

# Southern CROSS

JULY  
2016

THE NEWS MAGAZINE FOR SYDNEY ANGLICANS



## Packed in pews

WHEN PROPERTY PROBLEMS LIMIT MINISTRY

+

**God's choice as PM**

&

**A century since the Somme**





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We are anti-slavery. We are providing free education to all those children who are deprived of human rights.

Angela Michael

”



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# Flooded Picton pulls together

Water mark: some of the damaged furniture and fittings removed from inside the church the day after the flood.

ST MARK'S, PICTON, ALONG WITH THE REST OF THE TOWN, IS STILL CONTINUING TO RECOVER after heavy storms early last month resulted in two-metre high floodwaters that wreaked havoc on the church, homes and businesses.

While the church is secure in insurance terms, the future for many others in the area is much more uncertain.

"There've been some businesses and individuals who become quite frustrated at the process, for sure," says the rector of Picton, the Rev Ben Boardman. "There are people who are have been told they're not covered, and others who are still uncertain about whether they are or not.

"I think the reality is starting to sink in, and that's really hard. The last couple of weeks have been a frenzy of activity with a real community spirit, which has been great. But today in Picton it's pretty quiet – a lot of people just weren't here. I think they're feeling stretched, and that reality is setting in for a lot of people, sadly."

The church received assistance from locals in some of the immediate clearing out of debris on the church grounds, and church members have similarly been assisting in other relief work – particularly contributing to the town's official mayoral relief effort. St Mark's also recently hosted a service for the community at the Wollondilly Shire Hall, providing an opportunity for locals to meet, reflect and share while hearing a Christian perspective on the devastation.

"It was a great time, given the circumstance," Mr Boardman says. "The local [State] member Jai Rowell came along, and some residents and others as well – I think about a dozen people who had no connection to our congregations at all. People also came from our Wilton congregation as well, so it was a good time of being together and having that mutual support. Various people shared stories about how they've been affected and their reflections, and we also had time to pray for the town and give thanks to God for his continuing provision to us."

The parish has also been working to try and co-ordinate the restoration of a number of gravestones on the church grounds that were toppled, as well as other sites that were damaged in the flooding.

"We spoke to a heritage adviser today about the cemetery, because that's been a big thing for us and for the public – particularly families with relatives interred here," Mr Boardman says. "We've had people in here every day or so checking graves of family members and we've been trying to get the word out on social media and things like that, because we don't want restoration work to be done and then have families find out after the fact without being invited to be part of the process."

The St Mark's congregation will meet at Wollondilly Shire Council in the medium term as the church is cleaned and allowed to dry, before replacement floorboards, furnishings and utilities are installed. There is no fixed timetable, but the restoration of the church is likely to take several months.

# Vaucluse reaches out

Craft time: one of the former refugees shows her quilt square, made at a joint women's event in Campsie.

AS CHURCHES PREPARE TO SUPPORT SYRIAN REFUGEES ARRIVING IN AUSTRALIA, ST MICHAEL'S, Vaucluse has begun making links with refugees who already live in Sydney.

Prompted by a parish member's connection with Metro Assist in Campsie (a non-government organisation providing support and settlement to migrants and former refugees), the church invited about 80 people from the Middle East, Africa and Asia over to Vaucluse for lunch. This was so successful a number of return events have been held, including a women's morning tea in Campsie and a lunch for groups of St Michael's members in refugee family homes. Another women's morning tea is planned at Vaucluse this month, and a further lunch later in the year.

"It's absolutely brilliant," says the CEO of Metro Assist, Lou Bacchiella. "We've been working with these people for the past 18 months to two years. St Michael's was absolutely wonderful in extending the invitation to the lunch just before Christmas and things have just gone on from there.

"That simple contact through lunches and joint activities helps people assimilate into their new land far more quickly than if they had no one else to speak to except people from their own community. And it's not just feeling more comfortable with their new circumstances but, from the broader perspective, others understanding what some of these people have gone through as refugees.

"It's something we're very keen to continue and I think the commitment and discussions have been around what other sort of support activities St Michael's could provide to assist people."

The rector of St Michael's, the Rev Michael Palmer, says members of the parish had been keen to be involved with refugee support "but in Vaucluse we're a long way – let's face it – from where people are initially going to be housed.

"It was decided the best way of helping our own people here would be to have any preconceptions about refugees and who they are broken down and to extend a hand of welcome."

The first lunch included the chance for small groups to sit, eat and talk together, for the gathering to hear refugee stories, learn more about each other and for the opportunity to provide simple gifts to the refugee children.

"It was also a halal meal so that went down really well," Mr Palmer says. "When I held up the halal certificate the refugees just cheered. It was a really sweet moment actually, when they realised they could fully participate in this meal.

"We believe that the tensions and divisions that exist within the community are not religiously based. It's not religion that is the great evil in society and we want to demonstrate that Christian people and Muslim people can actually share space peacefully. Some people in Sydney might see this as being soft but I see this as very powerful."

For parishes that might be looking to do similar things but aren't sure where to start, Mr Palmer suggests thinking about who in their congregation might have natural links to another church or area where there are greater numbers of refugees. He also advises getting help from those with more expertise, such as Anglicare's refugee service.

"In the end, for me, it's simply a factor that we share space together as a community," he says.

"We make no forward ground unless we build friendships and appreciate each other as neighbours, friends, and brothers and sisters in humanity. And we don't make forward ground on opportunities to share our faith unless we're prepared to reach out in friendship. It's at all those levels."

# Promise of more Miracles



Sharing the Miracle: Angela Michael speaks to students at Roseville College.

THE CO-FOUNDER OF MIRACLE SCHOOL MINISTRIES IN PAKISTAN, ANGELA MICHAEL, HAS ASKED for help to start more schools and a feeding program during a recent visit to Australia.

The involvement of a number of Sydney Anglicans and now the sponsorship of Anglican Aid is helping Miracle Schools educate children enslaved in the brick kilns of Lahore. The children, many of whom are orphans, are trapped in intergenerational slavery and forced to make bricks to pay off their family's debts. Ms Michael toured Sydney and the Central West of NSW in May to appeal for help to expand.

"We are anti-slavery," she said. "We are providing free education to all those children who are deprived of human rights. It is totally inhuman what they are facing. So we are trying to do as much as we can – we are working to have more schools at brick kilns, and more resources."

From the Archbishop's office and the Cathedral to suburban and country churches as well as schools, Ms Michael brought the Miracle School message to more than 4500 people and, at one dinner alone, more than \$10,000 was raised.

"We have been discussing with Anglican Aid that we would like to have a feeding program – we also want to replace the old buses they are using – and especially start more schools," she said.

The Miracle School started with just 57 students in a teacher's home. Now there are more than 600 students enrolled. "We want kindergarten and primary schools because we want to keep the children away from the brick kilns," she said. "We need to motivate all the mothers and the parents to send the children to the schools."

As she spoke to *Southern Cross* in an air-conditioned office in Sydney, Ms Michael was preparing to return to temperatures above 40 degrees in Lahore. "June is the big month for producing more bricks because it is the ideal month for the brick owner: full sunshine, full heat," she said. "These poor people have to work in that like machines, no shelter upon them making bricks, because in July and August there will not be brick making because of the monsoon season. There are more than 2000 brick kilns and these people have to make 1000 bricks for just \$3."

Ms Michael, who was converted in her teenage years, is especially passionate about reaching the next generation for Christ.

"Whole families are working, and the teenagers, we have adult literacy and Bible studies with them, bringing them hope," she said. "The basic thing with these slaves is bringing them hope. They are just nominal Christians. They don't know Christianity; they are just born Christian. They are not born again. So we have to bring hope to them and if they have hope it will be easy to educate them."

A third area has already been identified for a school and the Archbishop of Sydney's Anglican Aid is working on ways to help fund this expansion plus the new feeding program.

"At least once or twice a week, if not every day, we would like to provide a complete hot meal to the children – even a simple one like rice or lentils or vegetables, healthy food so that at least they can have something," Ms Michael said. "At the moment we are providing a glass of milk weekly and any fruit which is available cheap in the market and a boiled egg. We also provide medicines and vaccinations but doctors have advised nutritious food is also very important for them."

Christians make up 1.6 per cent of Pakistan's population and are under extreme persecution, with Open Doors ranking Pakistan number six on the list of countries where Christians are most at risk. Angela Michael is also assisting the victims of this year's Easter Day bombings in Lahore, which targeted Christians at a fairground. The attacks killed 72 people and left many more injured. A number of these are still in hospital and face significant disability when they are released.

Despite the huge pressures at home, when asked about her message to Australians Ms Michael's concern was for our spiritual state.

"Australians need prayer because they are very blessed and they have no idea what they have," she said. "Especially the youth – they are taking it for granted. Bring the new generation and bring the youth towards the faith. That is very important because from outside it is the perception that Australia is a Christian country. Before coming to Australia I had the same feelings. The youth are unaware of this because they have no idea, no goals and they have no purpose of life, actually, so they don't need God. For Australia my slogan would be, 'Fill the benches! And Australia is in my heartiest prayers for this. As Miracle is in need of financial help, Australia is in need of spiritual help so it will be in my prayers, beside all the love of Australian people.'"

To provide support for the Miracle school see [bit.ly/miracleschool](http://bit.ly/miracleschool)

# Birthday honours



LAWYER ANNE ROBINSON (PICTURED) IS AMONG MANY Sydney Anglicans to receive an award in the 2016 Queen's Birthday Honours list.

The Governor-General and Chancellor of the Order of Australia, Sir Peter Cosgrove, announced the awards, recognising a diverse range of contributions and service across all fields. "To all recipients I offer my deepest congratulations, admiration and respect for your contribution to our nation," he said. "We are fortunate as a community to have so many outstanding people willing to dedicate themselves to the betterment of our nation."

Ms Robinson, who attended St Andrew's, Roseville, was made a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) for significant service to the community through regulatory and governance reform in the not-for-profit and charitable sectors, and to law. She has served on the Overseas Relief Fund board and councils including the November Relief Fund board from 1990-1997, and a decade on the Barker Church council. Ms Robinson has also been a board member of Anglican Deaconess Ministries.

Receiving a Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) was Beverley Elaine Earnshaw of Kogarah Bay for service to historical organisations, and as an author. She has been a Scripture teacher at Sans Souci Public School for 31 years and was a member of Synod from 1992-2007.

Laurel Horton of Tempe was recognised for service to the community through a range of organisations. She also created a database to record baptisms, deaths and marriages at St Peter's, Cooks River, and established the St Peter's Museum. Norman Ensor of Revesby received his OAM for service to veterans and their families. For many years he was also organist at Padstow Anglican Church.

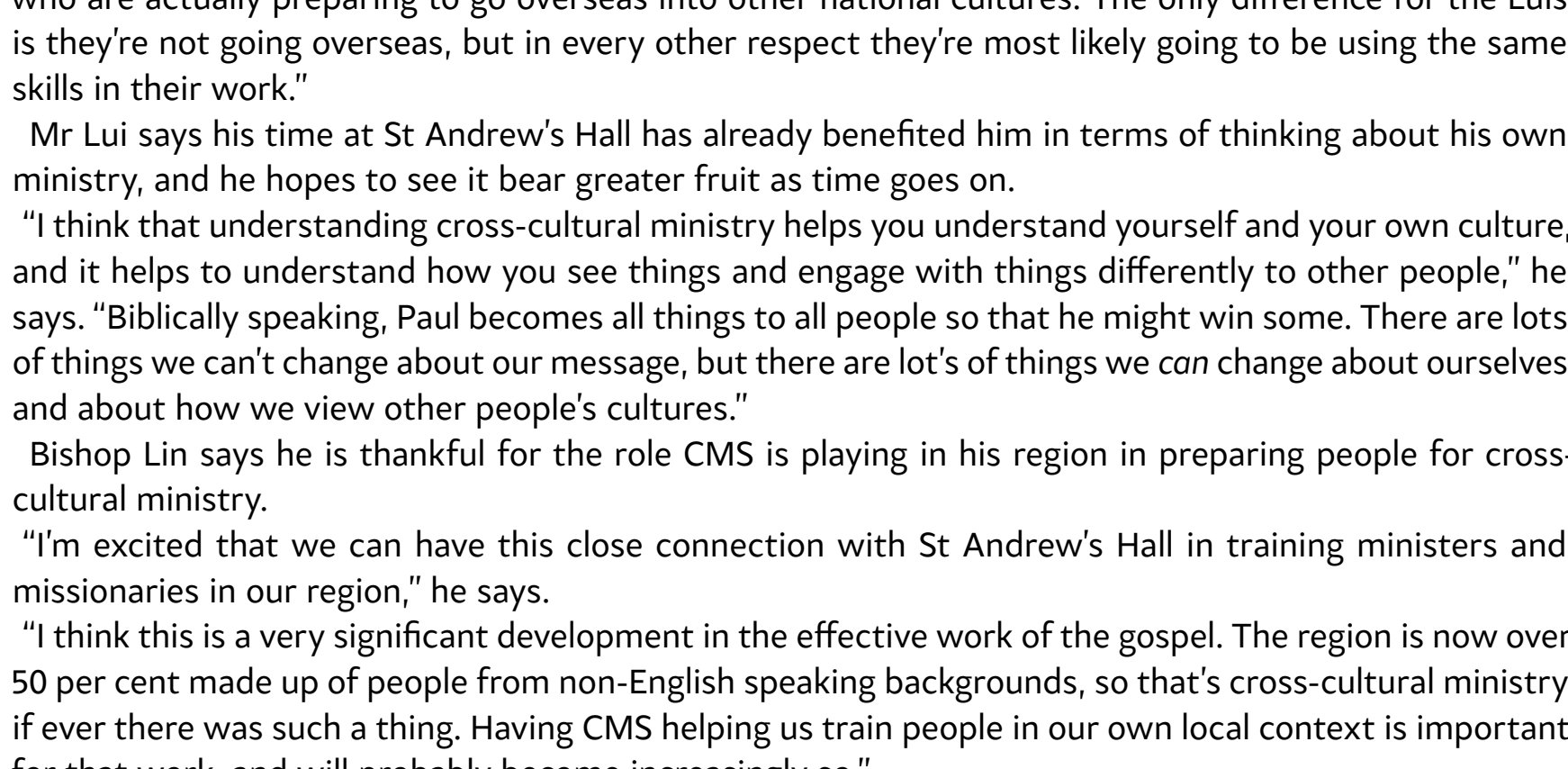
Margot Louise Lander of Warrawee was honoured with her OAM for service to the community of Ku-Ring-Gai. She was a supporter of Operation Christmas Child for more than a decade, a member of the Gideons International in Australia for 30 years and a long-time Bible distributor in the Ku-ring-gai area. She was also co-ordinator of the flower roster and a flower arranger at St Andrew's, Wahroonga for 30 years.

