionate about using creativity to connect with God's word, and it gives people a chance to give it a go in whatever context they're in. It's about the process of engaging with God's word, not how beautiful what you create is at the end.

"People often like to colour them in and then stick them around their home as a constant reminder of a verse of the Bible for them. Also when someone comes into their home who might not be Christian or familiar with what the Bible says, it's quite a non-threatening way to have Scripture and a visual Christian presence."

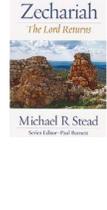
Meditations will be published on October 1 by Firewheel Press. Lorien Atwood's Facebook group is called *Colouring in Truth*.

A vision splendid

ANDREW SHEAD

Z ECHARIAH: THE LORD RETURNS

by Michael R. Stead
Sydney: Aquila Press, 2015



AS A YOUNG TEEN I USED TO READ THE GOOD NEWS BIBLE AND SOME OF ITS illustrations have stayed with me ever since. I particularly remember "The Woman in the Basket" (Zech 5:7) – for me, it perfectly summed up Zechariah's weirdness.

Since then I have learned this enigmatic prophet was a vital resource for the Apostles as they pondered the meaning of Jesus' death. The gospel writers used Zechariah to explain Jesus' entry into Zion on a donkey; the 30 pieces of silver paid to Judas; the scattering of the disciples upon Jesus' arrest; the piercing of Jesus' side after his death. How does one get from Zechariah's florid visions to the meaning of Jesus' death??

If I could have my pick of someone to ask, I would want a world expert on Zechariah to begin with – but one who had spent years teaching Zechariah to non-experts until he mastered the art of explaining and simple explanation. And I'd want this scholar to actually be a pastor who had spent years discovering the relevance of Zechariah in the lives of ordinary Christian people. In three words, I would want Dr Michael Stead, who is all these things and more.

How would Zechariah himself review this commentary? Surely through a series of visions! So here are four (uninspired) visions of my own. First, the hot-air balloon. The first eight pages brilliantly summarise Zechariah's 14 chapters. After you have floated like this above Zechariah's country you will never see it the same way again.

Second, the tapestry. Unlike the prophets who preceded him, Zechariah had the writings of earlier prophets in his hands and his own prophecies constantly draw on their words, weaving them with his own into a rich tapestry. No other commentary on Zechariah shows quite the same sensitivity to this tapestry as Michael Stead's does.

Third, the helmsman. Zechariah is notoriously difficult to interpret, both as a whole and at the level of individual units and even words. When Michael brings his ship to the one of these rocky shoals he indicates the possible routes ahead and explains why he points the wheel where he does. There may sometimes be a better route – though he nearly always convinced me – but his destination is invariably the right one.

Finally, the magic mirror. The Bible is written for us but it is not about us. Yet how prone we are to gaze into the Bible and see ourselves gazing back! Michael shows us how to gaze into Zechariah and see the face of Jesus. He does not concoct the face of Jesus out of thin air but allows his gaze to be directed according to the Scriptures. And he draws us to follow this Jesus in the manner of a pastor who has preached and prayed Zechariah for many years.

When next you come to read Zechariah, I recommend you hop on board with Captain Stead. It will be worth the trip.

Small Room, Big Sound

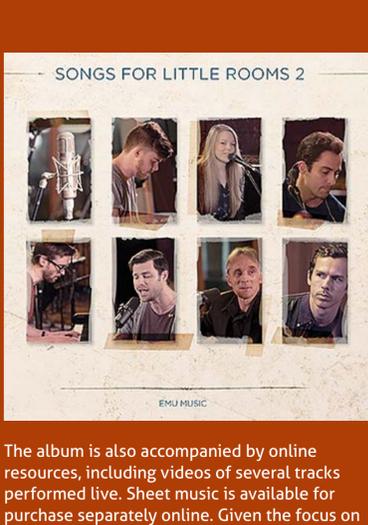
Songs for Little Rooms 2 is a studio-recorded follow-on from the 2010 live instalment and, like its predecessor, aims to present examples of resource-light congregational music.

Perhaps even more important than the suite of songs (including several Emu Music staples from the past few years plus three new tracks) is the way the album provides a palette of approaches to acoustic musical worship. While the instrumental line-up is fairly consistent throughout, never expanding beyond piano, guitar, basic percussion and the occasional accordion, the styles of song showcase this small group of instruments in different ways.

"The Chorus of the Saved", for instance, transforms from the guitar- and drum-driven track that appeared on *Songs of the Saved* into a piano-driven number, the keys stomping out the driving rhythm with guitars adding colour. Guitar come to the fore in other places, and the use of the in-vogue cajon means you don't need a full kit to have some percussive oomph.

The basic rhythmic focus also means that, while the musicians on the album are all excellent at their craft, you need not be at a similar level with your own church band to achieve the same results. There are few piano flourishes or complicated percussive fills here. The arrangements are simple, the instrumentation common. Space rather than a wall of sound is the order of the day, and it throws up all kinds of nuance in the songs that would be lost in a regular (sometimes church service) band. Less is, indeed, sometimes more, especially in song.

In this way, the basic ingredients are useful for a small service setting but could equally bring variety to larger congregations that may often use more musicians and resources in their corporate musical worship.



The album is also accompanied by online resources, including videos of several tracks performed live. Sheet music is available for purchase separately online. Given the focus on rearranging music, it would perhaps have also been interesting to see alternative arrangements of some songs released as well. Given congregations will have different instruments that tend to "lead" the singing, it might have been interesting to hear, say, a piano-led alternate version to a guitar-driven song. The songs are mostly mid-tempo, which suits acoustic modes more generally, but I also found myself missing the risks taken on the first *Songs for Little Rooms*, such as Michael Morrow's uptempo version of "Nothing But The Blood of Jesus".

In all, this will be a great tool in any music leader's arsenal, providing some ready-made templates for use in churches large and small. It perhaps lacks some of the innovation and risk-taking of the first iteration, but some new music and a greater use of online materials sweetens the deal. Here's hoping it's not five years until the next one.

Nick Gilbert