

FEBRUARY  
2017

# Southern CROSS

THE NEWS MAGAZINE FOR SYDNEY ANGLICANS



## Can you care for us?

THE CHALLENGES AND REWARDS OF FOSTERING



Peter Jensen on good preaching



The hypocritical chaplain

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Fostering kids is a step in faith for the Todds. 11  
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“

Many churches are already responding to the needs of refugees... and many others have great ideas for new ministries.

”

Margo Leach  
Sydney News



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## Chinese ministry booms

Planting and growth: the Rev Canon David Wong.

A SPECIAL CONSULTANT HAS BEEN APPOINTED AS THE RAPID GROWTH OF CHINESE MINISTRIES continues in the Sydney Diocese.

Bishop Ivan Lee has appointed the Rev David Wong, rector of Granville, as a Canon of St John's Cathedral, Parramatta with special responsibilities for Chinese church planting in the Diocese.

"David has always had a heart for church planting – having planted 10 churches in Malaysia before arriving in Australia and assisting in starting three new Chinese ministries here in Sydney," Bishop Lee says.

"He approached me about how he could be more formally involved in church planting in the Diocese and I'm delighted that he will now be able to do this part-time while remaining rector of Granville."

Bishop Lee says Evangelism and New Churches (ENC) director the Rev Phil Wheeler and Bishop Peter Lin – who chairs the Archbishop's Chinese Advisory Board – were also involved in the appointment.

Says Bishop Lin: "The numbers of people migrating from China are rapidly increasing and Mandarin is now the second-most spoken language in Sydney after English."

Canon Wong will also be ENC's Chinese Ministry Consultant – a position funded entirely by donations.

"David's role will be to plant, grow and strengthen Chinese-speaking congregations and ministries throughout the Diocese," Bishop Lin said.

"These new congregations and ministries will start alongside English-speaking ministries, whether it's a fresh church plant or it becomes part of an established English-speaking church."

## Anglican Oz Day honours

THE VICE-CHANCELLOR OF THE UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY, A PROMINENT FUNDRAISER AND THE organiser of an annual memorial service for the bereaved are among Sydney Anglicans in the Australia Day Honours list.

Vice-chancellor and clergyman the Rev Dr Michael Spence (top right) was made a Companion in the General Division of the Order of Australia (AC) for services to the tertiary sector and to the Anglican Church.

Several other prominent Anglicans were named in the 958 awards approved by the Governor-General and Chancellor of the Order of Australia, Sir Peter Cosgrove.

"We are fortunate as a community to have so many outstanding people willing to dedicate themselves to the betterment of our nation and it is only fitting that they have been recognised through the Australian Honours system," the Governor-General said. "To all recipients I offer my deepest congratulations, admiration and respect for your contribution to our nation."

Other Anglican recipients were given the Medal of the Order Of Australia (OAM).

They include the rector of Pymble, the Rev Dr Roger Chilton (second right), honoured for service to the Anglican Church of Australia and the community. In addition to his parish work Dr Chilton has also held senior roles on the board of the Bible Society.

Dr Allan Fife (third right) of Kirribilli was honoured for services to aged welfare, business and the property sector. He was a board member of Anglican Retirement Villages for 10 years before serving as chairman from 2008 to 2014.

Two members of St Mark's, Darling Point were honoured with Order of Australian medals. Alicia Watson (bottom right), who has raised funds and served extensively on diocesan committees, was named on the list for service to the community through church and fundraising bodies.

Ms Watson is the Archbishop's appointee on the council of Macarthur Anglican School and a former council member of St Catherine's School in Waverley.

She has also served on Synod, on diocesan committees and councils including Anglicare, and in her own parish as warden, nominator, parish council and choir member. Ms Watson is currently a consultant to the Archbishop's New Churches for New Communities.

Fellow parishioner Charles Wade, a member of St Mark's since the 1940s, was honoured for service to the community through a range of volunteer roles.

Mrs Helen Miller of St James', Turramurra was given an OAM for service to veterans and their families, while Mrs Patricia Spooner of North Turramurra was named for service to the community through volunteer roles – including at the Opportunity Shop of St John's, Gordon.

Ronald Dryburgh, a member of Albion Park Anglican Church where he has served as a warden and parish councillor, was honoured for service to the community. Margaret McMahon, a Sunday school teacher at St Thomas', Moorebank since 1969 and a Scripture teacher in local schools since 1978, was named for service to community health.

The founder of a significant ministry to the bereaved, Lynnette Molan, was awarded an OAM for service to the community, particularly to those mourning the loss of a child.

Mrs Molan is the organiser of an Annual Service of Remembrance for children who have died or are missing, which began at St Andrew's Cathedral and has been hosted at St Matthew's, West Pennant Hills since 1995. She has also been a member of the pastoral care team at St Matthew's for many years.



## Leaders to "work together"

ARCHBISHOP GLENN DAVIES AND THE BISHOP OF WESTERN SYDNEY, IVAN LEE, HAVE APPEARED in videos to promote the major push to buy land and build churches in new and growing areas of the Diocese.

The joint efforts of the Mission Property Committee (MPC) – which scouts for and buys land – and New Churches for New Communities (NCNC) – which raises funds for buildings and facilities – have been commended by both leaders in these videos.

"Over the years we purchased a number of properties and we have five vacant blocks at the moment and plans to build churches on those five blocks," Archbishop Davies said, highlighting areas at Leppington, Riverstone, Marsden Park and Stanhope Gardens (the latter of which is the first major project for NCNC).

The executive director of NCNC, Glenn Gardner (left), has appealed to parish councils in established areas to consider including NCNC in their giving to outside causes.

"If 100 parishes were able to give \$5000 over the course of this year, half a million dollars would go towards providing these emerging congregations with ministry facilities designed to help them connect with the communities growing around them," he says.

More than \$2 million has already been raised for the Stanhope Gardens ministry centre and construction is scheduled to commence mid-way through this year.

"The [land acquisition] sites are on the edge of Sydney, on the growing edge... predominantly to the southwest and south," says Geoff Kyngdon, chair of the Mission Property Committee. "That's

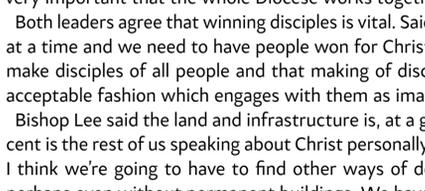
where the redevelopment is taking place, that's where the farms are being cut up and where the new suburbs are being rapidly developed."

The group is also investigating land acquisitions (to be funded by the parish levy) at Box Hill, North Bringelly/Badgerys Creek, West Dapto and Wilton Junction.

Said Bishop Lee: "It is important to get in early because once the houses are up, we believe the price of land or even the availability would be prohibitive. We need to act now – almost yesterday, really. It is very important that the whole Diocese works together."

Both leaders agree that winning disciples is vital. Said Dr Davies: "The kingdom of God grows one person at a time and we need to have people won for Christ. The Great Commission that Jesus gave us was to make disciples of all people and that making of disciples is to bring the gospel to them in a winsome, acceptable fashion which engages with them as image bearers of the living God."

Bishop Lee said the land and infrastructure is, at a guess, "10 per cent of the mission... the other 90 per cent is the rest of us speaking about Christ personally in our lives [and] developing new models of church. I think we're going to have to find other ways of doing church with different kinds of infrastructure, perhaps even without permanent buildings. We have also got to find ways of building a commitment in every believer to want to share their faith."



## Grants for refugee ministry

CHURCHES LOOKING TO SET UP OR GROW THEIR MINISTRY TO REFUGEES FLEEING THE SYRIAN and Iraqi conflicts will be able to apply for small grants from \$1000-\$5000 as part of the Anglican Agencies Syrian Refugee Response.

The refugee response is a consortia of Anglican agencies, led by Anglicare, which are seeking to respond to the needs of refugees in greater Sydney following the six-month period of government resettlement support.

Anglican Deaconess Ministries (ADM), as a member of the consortia, will be releasing a total of \$50,000 in small grants for churches in the Diocese.

"A key component of the Syrian Refugee Response is the involvement of church congregations within the Sydney Diocese caring for refugees from the Syrian and Iraqi conflicts," says Margo Leach, director of ADM's mercy and justice ministries.

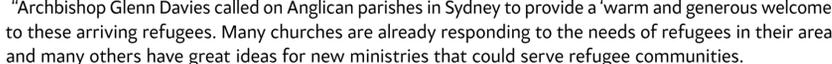
"Archbishop Glenn Davies called on Anglican parishes in Sydney to provide a 'warm and generous welcome' to these arriving refugees. Many churches are already responding to the needs of refugees in their area and many others have great ideas for new ministries that could serve refugee communities.

"Through this small grant funding from ADM, the Syrian Refugee Response is seeking to enable community-based, church-led responses to meet refugee needs.

"Churches are encouraged to develop their ministries and, in so doing, welcome and extend God's love to refugees."

Individual applications will be assessed and grants awarded based on how the ministry proposes to meet demonstrated refugee need; the expected impact of the proposed activity; the level of congregational involvement; the likely level of ongoing sustainability of the ministry; and the proposed use of grant funds.

Applications close on February 19. For more information see ADM's mercy and justice page at [www.deaconessministries.org.au/mercy-justice](http://www.deaconessministries.org.au/mercy-justice). Grant application forms are available on the Anglicare website at [www.anglicare.org.au/syrian-refugee-response](http://www.anglicare.org.au/syrian-refugee-response)



## Hub of creativity

MENTOR TIME: graphic designer Toby Knights shows a student the work he's doing.