Brian Luhr of Guildford received an OAM for service to the Anglican Church of Australia. He has been head server and master of ceremonies at Christ Church St Laurence since 2002. He also authored the parish handbook. Noreen Fielding of Concord West, a parishioner of Concord Community Anglican Church since 1954, was honoured for service to the community of Concord.

Further south, Elaine Spring of Mollismook Beach – who has been a member of St Martin's, Ulladulla since 1991 – received her OAM for service to the community of the Sapphire Coast.

The list included 565 recipients in the General Division of the Order of Australia who were recognised for contributions and service to citizens in Australia and internationally.

# Life plants in Marsden Park



Plans: Mark Collins (left) and another couple chat about the Marsden Park church plant at the recent vision afternoon.

LIFE ANGLICAN CHURCH IS GEARING UP TO BEGIN ITS LATEST CHURCH PLANT IN MARSDEN PARK. The greenfield suburb, named after colonial Church of England chaplain the Rev Samuel Marsden, has been earmarked as a growth suburb for the past decade and has recently seen a large spike in development – both in housing as well as small- and large-scale businesses.

At the 2011 census the suburb was home to just over 1000 people. By 2031, this is projected to have increased to about 50,000 people.

"It's a short- and long-term planting process really, because we're going to see some fairly intense growth in Marsden Park in the short term, but also growth that will continue for decades," says the rector of Life Anglican Church the Rev Geoff Bates.

"In the short term, we want to get on the ground in the parish with a reasonably big group of people so there is ministry for the growth in the area from the outset, and we hope that will set things up to just keep working away and growing into the future."

The plant is headed by the Rev Mark Collins, who previously served in the parish of St Marys. He and his wife Rachael became part of planning for the plant after deciding they wanted to continue working in Sydney's west while also focusing on evangelism and new ministries.

"Life Anglican had started thinking about the need to start a new ministry in Quakers Hill sometime around 2014, but without a hard plan or people in mind," Mr Collins says. "I'd been speaking to [local bishop] Ivan Lee about wanting to do evangelistic-type work in the west, and it was through that I ended up in contact with Geoff Bates. I became involved in the plant that way and I'm really looking forward to what God will do in the area."

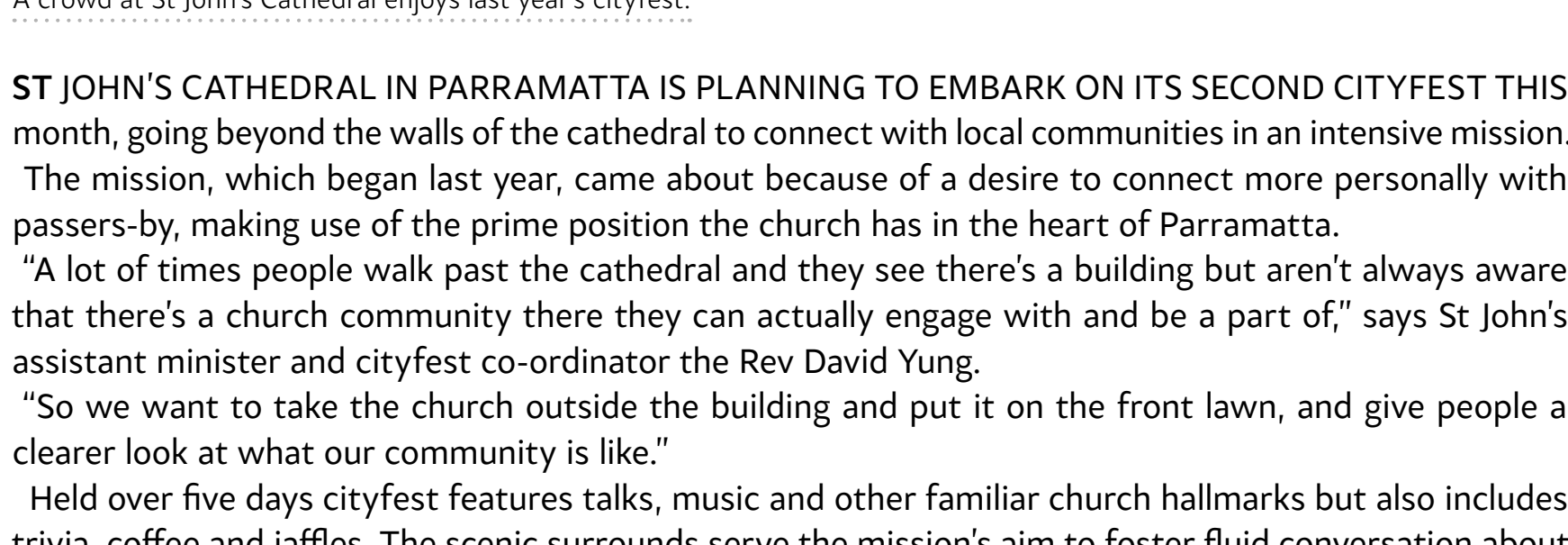
The parish recently held a vision afternoon, inviting church members and other interested parties to hear about the plans and think about how they might potentially become involved.

"We had about 80 adults there on the day," Mr Collins says. "It was basically a time to share the vision we have for the plant and to answer questions."

"We're basically at the point of putting together a church service from first term in 2017 and we're wanting to have a group of about 60 when we begin public services – although we are also planning to start some other work in the area before then as well. We're also in deep conversations with New Churches for New Communities, ENC and the Mission Property Committee, so we're already keeping busy."

Mr Collins says the main aims of the plant early on will be grassroots evangelism, a welcoming approach to membership and participation, and youth ministries. Land has been purchased in the suburb for a church building to be constructed by NCNC, but in the medium term people will meet in the hall of Richard Johnson Anglican School's Marsden Park campus.

# Missionary training for the Georges River



Mission on their doorstep: Phillip, Rebecca and Calvin Lui.

A NEW MINISTRY COUPLE IN THE GEORGES RIVER REGION HAS SUPPLEMENTED THEIR MINISTRY training by spending three months with the Church Missionary Society, paving the way for future ministers in the multicultural area to similarly receive cross-cultural training.

The Rev Phillip Lui – who is an assistant minister at Riverwood-Punchbowl Anglican Church – and his wife Rebecca spent the time at St Andrew's Hall in Melbourne at the request of the regional bishop, the Rt Rev Peter Lin. This was to help them prepare for parish work in an area where, as of the last census, more than half the people were born overseas, and roughly two-thirds spoke another language in addition to, or instead of, English.

"They went to CMS not to be missionaries overseas, but actually to be missionaries among the different cultures and people we have here in Sydney," Bishop Lin says. "The idea is to have that cross-cultural training and to be better prepared to do ministry where they are at Riverwood. In a region like this one, even working in a parish ministry role involves cross-cultural ministry, and I think it's important that people be prepared for that and feel confident in that, which is what this training was intended to accomplish."

Mr Lui says his early ministry career gave him an appreciation for the task of multicultural ministry and the needs of people on our own doorstep and that was, in part, what drew him to work in a parish in the Georges River region.

"What had the most impact was spending time in student ministry in Sydney's south west, among multicultural communities with many people who had never even heard about Jesus or who had no Christian friends," he says. "We'd thought about going overseas, but that's really scary! This was right at our door and many of the nations here with us had heard just as little about Jesus as [those] overseas. This was where we wanted to be."

Bishop Lin says he hopes to see more ministers in the Georges River area, and particularly new ministers entering into ministry locally, go through similar training.

"It's not a policy of ours but I want to strongly encourage it for people looking to minister in this area," he says. "This is something we want to develop and see more people do. It's an invaluable opportunity, as not only are they getting training at CMS, they are also spending time in the same courses with people who are actually preparing to go overseas into other national cultures. The only difference for the Luis is they're not actually going overseas, but in every other respect they're most likely going to be using the same skills in their work."

Mr Lui says his time at St Andrew's Hall has already benefited him in terms of thinking about his own ministry, and he hopes to see it bear greater fruit as time goes on.

"I think that understanding cross-cultural ministry helps you understand yourself and your own culture, and it helps to understand how you see things and engage with things differently to other people," he says. "Biblically speaking, Paul becomes all things to all people so that he might win some. There are lots of things we can't change about our message, but there are lot's of things we can change about ourselves and about how we view other people's cultures."

Bishop Lin says he is thankful for the role CMS is playing in his region in preparing people for cross-cultural ministry.

"I'm excited that we can have this close connection with St Andrew's Hall in training ministers and missionaries in our region," he says.

"I think this is a very significant development in the effective work of the gospel. The region is now over 50 per cent made up of people from non-English speaking backgrounds, so that's cross-cultural ministry if ever there was such a thing. Having CMS helping us train people in our own local context is important for that work, and will probably become increasingly so."

# More TV concern

ARCHBISHOP GLENN DAVIES HAS URGED FURTHER ACTION AFTER WHAT HE CALLED THE "inadequacies" of self-regulation by TV networks, following last year's review of the Free TV Code of Practice.

The industry body, Free TV Australia, publicised and conducted the review itself and then proposed the new code which was approved by communications regulator ACMA. It came into force in December last year.

The Social Issues Committee of the Diocese made a submission to the review, critical of measures that would bring M-rated programs into family viewing time and relax regulations on gambling and alcohol advertising.

The advertising committee argued that bringing forward the time from which M-rated material (not including films) can be shown from 8.30pm to 7.30pm was unwarranted and unjustified, as 7.30pm is still prime family and children's viewing time. MA15+ movies were brought forward and can now be shown from 8.30pm, rather than 9pm as previously allowed.

The Archbishop had strongly endorsed the committee's submission to the review, saying the changes would unnecessarily expose children and young people who were the "most vulnerable of viewers, least able to protect themselves from confronting or harmful material".

Dr Davies has now written to the Communications Minister Mitch Fifield, following up correspondence from the chairwoman of the Social Issues Committee, Dr Karin Sowada, pointing out there was a lack of publicly available information about the review, including the names and number of organisations participating, and no process for further public or parliamentary discussion or scrutiny around decisions made by Free TV Australia.

"On this basis it is impossible to gauge the extent of community engagement with respect to the review," Dr Davies told the minister. "It is also impossible to determine whether the concerns of those making submissions have been adequately dealt with. Free TV plays a significant role in shaping community standards, expectations and ethics. There is a clear responsibility on their part to maintain social standards and not to harm the recipients of their services."

"The new standards mean that young and pre-teen children will be subjected to messaging from Free TV that is harmful for their long-term wellbeing, for example: the viewing of advertising of programs carrying MA15+ ratings and the accompanying nudity, violence and degrading language; the glorification of online in-game gambling; and the normalisation of the consumption of alcoholic beverages."

The Archbishop said he remained "deeply concerned" about the changes to the code, saying these "serve the interests of advertisers and commercial broadcasters ahead of the community whom they should be serving". Dr Davies urged the minister to consider intervening to roll back the changes in the Television Code of Practice.

In correspondence just before the election, Senator Fifield said he noted Dr Davies' concerns and had written to the regulator to request that the ACMA carefully monitor complaints from members of the public about the operation of the new time zone arrangements for M and MA15+ programming, with particular regard to child audiences. ACMA promised to give priority to monitoring complaints and inquiries received about the new code and report to the Government by December 2016.

# Parramatta plans cityfest



A crowd at St John's Cathedral enjoys last year's cityfest.

ST JOHN'S CATHEDRAL IN PARRAMATTA IS PLANNING TO EMBARK ON ITS SECOND CITYFEST THIS month, going beyond the walls of the cathedral to connect with local communities in an intensive mission. The mission, which began last year, came about because of a desire to connect more personally with passers-by, making use of the prime position the church has in the heart of Parramatta.

"A lot of times people walk past the cathedral and they see there's a building but aren't always aware that there's a church community there they can actually engage with and be a part of," says St John's assistant minister and cityfest co-ordinator the Rev David Yung.

"So we want to take the church outside the building and put it on the front lawn, and give people a clearer look at what our community is like."

Held over five days cityfest features talks, music and other familiar church hallmarks but also includes trivia, coffee and jaffles. The scenic surrounds serve the mission's aim to foster fluid conversation about the gospel.

Mr Yung says this produced surprising results last year and the hope is it will do so again.

"What we've found amazing is that people do actually want to talk about Jesus," he says. "When we ran it last year it was winter, it was cold, but people were quite open about staying and having discussions about Jesus. We're quite open about that with people – that that's what we're here for – and I think many people respond well to that themselves by being open about talking."

