

Southern CROSS

THE NEWS MAGAZINE FOR SYDNEY ANGLICANS

MARCH
2017



The Royal Telephone

DOES GOD "CALL" US INTO MINISTRY?

- + Faith v performance
- & Where to now with marriage Bill



COVER

Waiting for "The Call" from above before jumping into full-time ministry? You might need to think again. 10

Sydney News 3

Mission News 4

World News 5

Letters 6

Changes 7

Essay 8

Archbishop Writes 9

Cover Feature 10

Moore is More 11

Events 12

Culture 13

“

We're using something very serious in a fun way... to do something worthwhile.

Rev David Mansfield
Mission News

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Ashbury learns early

Plenty to learn while having fun: one of the young participants in the Early Learning Through Play group.

EARLY LEARNING THROUGH PLAY PROGRAMS ARE STARTING TO EMERGE ACROSS THE DIOCESE, with one program at Ashbury already seeing strong participation within the church and the community. St Matthew's, Ashbury has a long-term playgroup aimed at preschoolers, but a strong desire within the church to better connect and support migrants in the area led last year to them planning and preparing a rebooted playgroup, in partnership with Anglicare, that would achieve that aim.

"We've got a number of people here who have been interested in helping migrants arriving in the area," says the parish's children's minister and group co-ordinator, Annemarie Rivers. "We also had a well-established playgroup that was ready for revitalisation and a new phase of growth, so talking to people at Anglicare brought up the prospect of doing an ELTP, but also pairing it with an ESL program and actually approaching it as a two-part program."

This new group is still quite young – up and running for only a month – but new faces are already joining from outside the church community. A key feature is that while children are engaged with free play and specially designed activities, parents are able to join the church's parallel ESL class. For the last section of a typical morning, the parents and children come together for a Bible lesson and some singing.

"We've designed the program in such a way that ELTP and ESL are linked," Mrs Rivers says. "So, today's theme was 'radies' – we had some box building and painting earlier, and that is the same theme for the ESL class today. The idea is that the parents will have the same words that their kids are learning and they might be able to practice them with their children."

The playgroup's use of Anglicare's ELTP principles means it focuses not just on community building and creating relationships between migrants and church members, but also on actively preparing children for the transition into Australia's school system.