A NEW CREATIVITY HUB AT ST ANDREW'S CATHEDRAL SCHOOL IS CONNECTING STUDENTS WITH professionals and how they do their day-to-day work.

The idea began as an initiative to give students more connection with the workplace by having creatives work at the school to give them closer, longer-term contact with people who work in creative industries.

"Increasingly we've started thinking about what it means to bring the world of the city and of work into the school, rather than just going outside the school into the city," says Richard Ford, the deputy head of learning and teaching at St Andrew's.

"Working as a creative, and the whole creative process itself, can often be frustrating or difficult to navigate in the real world. To be able to have long insight into the work that creatives are doing when you're still at school, through actual conversation and long-term exposure to that kind of work, will hopefully give students an understanding that other peers just wouldn't get – something that will help them into the future."

The arrangement benefits creatives by offering them a central location to conduct their work in, but asks them to share some of their time with students during the day, showing them how they go about their work and essentially being an informal professional mentor.

Toby Knights, a member of St Barnabas', Broadway who is a professional graphic designer, chats to students informally about his work and is also involved in the school's MakerSpace and Digital Art Club.

"I'm trained as a designer and as a youth minister," he says. "So at the most basic level I'm asked to have an opportunity to use both at the same time. I'm also excited to be working in an environment where I get to regularly share my love of, and skills in, design with the students and staff."

While Mr Knights is the first person to set up shop in the hub, the plan is to grow the number and kind of creatives using the space.

"We're a little looser, more contemporary in our understanding of creativity," Mr Ford says.

"Obviously that includes things like graphic design, visual arts and other traditional creative arts, but also things like start-ups working on creative solutions to problems in society, or coding for the web or other applications. The focus is on people creating new things and the kinds of processes that go into doing that."

At this stage the hub is based in the school library on the ground floor of St Andrew's House with access day and night for those who work there. However, Mr Ford says there are plans to redevelop part of that building, including the hub, to be ready as early as the first half of this year.

"The hope is that the space will, in due course, accommodate perhaps four to six people," he says, "and the diversity there will not only enrich the school and the students but perhaps also each other through being able to use a shared space with other like-minded creatives."

"It's very much something that we aim to make mutually worthwhile for everyone involved."



# Ready to serve



Chat time: the Rev Malcolm Richards (far right) interviews new missionaries Kylie Zietsch (far left) and Karen and Kevin Flanagan at Summer School. PHOTO: Aidan Williams

A CALL TO SERVICE FROM THE PODIUM OF CMS SUMMER SCHOOL IN KATOOMBA HAS BEEN answered, with 18 new missionaries set to go overseas this year under the banner of CMS NSW & ACT.

A few years ago CMS staff spoke at Summer School of the need for more Christians to offer for missionary service, asking its members to pray for more workers, as well as to consider going themselves. And the fruit of this call and prayer is now evident.

"God is doing something and we shouldn't be surprised, should we?" said the general secretary of CMS NSW & ACT, the Rev Malcolm Richards, at a Summer School morning session last month.

"Over the past year the number of inquirers and new missionaries has increased greatly. Eighteen people are going out on the field this year, and next year basically the same number of people will be going out on location. And there are more coming!"

Mr Richards spoke of God's faithfulness in fulfilling his biblical promise to create a people for himself from every tribe, nation and tongue.

"God is doing fantastic work all around the world to establish his kingdom through the proclamation of his gospel, and we've already seen how he's calling long-term missionaries to work alongside churches around the world," he said.

Speaking afterwards to *Southern Cross*, Mr Richards said CMS staff had spent some time considering what had led to this latest increase in people offering for missionary service, and they believed an answer to calls from the podium was just one factor.

"We've got good churches, good university groups – CBS at the University of NSW and Sydney's EU in particular are really emphasising global mission – and the National Training Event is also encouraging young people in that direction," he said.

"We also have a very good relationship with SMBC and Moore College, and all this together seems to be adding up to a really good flow of people coming to our door. It's very exciting."

But while Mr Richards rejoiced in having more people to send out across the globe under the CMS banner he underscored the fact that, without practical, ongoing support from back home, the gospel work our missionaries do will not be able to flourish.

"God also calls long-term supporters," he said, "and if the work of our faithful God is going to go forward, he also calls faithful men and women here in Australia to pray and care and give for these missionaries.

"It's God who raises up the workers for his harvest. It's our job to catch up to what God is already doing so we can keep these people out on location long term."

# Indigenous worker for BCA



THE REV NEVILLE NADEN HAS RECENTLY TAKEN ON A NEW ROLE AT BUSH CHURCH AID, NOW serving full-time as an indigenous ministry officer.

The role sees Mr Naden and his wife Kathie (above), who had previously served as BCA workers with the Living Desert Indigenous Church in Broken Hill, taking a more wide-ranging brief to train and support regional indigenous ministries.

"BCA does a lot of work with indigenous people already in rural areas and remote communities," Mr Naden says. "I think the idea behind this new role was really to have someone that could, in particular, walk alongside their field staff and support them in their work.

"I'm not an expert in any shape or form, but if we can help BCA field staff to contextualise their ministry in indigenous communities and encourage Aboriginal people on the ground to better understand their faith, then that's what we want to do."

The new position, which will commence in March, will see the Nadens head to Dubbo as a base of operations, but will likely see Mr Naden involved in a number of different areas as the need arises.

One important aspect of the new role will be identifying gaps in theological training among indigenous leaders in rural areas and finding ways to address this. Mr Naden says Nungalinga and Wontulp-Bi-Buya colleges are available in the north of Australia, but there are not as many options for indigenous training further south, outside of the big centres.

"Our people learn best living in community amongst themselves," he says.

"I studied at Moore College but I think the best time of learning for me was at Bimbadeen College [operated by the Aboriginal Evangelical Fellowship near Cootamundra], because we not only received information but also thought together and struggled together. One of our hopes is perhaps to explore getting that up and running again as a residential college in the future, but we'll see what happens."

Mr Naden's new position will not affect his other role as the chairman of the Aboriginal Evangelical Fellowship, which he has held for five years.

"The idea of the AEF is to bring Aboriginal people together across denominations for fellowship while still remaining in their own denominations," he says. "Mark [Short, the national director] has been keen for me to keep working with AEF while I'm working with BCA and help grow Aboriginal leadership through that."

# Adelaide elects new Archbishop

THE REGISTRAR OF THE DIOCESE OF BRISBANE, BISHOP Geoffrey Smith, will be installed as Archbishop of Adelaide in April.

Bishop Smith (right), 57, was chosen at a special Synod in December to replace Dr Jeffrey Driver, who retired last August after 11 years as Archbishop of Adelaide. Dr Driver steered the Diocese through difficult times, having taken over from Archbishop Ian George, who was forced to resign in 2004 in the wake of a sex abuse scandal.

Bishop Smith has previously been involved in ministry in Papua New Guinea and was the national director of the Anglican Board of Mission before becoming Bishop of the Southern Region in Brisbane.

"The days since I was elected to be the next Archbishop of Adelaide have been something of a blur as Lynn and I have begun to come to terms with the news and the impact this has for our lives," Bishop Smith said in his Christmas message to the Diocese.

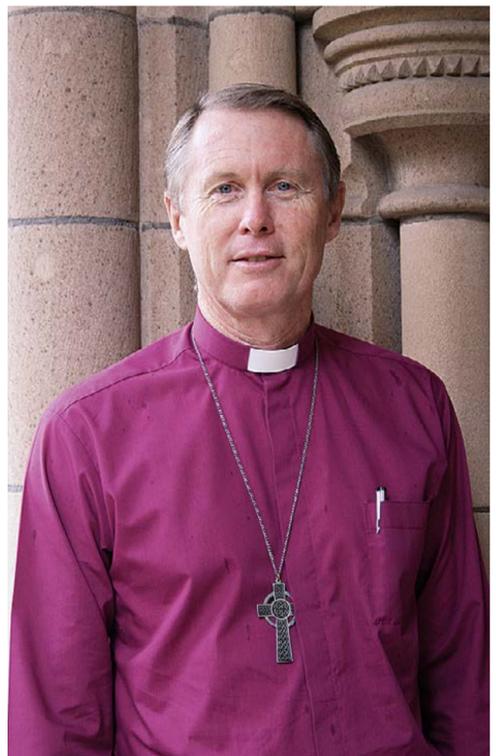
"We have received many wonderful messages of welcome and support from people in Adelaide and are greatly encouraged both by that support and the reports we have of the really generous and gracious spirit of the election Synod... the election was a clear calling of God to Adelaide and so we will come full of expectation of what the Lord has in store."

Bishop Smith expects to move to Adelaide in Easter week and an installation will take place on April 28 in St Peter's Cathedral.

"I'm going to be very focused on helping our parishes to be healthy, as well as encouraging the Anglican schools," the Archbishop-elect told local media. He also cited multicultural ministry as an area of attention, having been involved in work with the Sudanese community in Brisbane.

"We are grateful to God for this incredible opportunity to serve," he said.

"The God who calls is faithful and we seek to trust him as he works out his missional purpose through all of us in the Diocese of Adelaide in the years ahead."



# The call to come

"The battle for the Christian soul of Tanzania and Africa is on.": Bishop Mwita Akiri addresses the crowd at CMS Summer School.