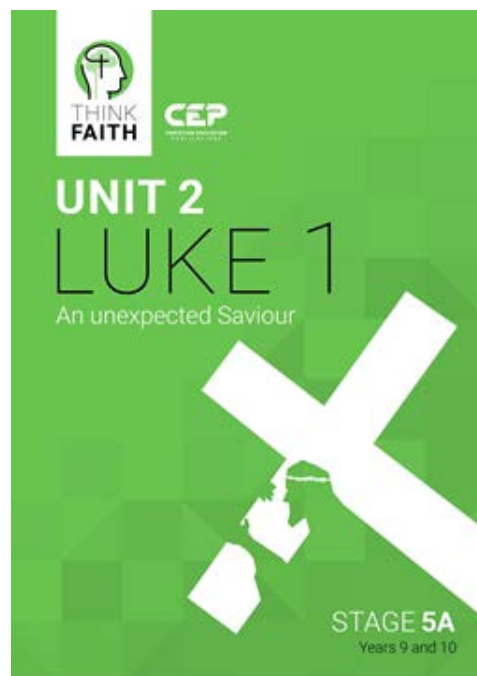
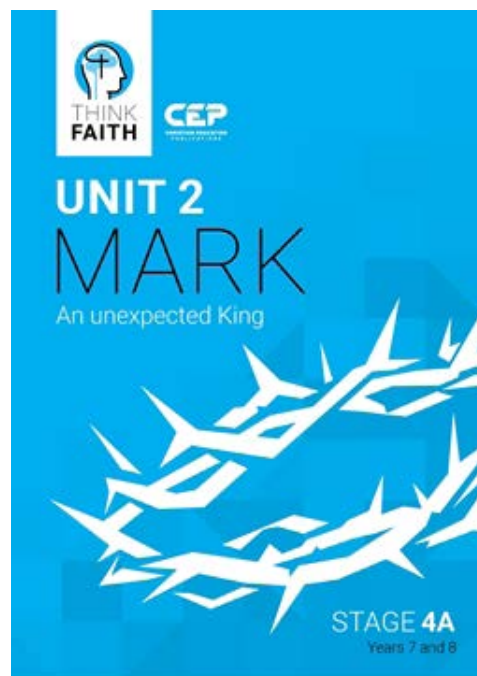
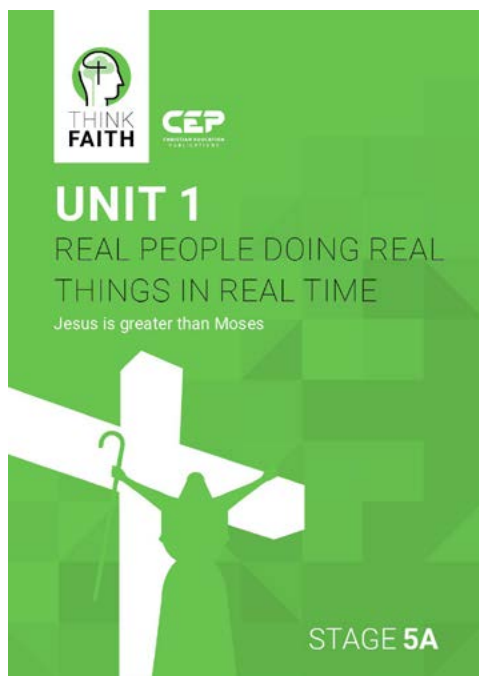
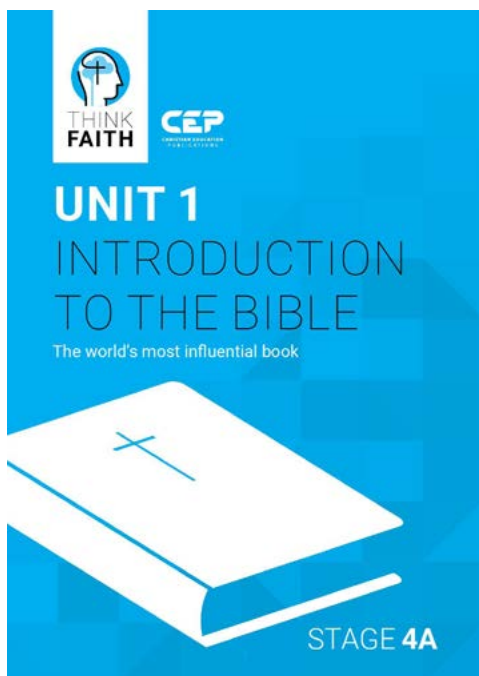
This year's cityfest is also a partnership with the nearby Hebron Chinese Alliance Church and the Evangelical Chinese Church. This is in part to facilitate the cathedral's new Chinese language program in the mornings, parallel to the English-speaking set-up in the evenings. Mr Yung says having helpers and materials in native languages helps visitors and church members feel more comfortable about chatting, and makes it easier for people to discuss the ideas in the gospel.

"For us the business part of the mission is at the helpers' end," he says. "We still have talks, but that is not an emphasis as much as the everyday conversations we get. It shows people that we are like them, that we're normal people you can have a chat with, and that Christianity means something to everyday people. It also helps our people have opportunities to engage individually in that way, and be confident about doing that outside cityfest as well."

Cityfest will run from July 5 to July 9 on the St John's Cathedral lawn.



# “Think Faith” in school SRE



THE NEW *THINK FAITH* SRE CURRICULUM FOR SECONDARY SCHOOL IS NOW OUT IN THE WILD, with Stage 4 and 5 SRE classes working with the new material.

The new curriculum, which has been planned since last year, is being rolled out incrementally, with two sets of material for Years 7-8 and Years 9-10 prepared before each term.

“The basic idea is that, by the end of 2017, we’ll have a two-year curriculum cycle for each stage, with each stage being a grouping of two grades,” says Youthworks’ director of ministry support, Jon Thorpe. “We write the content for each of those stages, not just year groups, and that basically reflects how the lessons are delivered and the development of the kids themselves.”

There are currently two units for each stage released and actively being taught in high school, and Mr Thorpe says the feedback he has received has emphasised the adaptability of the material, while still providing a clear direction and development in learning.

“The feedback’s been excellent so far,” he says. “We actually have a website where people can access the materials online and we offered that for free for the first term so people could transition into using it from older materials.

“We have about 300 people registered to use it through that, and the general feedback has been that people enjoy the flexibility of the curriculum, so they can contextualise it for the particular individual students that teachers have in each class.”

The new curriculum has been largely headed up by Youthworks’ director of curriculum and teacher quality, Dr Kaye Chalwell, with significant input from high school SRE teachers on the ground.

The need for a new curriculum was brought about by a desire to reflect new approaches to teaching in general, as well as a need to maintain appropriate standards in a secular schooling context.

“It’s very learner-centric and inquiry-based as a curriculum,” Mr Thorpe says. “The focus was very much on giving opportunities for the students themselves to explore and ask questions of the biblical text, rather than just have a teacher-led ‘Let me tell you what the Bible says’, which reflected a kind of older-school pedagogy. That also allows the lessons to be more attuned to the needs and modes of thinking of individual students.”

Training in the new curriculum for SRE teachers – both volunteers and paid – has been ongoing, according to Mr Thorpe, who adds that training is always available for those who feel they need more support.

“It’s a big transition for a lot of people from a different style of curriculum,” he says. “So far we’re pleased with the progress, but there’s more to go.

“We do have an SRE day conference coming up on August 29 with the aim of working with secondary teachers. We also have an advisor who is available to join in on an SRE lesson and then give feedback to the individual teacher, in addition to the more usual regional training days and things we make available. We try to provide whatever teachers need to feel confident in what they do, especially with this transition.”

Mr Thorpe says the new curriculum has also, as a courtesy, been shared with the Department of Education for feedback.

“We authorise the curriculum but we wanted them to have confidence about our pedagogy,” he says. “After all the discussion last year they didn’t indicate any concerns they had, so we’re pleased with that.”



# Mexican Protestants targeted



Christians protest in Tuxtla Gutiérrez. PHOTO: Voice of the Martyrs

**THERE HAS BEEN A FRESH OUTBREAK OF PERSECUTION OF MEXICAN CHRISTIANS WHO HAVE** left “traditionalist” village churches that mix local paganism with Catholicism. The persecution is centred on the southern Mexican state of Chiapas, in which Protestant converts have been harassed and, in some cases expelled from their villages.

Mexican authorities have been turning a blind eye to human rights violations. According to World Watch Monitor, Protestant Lauro Pérez Núñez has only recently been permitted to return to his village after being ordered to leave last year. Núñez has been arrested and detained several times since leaving a “traditionalist” church.

Hundreds of other Protestants face eviction for refusing to contribute to local religious festivals. In one case, a dispute led to nine families belonging to the Church of Renewal in Christ being thrown out of their homes by villagers carrying sticks, machetes and guns. Their homes were destroyed and the entrance to the village placed under guard to prevent their return. They are now trying to survive living in the mountains outside the village.

Despite protests in the regional capital city of Chiapas, Tuxtla Gutiérrez, authorities still have not acted.

Luis Herrera, the director of the Co-ordinación de Organizaciones Cristiana (Confederation of Christian Organisations) in Chiapas, says, “The constant violation of human rights and lack of guarantees in Chiapas for religious freedom is an everyday subject, and the employees of the state solely take the political line of favouring the majority – even if it violates an endless amount of human rights of religious minorities. “No man, woman, nor child should be forced to go to bed hungry because of their religious beliefs.”

## Passion to resurrection



**TWELVE YEARS AFTER MEL GIBSON'S FILM *THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST* WAS RELEASED, THE** Australian filmmaker is working on a sequel.

Screenwriter Randall Wallace, who wrote *Braveheart* and a string of Christian-themed films, has confirmed to trade newspaper *The Hollywood Reporter* that he and Gibson are working on a follow-up that will focus on the resurrection of Jesus.

“I always wanted to tell this story,” Randall told the newspaper. “*The Passion* is the beginning and there's a lot more story to tell.”

Gibson produced the original movie independently on a \$30 million budget. It earned more than \$600 million worldwide.

“The evangelical community considers *The Passion* the biggest movie ever out of Hollywood, and they kept telling us that they think a sequel will be even bigger,” Wallace said.

The project is still in its early stages and no studio or release date has yet been chosen.

Earlier this year, Sony Pictures released *Risen*, the story of a Roman soldier caught up in the events surrounding the resurrection of Jesus. It more than doubled its \$20 million dollar budget in ticket sales.



## Arts encouragement

Thank you for your recent article on Christians serving in the arts (SC, June). It was fantastic to see this issue being engaged with in a balanced, objective and sensitive manner.

I was encouraged to read of other Christians seeking to serve their Lord in the exciting – but often difficult – world of creativity. The article was a great reminder of the way God gifts individuals uniquely. It also helpfully highlighted the way that we as God's church can support and encourage our brothers and sisters week in, week out, no matter what "workplace" they serve God in.

I look forward to more articles from *Southern Cross* on this topic!

**Greg Cooper**

Songwriter, producer and researcher on  
church music with Effective Ministry

One assumes that *Southern Cross* upholds Christian and Sydney Anglican values yet in the June issue (page 18) we behold sexualised images more usually found in this fallen world's media. The exposed nipples of the women are not hard to see and it is either a thoughtless or provocative act on the part of your editorial role. In the past even such pornography might have been airbrushed in worldly magazines.

If this comment is seen to be unacceptably moralistic, one can only wonder how compromised by the world's ways we are becoming. Are you concerned about the offence you may have given Christians and the impact on the church's reputation? You might have another look at 1 Corinthians and offer your offended readers proper respect.

**Dr John and Karen Buchner**  
Camden NSW



Letters should be less than 200 words.  
[newspaper@anglicanmedia.com.au](mailto:newspaper@anglicanmedia.com.au)  
PO Box W185, Parramatta Westfield 2150





## READY FOR THE SHIRE

After eight years' ministry at St Paul's, Castle Hill – five as senior assistant minister – the **Rev Eric Cheung** becomes rector of St Philip's, Caringbah this month.

He says that he and his wife Vivian had been praying about what God might want them to do next, and "almost immediately" afterwards they got a call from Caringbah. "We weren't sure if that was the right move for us – we're not from the Shire, we'd never done anything in the Shire – but we said, 'Lord, if you want it to happen, make it happen' – and they nominated us," he says.

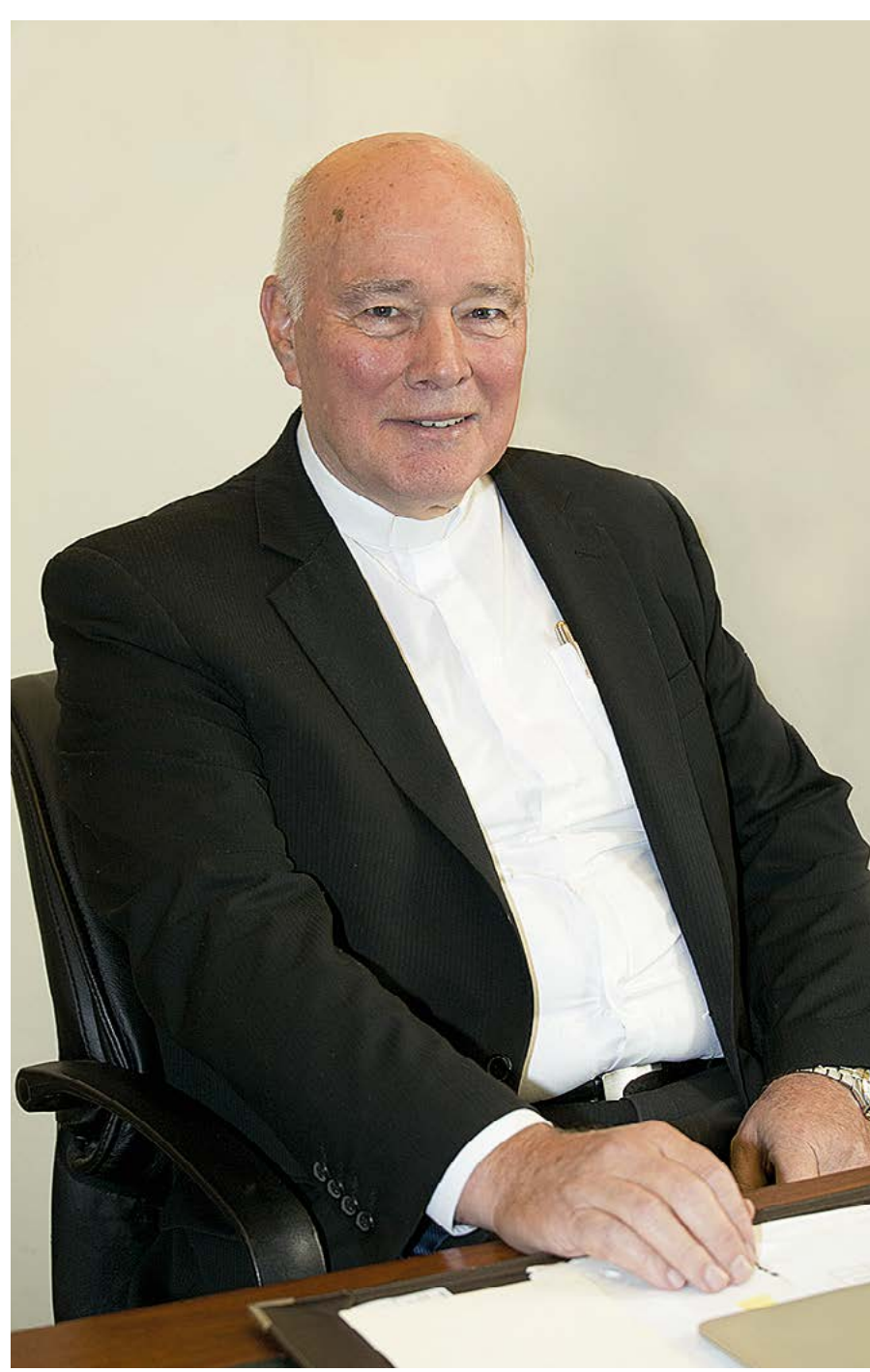
While moving to a new parish always involves goodbyes, making friends and different schools, the Cheung's two primary-aged boys sound like they're ready for anything. Mr Cheung says that last year the family read missionary biographies together like *My Seventh Monsoon* and *The Heavenly Man*, so the kids "were kind of expecting us to go to Nepal".