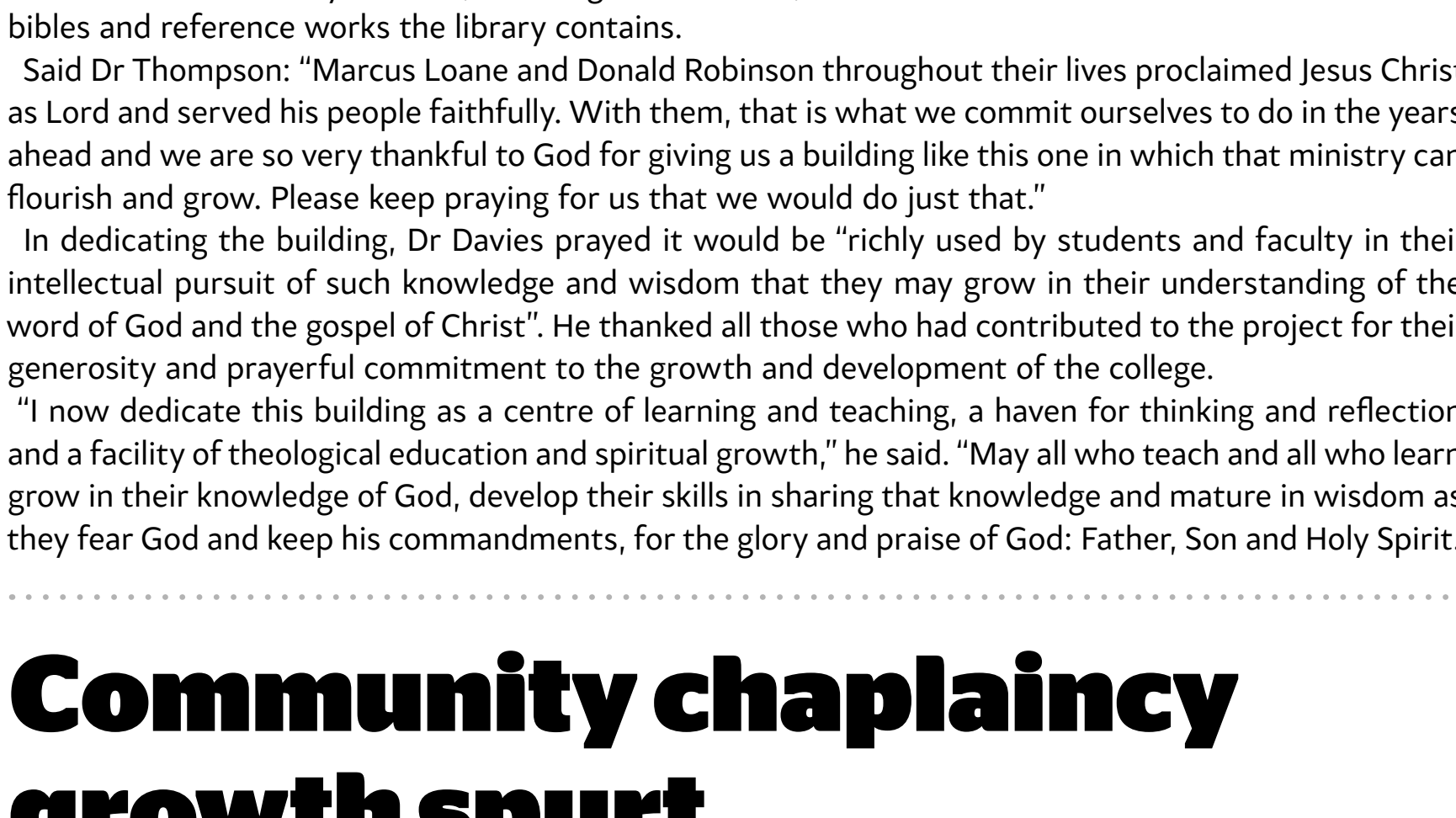
The parish co-ordinator for ELTP at Anglicare, Roberta Perkins, says the approach in working with parishes to develop such programs is very much done on a case-by-case basis.

"This was a case of supporting an existing playgroup to be more migrant friendly and to specifically be cross-cultural in outlook," she says.

"The process was like a consultation and it was important to us to fashion a program that was specific to Ashbury... each parish has its own strengths and goals."

There are currently two ELTP programs in the Diocese with a third due to begin in Term 2. In addition, many churches across the Diocese run similar playgroups, although these don't specifically use Anglicare's ELTP principles.

Moore centre opens



New centre has Moore treasures on view: (from left) Mrs Kathryn Thompson; Mrs Linda Hurley; the Governor of NSW, General the Hon David Hurley; Moore College principal the Rev Dr Mark Thompson and Archbishop Glenn Davies.

AMID RECORD HOT WEATHER NOT SEEN SINCE THE DAYS OF ITS ORIGINAL BENEFACTOR, MOORE Theological College has entered a new era with the opening of its ultra-modern Learning and Teaching Centre.

The \$33 million centre was dedicated by Archbishop Glenn Davies and officially opened by the Governor of NSW, His Excellency General the Honourable David Hurley AC DSC, before hundreds gathered in the main assembly room, Marcus Loane Hall.

The hall is one of two areas named after former Sydney archbishops. The Donald Robinson Library was named after the former vice-principal and later archbishop.

"The completion of this project is a moment for great thanksgiving to God, who has provided for this college at every point," said principal the Rev Dr Mark Thompson. "The college exists to enable men and women to take the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ to all the world. This building will help it to keep doing that for the next century and more. We are grateful to God and to all those who have given so generously to bring us to this day."

Dr Thompson drew attention to the plaque unveiled by Governor Hurley, featuring a verse from 2 Corinthians 4: "For what we preach is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake".