JUDY ADAMSON

A VISITING TANZANIAN BISHOP HAS MADE AN IMPASSIONED PLEA FOR MORE WORKERS TO COME and strengthen the gospel work in his diocese – and his nation.

Speaking at CMS Summer School in Katoomba last month Bishop Mwita Akiri, who leads the Diocese of Tarime near the Kenyan border, talked of the Great Commission and observed that Australians in the 19<sup>th</sup> century "heard those words of Jesus very clearly... that you shall be my witnesses to the ends of the earth.

"The way we hear those words today is different, I guess," he added. "It's very hard for us to consider going to other parts of the world."

Yet Bishop Akiri asked nevertheless – boldly suggesting many new missionaries could be raised up from the assembled company. "My contract with you is 200 new missionaries by the end of the year going to the ends of the earth!" he said.

He explained the main needs were in theological education and preparation for ministry, breaking it down into two levels: first, the education every Christian needed to be a disciple of Jesus and second, the theological training required to equip people for specialised ordained or lay ministry.

Intensive evangelisation and church planting in Tanzania has created many converts, but what is not happening as quickly is "teaching those those who come to Christ to obey what Jesus commanded them". As a result, he said, the teaching and discipling is "not good", there is little pastoral care, and so "very few disciples of Jesus".

Rapid urbanisation and the spread of smart phones has made the need for youth disciplers particularly urgent. The huge number of female converts and the children they bring with them to church has added to these needs.

The women, although believers, often live in fear of witchcraft, have poor health and a number of "empowerment problems", while their children are "a forgotten lot" in many churches – simply sitting with the adults, clapping along during the songs and "not being taught anything about Jesus". They all need guidance, teaching and discipling.

In terms of specialised theological education Bishop Akiri said that in his small diocese alone, 23 new congregations had been planted in the past few years, almost doubling the number of his parishes. Some of the pastors of these new congregations have theological training, but others have none – "so you have the blind man leading blind people... I can't wait to send these people to train at a theological college!" he said.

However, he also spoke of the theologically liberal training offered at a number of colleges in Tanzania and overseas, saying students came back "with false doctrine and a liberal agenda". He begged CMS and its members to send evangelists and theological educators to his country.

"The future of biblical Christianity is at stake in Tanzania and in Africa," he said. "The battle for the Christian soul of Tanzania and Africa is on. Send us your best generals in this fight... Please consider offering to come to Tanzania to help us."

## Ovey a gospel "gift of God"

TRIBUTES HAVE POURED IN FOR LEADING theological educator the Rev Dr Mike Ovey, who died last month at the age of 58.

Dr Ovey (right) was principal of Oak Hill College, one of the largest theological seminaries in the UK. He was also a leading figure among British evangelicals, a prominent contributor to the Global Anglican Future Conference (GAFCON) and a frequent visitor to Australia. Dr Ovey collapsed and died at his home on January 7 and is survived by his wife and three children.

After graduating in law from Oxford, he was a parliamentary legislative draftsman before training for the ministry at Ridley Hall in Cambridge. Early in his ministry, Dr Ovey taught at Moore College (1995-98) before returning to the UK to join the Oak Hill faculty.

The then principal of Moore, Dr Peter Jensen, said Dr Ovey "made a deep impression as a godly man and a lively and effective teacher. During the years that followed both at Moore and Oak Hill, he developed into a first-class theological thinker and leader. His contribution to the cause of Christ, not least in the fellowship of GAFCON, was profound. He showed judgement based on learning, humility like his Saviour and a courage born of faith."

On learning of Dr Ovey's death the current principal at Moore College, the Rev Dr Mark Thompson, flew to England to attend his funeral. "Mike's courage, clarity and theological acuity were extraordinary," Dr Thompson said. "His determination, insight and grace under pressure – sometimes astonishing pressure – gave hope to many suffering at the hands of those who should have been caring for them. He was a wonderful gift of God to us."

Archbishop Davies described Dr Ovey as "a gifted student of God's word whose ability to convey the truths of Holy Scripture and their contemporary application was outstanding. Mike's scholarly analysis of current trends in philosophy and theology was astute and penetrating, always with a view to strengthening the Christian's understanding of the nature of God's... sovereign rule over us".

Dr Davies said Dr Ovey's presence and counsel would be sorely missed not only at Oak Hill, where he served as principal for a decade, but throughout England and the world.

The Bishop of Maidstone, Rod Thomas, paid similar tribute. "Not only has he been an outstanding principal at Oak Hill but he has given himself unstintingly to the evangelical cause within the Church of England and indeed within the worldwide Anglican Communion.

"His brilliant mind has been greatly used in the service of the gospel. His many friends have frequently relied on his godly advice, knowing that they were turning to someone with insight and theological depth."

A former vice-principal of Oak Hill, the Rev Chris Green, said Dr Ovey's books would be part of his legacy. "Many will regret what stayed unwritten but, as he once said of Peter Jensen, 'His students are his books'. With his influence on a rising generation of evangelical ministers... in the UK and around the world, Mike may prove the most-read Anglican theologian of our day."



## Real feedback

Reg Lobb (Letters, SC, December) recommends “feedback” on sermons. This policy was a feature of my two major parish appointments.

In my last parish of Lugarno each contributor to the service was examined: leader, Scripture readers and preacher. This was eagerly awaited twice each Sunday (over 90 per cent of parishioners were “twicers”).

Two major benefits were a distinct improvement in presentation and an increasing awareness among congregation members of their importance in what should be recognised as two-way traffic between pulpit and pew.

Although I frequently preached for more than 30 minutes, not once do I recall a criticism of sermon length – although on at least one occasion there was a valid criticism on the length of a series.

Once a young female candidate for confirmation hesitatingly queried whether or not I was inclined to give too many Scripture references when one, or perhaps two, might suffice. I took her advice and hope I am still sensitive to what was a very helpful suggestion.

In addition, an occasional written quiz was also circulated to the congregation, which sought personal responses to sermons and what subjects people would like to hear expounded in coming months (as an aside, each week I asked for a score out of 10. One student who had the temerity to allot me 6.5 now occupies a senior position in our Diocese!).

Donald Howard  
Elderslie

## “TRUTHS” AND TRUTH

Jim Longworth in “Sex, lies and me” (Letters, SC, December) lists the litany of lies being told today and their consequences. An area of concern is in our universities. Plato’s philosopher kings have been replaced by a business model where people feel they “cannot fail a full-paying student”.

The material damage done by dispensing with the Kantian moral prerogative is reshaping society’s moral compass. It has led to today’s “post-truth era” that is accepted by an increasing secularisation of society.

Religion has contributed to truth’s slippery dip. The dominance of pulpit orthodoxy has prevented abolishing Bible “truths” that are no longer truths. It has damaged religion’s claim to the truth.

These “truths” have clouded the core truth of the Sermon on the Mount, which challenges today’s post-truth era. A challenge is needed to assert that truth – a challenge sounded by William Blake in his epic poem “Jerusalem”.

Reg Wilding  
Wollongong



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**BEACHING IT, NORTH TO SOUTH**

It's been 13 years since the **Rev Grant Gallant** has made a ministry move. Given that he's been on a "fantastic journey, full of joys and hardships" as an assistant minister at Narrabeen – 11½ of those years heading up the Warriewood Anglican church plant – the question of "Why move now?" seems more than usually relevant.

The work at Warriewood has been hard, but rewarding. Beginning with just a handful of families and reaching out to locals who "obviously loved the beach more than God", the ministry gradually broadened to include a new retirement village and the growing local community.

Mr Gallant says it was "an absolute joy to be part of being used by God for starting this church... seeing the old and the young meeting together, encouraging each other and the wonderful blessing it can be for the young people to hear how committed older Christians have persevered in their lives through their trials. Also for the older people seeing the younger standing up for Jesus."

However, some mature Christian friends had encouraged him to think about whether it was time to move on to another challenge – to see how he could potentially be used elsewhere. So when nominators from St Paul's, South Coogee made contact he was immediately open to the possibility.

"As they spoke about their church and what they were doing I saw it was very similar in some ways to Warriewood Anglican – a small, committed group of Christians seeking to reach their community for Jesus, trying lots of things," Mr Gallant says. "And I got this conviction that they needed someone to lead them and love them, and God laid it on my heart that maybe I could be that person."

"It's a different kind of community in South Coogee... it does excite me to have those various cultures and backgrounds," he adds. We'll be trying to reach all ages but I'm particularly keen to reach families and young people in the area.

"I come with a beautiful wife and five children who are a blessing to me and also to the church, and I think that was something that made the decision to move easier. My kids have grown up in a church plant and are used to being on mission together in a smaller setting... we come as a team, wherever we go!"

Mr Gallant was inducted as rector of South Coogee on February 2.

**BACK TO THE COALFACE**

After a busy decade as CEO of Anglican Youthworks, the **Rev Zac Veron** has decided to return to parish work as rector of St David's, Arncliffe.

"Ten years at the helm of a large diocesan organisation is a good innings," he says. "As I considered the next 10 years I felt that I had energy for one more challenge before I started to think about retiring."

"Looking back over those years – through the good work of my staff and those they equip and provide resources for – we've got 23 per cent more children and youth in our churches than we did a decade ago, which gives me great cause to praise the Lord for what he's done."

Once it was announced last year that Mr Veron planned to move on from Youthworks he received a number of inquiries about potential jobs, and one of these was from Arncliffe.