"When we were talking about moving, [my son] Alex said, 'Let's go to the Himalayas!' Mr Cheung says. "And when I said, 'We're going to Caringbah', Alex said, 'Is that in Sydney?' It was kind of fun.

"We've been visiting a few other churches around Sydney to give them experiences of different churches and people. We want to be ready to love God's people wherever they are and however many God gives us."

Mr Cheung will be inducted into the new parish on July 14.

## RANDWICK RACE



The **Rev Greg Job** retired from the parish of Randwick on July 1. He has spent 24 years as rector of St Jude's and admits to leaving with "very mixed feelings".

"We're very sad about leaving the people and the community and so retiring in this role is not just a matter of retiring from your job – it's retiring from your home and the community you're part of," he says. "There's also a sense that you have to allow the new person space, so you can't just drop back in all the time! That's difficult and some people in the parish find that difficult as well.

"At the same time we're moving to a small house we have in Bowral and we'll be spending a fair amount of time back in Sydney with children and grandchildren, so it will be nice to have the freedom and time to enjoy those things."

Mr Job has been heavily involved in planning more effective use of the St Jude's property, which is almost five acres in size and includes the oldest cemetery in the eastern suburbs. Houses have been built onsite for staff, in addition to the development of an old school hall as a child care centre and the creation of a memorial garden in the cemetery. The parish has also set up pastoral care for the needy and the sick.

"I think people would say [St Jude's] has a strong sense of community and people who come to

the parish get embraced into that community," he says, adding that over the years it has developed "a wider view of community – the parish church trying to look after the whole of the physical parish.

"We've been open to marrying people who don't necessarily come to church but see the church as the centre of the suburb. We take funeral services for people who may be on the fringe... It's more in line with the English concept of a parish where you have legal responsibility for people in your parish. It's not so in Australia but it's bringing that sort of thinking to apply here."

Outreach to younger people has always been hard – a factor of being in the "notoriously difficult" eastern suburbs – but Mr Job says St Jude's has been successful in reaching out to those over 40, seeing people come to Christ and being "very appreciative of the warm embrace they've received" by the church community.

"There are gaps in ministry areas someone will be able to fulfil that I haven't been able to achieve," he says. "I think the parish nominators are also keen to have someone carry on the tradition of the church as it is – they're very fond of their church and are looking for some sense of continuity about that."

## GLADESVILLE SON RETURNS

The **Rev David Mears** became rector of Christ Church, Gladesville on June 1.

While knowing the importance of being willing to move to a different parish after serving elsewhere for some years, Mr Mears says the decision to move from his previous parish of Minchinbury – where he had served since 2007 – was extremely difficult to make.

"I wasn't looking to move from Minchinbury – I love the church and God is doing some great things there," he says. "But you've got to be open to whether you could serve the kingdom more effectively somewhere else, so when nominators come you need to do them the respect of listening to them."



When nominators from Christ Church made contact, Mr Mears was surprised but gratified that people at the church remembered him, as he has already spent 19 years of his life in the parish. Not only was it the first place he "grew as a Christian", it was also the church where he married his wife Amanda, became inspired to do ministry and spent three years in MTS work before going to college.

Yet after the parish's first contact, Mr Mears expected the process to go no further. When it did, he found himself torn – still committed to mission in and for the western suburbs, but wanting to be true to God's call, wherever it led him.

"Really my prayer was that God would preside over the process," he says. "I wanted to go where I would best serve the growth of the kingdom of God and that both churches would be blessed in the long run by whatever happened.

"I put a lot of thought into what I'd be able to do if I stayed in Minchinbury and what would be the impact of me leaving. There were great gospel reasons to be in both places, so that was quite hard. In the end I thought, 'This is a selection process, there are other candidates and God is sovereign, so if they choose me then I will go with that.'"

Mr Mears says he is excited by the way Gladesville is changing, with an increasingly multicultural flavor and with offices and warehouses being rapidly replaced by townhouses and blocks of units.

"I'm keen to think about how we can do more cross-cultural ministry, especially with migrant communities," he says. "That's something I had experience with in Minchinbury, and that's something I'm excited about here. I also personally feel the challenge of leading a church that I've always felt, under God, indebted to, which I know has a history of excellent leadership and Bible teaching. So that's a great opportunity but at the same time a fairly daunting challenge.

"The staff team here is outstanding and I looking forward to working with them and also strengthening them in their ministries."

## VALE

The **Rev June Armstrong** died on April 18, aged 90, in Orange, NSW.

Born on July 20, 1925, Miss Armstrong had a strong desire from childhood to be a nurse. During her training at the Royal Alexandra Hospital for Children in Camperdown she was nurtured in faith by the Australian Nurses Christian Movement, and committed herself to preparing for mission service.

After completing her training she spent a year at a Bush Church Aid mission hospital in outback South Australia before returning to Sydney to study midwifery. Another two years followed at the mission hospital and, in 1954, Miss Armstrong began two years' study at Croydon Bible College, followed by two years training at Deaconess House under the likes of future archbishops Marcus Loane and Donald Robinson.

She was made a deaconess in 1960 prior to five years' nursing ministry at Oenpelli in the Northern Territory with the Church Missionary Society.

Deaconess Armstrong then moved to the School of Nursing in Wewak, Papua New Guinea, where she spent the next 22 years teaching local students in areas ranging from public health to patient diagnoses. In 1973 Dss Armstrong was also placed in charge of the Anglican parish of Wewak, which she ran in addition to her nursing duties until 1988 – focusing full-time on the parish from then until her retirement in 1992.

The government of PNG awarded Dss Armstrong the Independence Medal in 1985 in recognition of her long service, and in 1991 she was made a lay canon of Dogura Cathedral in the province of Milne Bay.

She returned to Orange in mid-1992 and was made an honorary deaconess of Holy Trinity, Orange. After a little over a year of service, she was ordained a deacon in the Bathurst Diocese and continued hospital visiting and Scripture teaching for many years – teaching schoolchildren about Jesus until well into her eighties.

Miss Armstrong identified very strongly throughout her Christian life with the small boy in John chapter 6 who gave Jesus what food he had, which Jesus used to feed the 5000 people around him. When writing about her life she said: "I have given my gifts to Jesus and he has multiplied them for his service. To him give all the glory!"



# Burnout prevention

DAVID MULREADY

I WRITE IN RESPONSE TO THE EXCELLENT AND TIMELY COVERAGE IN MAY’S EDITION OF *SOUTHERN Cross* about clergy burnout, the incidence of which is certainly on the increase. It was good to read of the Diocese’s recent initiative with the introduction of the Clergy Assistance Program. We need to see a greater emphasis on prevention of burnout as well as cure.

Who is responsible to care for clergy (including bishops) and other church workers? The Apostle Paul writes, “Carry each other’s burdens, and this way you will fulfil the law of Christ” (Galatians 6:2). True love for God and our brothers and sisters will be seen in helping to carry each other’s burdens.

While I acknowledge a little overlap with Ben McEachen’s helpful article, I want to suggest five people or groups of people who should be caring for our ministers of the gospel:

1. Bishops. Our bishops have such a responsibility of care. In the Service of Consecration of a Bishop in *An Australian Prayer Book* the exhortation includes these words: “Be to the flock of Christ a shepherd... support the weak, heal the sick, bind up the broken”. While these words don’t specifically apply to care for ministers, surely it includes them! While country bishops might have time to pastorally care for their much smaller group of ministers, our Archbishop and his assistant regional bishops in this Diocese have a very heavy administrative workload, which militates against spending much quality time with their ministers (and their spouses). Regional bishops need to be relieved of much of their very heavy administrative responsibilities by the Synod or the Standing Committee. Surely there are competent lay leaders and retired ministers who could chair some of the boards of our Diocese?
2. Church wardens and other leaders within local churches. Bishop Peter Brain’s excellent book *Going the Distance* (commended by Mr McEachen) includes a chapter designed to help local church leaders care for their ministers. In North West Australia we gave every minister a copy of Peter’s Brain’s book and we distributed bundles of that chapter – which Peter had arranged to be printed separately – to every parish. Parish councils could consider giving their ministers some annual study leave and encourage them to attend at least one ministry conference each year as well as CMS Summer School, which ought to be in addition to their annual holidays.
3. A minister’s own peers, who know what it’s like at the ministry coalface. This can be done informally or more formally through such things as the Focus on Ministry groups, which are run within the Diocese. These supportive and encouraging groups contain up to 10 ministers, who meet regularly over a three-year period then divide and invite others to join them. I found belonging to such a group of great help.
4. Retired ministers, who could be invited to encourage and, if needed, mentor a few parish ministers, with no reporting back to the regional bishop or Archbishop. Such involvement of experienced retired ministers could be a way of preventing burnout before it happens.
5. Ministers themselves. Peter Brain’s book is so helpful, touching on ministers looking after themselves and their wives and children, being regular in personal prayer and Bible reading and, while continuing to work hard, taking regular days off, learning to relax, taking regular holidays and long service leave when it falls due.

Of course, in this brief article I haven’t touched on the same need for care of those in ministry as chaplains in schools, prisons, hospitals, the armed forces and retirement villages as well as youth and children’s workers.

Gospel ministry is a great privilege but it’s hard work and sometimes lonely. It’s a marathon and not a sprint. New strategies are needed by bishops, local church leaders and ministers themselves in order to go the distance, because for many, the old strategies are clearly not working.

Come on Sydney! With prayer for God’s wisdom, we can do better.

*Bishop David Mulready is the immediate past bishop of North West Australia.*

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





# God's choice

DR GLENN DAVIES

AS I WRITE THIS COLUMN WE ARE IN THE FINAL WEEKS OF THE FEDERAL election campaign. I was mercifully overseas for three of those weeks, so it has not seemed quite as interminable to me as it has to others. Yet, by the time you read this edition of *Southern Cross*, the result will be known – even if the outcome of the Senate will likely take a little longer to be finalised. While a hung parliament is not an impossible outcome, as recent political history has demonstrated, it is not predicted at the time of writing.

Elections, whether they be federal, state or local council, are a reminder of the democracy in which we live. It is a precious gift that ought not to be taken for granted. Not all nations are democracies. In fact less than two thirds of all 192 nations have democratically elected governments, with varying degrees of electoral integrity and fairness. Moreover, only 32 countries have compulsory voting, of which only 19 enforce this practice.

Australia is therefore in a minority of countries (less than 10 per cent) that have mandatory, enforceable voting. This has not always been the case. The first nine federal elections were conducted by voluntary voting. Compulsory voting was only introduced nationally in 1924, with NSW following suit in 1928. The impact saw voter turnout rise from less than 60 per cent to more than 90 per cent between the 1922 and 1925 federal elections.

My own view is that we are blessed to have compulsory voting for a number of reasons, not least of which is that everyone is engaged in the activity and has a part to play in choosing who will govern us.

Although the Bible does not advocate any form of human government, whether it be by patriarchs, judges, elders or kings, it is the Lord who governs humankind through each of these agencies.

As Solomon declares: "The king's heart is a stream of water in the hand of the LORD; he turns it wherever he will" (Proverbs 21:1). This is true as much for pagan kings like Cyrus (Isaiah 44:28) as it is for Solomon. The Lord's hand is not restrained by those who do not acknowledge him.

Similarly the apostle Paul declares:

"Let everyone submit to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. Consequently, whoever rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves... The authorities are God's servants, agents of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer. Therefore, it is necessary to submit to the authorities" (Romans 13:1-2, 4-5).

No doubt we all voted in the recent election seeking to influence its outcome towards our favoured candidate. However, now the result is known, we must render our submission to the chosen government even if it did not receive our vote. God has overruled and placed the Prime Minister in his position, even if we thought our choice would have been better for the nation.

Of course, obedience to the governing authorities is not an absolute. Only our allegiance to God can be absolute. Peter and John both knew this when they confronted the Jewish leaders who had directed them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus, so they replied: "Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you rather than to God, you must judge; for we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard" (Acts 4:19-20).

Daniel experienced the same conflict when he chose to disobey the governing authorities but he was prepared to trust God and obey God, when obedience to the king was incompatible with obedience to God.

Living under the sovereignty of God is a great joy, for he has his purposes in giving us a new government. Furthermore, he exhorts us to pray for our government and its leaders (1 Timothy 2:1-2). May we fulfil God's exhortation by praying regularly for our Prime Minister and his government that we may be governed well, both for the good of the people of Australia and in a manner that is pleasing to God.