"These words crystallise for us in a wonderful way what we are all about as a college, and what we hope and pray our graduates will be about when they leave us and take up one of the multitude of ministries for which they have been preparing," Dr Thompson told the audience.

The history of the college was on show, including the Treasures of Moore College, housed in new showcases in the library. Visitors, including the Governor, were taken on a tour of the historic documents, bibles and reference works the library contains.

Said Dr Thompson: "Marcus Loane and Donald Robinson throughout their lives proclaimed Jesus Christ as Lord and served his people faithfully. With them, that is what we commit ourselves to do in the years ahead and we are so very thankful to God for giving us a building like this one in which that ministry can flourish and grow. Please keep praying for us that we would do just that."

In dedicating the building, Dr Davies prayed it would be "richly used by students and faculty in their intellectual pursuit of such knowledge and wisdom that they may grow in their understanding of the word of God and the gospel of Christ". He thanked all those who had contributed to the project for their generosity and prayerful commitment to the growth and development of the college.

"I now dedicate this building as a centre of learning and teaching, a haven for thinking and reflection and a facility of theological education and spiritual growth," he said. "May all who teach and all who learn grow in their knowledge of God, develop their skills in sharing that knowledge and mature in wisdom as they fear God and keep his commandments, for the glory and praise of God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit."

Community chaplaincy growth spurt

PLANS ARE UNDERWAY TO RECRUIT A FORCE OF 1000 community chaplains by the year 2020.

The aim is that community chaplains will act as evangelists in every community to either form churches or feed into existing churches.

Already the Diocese has 70 community chaplains deployed in areas as diverse as Muslim evangelism, hospital work and prison chaplaincy as well as working among people from a Catholic background, police, ambulance workers and in sporting clubs.

The inaugural community chaplaincy forum, which was held at St Philip's, Auburn late last year, was attended by church leaders, working chaplains, training providers and many potential chaplains. The Rev Bruce Hall, who chairs the community chaplaincy task force, says those being recruited will be licenced or authorised by the Archbishop under their local supervisor.

"Our target of 1000 community chaplains deployed in the Sydney and Illawarra areas by 2020 requires every chaplain to recruit one or two more a year and every parish to deploy at least four chaplains," Mr Hall says. "We think this is achievable."

Sporting clubs are an area of great opportunity with, currently, 8000 unfilled sports chaplaincy positions across the country.