"They asked if I was happy to chat and I certainly was," he says. "I'm more than ready to get back in the front line and have that regular pastoral, preaching, vision casting, leadership type of role in a parish. Arncliffe is a church that is small but doesn't want to stay small, and wants to make a difference in the world for themselves, their children and the local community with the gospel. I've missed that at Youthworks."

"I love working with people who want to be fed and led and loved and, in turn, love others. I get really excited by zealous Christians who want to be fair dinkum about their faith and want to share it with other people."

In addition to his Youthworks role Mr Veron has also been rector of the far-flung parish of Lord Howe Island for the past decade. He will now become Lord Howe's acting rector "because the Archbishop prefers not to have one person as rector of two parishes at the same time! But on the ground it'll be business as usual".

Mr Veron finishes up at Youthworks in mid-March, and starts at Arncliffe on May 1.



**DIRECTED TO MINCHINBURY**

The **Rev Michael Smith** became the rector of Minchinbury in western Sydney on January 24, after 10 years of ministry at Eastwood – as a student, assistant minister and then senior assistant.

"We're excited about moving to a part of Sydney where there are a lot of people – and a lot of people who need to hear the good news of Jesus!" he says. "Eastwood is a very multicultural suburb and Minchinbury is in a very multicultural part of Sydney, so we're hoping to put some of the things we've learned to good use in Minchinbury."

As Eastwood was the family's "spiritual home" for such a long time, it's not surprising Mr Smith describes leaving as "an emotional and heart-wrenching time".

"These are people we've spent so much time with, who've been in our home and we've been in theirs for so many years," he says. "It feels like leaving home again and it was hard enough the first time!"

However, he adds, their training and experience has been preparing them for leading a parish, and they felt God clearly at work in the nomination process – both in directing their steps and in the links they made with the people from Minchinbury.

"The nomination team were a lovely, relaxed, laid-back group of people that we connected with quite quickly," Mr Smith says. "We thought there was a bond of fellowship created immediately that we could build on."

"Initially we'll just be getting alongside people – there's a great staff team, fully invested and engaged in ministry, and we will build a partnership with them and work out together the direction that God might have for us in the future."

"But we do hope to build upon the church's multicultural ministry... we really have a desire for people of all backgrounds and cultures to come to know Jesus!"



**Gone east**

After eight years as an assistant minister in the parish of Springwood and Winnalee, the **Rev Andrew Schmidt** became the rector of St Jude's, Randwick on December 19.

He describes the parish as a "remarkable place" where the senior ministers tend to stay for a long time, and says moving to that part of Sydney "wasn't something we'd imagined or ever thought we would do".

"It felt like it came from God," he adds. "When the nominators warmed to me and wanted me to be their pastor, I thought, 'Well, perhaps this is what God wants us to do.'"

Mr Schmidt says the nominators saw him in two specific settings – the traditional early Sunday service at Springwood and the contemporary service at Winnalee.

"The nominators saw that I was someone who would be willing to embrace and maintain the liturgical traditions at Randwick at the same time as using expository preaching and outreach in the children's and youth department to grow the church there."

"I just want to do good, prayerful gospel ministry and I think that, under God, that will be effective whether you're in robes or in jeans and a T-shirt. It's those basic disciplines of gospel ministry – preaching Christ publicly from house to house – that is where the growth is. So I'll be applying that to pastoring the existing congregation and praying that more people will join us who will warm to having the gospel proclaimed in a more traditional sort of setting."

Mr Schmidt says his family feels "both excitement and apprehension" about their new life. Having the cricket ground and the beaches close by is a plus, but the greatly increased number of people around them will take some getting used to.

"Randwick Public School is probably three times the size of Winnalee – there are about 150 kids in kindergarten this year!" he says. "So that's a big thing. There's so much going on in the area – the hospital, the university, many schools and many residents, some of whom have deep roots in the area and others who are relatively transient. All of this adds up to plenty of opportunities for gospel work."

**MISSION CONTINUES**

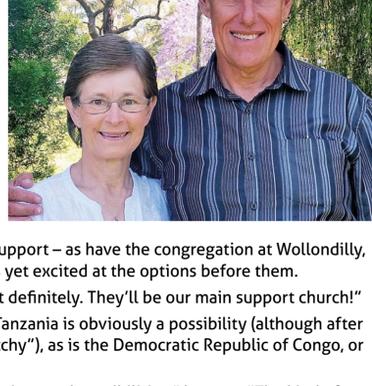
Thirty years after he served with the Church Missionary Society in Tanzania, the **Rev Kevin Flanagan** has left his southwestern Sydney parish of Wollondilly to retrain at St Andrew's Hall for overseas mission work.

"I was at St Andrew's Hall in 1987 as a single guy and Karen and I will be there in 2017!" he says. "We're empty nesters now. The Lord has given us good health and we're able to go, so we'll use this last six to 10 years before 'official' retirement in cross-cultural ministry instead of in parish."

Mr Flanagan says his kids knew a return to the mission field "was going to happen at some stage", especially as Karen Flanagan also had plans in that direction before the couple married and their ministry life took a different path. The children have given them their full support – as have the congregation at Wollondilly, who are saddened by Flanagan's departure after 10 years yet excited at the options before them.

"We'll be their link missionaries," Mr Flanagan says. "Most definitely. They'll be our main support church!" There is no certainty as yet about where they will serve. Tanzania is obviously a possibility (although after 30 years Mr Flanagan jokes that his Swahili is "really scratchy"), as is the Democratic Republic of Congo, or Ethiopia – or a country off the African continent.

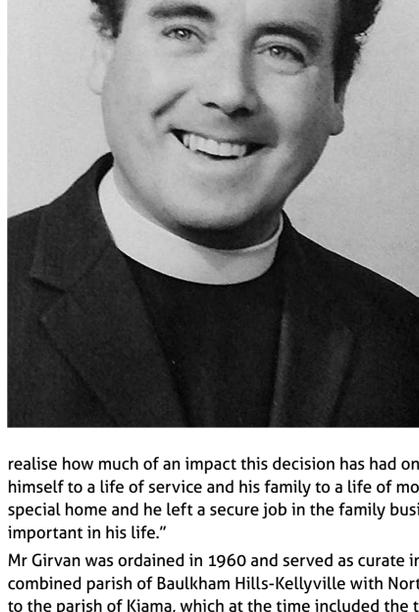
"Once we go to St Andrew's Hall we'll look at all the invitations and possibilities," he says. "The kind of work we'd like to be doing is discipleship and training of church leaders, wherever that happens to be, and also a ministry where Karen can be involved so we can work as a team."



**IN BRIEF**

The **Rev Andrew Robert Mahaffey** died on September 28, 2016.  
 The **Rev Dr Scott Newling** became rector of St Peter's, Watsons Bay on January 25.  
 The **Rev Mee Ping Lau** became rector of Unley in Adelaide on February 1.

**VALE**



The **Rev Canon Wes Girvan** died on November 11, 2016 at Kilsyth in Melbourne, aged 92. Born Wesley David Girvan on January 8, 1924, young Wes Girvan grew up on Sydney's north shore and attended St Andrew's Cathedral School as a chorister before moving to Shore School.

After finishing high school and working in a bank, Mr Girvan spent five years in the army during World War II, serving in Papua New Guinea and Borneo. When he returned to Australia he rejoined the family church, St Paul's, Chatswood, where he married and where his ministries included the church choir and Sunday school teaching (eventually becoming Sunday school superintendent).

Mr Girvan worked in his father's building company, helping to build the new St Paul's church and also St Aidan's, Longueville before he began studies at Moore College. In his eulogy Canon Girvan's son Chris noted that his parents had just finished "building their dream home" on five acres at Dural when his father went to college.

"Wes lived out his faith," Chris Girvan said. "He was a witness for the Lord who called him many, many years ago and cares for him still. He had a sure hope of his future and wanted everyone else he knew to share his hope."

Mr Girvan was ordained in 1960 and served as curate in Manly before becoming rector of the then combined parish of Baulkham Hills-Kellyville with Northmead and North Rocks. In 1967 he was called to the parish of Kiama, which at the time included the town of Gerringong. He was also acting rector of Jamberoo. During his seven years in the parish he was made Canon of St Michael's Cathedral in Wollongong, and senior assistant to the local bishop.

In 1974 he moved slightly further north as rector of Dapto before being called in 1978 to be the secretary of the Bible Society in Victoria. The move to Melbourne was to be permanent, and Canon Girvan headed back into parish in 1984 as rector of St Thomas', Werribee. This was his last parish before official retirement in 1986, although many locums followed across the country in parishes such as Corio, Cottesloe and Broome.



# The hypocritical chaplain?

BEN BOLAND

I NORMALLY SEE ANDREW\* RIDING HIS SCOOTER, BECAUSE HE STRUGGLES TO WALK. WE regularly chat and, occasionally, we have spoken of God and faith, but he has been adamant that God has no place in his life.

A while ago I received a referral informing me that he was really despondent. I caught up with him but he was not keen to open up so we talked about "the weather". A few days later, as I left my desk thinking I would leave work on time for once, Andrew beckoned me over.

In tears, he explained he was in significant pain and that the doctor had told him he would lose the use of his neck and his good arm, consequently leaving him bedbound. He was devastated.

I listened as he spoke of all the situations he had faced in life and then overcome, yet here he was, losing control. He was terrified. The doctor had suggested treatment for the pain but Andrew held no hope of its effectiveness. I suggested he at least try the treatment. Distraught, he repeatedly begged me to provide him with a means of killing himself.

