

APRIL
2016

Southern CROSS

THE NEWS MAGAZINE FOR SYDNEY ANGLICANS



Catching fire

HOW MISSION 2020 HOPES TO IGNITE SYDNEY

- + When Christians disagree
- & Pastor goes viral



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Mission 2020 hopes to light a gospel fire across the Diocese. 12

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“

I want people to be drawn to what I'm creating and for me to pass that on to Jesus.

Josh Hawkins
Culture

”



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Grace City in new digs

Membership pastor Jackson Stace leading the first Grace City service in the new building.

A CHURCH PLANT IN THE BURGEONING SYDNEY DEVELOPMENT AREA OF GREEN SQUARE HAS recently moved into a new home.

Grace City Church, which began as a meeting of prospective planters in 2014 and formally launched in January last year, moved into its new location on Bourke Street, Waterloo in February after many months of transient locations – including a film school and a movie cinema.

"The really helpful thing about our new building is profile," says Grace City's pastor the Rev Tim Clemens. "What church plants struggle with is no one knowing you exist. The first place we were in for services would not allow us to put up signs, and the second place we had to move to wasn't even in the area."

"I don't think this building will be a silver bullet, but it's a piece in the larger campaign of establishing a tangible presence in the area. Now we have people just walk in off the street to check us out and end up hearing something of the gospel, which is good to see."

The plant operates under the banner of Evangelism and New Churches (ENC). Grace City runs a single contemporary-style church service on Sunday mornings, with current attendance averaging about 80 adults. According to City of Sydney statistics from 2011, the population of Green Square is expected to more than double by 2031, which means an additional 34,000 residents.

Grace City Church joins a number of other church plants in an increasingly busy area for Christian ministry. Also in Green Square is a congregational plant of the South Sydney parish church One1Seven. Living Water Community Fellowship, another ENC-supported church, also meets within the parish area at the National Centre of Indigenous Excellence.

The Rev Matt Johnson, rector of One1Seven, says his church hopes Mr Clemens and his team will be blessed in bearing fruit as they preach the gospel of Jesus at their new site.

"I think everyone's had the same idea. This is a big, growing area, we don't want to miss opportunities!" Mr Johnson says. "That's not just us, it's other denominations and independent churches as well. From a kingdom perspective, that's the right thing to be doing. The harvest is bountiful and the number of workers in the area has been traditionally very few."

"Now there are more and that's a good thing given the growth that's taking place. It'll just take some time to see how that will work out and how these different approaches can best reach people in the area."

Mr Clemens says he has spent a lot of time talking to Matt Johnson and Andrew Leach, the leader of one1Seven's Green Square plant, since Grace City began. "We get on with each other well, but it's early days and I think we're all still considering what partnership looks like and how our ministries interact," he says.

"There are so many different people in the area and so many more moving in that there's potentially a lot for us all to be doing in the years ahead to further the work of the gospel in this area of Sydney."

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Minchinbury ESL skyrockets

All ears: students at Minchinbury's ESL class pay careful attention to teacher Melanie Tanner.

NICK GILBERT

ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE CLASSES AT MINCHINBURY HAVE PROVED A FRUITFUL MISSION field for the church.

The classes have ballooned into two separate Easy English Bible studies, plus a service on Sunday mornings that is accessible to those with limited English and little exposure to Australian culture.

The first class was begun in April 2014 by church members Melanie Tanner and Elizabeth Spencer. "Melanie and I had always thought that running Easy English Bible classes [with the ESL classes] was a great idea, but we also thought it would be too ambitious in our first year," Ms Spencer says.

"On the very first day we had new people. One was a lady named Amy, originally from Hong Kong. She came straight up to us and said, 'Can I come?' After we said of course she could come, she then asked, 'And are you going to teach the Bible?' We said, 'Yes, but maybe not right now'. She kept asking, and we just couldn't keep saying 'No! Next term, we started the first Bible class.'"

The English classes now have a regular roster of 20 people, with past and current students also often attending the following Bible study or Easy English service.

Minchinbury's assistant minister the Rev Matt Baines, one of the leaders of the Easy English Bible studies, only began at the church last year but says even in that time the ministry has grown immensely. "When we've participated in Anglicare ESL training days, we've spoken to people who have run these kinds of classes for years without feeling like it progresses," he says. "For us... in two years it's gone from nothing to a ministry with a developed structure. It has a mix of people, some who have been here from the beginning and are [now] being trained as leaders... and others who are new."

Mr Baines and Ms Spencer agree it has been a demonstration of God's grace amid the increasing need among immigrants to gain language skills and find community and friends. It's meant a lot of work, but the effort has been worthwhile.

"Any ministry you commit to will always take up more time than you think," Ms Spencer says. "There's also Melanie, Matt and Kevin [Vollmer, pastor of the Easy English service] and other volunteers, although we sometimes do wish for more. At the end of the day, though, it's really been an experience of God's grace and provision."

She says the task seemed daunting at first, but it is quite easy to start simply. They began with published ESL curricula and resources from Anglicare, which set a clear direction for the first few terms.

"What is most useful for people is just having an idea of what to say when they go shopping but, even more than that, to have a connection with someone local who can also help them with those things and be a friendly face," she says.

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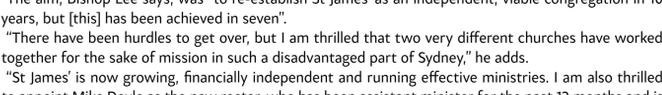
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A church reborn



Celebrating: (from left) new rector the Rev Mike Doyle, Malcolm Purvis, Bishop Ivan Lee and the Rev Bruce Hall.

JUDY ADAMSON

THE END OF A PARTNERSHIP CAN BE A GOOD THING, ESPECIALLY WHEN IT INVOLVES THE revitalisation of a church – as is the case with St James', Berala.

In 2008 St James' was in decline and struggling to find a minister. Bishop Ivan Lee approached the then rector of St Paul's, Carlingford, the Rev Bruce Hall, about a formal partnership with the smaller church. Over the years that followed, Mr Hall says, St Paul's provided people, ministry and administrative support, the Western Sydney Regional Council provided funding, and the church began to turn around.

The aim, Bishop Lee says, was "to re-establish St James' as an independent, viable congregation in 10 years, but [this] has been achieved in seven."

"There have been hurdles to get over, but I am thrilled that two very different churches have worked together for the sake of mission in such a disadvantaged part of Sydney," he adds.

"St James' is now growing, financially independent and running effective ministries. I am also thrilled to appoint Mike Doyle as the new rector, who has been assistant minister for the past 12 months and is building on the hard work of previous ministers Andy Chung and David Tyndall."

The official partnership between the two churches ended on February 28 with a special celebration, at which Bishop Lee also presented Mr Doyle with his license as senior minister of the church.

Long-term Berala churchwarden Malcolm Purvis spoke on the day of his happiness that God had blessed the partnership.

"St James' and St Paul's took on an uncertain venture in good faith and, with lots of prayer and financial and personnel support, Berala is on its feet again," he said. "It also provided a way for people who were under-used at St Paul's to serve in ways that they never thought possible."

"It hasn't been plain sailing but I think partnerships like these are a great way to help a small church re-engage with its community."

For Berala's new senior minister, the Rev Mike Doyle, the end of the partnership heralds a new beginning in the life of the church.

"In God's kindness over the last year we have baptised nine adults, seen many become Christian, and have had 25 per cent growth in our Sunday morning service," he says. "There are still great challenges facing us, but God is good and God is doing great things in Berala. [This is] a group of people who love Jesus, and love Berala, and want to see people from all nations come to know and love the Lord Jesus Christ."

Mr Doyle says that about 80 per cent of those living in Berala come from non-English-speaking backgrounds, and the suburb is located in "the second most disadvantaged local government area in the Sydney basin".

"St James' is doing all it can to share Jesus with those who live here," he says. "Through [the church's] strong refugee advocacy, many asylum seekers have come to know true freedom in Jesus. Through English classes and easy English Bible study groups recent immigrants are hearing the words of Jesus."

"Our monthly market day helps us connect with everyone in our community and, in our multicultural church service on Sunday morning, people from many nations, cultures, languages and ages gather together around the Lord Jesus Christ to praise his name and encourage each other to follow him."

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Moore graduates 2016

Moore College graduate Lauren Watt receives her Diploma of Theological Studies from Archbishop Glenn Davies.

THIS YEAR'S 102 GRADUATES FROM MOORE THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE HAVE BEEN CALLED UPON to "die to self" in their ministries so their work will produce more fruit for the gospel.

The address at this year's graduation ceremony, delivered by former director of the UK's Cornhill training course the Rev Christopher Ash, directed graduates to the pattern of Christ from John 12:24, giving himself to death to bring life to humanity. In the same way, Mr Ash urged his listeners to die to themselves and instead serve others, to share with them the life found in the gospel.

"I'm so thrilled for those who are heading into different Christian ministries, but for those following the Lord Jesus in the ministry of the gospel there is a kind of dying," Mr Ash said. "Dying to self, daily to self, is necessary and costly, but it will be fruitful. It is necessary also for ourselves, following the way of the cross, to die daily to self."

"And we grumble, don't we? A friend of mine once said grumbling about following the cross is like a youngster playing in his first game of rugby, coming home bruised and saying, 'Oh Mum, it hurt!' To which the proper answer is, 'Son, if you're going to play rugby, it's going to hurt.'"

Graduates across the range of degrees have plans for all sorts of ministry. Some are heading into parishes, others are returning to secular jobs but with a sharper theological focus. Prison chaplaincies, SRE teaching, church planting, Christian welfare work and a range of other ministry directions were all represented.

"The long-term plan is to stay in Sydney one more year and then head towards India – in Delhi especially," said Gladwin Joseph, a Bachelor of Divinity graduate who spoke to the audience in a prerecorded video interview.

"I would like to work in a local church over there as an assistant pastor. God willing, I'll be involved in some sort of student ministry as well. I'm hoping God will provide opportunities for me to be involved in training young men and women in gospel."