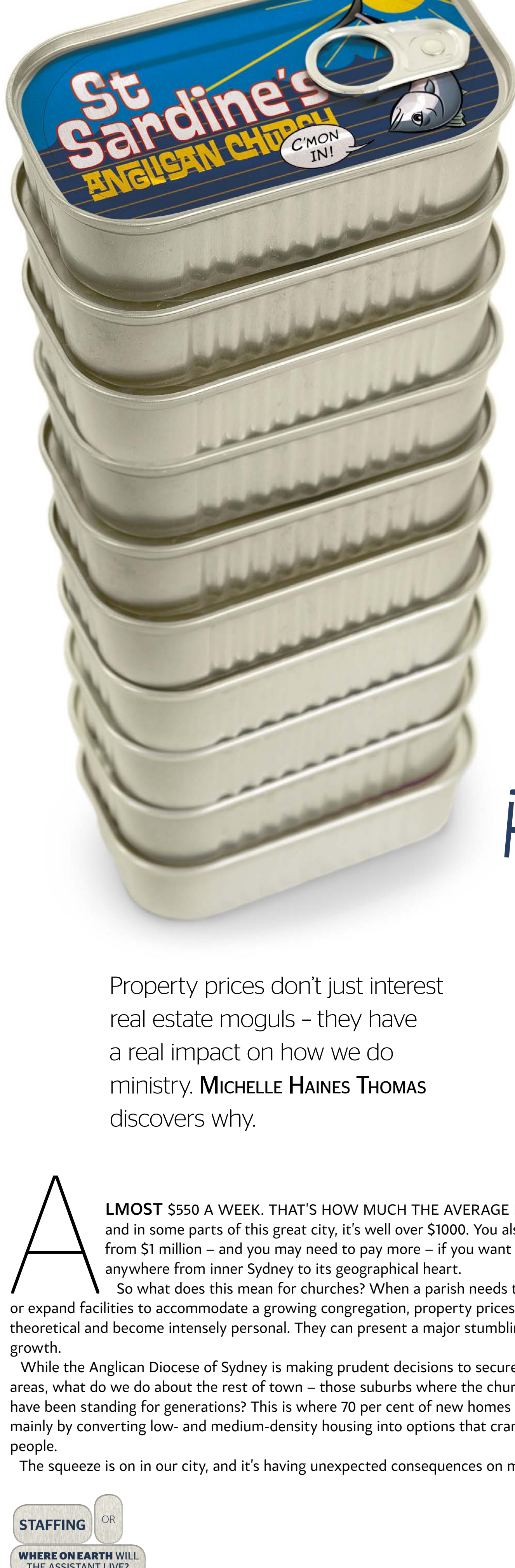
SC

## 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.





# The Sydney squeeze

8 Southern Cross JULY 2016

Property prices don't just interest real estate moguls – they have a real impact on how we do ministry. **MICHELLE HAINES THOMAS** discovers why.

**A**LMOST \$550 A WEEK, THAT'S HOW MUCH THE AVERAGE RENT IS IN SYDNEY, and in some parts of this great city, it's well over \$1000. You also don't get much change from \$1 million – and you may need to pay more – if you want to buy an average house anywhere from inner Sydney to its geographical heart.

So what does this mean for churches? When a parish needs to put on more staff, or expand facilities to accommodate a growing congregation, property prices stop being tediously theoretical and become intensely personal. They can present a major stumbling block to church growth.

While the Anglican Diocese of Sydney is making prudent decisions to secure property in greenfield areas, what do we do about the rest of town – those suburbs where the church and, usually, a rectory, have been standing for generations? This is where 70 per cent of new homes are projected to be built, mainly by converting low- and medium-density housing into options that cram in more and more people.

The squeeze is on in our city, and it's having unexpected consequences on ministry.

STAFFING OR  
WHERE ON EARTH WILL  
THE ASSISTANT LIVE?

It's a situation that is not unfamiliar. A parish, under God's grace, is doing well: its people are welcoming newcomers, preaching the word faithfully and carving out a loving reputation in the community. Numbers increase. The rows fill up on Sundays, until latecomers can't find a seat. The single minister or small staff team is stretched. The obvious solution is to employ another staff member (and possibly start another service) or build a bigger hall.

Cue the sound of screeching brakes.

It seems crazy to complain about ministry going well, but there's nothing like a \$30,000 a year (or more) rental bill to pour cold water on a church's expansion plans. Then there's the prohibitive price tag on the property next door that would be essential to accommodate a bigger ministry centre.

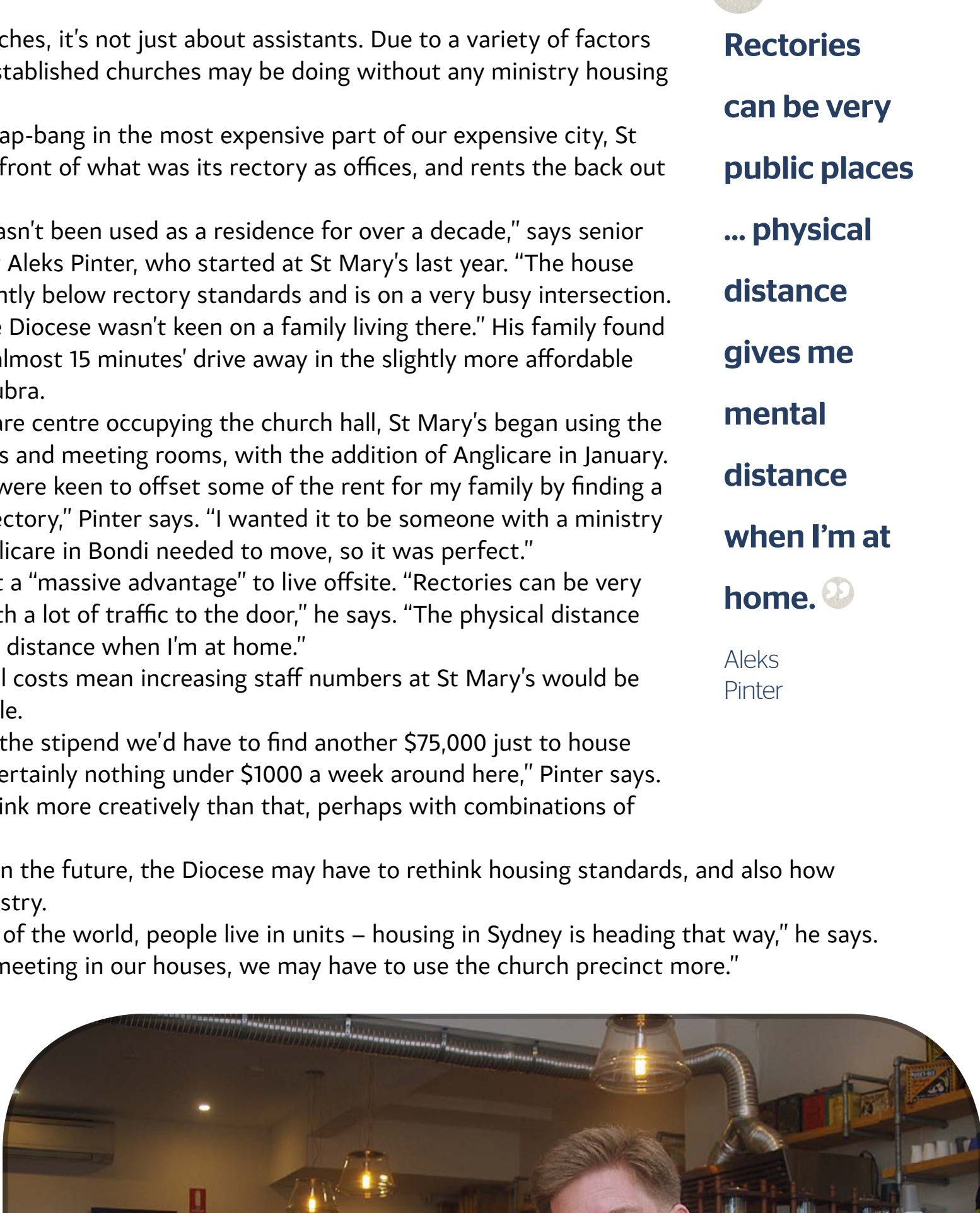
For one ministry family who has asked to remain anonymous the situation has imposed a real financial burden.

"The church was paying our rent but the property was just not adequate for our needs – family or ministry-wise," says the wife of an assistant minister in a booming parish in Sydney's west. The suburb has been revolutionised by a new transport corridor, which has seen both the population and rents rise dramatically in the past few years.

The family moved into a bigger house to accommodate their three children, with space for Bible studies and meetings, but they pay \$200 a week to top up what the church can give them.

"I've been forced back to work much earlier than I wanted to because we can't just choose to live somewhere else," she says.

Their church has a number of full-time staff members, with one only recently added. She says that key lay members have agreed they may not have employed the most recent staff member if they had known how impossible rents would become, or that they might have invested in more property when costs were still low.



Aleks Pinter

For some churches, it's not just about assistants. Due to a variety of factors even old, well-established churches may be doing without any ministry housing at all.

In Waverley, slap-bang in the most expensive part of our expensive city, St Mary's uses the front of what was its rectory as offices, and rents the back out to Anglicare.

"The rectory hasn't been used as a residence for over a decade," says senior minister the Rev Aleks Pinter, who started at St Mary's last year. "The house itself is significantly below rectory standards and is on a very busy intersection. I understand the Diocese wasn't keen on a family living there." His family found a home to rent almost 15 minutes' drive away in the slightly more affordable suburb of Maroubra.

With a child care centre occupying the church hall, St Mary's began using the rectory as offices and meeting rooms, with the addition of Anglicare in January. "The wardens were keen to offset some of the rent for my family by finding a tenant for the rectory," Pinter says. "I wanted it to be someone with a ministry connection. Anglicare in Bondi needed to move, so it was perfect."

He considers it a "massive advantage" to live offsite. "Rectories can be very public places with a lot of traffic to the door," he says. "The physical distance gives me mental distance when I'm at home."

But local rental costs mean increasing staff numbers at St Mary's would be almost impossible.

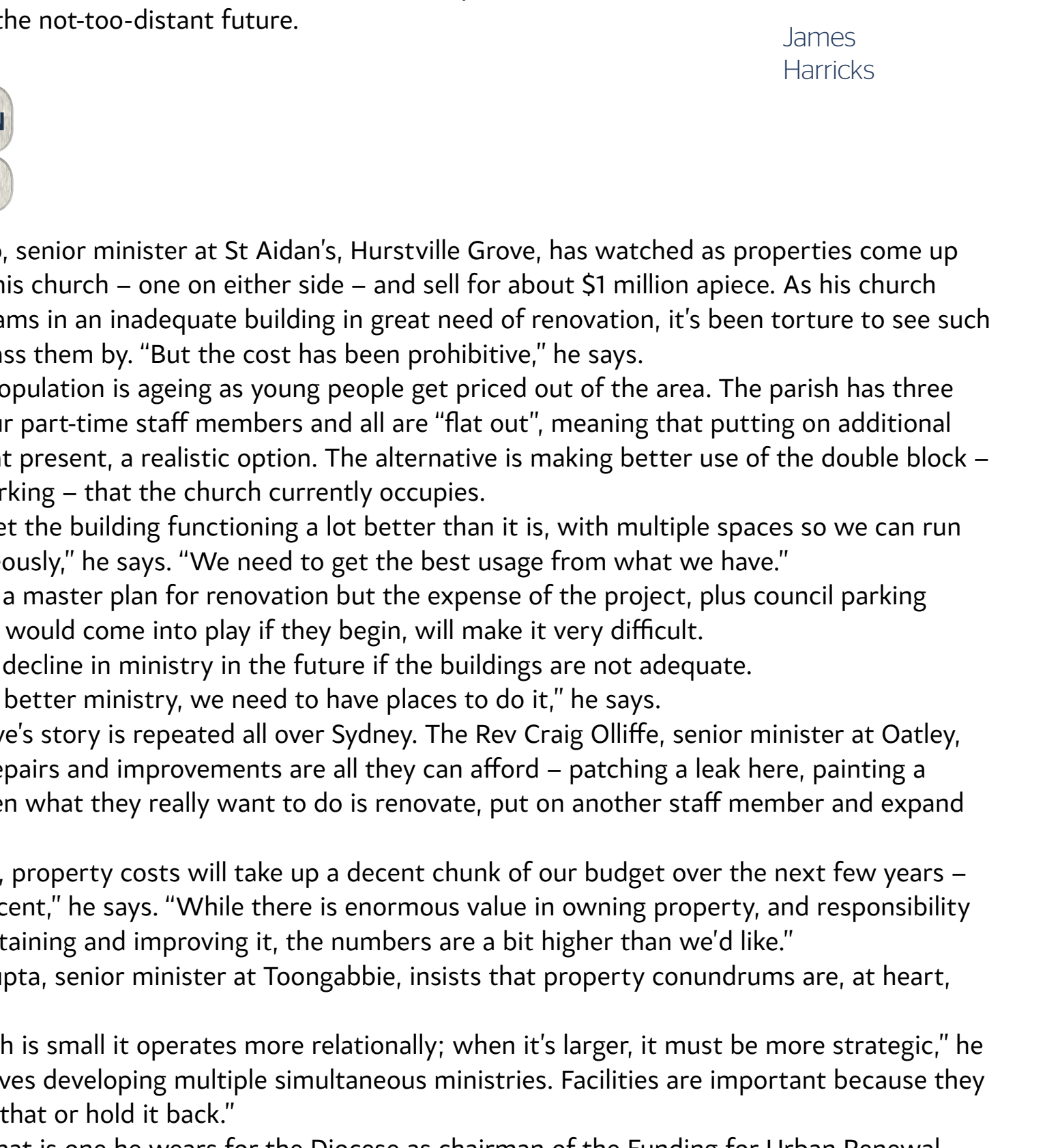
"In addition to the stipend we'd have to find another \$75,000 just to house them – there's certainly nothing under \$1000 a week around here," Pinter says. "We'll have to think more creatively than that, perhaps with combinations of part-time staff."

He adds that, in the future, the Diocese may have to rethink housing standards, and also how parishes do ministry.

"In other parts of the world, people live in units – housing in Sydney is heading that way," he says. "And instead of meeting in our houses, we may have to use the church precinct more."

**Rectories can be very public places ... physical distance gives me mental distance when I'm at home.**

Aleks Pinter



Aleks Pinter

Over at nearby St Matthias', Centennial Park, senior minister the Rev James Harricks heartily agrees.

"We need to be really careful around our expectations of housing," he says. "If the ministry staff all expected to live in large homes in Paddington, with free accommodation and room for all their kids while everyone else is scrimping and saving in small townhouses and units, I think that would say something we don't want to say."

St Matthias' staff members are sprinkled throughout Randwick and Kensington – university suburbs with slightly lower rents. Harricks admits that because St Matthias' is a "regional" church rather than a strictly local one, it's quite acceptable that assistants aren't living in the parish.