He explained he had already asked other people that day for help to kill himself. He assured me he would not tell anyone so I would not get into trouble. His cognition was crystal clear, his pain palpable. What could I say? I simply listened. He spoke of his work years ago in aged care and his discussions with colleagues about euthanasia being the only solution.

After many tears I asked, "Would you like me to pray that God takes you?" "Oh yes," he answered, so I prayed: "Father, draw Andrew to yourself".

After receiving Andrew's thanks I then went and consulted our clinical staff about how best to care for him. We could all see the attraction death held for him: his situation was dreadful. The staff organised a mental health and palliative care referral, and appropriate care to prevent suicide. His son was informed.

Although I am a passionate opponent of euthanasia, my thoughts were conflicting. His pain was profound, both physically and existentially. From talking to the clinicians I knew that, medically, all hope had gone. Andrew had good cognition, serious pain and a terrible prognosis. I have a science background, so my mind suggested a number of ways to help him kill himself.

Over the next two weeks I continued to pray with him about his request for his death, meanwhile constantly feeling hypocritical for not providing concrete help. I did not fear getting caught for euthanasia nor did my compassion fade. I simply cried inside.

Logically, I know why euthanasia is wrong. Theologically, I am convinced of its evil. Yet the question of why was I not loving Andrew enough to help him haunted me.

Today, as I leave my desk, I see Andrew approaching on his scooter. His first words are, "I don't want to die any more. The pain has stopped." A smile lights up his face.

Will Andrew face more pain? Probably.

Will I endeavour to walk beside him and listen? Yes.

Will Andrew and I again pray "Lord, draw Andrew to yourself"? Yes.

Will Andrew come to know Jesus' love? That is my prayer.

Will I bury Andrew? Probably.

Would euthanasia have actually helped Andrew? No.

Frailty is more than just an ageing body. As I reflect on my experiences with Andrew I am struck by the challenges it presents to him now, to me as one who seeks to support him in God's name, and to all of us as we face the truth of our own frailties.

Society's answer to bodily frailty is euthanasia. Our answer needs to be compassionate care and the love of Christ.

\* Not his real name

*Ben Boland is an aged care chaplain with Anglicare.*

# Saintly status



DR GLENN DAVIES

**N**EW YEARS ARE OFTEN CELEBRATED WITH MUCH JOY – PLUS A LITTLE apprehension – as one prepares to meet the challenges and opportunities that a new calendar year may bring. As the clock strikes midnight on New Year's Eve, kisses are exchanged as a natural expression of joy and celebration, even between strangers.

When the apostle Paul exhorts the saints to greet one another with a "holy kiss" (Romans 16:16; 1 Corinthians 16:20; 2 Corinthians 13:12; 1 Thessalonians 5:26) it is not a reference merely to the accustomed form of greeting in the first century, but is imbued with the sense of holiness that comes from being in relationship with the Lord Jesus and his saints. In three of these Pauline exhortations the peace of God is underscored in the context, which is, a peace whose essence is eternal. Similarly, Peter's exhortation to greet one another with a "kiss of love" is cast in the context of the peace that is enjoyed by all those who are in Christ (1 Peter 5:14).

Of course, greeting everyone who comes to church with a "holy kiss" is not the usual pattern of our assemblies, at least in the Sydney Diocese! So how are we to apply the apostles' mandate? The usual response is to greet one another with a "holy handshake", which is the acceptable cultural norm for many of us. This is good as far as it goes, as long as it provides enough emphasis upon the character of holiness.

References to kissing in the Bible are more frequent than one might imagine. There are different types of kissing. The kiss of intimacy between lovers is referred to in Song of Songs 1:2. However, more frequent references are to the kiss of intimacy between family members or friends: between a father and a son, a daughter and her mother-in-law, a grandfather and his grandchildren, two brothers, or two cousins; or between friends such as David and Jonathan or Paul and the Ephesian elders. All these are genuine expressions of affection and love, without any sense of the erotic (apart from Song of Songs).

On the other hand there are also kisses of manipulation. Here the outward sign of kissing is in fact a deception, such as the kiss of a prostitute (Proverbs 7:13). However, Judas' kiss of betrayal in Gethsemane is the exemplar of such deceitfulness (cf. Proverbs 27:6). Absalom's kisses given to his supplicants and Joab's kiss of Amasa are other examples of the misuse of a kiss to gain advantage and deceive – to turn good into evil.

The third kind of kiss to which the Bible refers is the kiss of homage. Samuel's kiss of Saul upon anointing him king is one such example, as are the kisses involved in pagan worship of calf idols or images of Baal. However, the pre-eminent act of homage with a kiss is revealed in the second psalm:

Serve the Lord with fear and rejoice with trembling.

Kiss the Son lest he be angry...

Blessed are all those who take refuge in him. (Psalm 2:11-12)

The kisses bestowed upon Jesus by the woman who anointed his feet are expressions of such homage.

True disciples of Jesus are those who have "kissed the Son": offered their lives in total surrender to the Lord Jesus in whom alone is found our refuge and our salvation. Once we have kissed the Son, we are able to offer a "holy kiss" to other Christians – members of Jesus' family. This is not just the kiss of friendship or familiarity, it is the greeting that comes from a shared holiness, a shared inheritance, a shared love that is grounded in our being "in Christ".

We dare not treat each other with disdain, let alone deception. Our attitude towards each member of Christ's family ought to be characterised by the holiness of Jesus and his servanthood (Philippians 2:5).

So, as this New Year has begun, let our relationships reflect our status as "saints" – God's holy ones – who have been saved by Christ for holy living and holy loving. For us, 2017 is a year nearer home, a year nearer the return of Christ who will usher in the new heavens and the new earth, which we shall enjoy with all the saints for a wondrous eternity. Therefore greet one another with a holy kiss. <sup>SC</sup>

## 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



# Family friendly

A leap of faith: the Todd family with their foster kids. PHOTO: Sarah Joy Photography

With many children and youth unable to live at home and in desperate need of love and a family, one very significant way Christians can help is by becoming foster carers, writes **TARA SING**.

**UCY\* AND HANNAH\* ARE YOUNG CHILDREN, CREATED IN THE IMAGE OF GOD.**

Both need a stable home, consistent care and unconditional love. And while Lucy enjoys the nurture and security of warm bed, stories read to her by her parents and sleeps without worry, Hannah does not.

There are children like Hannah all around Australia who are struggling with the impact of exposure to domestic violence, parents' substance abuse addiction to alcohol or drugs and are living in unstable homes. Each child's situation is different, but their need for protection and care is the same.

The ministry of foster care – looking after someone else's child in your home without being their legal guardian – can be difficult and messy, but it is an incredible way to share the love of Christ and protect some of society's most vulnerable people. Kids like Hannah are often confused, scared or angry. And with a legal system that is tricky to navigate, having access to loving, supportive and stable foster care families is vital.

"It's to provide a safe, stable care environment," says Mrs Sue Madden, Anglicare's manager and principal officer for foster care and adoptions. "We want for the child to no longer be exposed to the damaging, neglectful, or abusive conditions but for them to experience compassionate care with people who are empathetic. We want that care environment to be somewhere where there can be healing and repair for them."

As of June 30, 2015, there were 43,400 Australian children and young people unable to live with their families. This is often due to abuse and neglect.

And while there is stigma surrounding foster care, Madden says it's important to remember the kids are victims who did not choose their circumstances.

"These children have usually suffered some form of maltreatment or neglect," she says. "There's a lot of bewilderment and confusion for some of these kids. A lot of emotional nurture and care is needed. They have no control over what's going to happen to them."

With so many children displaced, Madden and the team at Anglicare always need more people to help. "We struggle to find carers for children with siblings, with additional needs [physical, medical, behavioural] and for older children, including teenagers."

She believes there are a number of reasons why it is so hard to find carers, in particular the changing demographics and social trends. "There are fewer people with time and space available," she says. "And with the negative image presented by the media about the foster care system, people don't get exposure to the fantastic kids and... wonderful stories and outcomes we celebrate here. There's a general community perception that fostering is very hard and problematic and the needs of the children are too great. But these things can be overcome with support and training."

Anglicare has four main fostering options: long-term, short-term, immediate/crisis care and respite care. Across all these programs Madden is constantly encouraged by the way carers walk the extra mile with the children.

"There is sacrifice involved but this shouldn't be strange for Christians," she says. "These carers don't want attention – they do it because of the value that every child has in God's eyes. Carers have a lasting impact on these kids because they demonstrate on a daily basis that they are lovable and loved."

SC spoke with foster carers who are authorised through NSW FACS, Anglicare and other agencies. Here are some of their stories.

## LONG-TERM CARE

Ten years ago Shani Smith and her family decided to embark on their journey in foster care. After coming to know Christ and after then losing the family business and home, they turned to God for the next chapter of their lives.

"It became clear to our whole family that we were to stay in the area we lived and to look for the orphan in our neighbourhood," she says. "A chance meeting with another foster carer in a bookstore led us to call the office of Family and Community Services [FACS]. We have been fostering respite, short-term and permanent care placements in the 10 years since."

With all four of her biological children grown up, Smith and her husband now have permanent care of four foster children: two sisters aged 13 and 10, and another sister and brother aged seven and five.