The night also featured 12 postgraduate students, two of whom completed thesis projects in the Masters of Theology course.

Mr Ash, in finishing his address to the graduands and other attendees, called on students to produce fruit in their ministries in the pattern of Jesus Christ.

"May your lives, and may my life, be that life of following in the footsteps of the Lord Jesus," he said. May it also be a life that, in the kindness of God, and through the promise of the Lord Jesus, bears much fruit."

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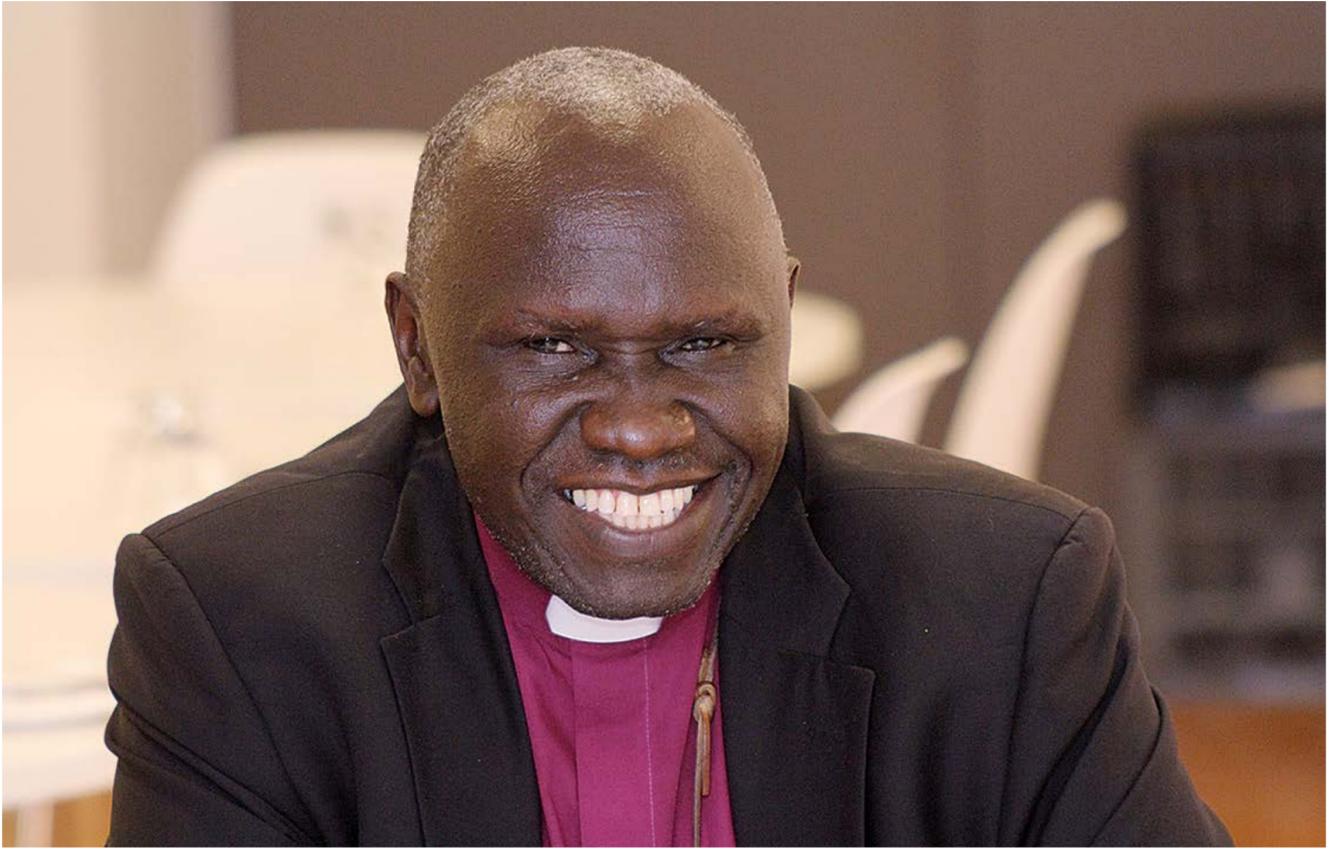
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Training for South Sudan



Help needed: Bishop Anthony Poggio from South Sudan during his visit to Sydney.

ONE OF THE LEADERS OF THE ANGLICAN CHURCH IN SOUTH SUDAN HAS VISITED SYDNEY, SEEKING help to boost theological training in the new nation.

The Republic of South Sudan gained independence from Sudan in 2011 after civil strife that stretched for more than 20 years.

Bishop Anthony Poggio from the Kajo-Keji Diocese of South Sudan told an Anglican Aid function that, "during the war, the church was growing tremendously – in fact at one stage it was said to be the fastest-growing church in the world. It was hard to meet that growth with relevant training.

"Bishops did what they could to give people very basic training, on-the-job training, and then ordained them. Now [peace has returned] we are doing what we can to bring this standard up."

Twenty-two clergy and Christian leaders from South Sudan are already training at a high level at Carlile College in Kenya, and plan to return to their homeland to train others. But Bishop Poggio is seeking support for gospel workers training locally in shorter courses. Kajo-Keji Christian College offers nine-month courses in three-month sessions to clergy already ordained in the diocese who do not have a theological qualification.

The director of Anglican Aid, the Rev David Mansfield, said: "Young people wanting to prepare for gospel ministry are often too poor to commit to the nine months of training needed. Commitments to their families mean they are often hesitant to lead the uncertain life of a minister, for which there is no guaranteed stipend."

Anglican Aid has begun a program to support students by providing them with scholarships. It has also partnered with the Kajo-Keji Diocese to address the food security and psycho-social needs of South Sudanese who have returned to their country after being evicted to Uganda during the civil war.

WORLD BRIEFS

ISIS burns bibles

ISIS forces in Iraq have released a video purporting to show a bonfire of bibles and Christian books in the city of Mosul. In the video, pamphlets with crosses on the front cover are shown being thrown onto a fire. Accompanying text proclaims that "Christian instruction books" are being burned because they "promote infidelity and call for disobeying Allah". A year ago, militants blew up the main library in Mosul, destroying more than 10,000 books and 700 rare manuscripts.

Middle East "genocide"

The US House of Representatives has declared the slaughter of Christians in Syria and Iraq is "genocide". The official declaration includes Yazidis and Shia Muslims killed alongside Christians in the same areas. The last time the house passed a similar resolution was more than a decade ago when it declared genocide was being committed in Darfur in Sudan. Later the State Department agreed with the designation, but did not announce any change in policy as a result. US Secretary of State John Kerry (right) said ISIS was "genocidal by self-proclamation, by ideology and by actions".



Belief slides in the Netherlands

Fewer than a third of Dutch people identify with a religious faith, according to a new survey in the Netherlands. The latest "God in Nederland" census showed one quarter identified themselves as atheist and one quarter as Christian. Within Christian groupings there was also a trend towards unorthodox beliefs, although it was less pronounced in Protestants than in Catholics. Fewer than 15 per cent of Catholics believe in heaven and under half believe that Jesus is the son of God. The number of people describing themselves as spiritual dropped from 40 per cent in the last survey a decade ago to just 31 per cent in 2016.

Primates withdraw from meeting

The leaders of the three largest Anglican provinces in Africa – Nigeria, Kenya and Uganda – have withdrawn from the Anglican Consultative Council meeting in Zambia this month. The primates, who are also leaders of the Global Anglican Future Conference (GAFCON), are concerned over the participation of the US Episcopal Church in the gathering. The Episcopal Church (TEC) was censured at January's primates meeting in the UK for its gross departures from Anglican teaching and was told it could not participate in the Lusaka meeting. But there are reports that US church representatives will be there and will vote. TEC also remains unrepentant for changing core doctrines. The Kenyan primate and chairman of GAFCON, Archbishop Eliud Wabukala, said his province could not go to Lusaka because "there can be no true walking together with those who persistently refuse to walk in accordance with God's word".

VITAL SPEECH

Many thanks for Michael Kellahan's timely and discerning article "Forced Silence" (SC, March) and his discussion about freedom of religion.

"Gospel" speech, we are reminded from the New Testament and history, can be costly, but it is also vital. The current tragedy is that our contribution of "salt and light" is marginalised and often blocked. Understandably we keep silent and withdraw. Despite this, the question is stark: how can we help "to build and shape a better politic for all", as the story asks?

There are no easy answers in our engagement with God, sex and politics. Yet we do well to heed the Apostle Peter's reminders to persecuted Christians in the first century. He emphasises, among other things:

a. our message and manner – "In your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope you have. But do this with gentleness and respect"

(1 Peter 3:15);

b. the distinctiveness of our character – "be holy in all you do" (1 Peter 1:15); and

c. most importantly, the priority (or it should be!) to be on our knees – "be clear-minded and self-controlled so that you can pray" (1 Peter 4:7).

Ian Keast
Quakers Hill

I'm in a secular retirement village. Last year, the manager circulated a letter saying that the usual Friday drinks around the barbecue would be held on "Easter Friday". I wrote to the manager saying: "Right now in the Middle East, Christians are being slaughtered because there are those who refuse to respect the faith of others. There are at least three Christians in this village and I hope management will respect our faith on Good Friday."

Drinks around the barbecue were cancelled. Blaspheming in my presence has also stopped. New friendships have remained.

There's no taping shut this lady's mouth!

Irene Voysey
Normanhurst

The articles in March's issue of *Southern Cross* mix interest with controversy. So in the edition's spirit of speaking out, the following is my response to reading "How same-sex marriage may change freedoms".

Change does shake up the "norms" of societies, both secular and spiritual, and great good can come out of it.

Marriage has changed in form and function many times in the past. The best example of these changes is obvious. Historically women were chattels, to be traded to a husband with the expectation of the woman "breeding" for future generations. Now we are in equal partnership whether we have children or not.