"Normally you want ministry staff living close by so they can bump into people at the school and the shops," he says, "but for us, spreading our staff around is normal."

The head of parish property for the Sydney Diocese, Greg Ellem, is already embracing the changes. "We are contemplating new, non-traditional models for ministry residences as suburbia changes from flat to vertical," he says.

He gives examples of parishes using underutilised branch church sites or inefficiently used residential property in more creative ways. "Some parishes, instead of selling, have been able to develop the site by building townhouses or a duplex, keeping one for ministry staff and renting out the others to service the loan used to construct the buildings," he says.

Ellem notes that, like many in their congregations, local clergy increasingly need to embrace the concept of commuting.

"It's not too novel," he says. "The larger parishes in expensive areas have been doing it for some time."

Current requirements stipulate that, to be a parish, a church must have a rectory-standard residence. Ellem thinks the Diocese may have to reconsider that position in the not-too-distant future.

**Normally you want ministry staff living close by so they can bump into people at the school and the shops, but for us, spreading our staff around is not a problem.**

James Harricks

RENOVATION OR  
IT'LL COST HOW MUCH?

The Rev Mat Yeo, senior minister at St Aidan's, Hurstville Grove, has watched as properties come up for sale around his church – one on either side – and sell for about \$1 million apiece. As his church bursts at the seams in an inadequate building in great need of renovation, it's been torture to see such opportunities pass them by. "But the cost has been prohibitive," he says.

The suburb's population is ageing as young people get priced out of the area. The parish has three full-time and four part-time staff members and all are "flat out", meaning that putting on additional services is not, at present, a realistic option. The alternative is making better use of the double block – with zero car parking – that the church currently occupies.

"We need to get the building functioning a lot better than it is, with multiple spaces so we can run things simultaneously," he says. "We need to get the best usage from what we have."

The parish has a master plan for renovation but the expense of the project, plus council parking restrictions that would come into play if they begin, will make it very difficult.

Yeo foresees a decline in ministry in the future if the buildings are not adequate.

"To do good or better ministry, we need to have places to do it," he says.

Hurstville Grove's story is repeated all over Sydney. The Rev Craig Olliffe, senior minister at Oatley, says that spot repairs and improvements are all they can afford – patching a leak here, painting a wall there – when what they really want to do is renovate, put on another staff member and expand ministry.

"Unfortunately, property costs will take up a decent chunk of our budget over the next few years – some 25-30 per cent," he says. "While there is enormous value in owning property, and responsibility involved in maintaining and improving it, the numbers are a bit higher than we'd like."

The Rev Raj Gupta, senior minister at Toongabbie, insists that property conundrums are, at heart, ministry issues.

"When a church is small it operates more relationally; when it's larger, it must be more strategic," he says. "That involves developing multiple simultaneous ministries. Facilities are important because they will either allow that or hold it back."

Gupta's other hat is one he wears for the Diocese as chairman of the Funding for Urban Renewal Group. Its job is to find ways, and money, for existing parishes to grow and develop. As a member of the Standing Committee's Strategic Research Group, Gupta presented a report to last year's Synod examining the effectiveness of diocesan grants to brownfield parishes that were used on building projects. He looked at the research was eye opening.

"We've heard at 10 churches that had been given grants in 2007 and asked, 'Was it effective? Was it worthwhile?'" he says. "We found that when a church was over 200 people, it was effective; when it had less than 200 people, it was not effective."

The other factor, apart from the cost of the grant, was that funds were used for facilities that allowed many ministries to occur at the same time, and that "incremental scalability" – allowing the ministry to grow into the space rather than overwhelm a small crowd with a huge auditorium – was also important.

Significantly, almost all of the parishes married the grant to other funds, either from the sale of property, internal fundraising or a loan, but there was general agreement that the grant had made the project possible.

Given the ongoing expense of housing staff, Gupta says there are changes ahead for our ministry models.

"It's been in vogue for the last decade or so to build a small congregation using one minister per congregation and, when you get to 100, you split and plant another," he says. "But now some church or service plants are shutting down and the 'mother' church is planning expanded facilities. We have to work out how to do church with fewer staff, and one element is to have bigger facilities."

The Funding for Urban Renewal Group will report back to Synod this year with some of its proposals.

## CHURCH CHANGE

Many churches were built for another era and a vanished way of doing ministry. What has changed and what are some of the implications for our "bricks and mortar"? The following points are Michelle Haines Thomas' summary of a talk given by Phillip Jensen at the Wollongong Regional Conference in May.

### 1950s suburban church

- Largely nominal
- Denomination mattered as ethnic marker
- People walked to church and there was one per suburb
- Prayer book service
- Clergy interchangeable
- Sunday school was for children of the whole suburb
- Evangelism happened inside church
- Social life of the parish revolved around church clubs

### 1960-2000 – The "great pruning"

- "British Christianity" culture dismantled by economic growth, materialism, new divorce laws and multiculturalism, among other things
- Sunday schools stopped attracting non-believers, followed by youth groups, Sunday night church and then family church
- In non-evangelical dioceses, where they retain their British heritage worshipping services, churches are dying
- Branch churches and services closed

### Challenges for today

- Churches are still set up for geographically based ministry, even though suburbs no longer function the way they once did
- Anglican ministers are more church pastors than parish evangelists (focus on church growth rather than evangelism) and need to begin to think and act like missionaries
- Stop expecting people to come to our buildings; go out and meet them in the community
- Run activities that are strategic for evangelism, not just seeking to fill people's time. Train and equip people to duplicate themselves with their contacts
- Ministers should live in the kind of homes of the people around them, just like missionaries do.

Large rectories are a reflection of the British Christianity from which we have moved on

LIQUIDATING ASSETS OR  
SELLING THE FAMILY JEWELS

While selling off property can free up funds for renovation or expansion, Ellem says it could also be the most shortsighted thing a parish ever does.

"When I first came into this role nearly 10 years ago, I did a tour of duty around the regions of the Diocese with the then archdeacons to meet rectors and better understand local issues," he says. "I went to one parish that was doing great things under God but bursting at the seams on a fairly constrained site. There were some recently built townhouses next door and I observed to the rector, 'If only we'd had the response to buy that for future expansion.'"

"The rector's response floored me. He said, 'We sold it to them.'"

Greg made a decision that day: under his stewardship, he would do all he could to persuade the various stakeholders to avoid selling any property. He has since overseen the sale of very little land, and then only if the sale was used to purchase or improve other property, or if proceeds were placed into something like the Property Trust's long-term pooling fund.

"The reality is that we're here until the Lord returns, so we must be strategic and long-sighted," he says.

"There are plenty of examples across the Diocese where we see the demographics of established areas change and, as new families arrive, church buildings that have been underutilised for sometimes decades, under God, experience a renaissance and become filled again as the parish flourishes."

Anecdotal evidence from a range of Sydney churches suggests there are parish councils all over town kicking themselves for unwise property sales, often in suburbs in which prices have skyrocketed since. When the population cycle swings around again and new staff or facilities are needed, there's nowhere to put them and no chance of buying more land.



Alexis Douglas

But it's not always a mistake.

In the little south coast town of Shoalhaven Heads, the population is growing and property prices are doubling. St Peter's, Shoalhaven Heads, formerly part of the parish of Gerringong, only became a parish in its own right in 2013. But in the lead-up to that it was in a position to build a new rectory on the church's large, central block of land, which still has plenty of space for expected future expansion.

According to the Rev Andrew Glover, rector of St George's, Gerringong, the acquisition and subsequent sale of an assistant minister's residence in Shoalhaven Heads – at just the right time to benefit from improving land value – was crucial to positioning the fledgling parish.

St Peter's rector the Rev Anthony Douglas, who oversaw the transition to the parish status, agrees, adding that the very large block purchased for the church in the 1990s (following the sale of previous land) was also far-sighted.

"The foresight of buying more land than we needed all those years ago means two things today: firstly, we have a bigger visual footprint in the community – so while our building might be small, we can be seen using all our space for various ministries and the locals know that we're alive and active," Douglas says.

"In a country town, this is an important thing to communicate."

"Secondly, there is a genuine path to growing our church facilities. A small church on a small block is going to find it next to impossible to raise enough funds to buy more land and then develop it. Having the room to expand means we can plan and save towards a new building that we hope and pray will accommodate more of our neighbours in our gatherings."

"Our people can actually see where a new building would go and visualise how that would enhance and enable future ministries. It makes that next step look like a challenge worth striving for rather than a rector's pipe dream!"

Dundas-Telopea is another parish selling off the family home. With dual cements, neither of which were adequate for effective ministry – and with the Dundas church and rectory hemmed in on all sides by new unit blocks and no parking – a decision was made to exchange contracts with a developer last year. The sale of both properties will fund the purchase of new land in an industrial area, the construction of a functional, purpose-designed facility (with parking!) and a new rectory.

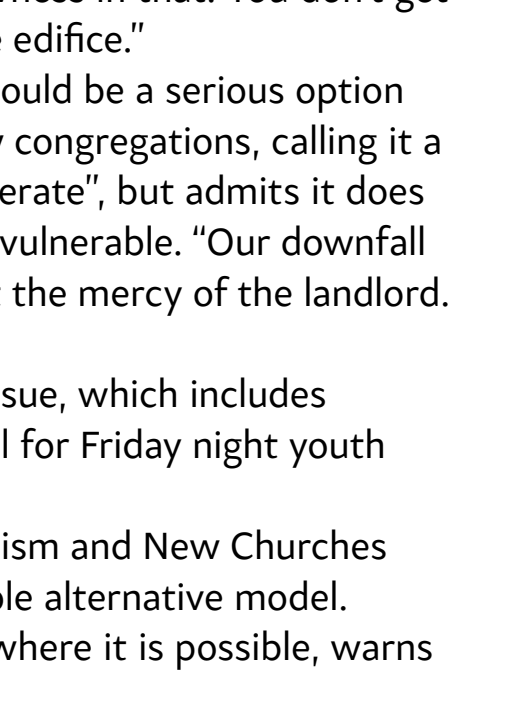
The rector of Dundas-Telopea the Rev Alistair Seabrook said it made sense on every level. "We didn't have a heritage-listed building and we weren't on the main street, so we never had a lot of footfall traffic," he says. "People were already driving to church but they had to park streets away. Now they'll still have to drive to church but it will be a much more enjoyable space to bring people."

**... we can be seen using all our space for various ministries and the locals know that we're alive and active.**

Anthony Douglas

## LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

- As Sydney becomes more urbanised and densely populated, ministry staff may no longer live onsite or even in the parish. Commuting to church could become the new norm.
- Parish centres will need to accommodate multiple simultaneous ministries to be in a position to grow their congregations.
- New or expanded facilities may have to include spaces for Bible studies and gatherings that may have previously occurred in homes as the population moves towards smaller residences and apartments.
- Parishes need to get creative about funding expansion and raise money for this from a variety of sources, as well as the Diocese looking seriously as to what support can be provided.
- Parishes may have to explore ways to do ministry with fewer staff, which would lead to a decline in the large team ministry model.
- Churches will increasingly appear in industrial zones rather than residential ones.
- Unviable facilities could become the site of new staff housing.



PROPERTY-FREE OR  
CHURCHES WITHOUT BRICKS AND MORTAR

We all know that a church is made up of people, not buildings, but embarking on congregational ministry without owning any property at all brings as many disadvantages as advantages.

The benefits, apart from having no leaking roofs or land taxes, are being felt by parishes such as Cherrybrook, which meets in a community centre. Senior minister the Rev Gavin Poole sings the praises of going "building-free".

"We promote ourselves that we are not only 'for' but 'in' the community – we are really embedded there," he says. "People are happier to contribute money to what is not just bricks and mortar. If for some reason we are ever kicked out, we may need to find an alternative space or close down. But that's okay because the kingdom of God will never close down. There is freedom in that."

Poole believes that being without a physical space makes a church more dependent on God.

"It's like someone who inherits a home compared to someone who has to live under their own steam – it makes you look toward God for provision," he says. "There's a reality and rawness in that. You don't get caught up in the edifice."

He thinks it should be a serious option for planting new congregations, calling it a "great way to operate", but admits it does make a church vulnerable. "Our downfall is that we are at the mercy of the landlord."

We have to be really wise."

The continuing cost of rent is another ongoing issue, which includes not only the community centre but a public school for Friday night youth ministry and residential properties for staff.

Most congregations connected with the Evangelism and New Churches group don't own property, proving it can be a viable alternative model. However Gupta, a supporter of such approaches where it is possible, warns that there are dangers.

"One church plant in Sydney got kicked out of its premises every three years, and they got tired," he says. "It gets exhausting."

One thing is for certain about Sydney property – it will not get any cheaper. And as any dinner party conversation can confirm, Sydneysiders will not stop worrying about it. Only wise planning and trust in a good God will give Sydney parishes the ability to continue to use their "bricks and mortar" as a tool to bring people to Jesus, and not as a stumbling block to ministry.

**We are not only 'for' but 'in' the community – we are really embedded there.**

Gavin Poole



Gavin Poole

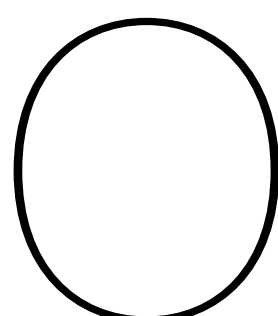


# Remember the Somme



"Densely sown with Australian sacrifice": soldiers on the road to Pozières, August 1916.

The effect of this battle on Australia and its people is still clear and painful a century later, writes **COLIN BALE**.



**I**N A STAINED GLASS WINDOW TITLED "JESUS – PROPHET, KING, PRIEST" AT ST Matthew's, Manly is the following inscription: *In memory of Lorenzo Dixon Marshall. Died 9 February 1933. To the glory of God and in memory of Victor and David Dixon Marshall who made the supreme sacrifice at Pozières on 23 and 24 July 1916. Mrs Alice Selkirk Dixon Marshall. Died 18 September 1949, aged 82 years.*

The reference to Pozières and the names of the two brothers who died there in 1916 is an ongoing reminder of the terrible loss of life suffered by the Australian force in the Battle of the Somme in 1916. The names of places, such as Pozières, Mouquet Farm and Flers, where Australians fought on the Somme, became well known to that generation at home in Australia. Anglican churches in older Sydney suburbs testify to the losses by inscriptions and memorials like the one at Manly.