"We mainly work with long-term placements now, which means we can invest deeply into the lives of these souls and start to work with the deep-rooted fears and hurts many adults never get to see freedom from," she says. "We work closely with psychologists through our foster care agency, other medical professionals, focus on good nutrition at home and keep daily family life pretty routine. It's the mundane daily routine that most of these children never got that can be the biggest influence on their healing."

Smith says the arrival of any new child into the "established mix" is always tumultuous. "Each child has their own unique personality and combined with the trauma they have experienced, it can make for a hectic household," she says. "Every child is desperate for love and attention – the things they have been denied the most – so it can be very draining in the early stages to ensure they feel your constant [presence] and care. Children from hard backgrounds have seen a lifetime in their short years."

One of the struggles Smith faces is the challenge to divide her attention evenly between her children. "Trying to split myself into multiple pieces to tend to the needs of each child takes more than I can physically give in my human strength," she says. "It forces me to stay very close to my Father's heart and ask his spirit for infilling strength, patience, kindness and compassion when all I want to do is lay down and close my eyes in a quiet room for a few minutes!"

However, because of the care the Smiths have given these children, they have overcome great adversity. This is a constant source of joy for Shani.

"Miss 7 missed over 90 per cent of kindergarten and began Year 1 well behind her peers," she says. "Her early testing showed little or no recognition of the most basic key learning areas. But this gorgeous girl took to schooling like a duck to water and, by the end of the year, had almost caught up to her peers. Her teacher, with tears in his eyes, said at the end-of-year interview, 'This is why I wanted to become a teacher. To help care journey like Miss 7 become all they were born to be!'"

Five-and-a-half years ago the foster care journey began for Linley and Phillip Todd from St Luke's, Liverpool. They now have a family of four children – two biological and two through long-term foster care. "I grew up with an awareness of fostering and God clearly kept bringing it to my attention," Linley Todd says. "God has been planting seeds since my childhood. It was something I discussed with my husband early on, although we decided to wait until our youngest child was in school. We felt their ages wouldn't then mean they could understand what fostering was and how it would affect our family."

It hasn't been an easy journey for the Todds. "There is no sugar coating the failings of the foster care system," she says. "[You may experience] case workers who fail to meet your expectations, the politics and personal agendas and what can sometimes seem like a lack of child focus. You enter the role with rose-coloured glasses in a way, and it's not until you see how politics can play out that you gain wisdom about which situations to advocate for and which to leave in God's hands."

Todd says that choosing to become a carer is a leap of faith – something "definitely not for the faint-hearted".

"It has challenged us in so many ways – ways that we never thought possible," she says. "In our current season, more days are difficult than not. We always come back to the fact that God has our back and did not set us on this path to abandon us but to see the little ones he placed with us grow and flourish, and for them to get to know him as their Lord and Saviour."

Even with the difficulties, the Todds have experienced support from family and friends during their time as carers. "Some were apprehensive because of their own preconceived ideas as to what fostering was," Todd says. "Others were concerned in relation to placements ending and how our hearts would cope with goodbyes."

And while both Linley and Phillip Todd acknowledge that goodbyes are hard, both believe the joys make it worth it.

"Nothing can bring more joy and a smile to your face than to see a child grow and meet milestones," she says. "Sometimes those milestones are hard-fought and require extra effort. It can take patience and time to see results. But our greatest joys have been seeing children we've cared for settle quickly into long-term placements with relatives. We know that adjustment has been made possible by the attachment that they've made with us during their time in our family."

"Yes, our hearts are hurting at the time but we've done what God has called us to do – provide love and care. Our full-time role is done and now it's time to watch from afar."



"Each child has their own unique personality": Shani Smith.



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## MANY W

# Good news about preaching

Amid discussions about sermon length and quality **PETER JENSEN** takes time to listen to what is being preached from a number of diocesan pulpits.

**S**YDNEY'S ANGLICANS TAKE PREACHING PRETTY SERIOUSLY, AS WE SHOULD. THE Lord rules his church by his word and the reading and exposition of the word of God in the midst of the people of God is indispensable to true worship. We, rightly, have high expectations.

It's not surprising, therefore, that we set our standards very high and that there is criticism of our preaching. In a sense this is only right, since preaching is so significant and we all wish to see it improve. Thus, it is good to hear there was a debate about the length of sermons in last year's Synod.

Over the years I have heard (and have given voice to) the following generalisations about "Sydney preaching": the sermons are too long; they are boring; they all finish with the same exhortations (either "You must evangelise" or "You must believe in Jesus"); they are unbiblical; they are unapplied; they are preponderantly on the Pauline Epistles. And so on, and so forth!

Two preliminary observations. First, preaching is an extremely demanding undertaking. It requires very high intellectual, spiritual and personal qualities, not least when the same person is occupying the pulpit for years on end. I would rate it as far harder than lecturing, although of course lecturing requires a strong technical research base. In our critique of preaching let us not underestimate what it involves if it is to be done well. Furthermore, let us not judge the parish preacher by the standards of the "platform preacher", whether we hear them at Katoomba or access them on the internet. It is a different task.

Second, for good or for ill Australians are a critical group. Our American friends are very affirming – so much so that we can feel (from our perspective) there is insincerity and sentimentality. On the other hand, people from outside our culture may think of us as cynical. I am an Aussie as this point – but we must be careful not to so downplay ourselves and others that we become unbalanced. To be instinctively critical can be as worldly as to gush with flattery.

## AN OPPORTUNITY TO LISTEN

In the middle of last year I had an eye operation that left me unable to read for some time. Instead I began to analyse Sydney sermons, since so many churches now record the preacher and have sermons available on their websites. In just a few months I listened to about 40 sermons. I deliberately chose senior ministers from different parts of the Diocese without respect for reputation or expectation.

In the nature of the case this provides only a limited base from which to work. It constitutes only about 15 per cent of the ministers. It tells us nothing about assistants and lay preachers. I was not able to compare and contrast, for example, by checking another denomination or another city or another country.

Furthermore, listening to a sermon is not the same as being physically present, especially bearing in mind that the sermon is both a spiritual and pastoral occasion and there may be things happening unknown except to those who are at hand. I had no idea of numbers; I could only guess at the visuals in play; with only one sermon to go on I had no way of knowing whether the preacher was interesting the first time and exquisitely boring after half a dozen outings.

In short, I would see my comments as a partial and interim report, but not altogether lacking in veracity for all that.

For the sake of analysis I used the time-honoured technique of asking myself about matter, method and manner. I also checked things such as Bible passages used, length, fairness to the text and exhortation.

## WHAT THEN?

Here is what I have found so far:

1. The expository sermon from a passage is by far the most common type of sermon and the passages are preached on consecutively through a biblical book. That is, formally at least, the preachers are not simply letting their own spiritual thoughts loose on the congregation, or preaching moralisms or headline news. Their aim is to let the word of God dwell among the congregation, so that Christ may rule through his own revelation of himself in his word.
2. Overall there were more sermons taken from the Old Testament, the Gospels and Acts than there were Pauline ones. It is likely that Paul will provide much of the instruction in church given the nature of the material, but in my judgement this was not unbalanced. Personally, I think that there should be more doctrinal and ethical sermons, but I would rather the fault to lie on the side of biblical exposition.
3. By far the most usual time for a sermon was between 20 and 30 minutes. A few went between 30 and 40 minutes. I heard none above that range. I know that there are those who argue that sermons should be less than 20 minutes. Perhaps that is right, but it is worth remembering the biblical and spiritual maturity of so many in the congregations means our lay people are very good listeners. But the idea that Sydney sermons are 40 minutes long, as a rule, is a myth. I did hear two 40-minute sermons from "ordinary" parish ministers. Both were worthy of the time. Both addressed significant issues, at depth, in a way that kept my interest. Another, however, preached on a difficult passage (for which he should be praised) but so missed the key points that I wondered if he had studied the passage with the help of a commentary. It was both long and shallow.
4. Although there were a variety of methods of application and exhortation, with some such occurring at the end as the preacher drove home the point of the passage, mostly exhortation was woven through the sermon. Of course some preachers failed to apply completely; others gave little sense of the passage in their attempt to draw out its lessons. But mostly the listener was invited to interact with the passage fruitfully on the way through.
5. It was very rare indeed to hear an exhortation to evangelise or even (and I think that this is a worry) to repent and believe in the Lord Jesus to be saved. If this was the case in years gone by, it is no longer the case. I would say that the theme of most sermons was to exalt the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and to call for obedience to his word. Indeed, I would say that the rush to a Christological reading of every passage needs to be modified (not abandoned), as there can be a failure to see important features of the passage that also need to be attended to.
6. On the whole, the preachers were faithful to the passage, although they may not have followed the line of argument through explicitly.

Some variations were notable. In my opinion, one man preached himself rather than the text; one or two showed exegetical ineptitude; one of the more eloquent preachers managed to preach beside the text rather than from it – that is, he focused on the secondary rather than the primary. But these were variations rather than the norm.

## MANNER

Bear in mind that I was listening, not watching.

Australians, in general, are not rhetoricians and orators. We do not seek out orators to train for ministry and we do not turn ordinands into great speechmakers. I remember being struck by the contrast when I lived in the UK for several years.

But does that make for poor preachers? No doubt we could all develop a more practiced gift for language and show a deeper mastery of structure, drama, silence, variation of tone, imagination or deliberate address to the heart. But you can have all those things and still not be a good preacher. It may be mere technique.