Of course same-sex marriages may change freedoms! The freedom to be a loving couple fully integrated in the society and religion of choice. The freedom to be recognised as part of God's beautiful and diverse family. The freedom to be recognised as fully human.

It is time for religious leaders to cast off the lingering shadows of primitive fear. It is time to accept the reality of human diversity. All people should have the same sacramental rights based on their God-given humanity, not merely their sexuality.

Janet Russell
Wollongong

Michael Kellahan's article "Forced Silence" was very thought-provoking.

If a complaint has been made to the Anti-Discrimination Commissioner by a Greens candidate because the Catholic Archbishop of Hobart distributed a booklet setting out the Catholic Church's teaching on marriage to Catholic parishioners and school students, how long will it be before a complaint is made against people distributing bibles?

Will Christians be forced to delete passages like Roman 1:26-27 and Leviticus 18:22 from the Bible?

Michael made a good point when he said that Christians should seriously consider joining a political party. In that way they can help ensure people of integrity stand as candidates in their electorates.

God is sovereign and he is working his purposes out, but he has always used committed Christians and people of prayer for every great Christian movement in history.

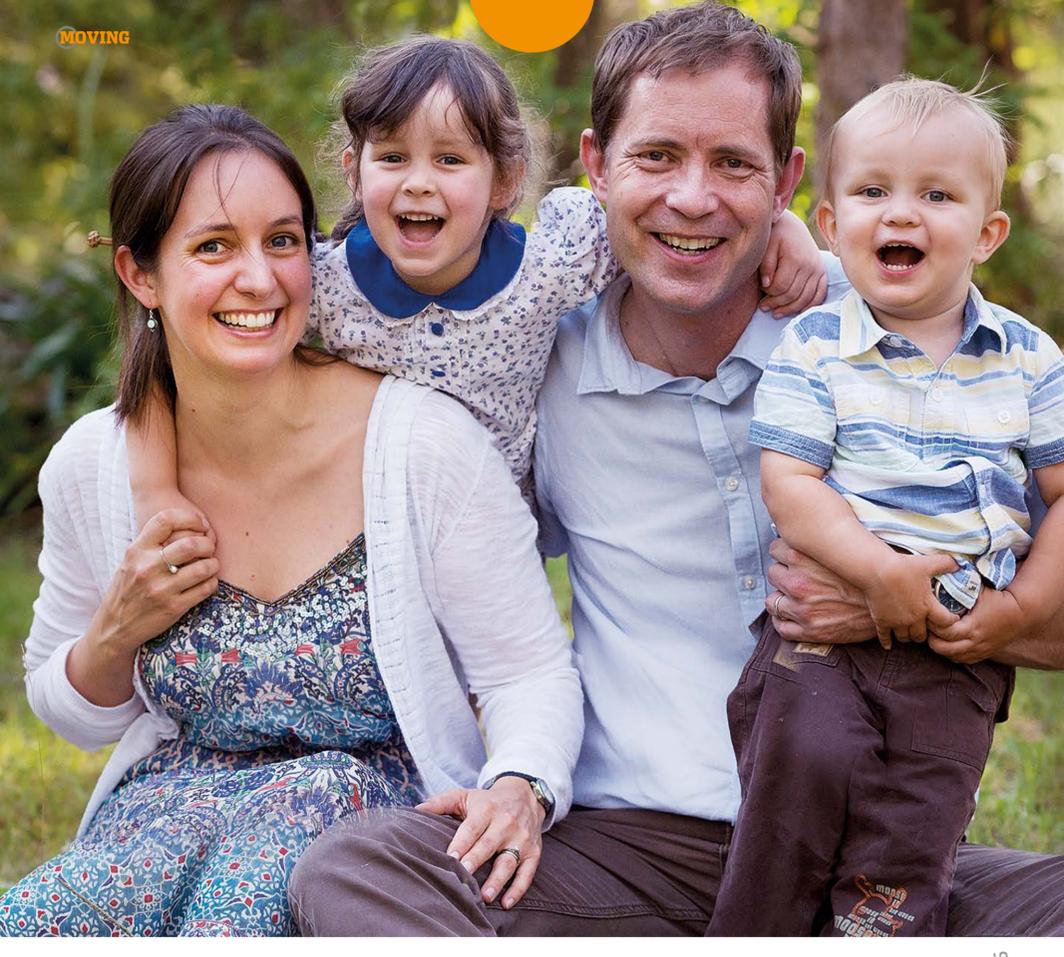
Rewa Bate
Coombs, ACT

Many thanks *Southern Cross* for the great reads in this month's magazine. Michael Kellahan's cover article, encouraging us to persist in speaking up about Jesus, was just superb. Hard work to write but so glad you did, Michael. I am looking forward to the conference later this year.

Also, it was so good to see Dr Peter Jensen's brief statement on forgiveness in the story about the Royal Commission apology. It's a timely reminder of the forgiveness that really works.

Clare Halls
St Peters





MOUNTAIN MOVE

On February 2 the **Rev Dr David Sandifer** became rector of St Alban's, Leura.

Born in France and trained in the US, Dr Sandifer was an Episcopal pastor before the drift toward theological liberalism in The Episcopal Church led him and his Florida congregation to join the Anglican Church of North America.

He met his wife Cathie at Cambridge University while both were working on their PhDs, and the couple moved to Australia to be closer to her family. He served as a chaplain at Robert Menzies College, and as the associate pastor at Trinity Chapel Macquarie.

After finishing his PhD, Dr Sandifer worked for a parachurch organisation in Sydney until he was contacted by Bishop Ivan Lee about the possibility of moving to Leura.

"We had been praying about what the Lord might have for us," Dr Sandifer says. "It felt like the Lord was calling us back into parish ministry, and when this opportunity presented itself it just seemed like the place the Lord was pointing us to. We even had some family ties at the church – Cathie's grandmother and some cousins – and the congregations have been very gracious to us and very welcoming.

"We really felt a sense of connection here, and there was a good fit between my background and gifts and the needs of the congregation and the area."

Dr Sandifer says that in addition to growing together as a church family in godliness and the knowledge of Christ, there is great potential for the gospel in an area he describes as "hugely needy".

"We're excited about the potential to shine Christ's light in the upper mountains," he says. "St Alban's is a wonderful family of believers, and we're looking forward to expanding our outreach to the community with them."

GRACE AND TRUTH

Following five years as an assistant minister in the parish of Sylvania, the **Rev Ben Gray** became rector of All Saints', Petersham on February 11.

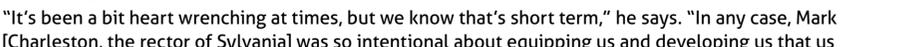
"The nominators from Petersham contacted us in about August last year," Mr Gray says. "We weren't particularly looking to move but a couple of people mentioned Petersham to us and said we should think about it. Obviously we were impressed by the history of gospel ministry here and we knew we would be standing on good shoulders if we came and served here."

Mr Gray says that as he and his wife Sara prayed about the possibility of moving, something that enthused them very much was the parish's combination of solid, Bible-based ministry with "caring for the vulnerable and marginalised in the community – a strong social conscience as well as a commitment to making disciples. That brings opportunities and challenges but it's one of the exciting things of life in ministry here at Petersham."

He says they're enjoying the change, even though leaving Sylvania felt "very much like leaving home" – particularly for their five children.

"It's been a bit heart wrenching at times, but we know that's short term," he says. "In any case, Mark [Charleston, the rector of Sylvania] was so intentional about equipping us and developing us that our moving on was kind of the inevitable result!"

When the family arrived at Petersham a little over a month ago, Mr Gray started a preaching series in John's gospel, and his first sermon underscored his hope for their time in the parish. "I said in my sermon that grace and truth has come through Jesus, and if our ministry can be characterised by grace and truth we'll be in a good place in the future," he says.



BOLT MOVES TO DIVINITY COLLEGE

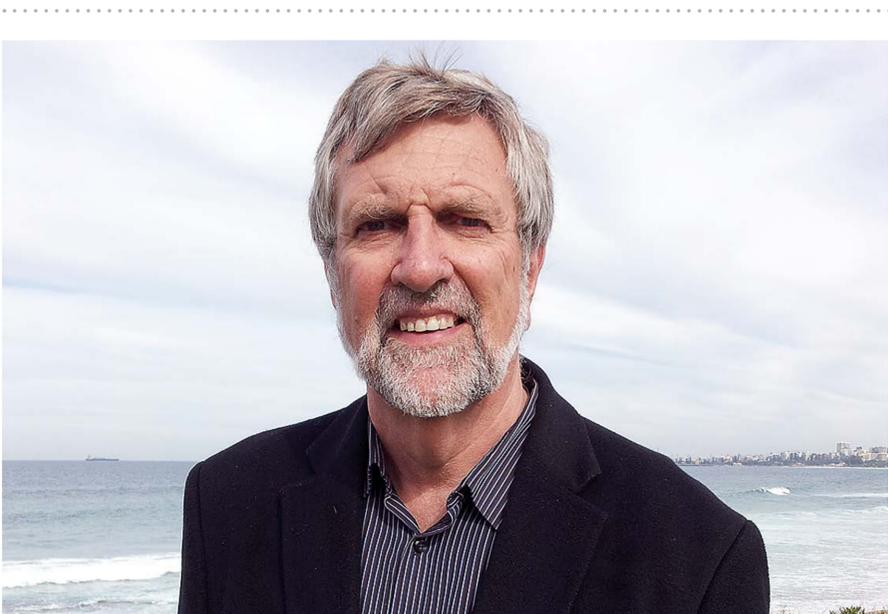


The head of the departments of New Testament and Greek at Moore College, the **Rev Dr Peter Bolt**, has left the college staff after 25 years to become the academic director of the Sydney College of Divinity.

The author of a number of books during his years at Moore – including publications about mission, the spiritual world, Jesus' victory over evil, and historical biographies – Dr Bolt said he was both "profoundly sad" to leave the fellowship of the college yet saw, in his new position, opportunities for "further joyful service in God's purposes in the years to come".