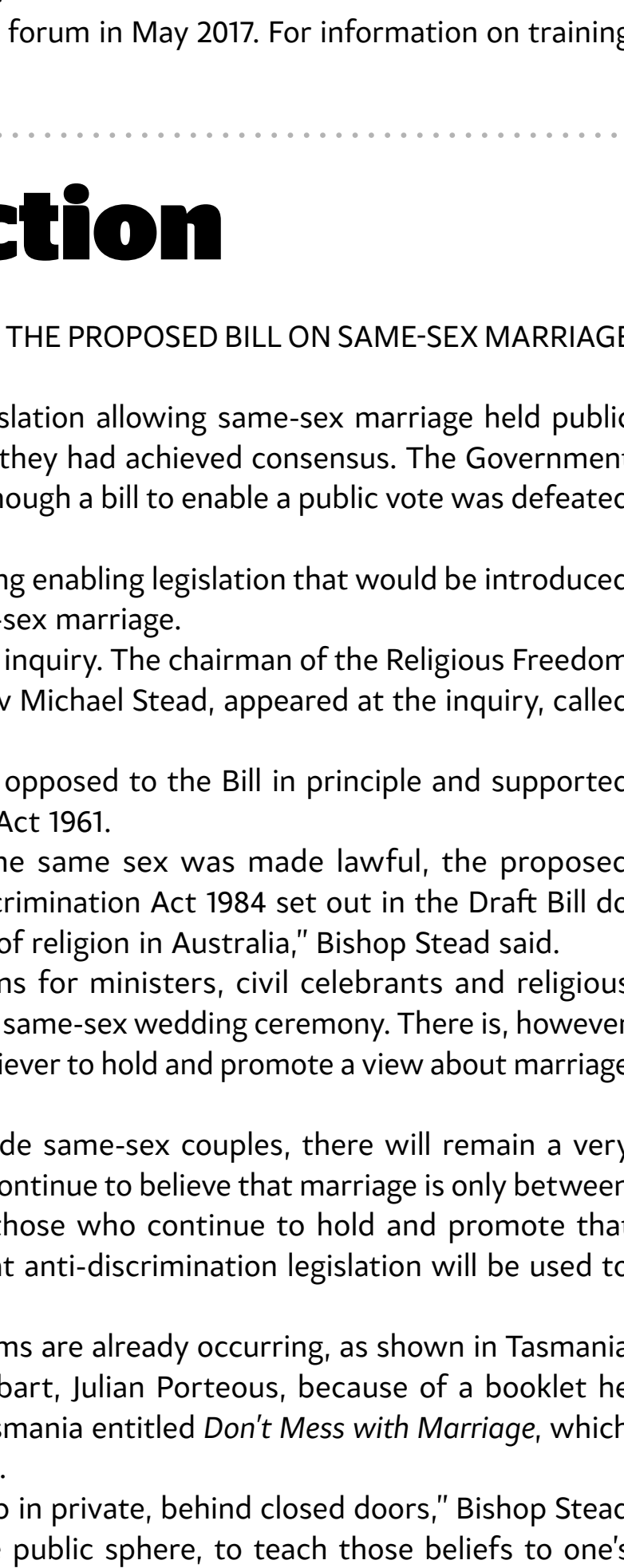
Those chaplains already in place face many demands. Raewyn Elsegood, chaplain to a netball club in Castle Hill, has been asked by Netball NSW to provide a self-esteem course for all young netballers in the state.

Surf Lifesaving club chaplain Mark Gilbert (above) has been promoted on Foxtel as a model for providing pastoral care to young surf lifesavers facing stressful life issues.

"An ideal community chaplain is a faithful Christian man or woman who is able to love a particular people group and communicate with them about Jesus," Mr Hall says.

Other examples include Mel Fung, who started the Jesus Club – an outreach for adults with intellectual disabilities. This now runs in at least nine parishes around Sydney. Another ministry works with women recovering from domestic violence in the Rockdale area.

Mr Hall says the group plans to run another chaplaincy forum in May 2017. For information on training and recruitment see communitychaplaincy.org.au.



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Push for protection

THE DIOCESE OF SYDNEY HAS TOLD A SENATE INQUIRY THE PROPOSED BILL ON SAME-SEX MARRIAGE does not sufficiently protect freedom of religion.

The Senate inquiry into the exposure draft of the legislation allowing same-sex marriage held public hearings in January, and then reported last month that they had achieved consensus. The Government has vowed the issue must be put to a plebiscite first, although a bill to enable a public vote was defeated the first time it was introduced into the Senate.

However, the committee was given the task of examining enabling legislation that would be introduced if a plebiscite were to result in a vote in favour of same-sex marriage.

The Diocese of Sydney made a submission to the public inquiry. The chairman of the Religious Freedom Reference Group, the Bishop of South Sydney the Rt Rev Michael Stead, appeared at the inquiry, called alongside the Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney.

In the submission, Bishop Stead said the Diocese was opposed to the Bill in principle and supported the current legal definition of marriage in the Marriage Act 1961.

"Nonetheless, if marriage between two people of the same sex was made lawful, the proposed amendments to the Marriage Act 1961 and the Sex Discrimination Act 1984 set out in the Draft Bill do not go far enough to ensure the protection of freedom of religion in Australia," Bishop Stead said.

"The proposed amendments are limited to protections for ministers, civil celebrants and religious organisations in relation to the provision of services for a same-sex wedding ceremony. There is, however, no protection for a religious organisation or individual believer to hold and promote a view about marriage in accordance with their beliefs."