I heard something more precious: the expression of passionate belief. I never heard one person who was dulled by mere routine. Depending on the sermon and the preacher, the words that came to my mind in describing the style of different people were: enthusiastic, lively, deliberate, personal, relational, clear, pastoral, engaging, edifying, pious, folksy, interesting, authoritative, animated, elevated, persuasive, quiet, chatty. Of course, some were less than interesting. But most of the sermons I heard were listenable and not boring, dealing as they do with important topics, passionately believed in.

Mostly, the preachers I heard – for all their variety of skill, interest, manner and method – were aiming to teach the Bible. They clearly saw themselves as "pastor-teachers" and, indeed, effective preaching is an indispensable element of pastoring.

## GOOD NEWS?

There is no doubt in the world that our preaching could improve and that discussion of preaching not based on cynicism or a misapprehension of what can be done is a good thing. I am very pleased that bodies such as Moore College and Cornhill Sydney are constantly challenging us – and I welcome discussion that is constructive and not mere cynicism.

But let us not be negative about what God has mercifully given us. We live in world of growing ignorance about the word of God. The evil one has tempted us and we have denied the word, repudiated it and abandoned it. This has even happened in the churches of the Western world, as the churches have been afflicted by doubt from complacency, academic failure in the seminaries and the power of the secular narrative.

Yet you and I can go to churches where almost certainly the word of God is given a central place and preached on, with depth of belief, Sunday by Sunday. It is not treated as a routine exercise, or merely a curriculum for an exam. Our preachers want us to hear and believe and obey the word and they want us to worship the gracious Lord who has given us his word.

Our churches are clearly shaped by this teaching and they provide an intellectual and spiritual alternative to the dominant secular narrative. Furthermore, the preaching is supplemented by encouragement to personal, family and small group study of Scripture.

Good news! Thank God! Press on! Do better!

# Upon the death of a grandson

PHILLIP JENSEN

W

HEN WE CEASE TO RAGE AGAINST DEATH, WE HAVE GIVEN UP ON LIFE. Death is the horrible reality of our life that screams: "There's something wrong with the world!" We try to hide that scream; silence it with distractions, pretend it's not happening with anti-ageing creams and rationalise its existence with meaningless platitudes. We question the sanity of those who want to die but there is no greater madness than thinking we can avoid death.

There is a statistical normality to death that inoculates us against it. Because everybody dies we lose the qualitative horror of death in the quantitative reality of our mortality. Does not the Bible itself tell us that we only have three score years and 10, or four score if we are strong? To count our years in "scores" sounds so much better, so much gentler, so much more removed than the harshness of the modern, prosaic translations of 70 years or 80.

We expect old people to die – it is the way of the world. Yet when it happens, and happens to somebody we love, there's still grief and sadness; there's still loss and hollowness. It's an appalling challenge to our very humanity. As the poet said: "Any man's death diminishes me". Some part of our world, some part of our selves, has been removed and there is no scratch that will satisfy the itch of the amputated limb.

It's the natural order of things to attend the funerals of the generations before us: our grandparents, our parents, our uncles and our aunts. We come to expect that some of our own generation will die before us: our siblings and school friends, our colleagues and neighbours. We even discuss with our spouse which one of us will die first and what we will do without the love of our life.

But nothing prepares us for the death of our child; nothing prepares us to attend the funeral of our grandchild. That is not the natural order of things. That is not statistically normal in our modern society. That is not part of our plans or hopes, our aspirations or dreams.

He was supposed to attend my funeral not me attend his. He was supposed to carry my coffin not me carry his.

“

**Cancer... [is] not normal, it's not natural, it's not good. It's a sign that the world is not right.**”

”

The death of a grandson is not simply natural and normal; it is tragic and horrible. Some children don't die of natural causes but are killed taking risks while living in dangerous times or places, or following dangerous occupations or hobbies. Still, no parent of such a child will be ready to bury his or her offspring. No grandparent will be anything short of heartbroken by the death of their progeny.

Yet, how can it be "natural causes" when he is only 16? How can we call cancer "natural"? How is a tumour in the heart in any way, shape or form "natural"? Call it obscene, call it horrible, call it ghastly, call it whatever nasty word you like but it's not normal, it's not natural, it's not good. It's a sign that the world is not right. It's something against which we must rage. It's not simply the dissolution of one temporary organism. It's the death of person who loved and was loved.

Such a death is one of the trumpet blasts of the Apocalypse, warning us of the judgement to come and encouraging us to look beyond this world for our understanding of life. God has put eternity in our hearts and we do well to listen to it. For in life we, unlike the animals, are constantly making judgements and choices that reflect our values and morality. But it is from the next world that we gain those values and that sense of morality. For though we have eternity in our hearts, which speaks of values and transcendence, we do not know the meaning of life or of death without God's word.

It is God who has told us that death is the consequence of humanity's rebellious autonomy. It is because we are the creatures who want to run the world without our Creator that we are unworthy to live beyond our creation. Yet God's plans are not limited to us and this world. He sent his Son to die our death, as our representative and substitute, that we may be forgiven. And he raised Jesus to new life to reign as the Lord of heaven and earth; the ruler and judge of this age and the age to come.

My grandson Nathan was, as his name indicated, a gift from God. Fourteen months ago, he and I went fishing down at Port Hacking. As I taught him how to spin for tailor, he told me of his hopes and plans for education, girlfriends, his church youth group, school Bible study and discussed with me whether to be a preacher or a Bible translator.

A couple of weeks later the headaches started and he underwent brain surgery. A couple of months later we learnt of the heart tumour and the likelihood of death. I prayed that God would take my three score and 10 years in place of his less than one score. But it doesn't work like that. There is only one who can die for others and he has already done it on the cross 2000 years ago. Nathan knew that and continued to testify to that truth throughout his remaining months. You can hear Nathan telling you himself on this short video he made from hospital for his school friends (<https://vimeo.com/189887252>).

I know that Nathan is with Jesus in glory for his confidence was not in himself but in his Lord who died for him. Christ had to bear all the horror of our death to bring us eternal life. We may have victory over death in him but we can never accept death as good, normal and acceptable. For when we cease to rage against death we have given up on life itself.

*This article first appeared at [phillipjensen.com](http://phillipjensen.com)*

## DUNDAS MOVES OUT



Dundas-Telopea clergy families, past and present (from left): the Rev Graeme Begbie and his wife Sally; Gwyneth Higginbotham; current rector the Rev Alistair Seabrook and his wife Sarah; the Rev Alan Lukabyo and his wife Ruth; and the Bishop of Western Sydney, the Rt Rev Ivan Lee.

Dundas-Telopea Anglican Church has celebrated time spent in its traditional locations ahead of settling on a new property that will accommodate the parish's recent growth.

The service held in November saw former parishioners, past rectors and local well-wishers attend for a day of remembrance and celebration. The Bishop of the Northern Territory and former Dundas member the Rt Rev Dr Greg Anderson preached, and the event also doubled as a confirmation service presided over by the Bishop of Western Sydney, the Rt Rev Ivan Lee.

"It was a really good way of marking the occasion," says the rector of Dundas-Telopea the Rev Alistair Seabrook. "There was a lot of thanksgiving for the time that we've had here in St Andrew's and there was plenty of celebration of that, but also some sadness about leaving somewhere that has been an important place in many people's lives.

"Part of the service was structured around remembering those sorts of things, but we also had confirmations of some of our young people who will go on to lead our church into the next stage as well." The day also featured a shared celebration lunch, with a jumping castle and face painting for the kids.

The church has already moved out of St Andrew's and, while it has exchanged contracts on the new site, the settlement date is still a few months away. In the interim, the church is meeting at Tara Anglican School on Sundays and using other community buildings during the week.

In removing the church's foundation stone as part of closing down the current buildings, members also discovered a 50-year-old time capsule, creating a minor mystery ahead of the next era in the life of the parish.

"There were members of the congregation today who were wardens at the time the foundation stone was laid and they didn't know it was there," Mr Seabrook says. "It contained a letter from the minister of the time, a church magazine and a five cent piece which would have been new currency at the time, but we're not sure who actually put it in there.

"It was interesting reading how the church then saw itself and how they described themselves: it's almost word for word what we would say we were doing and what we are here for today."

## COMMUNITY EVENT SHOWS SIMPLE LOVE



Involved: locals take part in East Lindfield's refugee event.

St Peter's, East Lindfield recently held an event for the local community in partnership with Simple Love in order to help support refugees from Syria.

Simple Love is a Christian organisation that facilitates grocery donations and drives, among a large number of churches in Sydney. The rector at East Lindfield, the Rev Steven Layson, says his church decided to enhance its partnership with Simple Love this year by running a larger event.

"We've done collections before," Mr Layson says. "We've had people like Coco Knight [head of Simple Love] and Greg Lake [a Christian and former Department of Immigration official] but this time we thought we'd make it a community event, making it larger than just us."

In addition to talks from Mr Layson and Ms Knight the event also featured musical concerts, a puppet show and a barbecue dinner, with local shops, schools and other organisations involved and invited along.

"In terms of people turning up, I think about half were people from outside the church," Mr Layson says. "Some were loosely connected – involved in helping run things or organising things – but it was very much something that had wide community involvement... I didn't count up everything that we collected but we had about four carloads worth of goods for donation, which was great to see."

The goods collected go towards helping new refugees settle in, as well as emergency items for those who have none.