He spoke of his ongoing wonder at the scale of God's plans and purposes, adding: "This is still the world in which a man has risen from the dead. It is still a world in which the gospel of forgiveness is being proclaimed to the nations."

Dr Bolt began his new role at the SCD on April 4 and has asked for prayer "that it will prove a very fruitful avenue of service in Jesus' name".



REINVENTION AT CROSSROADS

The rector of Crossroads Christian Community in Fairy Meadow, the **Rev Martin Bragger**, retired from his role at the end of February.

The parish has changed significantly in the 15 years Mr Bragger has been there. It had originally contained three churches but, about a year before his arrival in 2000, a new church was built on a block purchased after the sale of those three sites. And with no consensus about a saint's name – or any other name – it was simply called the "Anglican parish of Fairy Meadow".

Yet Mr Bragger wanted a new name for the church and asked members to think of ideas. The final choice was reached in 2008 after a member of the parish council read Jeremiah 6:16: "Stand at the crossroads and look".

"We didn't want our name to be geographically determined," Mr Bragger says, explaining that while he wanted the church to be "theologically Anglican" he also hoped, in time, to create a number of local "mini-churches". This hope to be "theologically Anglican" with groups of different sizes and styles meeting all over the parish each week "to engage deliberately with non-Christians where they are – taking church to them".

"We wanted a name that emphasised the idea of community," he adds. "We also wanted to promote our international ministry, therefore we wanted a neutral name. And that [international element] has come about in the past eight years – we now have a large ethnic mix."

Mr Bragger knows the "journey of reinvention" will continue after his departure, but now he is retired he can devote more time and energy to other gospel work. This includes the Archbishop's working group investigating alternative forms of Anglican church, and a group he has run for the past 18 months called "The Conversation", which is considering ways to reach – and change – more people with the gospel.

"Why is our Mission not as effective as we'd like it to be?" he asks. "We want to remain theologically appropriate but be more missional – more effective."

LIFELONG LORD'S LABOUR



After 40 years of ordained ministry the **Rev Stephen Miller** retired from the parish of Chester Hill with Sefton after Easter.

Not that retirement will stop him working for the Lord – after all, he felt called to ministry while still at primary school. His father, then the minister at Brighton-le-Sands, was keen to give the young Stephen a chance to preach. "The bishop wouldn't give his approval, so the congregation was marched into the church hall [so I could preach]!" Mr Miller recalls.

At high school Mr Miller led an ISCF group, then – following a degree in maths and physics at the University of Sydney – studied at Moore College, graduating with first class honours in 1975.

His "priority and commitment" in the five parishes where he has been rector has been ministering to those under his care. And it's a job that still

excites him. "I get paid to explain the Bible to people – I can't imagine a better job than that!" he says. Other people have to do it after work or when they've got time. I can do it all day."

He says he could not have done as much as he has in ministry without his wife Jeanine. She has been his most reliable sounding board and has also been involved in ministries that have brought people together as well as helping fund parish work.

The couple will be retiring to Wentworth Falls, and Mr Miller says that while he has nothing planned, he is confident God does. "I'm sure things will come up after we move," he says.

VALE

The **Rev Richard Bosanquet** died on March 6, aged 94.

Richard Frederick Bosanquet was born on August 16, 1921 into a family of strong faith. He left school at 14 to help support his family during the depression and, in his later teen years, became involved in street preaching with his older brother Geoff.

In 1940 he joined the AIF and, as a surveyor and mapper, was first posted to Queensland and then Papua New Guinea. On leave he met his future wife June at a church picnic, and they were married after he left the Army in 1945.

Mr Bosanquet had studied at night for his matriculation while in the Army and once back in Sydney was accepted into Moore College. At about the same time he enrolled in, and completed, a BA at the University of Sydney.

Upon graduating from college in 1949 he was curate at Marrickville, then rector of St Cuthbert's, South Carlton, before taking up the role of assistant chaplain to Shore School in North Sydney in 1953, in addition to teaching geography and divinity.

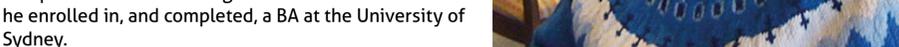
In 1959 Mr Bosanquet became the first headmaster of The Illawarra Grammar School in Wollongong, which grew from 32 to 330 students in the first years he was there. The school has since named a scholarship in his honour, which is awarded to students with academic promise, Christian character and ongoing financial need.

He returned to Sydney to teach at Shore in 1966 but, as his son John remarked, "all that talent could not be hidden under a bushel" and after two years of teaching at the high school Mr Bosanquet was asked to be headmaster of Shore Prep. In 1977 his title at Shore changed to "master in orders", which he held until his retirement in 1985 (with the addition of an assistant minister position at Castlecrag for the last two years).

A busy "retirement" followed, with the Bosanquets moving to Bathurst and then Yass. Mr Bosanquet was involved in everything from regular Aidum work to building and woodwork (a lifelong enjoyment). He also linked up with the group Technical Locum for the Disabled, and enjoyed designing and making appliances for people with a range of disabilities.

In his eulogy John Bosanquet described his father as "an inspiration and a model for our own lives... we can thank him for showing us the way to that one life where he is now. He dedicated his life to extending God's kingdom on earth to leave it a better place."

Mr Bosanquet's life and faith will be celebrated at a memorial service in the Shore Chapel on May 28 at 11am.



IN BRIEF

The **Rev Richard Harvey** died on March 3. More information in the next edition.

Pride: the great enemy

RAY GALEA

LAST MONTH THE MBM (MULTICULTURAL BIBLE MINISTRY) CELEBRATED ITS 25TH ANNIVERSARY. It began life way back in 1991 as a church plant in a suburban home in Blacktown. It was the year after I graduated from Moore College and I can remember my first day, sitting on my lounge, wondering how I was going to fill my time.

Yet by 1996 we had grown to about 150 people and amalgamated with St Alban's, Rooty Hill. We needed real estate and they needed people. It was a marriage made in heaven.

If I could time travel all these years later, what would I want to say to the younger version of myself starting a church plant with no experience? I'd want to say a lot of things – but one of the first would be to watch out for pride, as it will be the biggest threat to both gospel ministry and church growth.

Augustine was right when he called pride "the mother of all sins". But it's a sin that is not so easy to detect, especially if you see yourself as I do: a relational, open-minded person who is able to apologise.

Pride has so many faces in ministry. Its obvious symptoms include not having a broken and contrite heart and a failure to tremble at God's word; to somehow think we are wiser than God; or when we are driven to make our ministry about us and make church growth an idol with no regard to God's glory. Another symptom is when we fail to celebrate other people's victories or define ourselves by our role and not our status as children of God.

Pride and envy tend to find joy in the failures of others and suffer at the success of another ministry. As Gore Vidal once said, "Every time a friend of mine succeeds a little part of me dies inside". It's a long way from gospel generosity if we fail to rejoice with those who rejoice.

However, let me suggest the other faces of pride that I have encountered within myself that don't appear to be pride – on the surface, at least.

1. Pride fuels anger at people at church for not doing what we want them to do, when we want them to do it. Let's face it: I am forever fighting the urge to build my self-esteem on my congregation's attendance and giving.
2. Pride fuels anxiety, depression and self-loathing about the lack of growth, lack of giving or lack of serving at church.
3. Pride also makes us resist facing facts by taking good statistics about our ministry. So often our commitment to protect our ego is so strong that we will not engage with depressing facts.
4. Pride explains away realities by using anecdotes or telling stories to undermine the validity of hard data. It's not that anecdotes don't have any place or that every survey is correct, but so often we listen to our intuition rather than evidence-based conclusion. Part of the reason for this is so we can avoid feeling like a failure.
5. Pride means we tell ourselves that we can't learn from "those over there" because they are "Pentecostal" or "Americans" – and let's face it, anyone can grow a church in the USA, right? (NB. the average size of churches in the US is similar to Australia).
6. Pride means we think our patch is so unique – and that only we know the Australian context – that we shut down reflections, insights and opinions from our overseas friends. While our theological community is critical to safeguard truth we can sometimes overestimate what our tribe can offer, especially in those areas of small "w" wisdom.
7. Pride means we theologise our way out of feeling bad. We somehow think that we can set faithfulness over and against fruitfulness.
8. Pride won't access and learn from a wider body of literature. I remember first reading Gary McIntosh's book *Taking Your Church to the Next Level* – it was like reading the history of MBM as it journeyed through the various church barriers. As I read about the strategies I remember asking myself, "Why did I not think it important to read about these growth barriers that I was experiencing and take tried and tested solutions seriously?" I spent so much of the first 15 years of my ministry living out Einstein's definition of insanity, which as we all know is "doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results". I suspect part of the issue is that we hold on to a view that if a body of work is theologically faulty at some levels then it has absolutely nothing to offer.
9. Pride means I have to come up with ideas as though originality were the highest value. We tend to think our original Bible studies are God's gift to the Christian world when sometimes using another church's material may be wiser and more loving to our congregation.
10. Pride resists feedback and refuses to ask for help. It took me 15 years before I secured a mentor! Why so long? It's not like the book of Proverbs doesn't repeatedly warn about the failure of plans due to lack of counsel. I somehow thought I knew best.

I've been so blessed by the mentor relationships I have had over the years with Rod Irvine and Dave Kraft, and the consultative relationship with Gary McIntosh. I now require all staff to have a mentor or coach.

Conclusion

The only way to deal with the curse of pride is to make feedback our friend. However, to face facts means we must be willing to resist getting defensive.

A necessary step is being prepared to get depressed with the feedback and facts – whether it's about preaching, how we run meetings, or some issue that involves our effectiveness as overseers.

The one vital step so often missing in facing reality when it comes to our leadership and ministries is being prepared to get depressed at the state of play.

With a prayerful dependence on the Holy Spirit this then inspires reading, research, consultation and taking counsel and, from there, we can embark on solutions and strategies – never forgetting that it's as the Lord wills. Only then will we properly function as faithful overseers.