"If the legal definition of marriage is changed to include same-sex couples, there will remain a very significant proportion of the Australian population who continue to believe that marriage is only between a man and woman... Without explicit protection for those who continue to hold and promote that marriage is between a man and a woman it is likely that anti-discrimination legislation will be used to silence this point of view in the public sphere."

The Diocese's submission pointed out that such problems are already occurring, as shown in Tasmania by a complaint against the Catholic Archbishop of Hobart, Julian Porteous, because of a booklet he authorised for distribution in Catholic institutions in Tasmania entitled *Don't Mess with Marriage*, which taught that marriage was between a man and a woman.

"Freedom of religion is more than a freedom to worship in private, behind closed doors," Bishop Stead said. "It entails a right to promote those beliefs in the public sphere, to teach those beliefs to one's children, to promote those beliefs to the public arena, and for religious organisations such as schools and hospitals to be shaped by those beliefs, without those beliefs being curtailed by the threat of the withdrawal of public funding. These freedoms are not protected by the proposed exemptions."

The final report, which emerged after the hearing, recommended creating a new category of independent religious celebrants who would be allowed to refuse to marry couples on the basis of the celebrant's religious belief. Ministers of religion would retain their current right to refuse weddings on grounds of sex, sexuality and family status. But civil celebrants would be required to marry any couples that are legally allowed.

Committee chairman, Liberal Senator David Fawcett, agreed that current protections for religious freedom needed strengthening and that the changes were not as simple as people think. "Evidence demonstrated that there are substantial matters of law and individual human rights to be dealt with that extend well beyond the Marriage Act itself," he said.

"If Australia is to remain a plural, tolerant society where different views are valued and legal, legislators must recognise that this change will require careful, simultaneous consideration of a wide range of specialist areas of law, as opposed to the common perception that it involves just a few words in one act of parliament."

Marriage booklets out

MORE THAN 65,000 BOOKLETS DISCUSSING GOD'S PLAN FOR MARRIAGE IN LIGHT OF THE CURRENT push for its redefinition are being distributed to Sydney churches.

The 20-page booklet opens up the question (which is also its title), *What has God joined together? Jesus' good message about marriage for Australia*. The publication outlines the biblical view on marriage and answers some common challenges to that view in the context of the same-sex marriage debate.

"Jesus said that from the beginning marriage has been the result of a man leaving his mother and father, joining to a woman and the two becoming one flesh," Archbishop Davies says in his introduction.

"Once this was obvious for all Australians. Now Australians are hearing voices say that marriage is not about a man and a woman; that gender doesn't matter at all to marriage. A new definition of marriage is being put forward, which claims that it is simply about two people who love each other and want to commit to each other."

The Archbishop has challenged Christians to speak up and Bishop Michael Stead, who chairs the taskforce that produced the booklet, says he hopes it will be used by Christians to prepare themselves to enter the public discussion around this issue.

"There needs to be an intelligent public conversation in Australia about this whole question of marriage," he says. "Although a national plebiscite on this issue was blocked by the Senate, the Government remains committed to its election promise to have a plebiscite, which means that this question will not be decided by a conscience vote in Parliament in the current term."