This push is particularly geared to supporting Syrian refugees, part of the special humanitarian intake authorised by the Commonwealth Government. As of mid-January about 75 per cent of the 12,000 intake had arrived in Australia.

Mr Layson says the church's event was so successful as a drive and as a community event that he is contemplating repeating it in the future. "Simple Love do a lot of different collections around the place, and I tend to think doing this kind of event as a once-a-year thing probably works better in terms of donations and community pull than making it too regular," he says.

"It's something we'd definitely like to do again."

# Cool cat

JUDY ADAMSON

## A Street Cat Named Bob

Rated PG

**S**TRANGE AS IT MAY SEEM, GIVEN THE AMOUNT OF INTERNET TRAFFIC DEVOTED to them, there are some people who don't like cats. The remainder of rational humanity, however, would love to have a cat like Bob. A kitty that walks on a lead, sits on your shoulder, takes the bus and train alongside you, wears cool scarves and gives high fives – who wouldn't be charmed by that?

This story has been a magnet for cat lovers ever since newspaper articles first began to appear in 2007 about Bob and his human, James Bowen (played in the film by Luke Treadway). Women started knitting scarves for Bob. People wanted to have their photos taken with the pair, and kids were fascinated by the handsome ginger cat who sat by his busking pal every day, cool as you like and more than happy to be admired.

The thing is, in creating a film out of Bowen and Bob's extraordinary story it's important for people to realise this is not an extended YouTube video to coo over with small children. We're bluntly shown elements of London's seedy side: drug dealers on the streets, medical and social work professionals fighting a (predominantly) losing battle to help addicts get clean and the addicts themselves, desperate for a hit – as well as enough money to buy their next meal. We don't really plumb the depths (hence the PG rating) but we certainly get the idea.

When the cat and his man first meet, Bowen – a recovering heroin addict – has just been given a lifeline off the streets into supported housing. On a methadone program and with barely two cents to rub together from his busking efforts, he's revelling in the unfamiliar joys of a bath and a door to shut out the night when Bob slips through a window into his kitchen. Bowen's life changes from that moment.

Bowen initially tries to brush Bob off after giving him some food, but Bob is having none of it. And after nursing Bob through an infection, the cat stubbornly begins to accompany Bowen every time he goes busking – even jumping on the bus with him. So not only does Bowen now have a companion as he sings, Bob's presence draws a delighted crowd and the money begins to flow.

It's clear from the outset that Bob chooses Bowen. Or, as one member of the public tells him: "Gingers have a will like iron. You've got yourself a friend for life".

In some ways the plot is very slight: man meets cat; cat changes everything... although there are a number of roadblocks in the way, including the man himself.

The fact that it's a true story helps, as it gives the narrative a weight it wouldn't otherwise possess. Real life is rarely black and white, and to be shown a window into the world of someone teetering on the brink of homelessness and drug addiction underscores that. We get to see their history, their struggles, their sorrows.

We also see what life is like on the edge for those regularly ignored or written off by society, and it's heartbreaking. Imagine the stories all those sellers of *The Big Picture* (which Bowen sells at one point) could share, if they were asked. It's worth pondering – and worth checking our hearts to see if we're willing to put ourselves out even that much for the "other" in our midst.

All that said, the film has plenty of cute moments to enjoy. Most of the time the real Bob plays himself, which is a delight to know. Apparently when the ring-in cats were having trouble grasping the shoulder-riding routine, Bob showed them all up, perching straight onto Luke Treadway's shoulder with the ease of a pro.

But there's no danger of a sweetness overload – even though, with Bob's help and a friend's care, Bowen was truly able to restart his life.

Treadway gives a fine performance in a very tricky role. He swans around with Bob like they were made for each other, sings purpose-written songs by Charlie Fink (from English folk rock outfit Noah and the Whale) with aplomb, and balances these expertly with Bowen's street persona and messy family history. Of particular note is the scene where he's coming off methadone, which is excruciating and brilliantly done.

We're not shown everything we could have seen: the language is surprisingly clean and while the misery of scrounging, grinding poverty and homelessness is clearly presented, director Roger Spottiswoode doesn't labour the point. And there is indeed a happy ending. But this is not a cutesy-pie piece of cinema to take your five-year-olds to. Read them the "Bob" kids' books instead. There are a few!

## Living for the Lord

ROB MORTON

### Unshakable: Following Jesus in your teens and beyond

by Fervr



**W**HEN I WAS A TEENAGER I WENT TO A RUGBY-MAD ALL-BOYS SCHOOL. BUT I WAS THE captain of the debating team and liked to do magic tricks. Needless to say, I didn't exactly fit in! And as we all know, fitting in is important for teenagers.

That's why it's no small thing for a teenager to stand up, and stand out, as a Christian. The young person at school who claims Jesus as Lord won't always have an easy time of it. They need help and encouragement.

Enter *Unshakable*, a book made up of articles from fervr.net. It's been put together for teenagers who have made the brave decision to follow Jesus and it considers four broad areas: faith, church, life and future. The short articles/chapters cover everything from "How do I talk to God?" to "Are you ready to start dating?" and "What if I fail my exams?".

Let me tell you three things I liked about *Unshakable* and who I think would get the most from it.

**1.** It's a practical book – full of the gospel.

*Unshakable* does what it aims to do: help teenagers see what the Christian life looks like in the world they are living in. There are plenty of practical suggestions and ideas such as how to start a gospel conversation, how to avoid sexual temptation and what to remember in times of suffering.

But the book is not just filled with lists of things to do. It also points the reader to Jesus and what he has done. Here's a quote from the chapter on fighting against sin:

"You might be a really good fighter and think you can fight the enemy of sin and death on your own. The Bible says that you can't, but Jesus already has. So trust in Jesus your champion!"

**2.** It's a punchy book.

I assume because these chapters started out as blog posts they are short, sharp and to the point. Most of them deal simply with one issue, or answer one question. This makes the book easy to read and easy to dip in and out of. I gave my copy to my 13-year-old, who immediately found and flicked to the chapters that interested her most.

Here's one illustration on sex I found especially memorable:

"How far you can go with your boyfriend/girlfriend is exactly the wrong question to be asking. It's like playing a game of soccer and trying to see how close you can get the ball to your own goal. It's just not what you're supposed to do – you should try to keep the ball as far away as possible."

**3.** It's a book that pushes forward.

At the end of every section there are suggestions for further reading. These range from recommended blog posts right through to some evangelical classics like J.I. Packer's *Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God*. For teenagers who are keen to dig deeper, these reading lists will push them on in the right direction.

Obviously, this book is aimed at teenagers. Anyone in my youth group could read it and benefit from it. But I think there is a second audience for this book: people like me who are involved in ministry to youth.

*Unshakable* gives me some model answers to tricky questions, as well as helpful metaphors and practical suggestions/applications as I aim to teach and encourage our youth to live for the Lord.

*Unshakable* (\$14.95) is available at [fervr.net/store](http://fervr.net/store), [www.cepstore.com.au](http://www.cepstore.com.au) and Koorong.

## Sydney's past 70 years under the microscope

STUART BRAGA

### Phenomenal Sydney

by Marcia Cameron



**T**HIS IS A BOOK THAT NEEDED TO BE WRITTEN. THERE HAVE BEEN SEVERAL HIGHLY CRITICAL views of the Diocese of Sydney written by outsiders and Dr Marcia Cameron sets out, as a Sydney Anglican, to redress the balance. Not all will agree that she has succeeded, but the conscious endeavour is there.

Like all contemporary history her book enters energetically into the issues of the day. Her methodology is to discuss each episcopacy in turn from Mowll to Jensen This gives the book a bias towards central organisation and leads to a concentration on matters of church governance, some of which have obvious theological implications, notably the ministry of women.

Dr Cameron does not shy away from difficult issues such as the short and troubled episcopacy of Archbishop Gough, the dominant role of the Anglican Church League and the sometimes tense relationship between Moore College and diocesan authorities. While her book is at least in part a riposte to polemic, she is prone to engage in polemic herself, especially in the vexed issue of women's ministry. Nevertheless, she steers a course through several other major issues that have seen discussion and division in the 70 years covered by her study.

While Dr Cameron carefully addresses the distinctiveness of the Anglican Diocese of Sydney (hence the somewhat arresting title), there are important questions which could be examined more fully, such as the changing role of jettisoned church music. The late Rev Dr Stuart Cabbage offered some years ago that both had been jettisoned. It is an observation that merits discussion. The reader might ask, "How has Anglican worship changed?" A churchgoer from 1945 would be amazed at these changes and also the differences in the buildings in which we worship.

Some technical matters cannot be overlooked. Many sources, both primary and secondary, are quoted with little evaluation. Two examples: should Ross Border's denunciation of Bishop Barker be included at all? Although the book was published by an American publisher, it should have been possible to use spelling conventions familiar to Australian readers, e.g. "centre" rather than "center". The book is also marred by spelling errors and little slips such as "Pork Hacking" and "Moorehouse" for "Moorhouse". The bibliography, while extensive, could be better organised.

In summary, this book is one view of the way in which the Diocese of Sydney sees itself. In writing it Dr Cameron has done Sydney Christians a service. Her book is part of a discussion that others – including the Rev Dr Bruce Ballantine-Jones, whose book was reviewed in last December's *Southern Cross* – may wish to enter. The recent history of the Diocese is too important and too complex a subject to be ignored, or for any one book to be seen as definitive.

Copies are available at \$43, including postage, from the author at [marciacameron.com](http://marciacameron.com)