I recently read an editorial by Don Carson on pastoral leadership. He writes, "But oversight of the church is more than simply teaching and preaching... As important and central as is the ministry of the word of God, the thoughtful pastor/elder/overseer will devote time and energy to casting a vision, figuring out the steps for getting there, building the teams and structures needed for discharging ministry, and training [and] building others up."

It's an attitude and focus all pastoral leaders should have – with their pride firmly under control.

The Next Level conference will be held on August 10 and 11 at the Wesley Conference Centre in Sydney.

Don Carson will speak from 1 Timothy 3 about the task and importance of the overseer and Gary McIntosh will unpack issues of church growth and leadership.

For more information see <http://anglicanchurch.net.au/nextlevel/>



Doers of good

DR GLENN DAVIES

HAVE OFTEN BEEN STRUCK BY THE SUMMARY OF JESUS' EARTHLY MINISTRY THAT THE apostle Peter provides for Cornelius:

"You know the word that he sent to Israel, preaching good news of peace by Jesus Christ (he is Lord of all), the word which was proclaimed throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee after the baptism which John preached; how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power; how he went about doing good and healing all that were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him". Acts 10:36-38

We all recognise that Jesus was foremost a preacher, proclaiming the kingdom of heaven and gathering disciples whom he baptised, just as John had done (John 4:1-2). However, we do not so readily recognise that Jesus' ministry was also that of "doing good". Yet this is at the heart of our Saviour's work. The greatest good, of course, was his act of sacrifice on what we appropriately call Good Friday. Yet Jesus' good works were not limited to his redemptive act. His care for the poor, his compassion upon the afflicted, the diseased, the blind and the lame, and his concern for his mother's welfare after his death, are all elements of his "doing good".

Of course, God is the author of all that is good. This was his declaration at the end of each day of creation – "He saw it and it was good" – culminating in the sixth day's declaration: "Behold, it was very good". When we are doers of the good we reflect God's character and the example of Jesus, who said: "Let your light so shine before others that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven" (Matthew 5:16).

At the end of this month a special session of Synod has been called to consider a merger of two of our great diocesan organisations, Anglicare and Anglican Retirement Villages (ARV). This is a very important decision in the life of our Diocese, as each organisation has its own history – each having been established to provide care and assistance to the most vulnerable in our society, which is often beyond the reach of local parishes or Christians generally. Yet when Anglicare seeks to bind the brokenhearted, provide food for the impoverished, housing for aged care, accommodation for refugees, second-hand clothing for the needy and much more, it is doing the good – and doing the good in the name of Christ.

Likewise, ARV's provision for the elderly and frail of our community, especially those in necessitous circumstances, is an expression of Christ's love. Whether it be in retirement villages, residential aged care facilities, respite care, home care services or shelters for homeless men, it too is doing the good in the name of Christ.

We are blessed by having these two organisations whose mission statements include proclaiming the gospel alongside seeking to do good to all people, but especially the household of faith (Galatians 6:10).

Yet the world is rapidly changing and new government regulations are affecting the delivery of these community services. Moreover, there is unnecessary duplication between these two organisations, each with residential aged care services and home care services. For the past couple of years both have been considering how they might work together in partnership with parishes and with the same diocesan vision of wanting to see Christ honoured as Lord and Saviour in every community. A compelling case for the merger of these organisations is now in the hands of our Synod members. It will be an historic moment in the life of our Diocese should the Synod vote in favour of the merger. Not only will it strengthen the work of "doing good" in our communities, it will strengthen the presence of Christ's love in word and deed to the most vulnerable in our society.

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.

Mission: POSSIBLE

Is having a ministry plan and setting goals undermining the sovereignty of God?

RUSSELL POWELL investigates.

HERE ARE TWO KINDS OF PEOPLE IN THE WORLD: THOSE WHO LOVE MISSION statements and those who don't. Christians, at least, are in favour of the "mission" part, but mention a vision statement or goal setting and you will be overwhelmed by differing views.

There are those who like audacious goals – they say, "Reach for the sky and you will get 80 per cent of what you aim for". Other people are more cautious and choose what's "achievable", while still others are repulsed by anything that smacks of corporate-style planning.

In this atmosphere, the framers of the diocesan Mission 2020 chose a middle path when they presented to the 2014 Synod both a vision *and* a mission statement, as well as Mission priorities. At the time Archbishop Davies said, "No document will cover everything that everyone believes should be incorporated in our Mission. Some parishes and organisations will develop their own priorities for their local situation".

But with input from a lengthy debate, Synod adopted the Mission 2020 campaign to run for five years from 2015. So, one year in, how is it working and what has been the reaction to our diocesan goal-setting exercise?

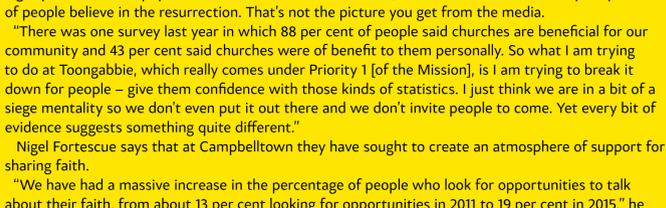
The first thing to say is that, unlike the previous mission with its "10 per cent" goal, the 2020 aim is lower and more measurable. Mission possible, if you like.

The mission's vision and values seem easy enough to sign on to, but it is in the Mission's priorities that the rubber hits the road. Bishop Peter Lin, from the Strategic Research Group that oversees the progress of Mission 2020, says the group is working to determine how churches are lining up behind the priorities.

"People think the key thing about our group is strategy," he says. "Actually, the key thing is strategic research: what do we need to find out to help the Mission progress?"

The rector of Campbelltown, the Rev Nigel Fortescue, agrees with the measurable approach. "Measurable goals aid stewardship in gospel ministry but we ought not see them as a noose around our neck or a harness that is dragging us along," he says.

"The world in which our congregation members live is a world of measurables. Often the world in which not-for-profits and churches live is a world in which we have been reluctant to seek measurables – perhaps because of our theological convictions about the sovereignty of God, not wanting to undermine his sovereignty. But we can invest a lot of money, time and effort into things, and in the end wonder, 'Did that do anything?' Unless you have measurables then you will never know."



An outdoor baptism at Toongabbie Anglican Church.

REACHING THE LOST

The first priority of the Mission, not surprisingly, is to "reach all the lost in our Diocese with the life-giving gospel of Christ". It depends upon engagement with local communities and the willingness of congregation members to share their faith and invite people to church.

At Toongabbie Anglican Church, senior minister the Rev Raj Gupta says this has a lot to do with confidence.

"People perceive that Christianity has been marginalised but that is not the reality," he says. "Sixty-eight per cent of our population believes in heaven and that Jesus is the Son of God. Sixty-six per cent of people believe in the resurrection. That's not the picture you get from the media.

"There was one survey last year in which 88 per cent of people said churches are beneficial for our community and 43 per cent said churches were of benefit to them personally. So what I am trying to do at Toongabbie, which really comes under Priority 1 [of the Mission], is I am trying to break it down for people – give them confidence with those kinds of statistics. I just think we are in a bit of a siege mentality so we don't even put it out there and we don't invite people to come. Yet every bit of evidence suggests something quite different."

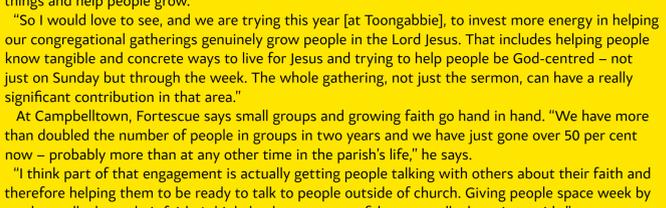
Nigel Fortescue says that at Campbelltown they have sought to create an atmosphere of support for sharing faith.

"We have had a massive increase in the percentage of people who look for opportunities to talk about their faith, from about 13 per cent looking for opportunities in 2011 to 19 per cent in 2015," he says. "I think a lot of that comes not necessarily from training courses and those sorts of things, but from actually helping people to trust and believe the reasonableness of their faith – and to see and hear stories of other people who have shared their faith and the encouragement they have gained from that."

One example he cites is the Take 5 program. "With our leftover *Essential Jesus* books from the Connect09 campaign we gave those out to people in bundles of five to give away to friends. [We would] say to them, 'Here is a copy of the biography of Jesus. I would love you to read it and then let's talk about it.' A whole lot of people said, 'That's simple – I can do that', and they did."

Mr Fortescue says the church has sought to create a culture where people would feel comfortable to invite friends.

"We've just launched a new mission goal: we want to see everyone in our church bring someone else to know Jesus and join our fellowship in the next five years," he says. "So it is another way of saying we want to double our size in five years but it is an active way of saying it. Even that just gets people thinking, 'I have five years to invite someone to church – it doesn't sound difficult!'"



Members of the kids club at Campbelltown Anglican Church gather for a Christmas activity.

DEEPENING SPIRITUAL MATURITY

Evangelism is only one priority of the Mission, albeit a foundational one. Feedback from the National Church Life Survey has also led to a desire to – in the words of the Mission document – ensure that congregational gatherings are significant places for spiritual growth and enrich the believer's devotional life and small group fellowship.

Gupta says the priority lines up with Scripture. "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength," he says. "Our congregational gatherings should be places that engage all of those things and help people grow."

"So I would love to see, and we are trying this year [at Toongabbie], to include more energy in helping our congregational gatherings genuinely grow people in the Lord Jesus. That involves helping people know tangible and concrete ways to live for Jesus and trying to help people be God-centred – not just on Sunday but through the week. The whole gathering, not just the sermon, can have a really significant contribution in that area."

At Campbelltown, Fortescue says small groups and growing faith go hand in hand. "We have more than doubled the number of people in groups in two years and we have just gone over 50 per cent now – probably more than at any other time in the parish's life," he says.