When Australians think of World War I there is a tendency to think of Gallipoli rather than the Western Front of Belgium and France. However, the reality is that many more Australians fought in the European theatre than at the Dardanelles.

The Battle of the Somme was an Allied offensive from July to November 1916 in the French department of Picardy that was meant to break the stalemate on the Western Front. Severe losses were suffered by both sides with British Empire forces, including the Australians, sustaining an estimated 420,000 casualties. The net result of this effort and sacrifice over 4½ months was an advance of only 12 kilometres in that section of the Front.

The Australian Imperial Force (AIF) had moved to France from Egypt early in 1916 after the withdrawal from Gallipoli. Before the AIF's involvement in the Somme campaign, its 5<sup>th</sup> Division went into action at Fromelles in Northern France on July 19. This battle was meant to be a feint to draw German forces away from the Somme battlefield to the south but it was a complete failure with the division suffering 5533 casualties in a 24-hour period.

On July 23 the 1<sup>st</sup> Division attacked on the Somme at Pozières. It gained the village but was withdrawn on July 27 after suffering heavy casualties. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Division then came into the line and was later replaced by the 4<sup>th</sup> Division. In the seven weeks from July to September 1916, the Australians suffered more than 28,000 casualties, a figure higher than the eight months on Gallipoli. The Australian war historian Charles Bean described the area around Pozières as "a site more densely sown with Australian sacrifice than any other place on earth".

The grim reality of the Australian losses was hard to avoid for those on the home front. As well as their own particular loss, grieving Australian families were also participants in the losses experienced by the wider community. It was the official casualty lists that really brought the war home. These were published in local metropolitan newspapers in all states, and displayed in public places such as post offices, police stations and railway stations. The lists contained the names of soldiers in one of the following categories: killed, wounded, missing, prisoners-of-war and sick.

The sheer number of casualties would have been a shock to everyone in Australia, even though they had been conditioned by the Gallipoli campaign to expect losses. Between August 15 and September 16, 21 lists – sometimes two a day – were published in the *The Sydney Morning Herald*. The four weeks centred on the official notification of Australian casualties in the attacks on Pozières and the first of the actions at Mouquet Farm. The lists contained 2959 killed or died of wounds, 13,617 wounded and 1802 missing in action (most of these were confirmed as dead later by courts of inquiry). The casualty lists published in the weeks following September 16 were equally grim as they accounted for losses suffered as the Australians continued with the attack on Mouquet Farm.

The lists brought home in powerful ways the intensity of loss and the tragedy of distance. In contrast to the articles and stories published by newspapers about the war, which were censored and tried to present the losses as noble sacrifice, the official casualty lists bore stark witness to the human cost.

The *Herald's* special correspondent in London believed the casualty rates at Pozières would be a psychological blow to Australians at home. He wrote on August 26 in the paper of the numbness he felt "morning by morning reading lines of crowded and abbreviated names", adding that "our casualty lists are truly tragic... irreparable loss to bereaved parents... a tremendous price we are paying, this toll of our very best abilities."

One woman wrote, "How harrowing it is to read daily of the heavy list of casualties... it makes our hearts ache for the many parents whose homes are desolated by the cruel war".

As the casualty lists grew and the awful reality of trench warfare became apparent, there was a growing sense for families and soldiers that death or serious injury was a strong probability. Lieutenant Alec Raws, a journalist before the war, wrote on August 4, 1916: "I write from the battlefield of the Great Push with thousands of shells passing in a tornado overhead, and thousands of unburied dead around me... One feels on such a battlefield as this that one can never survive, or that if the body lives the brain must go forever."

Two brothers, David and Victor Dixon Marshall, had enlisted in September 1915 in answer to the call for reinforcements after the losses on Gallipoli. Both were young men and unmarried. David was 21 and Victor was 24. They joined the 1<sup>st</sup> Division and were thus involved in the fighting at Pozières in late July. David was killed in action while Victor died of wounds. They died five days apart.

Like so many of the Australian dead at Pozières, David has no known grave and is remembered on the Villers-Bretonneux Memorial. Victor died at a field hospital at Puchevillers and is buried there. The boys were both separately remembered in Roll of Honour notices in *The Sydney Morning Herald* in August 1916 by "sorrowing parents and sister". It seems that Mr and Mrs Lorenzo Dixon Marshall had three children, two of whom were killed at Pozières. A key way to commemorate this loss for the family was to include the sons' names in the inscription of the church's stained glass window at Manly.

Interestingly, the names of the brothers are not to be found on the Roll of Honour in that church.

The reason for this seems to be that they had enlisted from Bondi, where the family home was located. Their parents moved to Manly and became parishioners at St Matthew's in 1917, so the sons were not eligible for inclusion on the Roll of Honour.

Another set of brothers, Robert and Stephen Allen, are listed on the Roll of Honour at St Matthew's. They, too, died in the vicinity of Pozières in August 1916. Both were reported as missing in action, which was later listed "killed in action" by an AIF court of inquiry in January 1917. There is a family portrait (right) in the Australian War Memorial collection of the Allen brothers, with their mother and two sisters, which was taken just before they sailed away as reinforcements to join the 13<sup>th</sup> Battalion in September 1915. It is sad reminder not only of the loss suffered by this Anglican family but it visually represents the grief caused to so many other families by the Somme campaign.

The Australian casualties on the Somme should not only be understood in terms of the large number of those who fell in the fighting. Many of those who survived bore physical and/or psychological wounds for the rest of their lives. This is vividly presented in Vance Palmer's poem "A Farmer Remembers the Somme":

*Will they never fade or pass!  
The mud, and the misty figures endlessly coming  
In file through the foul morass,  
And the grey flood-water ripping the reeds and grass,  
And the steel wings drumming.*

*The hills are bright in the sun:  
There's nothing changed or marred in the well-known places;  
When work for the day is done  
There's talk, and quiet laughter, and gleams of fun  
On the old folks' faces.*

*I have returned to these:  
The farm, and the kindly Bush, and the young calves lowing;  
But all that my mind sees  
Is a quaking bog in a mist – stark, snapped trees,  
And the dark Somme flowing.*

In this centenary year of the Battle of the Somme we do well to remember the Australian casualties of that campaign and the grief experienced by families across the nation as a result. The wider community, including the churches, also shared the sense of loss.

During the conflict young men had been urged from the pulpits of many churches in the Diocese of Sydney to join up and "do their bit". On the Somme many of these young people either died or suffered life-changing physical and/or psychological wounds. Thus the impact on churches was profound, not only because of the loss of some of the brightest and best of that young generation, but because of the impact it had on those who survived and carried the horror of the Somme with them for the rest of their lives.

The next time you are in an Anglican church which has an honour roll for World War I, take a moment to reflect on those named – many of whom fought on the Somme in 1916.

*The Rev Dr Colin Bale is vice principal and academic dean of Moore College, and is head of the Department of Church History. He is the author of Crowd Of Witnesses - Epitaphs on First World War Australian War Graves, published by Longueville Media.*





## Blacktown Takes the cake



Christ Church, Blacktown has been building connections through local events, giving away 1000 pieces of cake at a recent community festival.

The church's involvement with the Blacktown Festival stretches back to 2009 and also features kids' crafts and hot drinks, all provided at the expense of church members.

"When we first got involved, we realised that most of the other churches in the area were using it as a fundraiser," says Blacktown assistant minister and festival involvement co-ordinator the Rev Graeme Marks. "We thought that the people of God should be supporting church work and so, instead of asking for money, we'd give it away. Over the years we've been giving away cake, giving away drinks, giving our time, in the hope that even just in that we can say something of God's grace to people."

The time at the festival has opened discussions with people about Jesus, with some families becoming connected with the church through the event – most recently with nine children joining the church's after-school kids' club as a direct result of contacts made at the festival.

"There's a number of us, including Michael Robinson [Blacktown's senior minister], myself and others, who have chats with people," Mr Marks says. "We deliberately don't make that the focus or the object of the day, but what we do focus on is mingling and being a part of the community on that day. And that does bring up conversation about the gospel."

"There's one family I particularly think of that have moved away now but became involved in our church after meeting us [at the festival]. Like all community work it's slow work, but we have a growing group of people here who are increasingly invested in the work at the festival, so that helps."

Mr Marks says that participation in the festival has also created links with local businesses who are similarly regulars at the event, as well as with Blacktown City Council, which has provided the church with a stall and the same location at the festival for several years.

"We're now getting to the point where people expect to see us there each year and actually enjoy seeing us there each year," he says. "And I think that's a good thing."



## PM, Premier attend Orlando service

Grieving dignitaries come together at the Orlando commemoration at St Andrew's Cathedral (front row, from far left): NSW Governor David Hurley, Mrs Lucy Turnbull, Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull, Premier Mike Baird, US Consul-General Hugo Llorens and his wife Lisett, and the wife of Archbishop Davies, Mrs Dianne Davies. Below: Sydney's Dean Kanishka Raffel speaks at the service.

Federal and State leaders last month attended what the Prime Minister called a "loving" commemoration service for victims of the Orlando massacre.

Malcolm Turnbull and his wife Lucy took time out from the election trail while Premier Baird, the NSW Governor David Hurley and the American Consul-General, Hugo Llorens, sat in the front row during the service led by the Dean of Sydney, Kanishka Raffel. Labor leader Bill Shorten was represented by Senator Doug Cameron.

"We gather to mourn the dead, to offer comfort and sympathy, to renounce evil, hatred and violence, to pray for peace and freedom for all, to share the hope that is offered in the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ," Dean Raffel said in opening the service. "We offer our sympathy and condolences to all LGBTI people knowing this crime targeted their community and we condemn all violence against people on the basis of their sexuality."

One minute's silence was observed in memory of those who died after Omar Mateen's shooting spree at a gay nightclub in Orlando, Florida. The US Consul-General read from Revelation 21, while Governor Hurley read a passage from Isaiah 65 and Premier Baird read Psalm 46: "God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble". In his address, Archbishop Davies said there was deep grief at the "crime of hate" that had turned the Orlando nightclub into a "theatre of war".

"It is a loss for the LGBTI community, it is a loss for the American people, it is a loss for us in Australia, it is a loss for all humanity – it is also a loss for God," Dr Davies said. "It is only seven months ago that we gathered in this Cathedral to mourn with members of the French community following the attacks on Paris where 130 people were slain. Twelve months before that we mourned the deaths of those killed in the Martin Place siege. 'When will this end?' we cry."

Dr Davies went on to deplore violence, especially against the LGBTI community. "As Australians we abhor violence in all its forms – domestic violence, street violence, xenophobic violence, religiously motivated violence and especially violence against members of the LGBTI community. As the leader of the Anglican Church in Sydney I want to affirm my stance against all such outbreaks of violence, and if any members of our churches have participated in such acts of violence against women, against young people, against ethnic minorities, against religious minorities or against those from the LGBTI community I offer my heartfelt apology.

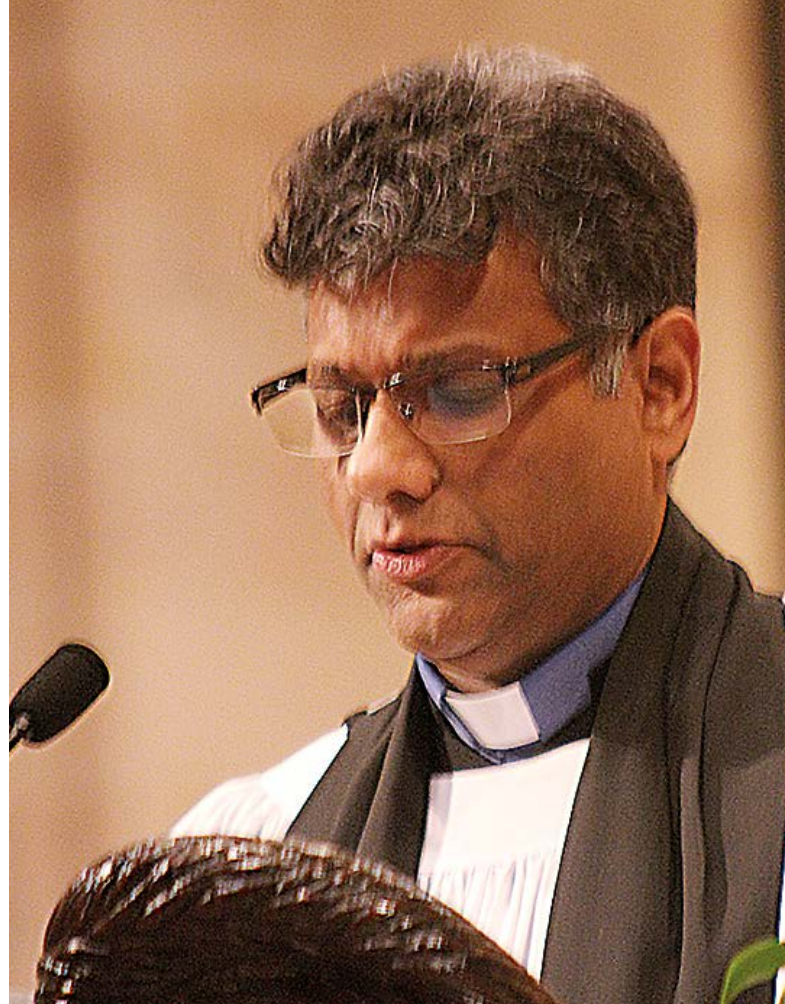
"Yet we must all search our hearts, as evil resides in each one of us. We have all fallen short of the glory of God. None of us are without fault. Words of derision, mockery and exclusion so frequently fall from our lips when directed against persons who are different from us. This is especially the case for members of the LGBTI community, who have suffered the verbal abuse that so deeply cuts into a person's soul. Where we have been guilty of such words, I also offer my apology on behalf of the Anglican Church in Sydney."

However, the Archbishop added, "God's love knows no bounds. He extends his love to all without distinction and without prejudice. Therefore when one, let alone 49, bearers of the image of God are murdered, God grieves. When a further 53 are injured and hospitalised, God grieves. For our God is a God of compassion and grace, and in the depth of our sorrow and pain, he offers to carry us 'through the valley of the shadow of death'."