"I think part of that engagement is actually getting people talking with others about their faith and therefore helping them to be ready to talk to people outside of church. Giving people space week by week to talk about their faith, I think, leads to more confidence to talk about it outside."

In turn, he says, that boosts spiritual growth.

"In 2011 we had 26 per cent of people who said they experienced 'much growth' in the last year through this church and in 2015 we had 47 per cent of people saying the same thing. So we have almost doubled the number of people who believe they are growing."

"A lot of that is just due to people joining groups and starting to think carefully about their faith, and the flow-on is them feeling more confident sharing their faith and inviting people to church. Then they feel more engaged and part of what's happening, rather than just sitting there watching other people do stuff."

Away from the congregational gatherings, large or small, the Mission also encourages churches to consider how to spur on the devotional life of their members. This is a constant job, according to Raj Gupta.

"Last year we saw in our statistics that prayer was dropping off, so we used the month of June to do something big," he says. "We had a sermon series about it and we encouraged people to sign up to really kick-start their prayer life. We realised that we had to do it by social media, we had to do it with an app and we had to do it in hard copy. We basically said to people, 'We will provide you with prayer points for 30 days to help you restart your prayer life'. That had a fairly big take-up and I hope it has lasted." Toongabbie's next target is to boost personal Bible reading among its members.

EXERCISING GIFTS

One of the significant things about recent surveys is the number of people who feel they aren't using their gifts, either through lack of opportunity or training. This is something that diocesan Ministry, Training and Development director the Rev Gary O'Brien is taking seriously.

"The hope is that if we can do a good job equipping the clergy, they in turn will do a good job harnessing, equipping and releasing the people in their congregations," he says.

The Centre for Ministry Development at Moore College is assisting O'Brien in this task, which he says is particularly needed by those just leaving college and taking up assistant minister positions.

"It actually came up in a training session the other day – about recognising that they don't actually have all the gifts," he says. "Sometimes we come out of college and we feel over-confident and fail to fully realise that ministry is done in partnership with others. So we emphasise that theme."

O'Brien believes there are strengths and weaknesses in the "professionalisation" of ministry over recent years. "I shared at a conference the other day that in my ministry, one of the greatest joys [of being a rector] was being able to let other people flourish and enjoy the fact that a lot more is going to get done if you can enable other people to flourish."

"We did a building project at West Pymble and it was terrific because I didn't run it. There were people there who had great skills. I had to give input about that and kind of thing, but once they grasped the nettle, I didn't go to building meetings and they only consulted me when needed."

"We must not have people starting ordained ministry thinking they have to do everything, because they can't."

MISSION 2020

OUR VISION

To see Christ honoured as Lord and Saviour in every community.

OUR MISSION

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

OUR VALUES

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

OUR PRIORITIES

1 Reach all the lost in our Diocese with the life-giving gospel of Christ

Goals:

- to increase our members reporting their willingness to talk intentionally about their faith from 18 per cent to 22 per cent across the Diocese by 2020.
- to increase our members reporting that they have invited someone to church in the past 12 months from 40 per cent to 45 per cent across the Diocese by 2020.
- to increase newcomers in church from 9 per cent to 12 per cent across the Diocese by 2020.

2 Deepen spiritual maturity among our members

Goals:

- to increase our members reporting "much growth" in faith from 47 per cent to 60 per cent across the Diocese by 2020.
- to increase our members reporting time spent in prayer, Bible reading, meditation everyday/most days from 43 per cent to 50 per cent.

3 Equip our members to exercise their gifts

Goal:

- to increase our members reporting their use of gifts "to a great extent" from 21 per cent to 27 per cent across the Diocese by 2020.

4 Respond to the changing face of our society

Goals:

- to increase our members born in non-English speaking countries from 15 per cent to 20 per cent across the Diocese by 2020.
- to increase the retention of our members' children in church from 65 per cent to 70 per cent across the Diocese by 2020.
- to plant 15 new churches in greenfield areas by 2020.
- to plant at least two new churches per mission area by 2020.

The full document can be downloaded at: sydneyanglicans.net/mision

SOCIETAL CHANGE

The fourth priority of the Mission is perhaps the most wide-ranging as it includes reaching children, youth and over 60s, as well as what might be termed "new Sydney".

Multicultural outreach is a passion of Bishop Peter Lin, for a number of reasons. Not only is he bishop of the Georges River Region, the area of Sydney which has undergone the most multicultural change, he was rector of Fairfield with Bossley Park for many years and is an Australian of Chinese descent.

His insights are worth taking to heart, and his first blunt assessment is "that we are still not doing cross-cultural things well."

He becomes more animated as he explains why. "One of the key things that turns a church around in moving from 'white' to 'mixed' – if I can put it crudely like that – [is if] the churches are prepared to change themselves. The ones that don't do it well are the ones that expect that when people come in it is the visitors who have to change."

So what kind of cultural shift is needed in our churches? "We need to adapt to them, not expect them to adapt to us," he says. "That's a big shift. That's 'opposite assimilation'."

"It's certainly not saying that if there are a lot of Indian people in your suburb you have to become an Indian church. I'm not saying that at all. I'm saying 'tweak things' – and my view is that most churches, not all, only need some tweaking. Not massive things. But things are – still change."

Lin has already shared these insights with the churches in his region but says across the Diocese the key to retaining visitors is the ability to change.

"Instead of trying to push someone to fit into our mould, if we just adjust a few of these things, then when they walk in the door they will hopefully feel comfortable enough to stay," he says. "I mean, no one from another country expects to walk into a church and feel totally comfortable. None of them do. They know it is going to be different, but has the church done enough?"

"You know the level of discomfort determines whether you will stay or whether you will go. But some churches won't budge – they won't change a thing. I'm not talking just about traditional services. Even modern contemporary congregations say, 'No, we don't want to change'. So that's the shift that needs to occur."

If you are wondering where to start in welcoming recent arrivals, Lin suggests it may be as simple as having people of different ethnicities up front, or changing the morning tea menu.

"I have said to some churches, 'Don't just put out a packet of Tim Tams for morning tea – prepare something substantial,'" he says. "They say, 'Oh, that's too much work and we don't have enough volunteers' – often they haven't asked. But for the average ethnic person, whether you are from Asia, South America, the Mediterranean, Europe or the Middle East, if you go to their house and they offer you one biscuit, that means they only want to spend enough time with you that it takes to eat one biscuit. An ethnic person would never do that if you came to their home."

Greeting time can also be a trial for visitors. We think we are being friendly, but Bishop Lin says newcomers hate it.

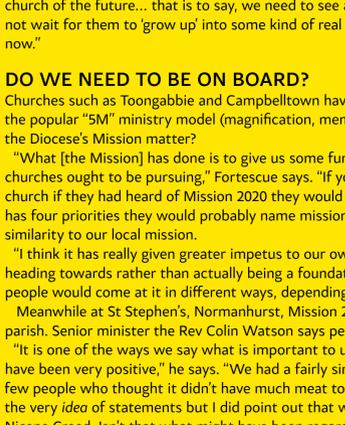
"I know we all love the greeting stuff, but it's awful if you don't know anybody and even worse if no one says 'Hello' to you," he says. "Most people in churches will say 'Hello' to the person they know, not the person they don't."

Lin isn't singling out any one church, but he says there is a lot to do. "Even the young contemporary groups are still quite uneasy about the way they do things," he says. "There's a big spiritual and cultural shift that has to happen in churches if we are going to reach the 50 per cent of people from non-English speaking countries now in our cities."

YOUTH AND BABY BOOMERS

The Synod debate on Mission 2020 resolved to specifically include a reference to "connecting with the over 60s", a move welcomed by ARV's director of mission, the Rev Andrew Nixon.

"There is a biblical imperative to care for the vulnerable and marginalised in our midst, and as people age they move into this category," Nixon says. "In the future, more and more older people will remain



The Rev Gary O'Brien leads this year's ordination candidates into St Andrew's Cathedral in February.

in their own homes for longer, which means they will be in parishes but not very visible. There will be lots of challenges, but we need to find a will and a way."

Nixon echoes the thought that connections are often easier than we think. "The sheer numbers are enormous – lots and lots of people who need to know Jesus before it's too late. The good news is that as people age, their interest in spiritual things increases. And, for now at least, most have a strong connection with mainstream church. So it is really 'reconnection' and it is often far more welcome than we realise."

With youth, there is a specific Mission goal to "increase the retention of our members' children in church from 65 per cent [an NCLS 2011 statistic] to 70 per cent across the Diocese by 2020".

The Rev Dr Bill Salier, principal and director of theology of Youthworks College, is looking beyond the percentages quoted. "You can either say they are too optimistic or not visionary enough," he says. "What I think is important is the focus on retention."

"While some might suggest that this is not outward-looking and what about all the unchurched youth and children, the statistics point to a massive attrition rate, and it gets worse as things go on – with some figures suggesting as high as a 70 per cent attrition rate by the age of 30. I suspect if someone suggested to a rector that their adult congregation would be diminished by 30 per cent in a couple of years that would grab their attention! So it is very significant that this been noticed and is part of the Mission strategies."

Salier says it is important to recognise the various transition points where youth may "drop out" of church, including the change to high school, the change from high school to further study or work and the change from further study to the workforce. One of the ministries he oversees, the Year 13 program, was established to help Christian young people manage such a transition.

"We need to help young people see that they are part and parcel of the church now and not just the church of the future... that is to say, we need to see and treat young people as disciples of Jesus and not wait for them to 'grow up' into some kind of real faith. Their faith is real enough to be nurtured now."

DO WE NEED TO BE ON BOARD?

Churches such as Toongabbie and Campbelltown have their own mission and goal statements under the popular "5M" ministry model (magnification, membership, maturity, ministry and mission) so does the Diocese's Mission matter?

"What [the Mission] has done is to give us some further insights into the sorts of things that churches ought to be pursuing," Fortescue says. "If you asked a normal person at the Campbelltown church if they had heard of Mission 2020 they would probably say 'No'. But if you say the Mission 2020 has four priorities they would probably name mission, maturity and ministry and would recognise the similarity to our local mission."

"I think it has really given greater impetus to our own work and greater bulk to what we were heading towards rather than actually being a foundation. But I can see that in different churches lay people would come at it in different ways, depending on the footing that the church is on at the time."

Meanwhile at St Stephen's, Normanhurst, Mission 2020 has been adopted as the mission of the parish. Senior minister the Rev Colin Watson says people find the priorities helpful.

"It is one of the ways we say what is important to us as an organisation and so people on the whole have been very positive," he says. "We had a fairly simple mission statement before but there were a few people who thought it didn't have much meat to it. On the other hand, some find difficulty with the very *idea* of statements but I did point out that we stand up and say the Apostles' Creed or the Nicene Creed. Isn't that what might have been regarded as an early form of mission statement?"

Mr Watson couldn't find any Bible studies on the Mission so he wrote his own, which the church is working through now. "The big thing with any mission statement is what are we going to do about this – for example, how are we going to budget for it? So we are still trying to work out what to do as a result of this, and the Bible study series on this will help, but the good thing is that it has got people thinking."

Peter Lin is relaxed about how the Mission is used, as long as the principles are getting through to churches. "Because the National Church Life Survey is this year, we are working on how we can harness the research of the NCLS to see how we are going in terms of uptake of the Mission," he says. "But he says that uptake doesn't have to be in the language of the Mission 2020 document."

"We might say 'reaching the lost', some churches might call it 'evangelism to the local community' – well, it's still reaching the lost. We just want to see that people are doing the kind of things that underpin the Mission."

When we disagree



What should we do when Christians can't agree, asks

ARCHIE POULOS.

DISAGREEMENT AND DIVISION AMONG CHRISTIANS IS BOTH SURPRISING AND, at the same time, to be expected.

The opening paragraph of Ephesians 4 oozes with unity – one body, one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father – so it is not surprising that the Apostle Paul calls believers to humble, patient unity. In the goodness of God, he calls a person not just to himself by the blood of Jesus, but individuals into deep fellowship and unity with each other. Unity is the work of the Trinity!

Despite that deep, Spirit-enabled unity, however, the New Testament is very clear about what our communal fellowship is like this side of the return of Jesus. Paul has disputes, even with the Apostle Peter (Gal 2), and in a chapter about how to live God-honouring lives with each other Paul writes, “if it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone” (Rom 12:18) – a clear indication that unity and peace are not easy to achieve.

So, members of God's church are called to unity and peace, while at the same time the Bible is very realistic about the difficulty of living out this call.

In our own city of Sydney, where we have the joy of our clergy being trained together at our own colleges – which so clearly promote care and support – we are no less immune to the problem of disagreement. I know of no clergy who do not teach and proclaim the central place of the cross. But our disagreements are over how we make, keep and apply these central gospel issues. So the question is when and how should we disagree and argue a position with brothers and sisters who are fighting in the same trenches against our common enemy, the devil? Are there principles that we can apply in answering this question?

THE TWO NORMAL OPTIONS

When it comes to charting our way through how to disagree, we can see that, even from the Lord himself, the issue is complex. In Luke 9:50 Jesus declares if someone is not against you, he is for you, but two chapters later he says, “whoever is not with me is against me” (Luke 11:23). Should you side with someone who is not against you, or do they need to be actively in your camp? Do we *not* divide in order to maintain unity and foster friendships, or do we divide in order to maintain purity?

DISCERNING TRUTH

In the New Testament, truth and deciding whom to follow is not merely a matter of assessing stated beliefs. We must always consider teaching, behaviour and attitude to fellowship. Paul commands Timothy to watch both his life (behaviour) and doctrine (teaching) carefully (1 Tim 4:16). In 2 Peter 2 and 1 John 4 the marks of true and false teachers are seen both in what they teach and how they behave. This is completely unsurprising, as the call of God through gospel proclamation is a call to righteousness and right living, and because righteousness also loves the truth, it will result in right teaching.

Along with teaching and behaviour, fellowship is the other factor that must be considered. As we have seen, believers are called to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (Eph 4:3). The attempt to exclude people from church is the desire of the anti-gospel man named Diotrephes (3 John 9-11). We must be very, very slow in withdrawing fellowship, yet to not withdraw from wicked people is just as dangerous.

At an individual level Timothy is warned to avoid Alexander the coppersmith (2 Tim 4:14-15). At a church level Paul warns of eating and drinking with those who sacrifice to demons (1 Cor 10:14-22), and even more pointedly John commands that hospitality not be offered to anyone teaching a false gospel (2 John 11). This is because the task of the church and its shepherds is to teach the truth and to correct error.

So what do we do? How do we put these ideas together? A friend put this well: “We must not be divisive, but division over matters deepens relationship and corrects error if done kindly”.

Divisiveness attempts to create factions that are pitted against each other. Division puts the matters on the table for discussion, prayer and study. Rest assured that if we do not discuss our differences – if we say, “You have your opinion and I have mine, let's agree to disagree” – the devil will attempt to use these unresolved differences to create factions and parties.

What Christians must do is respectfully address both the issues with our brothers and sisters and work together with the Bible open to seek the mind of God.

PRINCIPLES

Having very briefly considered what the Bible has to say on Christians disagreeing – that it is a right thing to do, but must not be undertaken with the goal of being divisive – what principles can we discern as we go about this?

Here are some thoughts:

- Recognise that fellow believers will be judged more harshly. 1 Corinthians 5:9-13 gives the clear model that those outside the church will always have different beliefs and practices but fellow Christians should be asked about *their* beliefs and practices, for their sakes and for the sake of others.
- Do not be a respecter of persons; that is, do not accept or reject another and their position based on the tribe they come from, the position they hold or the pedigree they have. We must assess everyone based on teaching, life and fellowship (almost any chapter of 1 Corinthians underscores that).
- Heed the warning of the Apostle Paul: “Who are you to judge another man's servant?” (Rom 14:4). This means we must be slow in attributing motive. We do not know why a person holds a particular position or why they act as they do. We must be careful of assuming we know the motive, and so we should ask. Christians discuss with each other.
- Practice should flow from theology, but so often theology is reshaped by accepted practice. This is very dangerous. Accordingly, we will often need to discuss practices and behaviours as well as theology, and call each other to account on both matters.
- Beware of the interpretation loophole. It goes like this: “We both believe the Scriptures, but you interpret it one way and I interpret it another way, so we must respect each other”. Such an argument makes the interpreter the final arbiter. It is always a danger to seek a synthesis that satisfies both parties, or explains everyone's experience, at the cost of the revelation of God. Both need to work at the Scriptures – the immediate passage as well as the whole counsel of God – to seek greater clarity.
- Consider each other's trajectory. No one holds a position independently of where they have come from and where they are going. It is worth considering: Are they, or am I, moving away from historical faith or toward it? Do they/I hold a position because they/I have a vested interest in the outcome (often a moral failure we won't challenge or a settled, comfortable way of living)? This means that in our disagreements we should watch behaviours as well as theology.
- There is no “set of beliefs” that mark out true faith, so that if you hold them you are orthodox and if you don't then you are not. A biblical example is that, for Paul, circumcision or non-circumcision count for nothing (Gal 6:15) – it doesn't matter one way or the other. But when it was demanded that Titus be circumcised Paul opposed it (Gal 2:3-5) because the basis of acceptance before God was being compromised. This demands that we pray for wisdom and explore issues widely.
- When determining those with whom you can work, remember that fellowship is not one-dimensional. Fellowship demands trust, and there are some areas that you can trust others in and others that you cannot – for example, the people with whom you work at “Carols in the Park” may well be a wider group than those you ask to disciple a new Christian.

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS

Here are some suggestions about how to disagree.

- Avoid quarrelling about foolish genealogies (2 Tim 2:22-26). Choose to disagree only on important matters.
- If you choose not to disagree on a matter, it is worth asking yourself whether that is because it is indeed a foolish matter to dispute over, or whether the life of ease through not disputing is something we treasure more than truth.
- Beware of the real reasons for your disagreements. Sometimes there is a disposition to disagreement arising from personality differences, past failures and the tribes from which we come.
- Recognise that everyone has reasons for their positions. Holding a position other than yours is not necessarily the devil at work. Beware of demonising the other person because of the position they hold.
- A theologian's position can be held for a variety of reasons. Sometimes it is biblical, sometimes theological, sometimes sociological and sometimes from experience. And sometimes a person can't even articulate why they hold a position. Beware of assuming why a person holds a position. Talk with them about it.
- Christians discuss issues of difference with each other with the Bible open. As you would expect, change can and does occur when we work together from God's word.
- Do not just agree to disagree and so take discussion on the matter off the table. That will create party spirit, demonising of others and broken relationship. God has spoken and given us our minds and the settings where we function. It is not simply that you have one opinion, I have another, let's go our own way. No. Let us work on this.

There are many topics we could point to by way of example and I am sure you can consider many more than me. That said, I am sure we have all prayed that everyone will come under the sound of the gospel and be called to repentance.

We must work with brothers and sisters in this task and, in working together, we will need to voice our disagreements and deal with them in a Christian way. This may at times, sadly, cause us to break fellowship, but usually it leads to greater gospel clarity and deepening fellowship. ☺

The Rev Archie Poulos is head of the Department of Ministry and lectures in ministry at Moore College.

STORIES FROM THE MIDDLE EAST



Sarah (centre) and fellow refugee Hayfa (far left) with Margaret Powell, Dianne Davies and Janine Clarke. PHOTO: Janine Jones

Ten years on, Sarah is still overwhelmed by emotion as she recalls her family's escape from the civil war in Iraq and the attacks of ISI (now ISIS). As a devout Christian she is thankful for God's guidance and protection in circumstances where her family could have been injured, kidnapped or killed.