Outside the service, Mr Turnbull described it as "a loving ceremony".

"It was responding to an act of unimaginable hate with solidarity and love," he told reporters. The Premier described the Archbishop's statements as "very powerful and entirely appropriate".

"My hope is it's received in the graciousness it was delivered," Mr Baird said. "Certainly this was a clear example, I think, where the Archbishop has opened himself up to the entire community and asked everyone to join in standing together with those who were obviously impacted."



## Combined Youth Groups Mission

Listen and do: youth from four Hawkesbury groups hear from the Bible before heading out to serve the community.

PHOTO: Stephanie Patch

A number of Anglican churches in the Hawkesbury region, including Richmond, Kurrajong, Wilberforce and Pitt Town, recently completed a combined mission made up of their youth groups, serving and sharing the gospel in their local communities.

The mission is in its fourth year, originally started by members of Richmond and Kurrajong. This year it was hosted by Pitt Town Anglican, which joined in for the first time.

"It actually morphed out of a mission trip some of us in the area took to Fiji," says the mission's co-ordinator and Richmond youth minister Josh Wilson.

"We reflected that we travel quite a distance to do mission activities, when many of the things we would do in other places could be done – and are even needed – closer to home. It also grew out of wanting our youth to not just be consumers, but to also be given an opportunity to step up and be servers."

The mission, which runs over the June long weekend, is an opportunity for youth to come together, hear the Bible and be trained, but also put this into practice by serving community groups and others in practical ways such as lawn mowing, charity op shop shifts and helping out at the local aged care facility.

"The youth have more energy than the leaders," Mr Wilson says. "We basically brace ourselves after each weekend for all the kids to ask, 'So why don't we do this every term?' They actually really get into it and surprisingly, for me at least, some of the non-Christian kids who tag along are some of the most impacted by the whole weekend. Maybe it's because the whole thing is so out of the ordinary for them, but it's actually been something of value for non-Christians in and around our youth groups as much as the Christian youth and the people they help out, I think."



# Gobblefunk in Giant Country

JUDY ADAMSON

The BFG

Rated PG

IT'S TAKEN A LONG TIME, BUT FINALLY THE GLORIUMPTIOUS DAY HAS ARRIVED: FANS OF Roald Dahl's stories can see their favourite big man on the big screen with the release of Disney's *The BFG*.

For the uninitiated, BFG is short for Big Friendly Giant. He's 24 feet tall on the old scale with huge, flapping ears, a kindly face, a dreadful diet and his own impressively mangled form of English.

Beloved of kids (and grown-ups) since Dahl published the book in 1982, a live-action adaptation of *The BFG* was first mooted less than a decade later but technology hadn't yet caught up with imagination. The rise of digital wizardry – including real time motion-capture – have now bridged that gap, and with the addition of Steven Spielberg to direct, the pieces were all in place to create a phizz-wizzing adaptation.

Like most books with a devoted audience, the wait for the final product has been an anxious one for fans. But if the response of the audience at the screening I attended is anything to go by, the makers have the mix just about right. The script is well attuned to Dahl's gobblefunk (i.e. messing about to invent new words or meanings), and the setting and style are suitably fantastic, funny and, at times, downright beautiful.

But back to the story. Ten-year-old Sophie (Ruby Barnhill) lives in an orphanage. One night, as she struggles with her usual insomnia, she decides to tempt fate at the witching hour and looks out the windows near her bed. To her shock, out in the street she sees a giant taller than the terrace houses – and he sees her. Covering under the covers is no good, as the giant picks Sophie up, bedclothes and all, and takes her to Giant Country.

While understandably scared of this huge creature and the real possibility of being eaten, Sophie is soon reassured that her captor is a gentle, rustic soul who dines only on (very unpleasant-tasting) snozzcumbers – unlike the rest of Giant Country's inhabitants, who are exceptionally fond of "human beans", mock him for his shorter stature and refer to him as "Runt". When Sophie hears that a previous friend named him the "big friendly giant", she grasps the name with enthusiasm and calls him "BFG". And so their adventures begin.

Be assured that you don't have to be familiar with the book to be charmed by this film. The BFG is a busy fellow, catching dreams in a beautiful upside down lake at the top of a mountain. He bottles them carefully, storing each one until it's time to release it into the mind of a sleeping human. Which is what he does in the dead of night, every night.

But he's lonely, on the fringe of his society just like Sophie, so their friendship quickly becomes very valuable to both of them.

Steven Spielberg and the screenwriter haven't included unnecessary elements in the telling of the story. Much like Dahl, we don't dwell on Sophie in the orphanage but get right into the fun stuff: Giant Country and its inhabitants, the magical beauties of dream catching and the BFG's cave, and – when all seems otherwise lost – asking for help from the Queen (Penelope Wilton).

At almost two hours you would think the film would feel too long, especially for kids, but it really doesn't. A lot happens but not a lot happens in this time, which might disappoint those used to more complex plot twists and things that blow up, but personally I found it an enjoyable relief.

Ruby Barnhill as Sophie is a very Dahl-esque heroine – smart, feisty and full of ideas. She isn't about to let abduction stop her from doing what she wants, even if it puts her in danger of being gobbled up by the other giants (who have such toe-curling names as Bloodbottler and Gizzardgulper). Sophie is also determined to ensure that BFG and the general human population don't have to suffer at their hands either, which is where the Queen comes in – but I won't spoil that part of the story by telling you what happens at the palace. It's far too much fun.

The real star of the film, of course, is the BFG himself. It's crucial that we aren't just hearing the voice of Mark Rylance (who, just to note, won an Oscar earlier this year for his role in *Bridge of Spies*). Performance-capture technology is able to give us every move he makes, which answers the (no doubt) burning question of whether a digital giant can be nuanced in speech and facial expression with a resounding "yes". Rylance's performance is beautiful, managing to make his BFG unschooled but clever, vulnerable but tough, and agile yet endearingly awkward.

*The BFG* is really not for small children – the bloodthirstiness of the other giants would be far too frightening – but kids (and adults) from mid- to late primary school onwards will have a ball, and leave wishing they also had a BFG as their buddy.

## Faith resounds



Church history: St Jude's with parsonage, c1873.

COLIN BALE

**Summoned by Bells – A History of St Jude's Church, Randwick 1865-2015**

by Ron Ringer

THIS IS A BEAUTIFULLY PRODUCED BOOK THAT DETAILS the ministry of St Jude's, Randwick during its 165 years. The chronological account begins by acknowledging the Aboriginal people of the Sydney region and their dispossession by European settlement. It then weaves the story of St Jude's with that of settlement and the subsequent development and history of both Sydney and Australia, but always pays close attention to the vicinity that was to become Randwick.

Early on we learn of the important role of Simeon Pearce, an Anglican layman and businessman, in the establishment of the church at Randwick – especially his determination to build a fine church for the locality.

The history reveals that St Jude's began as an evangelical parish with a close association to Bishop Barker, the second diocesan bishop of Sydney. Barker was a conservative evangelical and the appointments to St Jude's during his episcopate reflected his churchmanship.

The link of St Jude's with the bishop was not only due to the location of Bishopscourt at Randwick – there was an obvious warm regard by Barker for the ministry of the parish. His replacement, Bishop Barry, changed the direction of St Jude's in 1884 with the appointment of a Tractarian clergyman, the Rev William Hough, as rector. There is an indication that this was not a popular choice as we are informed that the locum, the Rev James Clarke, "despite having the support of his parishioners... was passed over... in favour of [the] Rev William Hough".

The long ministry of William Hough at St Jude's, together with that of his successor the Rev William Cakebread, accounted for the next 55 years. During this time the parish clearly moved from its earlier evangelical pattern to a more ceremonial and distinctive path. It was under Hough that the church building was enlarged and the mission hall opened. Indeed, Hough is acknowledged as "the Builder" in the story of St Jude's.

Cakebread's tenure from 1912 to 1939 witnessed a period of great change and uncertainty in Australia. During his time the parish was at the centre of Randwick community life but, like the rest of Australia, it struggled financially during the 1930s.

Another long incumbency occurred with the Rev Oscar Abram (1939-1955). The High Church "feel" of the parish was very evident in rector's encouragement of vestments, but his successor, the Rev Ronald Johnson (1956-1974), moved away from much of Abram's ritualism, and the so the story of St Jude's continues until the present, with obvious warm regard for its just-retired rector the Rev Greg Job.

In many ways the book has the feel of an institutional history but it is more than that. The author clearly seeks to contextualise St Jude's in its local community and the wider world, thus showing how the parish responded to the changing currents of social, political and religious life.

As well as what one would expect in a parish history, there are some very interesting and unusual aspects detailed in the book. For example, pew rent – the practice of paying for the right of occupancy of a particular pew – was a feature of St Jude's. It was fascinating to read about this English practice in the parish. For many years St Jude's also ran a parish school. Most Anglican schools in Sydney were closed after the Public Instruction Act of 1880 was enacted, yet St Jude's continued to run its own school up until World War II.

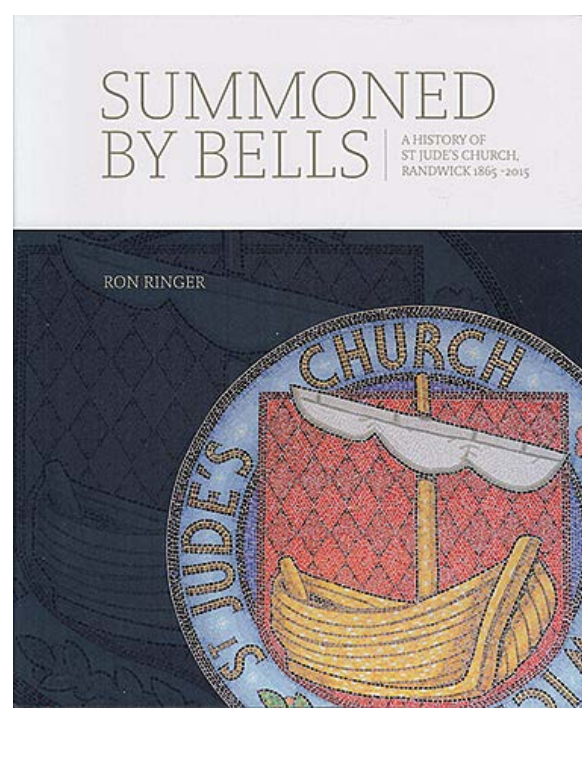
What of the title *Summoned by Bells*? It, too, is a somewhat unusual feature of a Sydney Anglican church. The importance for the author of bell ringing at St Jude's is evident in the text. From time to time in the parish story the reader is informed about the situation of bells and bell ringers. This culminates with the provision of new bells in 2000. This narrative thread of the bells symbolises both the style of worship at St Jude's as well as the church's role in "sounding through" the Christian faith to the Randwick community over the years.

What makes this an interesting read is what Bishop Robert Forsyth describes in the foreword as St Jude's "slightly quirky Englishness" and its "distinctive path less in step with the mainstream" of the Diocese of Sydney. These features are apparent in the account but could have been teased out more in the narrative.

Sometimes in the telling too much attention is given to buildings and other tangible features of the parish when it would have been useful to have heard more from its people. However, these are small criticisms. The book is carefully researched, well written and richly illustrated. The author, Ron Ringer, has produced a fine account of St Jude's.

*Summoned by Bells* is published by St Jude's, Randwick.

For information contact the church office on 9399 9400.



## God and gorillas

STUART STARR

WHEN AUTHOR DAVE BRY STEPPED INTO THE CONTROVERSY ARISING FROM THE DEATH of a 17-year-old silverback gorilla, his story in *The Guardian* was titled, "I can't believe I have to say it, a human life is worth more than a gorilla's".

The reason for the hue and cry is that Harambe the gorilla's life was ended by staff at the Cincinnati Zoo in May after a four-year-old boy scaled a fence and fell into the enclosure. With the 180kg gorilla pulling the child by the leg and becoming increasingly agitated the zoo's keepers took the very difficult decision to end Harambe's life with a single rifle shot.

The outcry was intense. When the mother said she had "made a mistake" in taking her eyes off her son, adding that "accidents happen" – members of the public took it as disregard for the danger she put her child in, and thus an internet lynch mob was born.

Dave Bry's discomfort with the public response was expressed like this: "As much as I love animals – and I love them very much – the idea that the life of a cat or a dog or a lion or a gorilla is as important as the life of a human is a terrible one, a wrong one, an insulting one".

His reasons? Humans are genetically distinct from animals, they are sentient, with unique rationalising, ethical frameworks and conceptualising skills no other animal possesses; and other creatures "don't have the same access to our state of being, the empathy, the sympathy, the language, the particular and unique sort of love that we share with each other".

One reader's comment – amid the wave of opinions offered – was a pretty good summary of the sentiment I read: "To think that the life of that stupid kid is worth more than the gorilla's life just on the basis that he is human is the biggest load of bull. I would rather a thousand humans died than one more animal of a critically endangered species."

How should we evaluate such claims? The Bible has lots to say in its first chapter. We note that animals precede humans in the Genesis account and yet it is only humans whom God makes in his image, blesses and instructs to "rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground". We are invested with a dignity (and indeed worth) that transcends that of other living creatures. Animals and humans aren't equal if the job of being sovereign over them is given solely to humans. The second chapter of Genesis is also helpful. God exhorts Adam to "work and take care" of the garden. When Adam names all the other creatures and no "suitable helper" can be found, the Lord creates Eve, another human being.

How does this impact our boy and the gorilla? The fact that the silverback's natural habitat is being destroyed and his species endangered tells us something about our fallen world. What the angry online commenters get right is that Harambe is valuable. What they get wrong is how they view the boy involved.

When we find a human endangered by an animal we should naturally preference the safety of the person (in this case a child). We do so not because killing animals provides any joy, or that animals are worthless, but rather that in a terrible choice between an image bearer in danger and a creature there is only one choice to make. It's the human every time.

I hope that this young man, having had his life spared, grows up with a heartfelt desire to care for God's creatures and becomes a passionate advocate for an endangered silverback population.

Thankfulness is, after all, profoundly human.

Stuart Starr leads the team at NewLife Church at Oran Park and blogs at [newlifelived.com](http://newlifelived.com)