After the overthrow of Saddam Hussein in 2003, religious and ethnic minorities were targeted by extremists. Assyrian Christians reported persecution, terrorist bombings, abductions, torture and murders. They were given an ultimatum: to convert to Islam, to pay *jiziya* (a tax on non-Muslims) or to leave – without any of their possessions. Failure to comply resulted in the death penalty.

Despite the increasing violence, Sarah's mother was afraid to leave Baghdad as the journey to Syria was equally dangerous. But when armed militants pulled up in front of Sarah's university and kidnapped her best friend, Sarah's father decided it was time to go.

Her story was one of three shared by women at an Anglicare event last month to raise funds for Syrian refugees.

In talking about her ordeal Sarah shared how God personally and powerfully intervened in her family's life. The Lord strengthened the family's resolve to leave, reassuring them of his presence with them and his protection for the precarious bus ride to Syria.

It was a promise they held onto when six armed men forced their bus to stop and interrogated each passenger about their religion. Sarah's mother began repeating Jesus' name, but the gunmen didn't hear her. It was as if God had "blocked their hearing", Sarah said.

One male passenger spoke to the gunmen with some authority, indicating they exit the bus to talk. After some tense moments, the man returned to the bus signalling the driver to quickly move on. Passengers were bewildered but unharmed. Later, this man revealed to Sarah's family that he was a former leader in ISI. When he had been seriously injured, the only people who helped him were Christians and this was the reason he saved Sarah's family. Thankful for God's protection, she said, "It is the best story of my life".

Sarah has now made Australia her home and is involved with her local community and church.

The fundraiser was hosted by Mrs Dianne Davies, wife of Archbishop Glenn Davies, who said, "These women's stories evoked a variety of emotions in me: sadness, outrage, gratitude and hope. Parts were distressing to hear but I hope today will motivate us to do whatever we can to help."

Mrs Kerry Baird, wife of the NSW Premier, was also one of the guests, and added: "I was deeply affected by the stories told on the day. I don't think we can truly understand what these women have been through."

The Federal Government has indicated that the first group of additional Syrian refugees should arrive by the middle of the year.

Families who have been persecuted or traumatised by war need long-term support if they are to adjust to a new culture and successfully resettle in Australia. Anglicare programs provide this support through specialised counselling, English as a Second Language (ESL) classes and "Early Learning Through Play" programs that help preschool children adjust to Australian schools.

Many Anglican agencies and local churches are eager to assist the refugees. Anglicare is co-ordinating a collaborative diocesan response and aims to equip individual volunteers and parishes to show Christ's love in practical ways.

"Anglicare is asking people to pray, donate and volunteer," Mrs Davies said. "And if our response to our new neighbours is to be truly effective it will also need to be grounded in prayer."

"This is a marvellous opportunity to show our gratitude to God for his love and mercy towards us by extending his love to others."

To donate or for more information see www.anglicare.org.au/syrian-refugee-response

Love in the Big City



Anti-clockwise from above: Kate Bradford; speakers Sarah Condie, Michael Jensen and Kara Hartley; event attendees.

The Love in a Big City seminar held recently by Mothers' Union was a "refreshing" day, according to those who attended.

"I stepped back into my own home at the end of the day feeling enormously grateful for the husband I have and the kids God has blessed us with," said Katie Stringer, a young wife and mother who was enthusiastic about the event. "The Mothers' Union day often feels like a professional and spiritual development day for parents, which is unique."

The Rev Dr Michael Jensen spoke on marriage from Genesis 2 and 1 Corinthians 7. There were also talks from Sarah Condie, chaplain Kate Bradford and Sydney's Archdeacon for Women's Ministry, Kara Hartley.

Said Mrs Stringer: "Kate Bradford gave a passionate and sensitive talk on the topic of domestic violence and took great pains to explain that love protects – and we all have a responsibility to help our neighbour and our sisters in Christ who are not being protected in their marriages."

"In my 20 years of church- and conference-going, I think this is the first time I've heard a talk specifically on the topic of violence in the home. This is sadly such a timely issue and it was great to have it discussed in a public forum."

Archdeacon Hartley encouraged the attendees to speak up about marriage and promote safe and strong relationships. "Our job going away from here today – hearing about marriage, good sex, domestic violence – is to promote good, faithful marriages," she said. "May God be with us as we do."

The talks from the seminar are now on the Mothers' Union website – www.musydneyn.org.au



Faith goes viral

TARA SING

FOR JOSH HAWKINS, JESUS IS LORD OVER EVERYTHING, INCLUDING HIS YOUTUBE videos. On the internet he explained how to speak Australian (his tip: abbreviate everything). On the radio, he won \$10,000 in a 24 hour dance-a-thon. He recently auditioned for *Australia's Got Talent* with an incredible rendition of Jamaican reggae singer Shaggy.

For the past nine years Josh Hawkins has not only taught people about Jesus, he's kept many laughing with his quirky antics, too.

By day Hawkins serves as a young adults minister at St Paul's, Castle Hill, and by night he pops up across all channels with his quirky brand of entertainment. Even he isn't quite sure how to describe it. "Sometimes I say, 'I make YouTube videos,'" he laughs. "I'm sure a good explanation will come eventually."

But he also performs live, as his appearance on *Australia's Got Talent* shows.

"My go-to karaoke song for a couple of years has been Shaggy," he says. "One night a friend who had never seen me do it before mouthed from across the room, 'Dude! *Australia's Got Talent!*' And it just clicked."

Shortly after, he found himself before the judges working his magic. "I was thinking [as I prepared] what are my friends going to say 'I can't believe you did that' to?"

Hawkins has been amusing people for as long as he can remember. "Out of boredom, my friend and I started making short videos just to entertain our friends and make each other laugh," he says.

He started the YouTube channel "hijosh" simply as a way to showcase his antics to friends. This changed last year with the release of his video "How to Speak Australian: Abbreviate Everything", the success of which blew Hawkins' mind. "I posted the video at 8pm and it unravelled before my eyes. I stayed up until 3am talking to people about licensing. By the morning there were millions of views and a bunch of emails from the media."

His first reaction? "This is cool," he says. "From that moment on, there was a bit more legitimacy about what I was doing. The purpose is always to entertain my friends and to have a laugh. The crazy thing is that people outside of my small friendship group also enjoy my videos. That is wild to me."

As Hawkins entertains he is unapologetically Christian. His website details the gospel. *Australia's Got Talent* shared about his vocation as a minister. As he took out the radio dance-a-thon title he wore a T-shirt declaring, "I belong to Jesus".

"There is a level of wisdom about being a Christian – people knowing you're a Christian and how they perceive you," he says.

"I am careful not to push boundaries too much that people might be offended or 'weirded' out. I want people to be drawn to what I'm creating and for me to pass that onto Jesus. If people are attracted to what you do you don't take that glory for yourself. You pass it on to God."

Joy is an important part of the Christian life for Hawkins, and he celebrates that in what he creates. "I want to show that being a Christian is being joyful as well. Christians are free, and so we can have a laugh and enjoy life."

Hawkins loves it when God provides opportunities to share, but wants them to come naturally. "I don't want to be the guy who answers every question with 'Jesus' even if it makes no sense," he says. "I create stuff that isn't explicitly gospel content most of the time. I'm just trying to entertain and see what God does."

"But one of the craziest times was after the first video went viral and I was interviewed on the radio. A celebrity agent was on the line and I asked for his advice. He replied, 'You've got to follow the calling of God. God's will is on your life, you shouldn't run from God's will.'"

"He wasn't a Christian, but he was saying what came to his mind and it was broadcasting across Australia. I sat back and thought, 'Wow, I didn't initiate this!' But those moments don't always happen. It's just about being ready."

After his videos went viral and the attention increased, Hawkins spent a lot of time with God. "I was trying to make sure it didn't make me crazy," he says. "It was the thing God was revealing to me as media opportunities were coming up. God was saying, 'Just go and be a normal Christian that people can respect and don't feel weird about approaching.' That's what I've tried to do."

"I think it's good for people outside of the church to see that Christians can laugh at themselves and have a sense of humour."



Hawkins explains his eccentric throwing skills on TV.



Ideas invasion

JUDY ADAMSON

Where to Invade Next

Rated M

MOVIE REVIEW

AS THOUSANDS OF AMERICANS JUMP ON THE TRUMP BANDWAGON OR TEAR THEIR HAIR out about his ascendancy, documentary maker Michael Moore (*Bowling for Columbine*, *Fahrenheit 9/11*) has his own solution. He jumps on a boat with a large American flag and invades... Europe.

It's a funny opening gambit, but there is a litany of real, seemingly irreparable problems behind a fictional "plea" from the US joint chiefs of staff for Moore's help. He's making fun of his country, but he's also deadly serious.

America is no longer a land of opportunity. While Donald Trump promises to make the nation great again by excluding people, building walls, crushing ISIS and so forth, Moore – ever the stirrer – decides to see how other countries are succeeding where the US is failing, and then steal all their ideas.

From Finland to Italy (with a side trip to Tunisia) we see different national attitudes to education, health care, work-life balance, nutrition, drug laws, gun control, prisoner rehabilitation and women's rights. What Moore finds is both extraordinary and depressing. Not only does the US seem to be digging itself into a massive hole, it's not learning from the past – and many of the ideas he sees initially came from America.

Not all the issues covered are relevant to Australia, but there's still plenty for us to chew on. It's challenging to see how the Norwegians deal with their murderers and rapists, for example, or how the Portuguese respond to drug use.

Of course, it's not as black-and-white as Moore paints it. Objectivity and balance are not his strong points. Yet one of the strongest threads running through *Where To Invade Next* is the importance of caring for others. The everlasting "I" of the US (and Australia) is not on display. A female CEO in Iceland is particularly damning about the way America treats its people, saying: "I would never want to be your neighbour".

The documentary is over-long at two hours, but it's worth seeing and talking about.



Invasion plan: (top) the joint chiefs of staff give Michael Moore the green light to "invade" other nations; (above) an Italian couple are surprised when Moore plants a US flag in their living room.