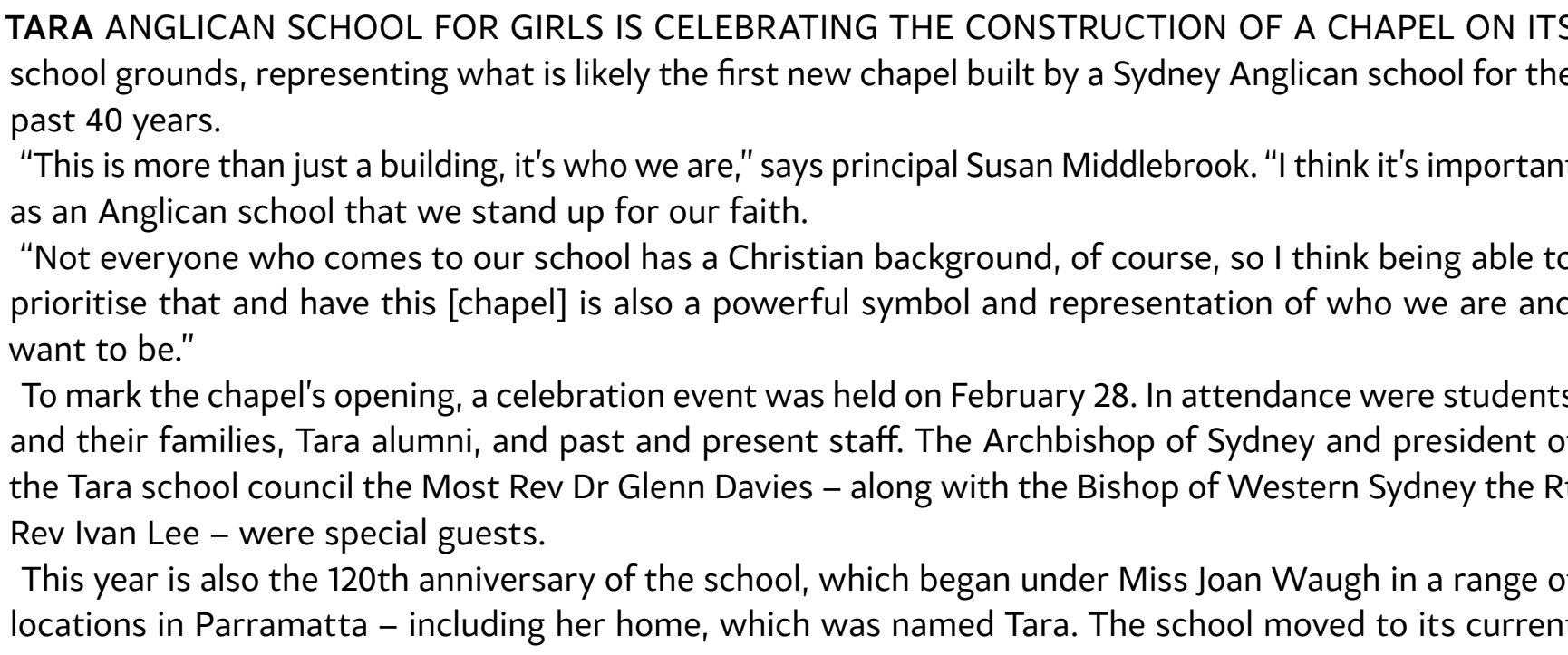
"Either at the next election, or sometime before, we will have to have a debate about the substantive issues, which we really haven't had so far in this country."

Bishop Stead adds that the booklet "provides an opportunity for people to inform themselves and to recognise that there are dimensions to this issue that they haven't heard in the media because they are only getting a very limited story."

"The booklet lays out the issues which need to be explored and shows that there are good reasons not to support same-sex marriage that don't spring from bigotry or hate or fear."

As well as printed copies available from churches, the full text of the booklet and further resources are available online at www.sydneyn Anglicans.net/marriage.

Connect evangelism



Some of the 2000-strong crowd at the Glenmore Park Christmas Carols.

A CHRISTMAS EVANGELISM PUSH IN THE PARISHES OF MULGOA AND GLENMORE PARK, HEADED up by Glenmore Park Evangelist Evangelist Tim Scheuer, is paying ongoing dividends but, focusing on simple doorknocking and gospel-sharing initiatives.

Christmas Connect, as it was first known, began in July last year with church members being trained to start simple gospel conversations and provide invitations to church events – with a particular focus on involving average congregation members, not just the evangelism die-hards.

"Over the weekends we had people as young as four and as old as 83 go out doorknocking," Mr Scheuer says. "It's been key to help the average parishioner feel that this kind of fundamental gospel work is achievable for them."

Fifty members across the two parishes visited about 1000 homes over the two weeks, and also connected with 2000 people at the Glenmore Park carols event that capped off Connect. According to statistics compiled from those visits, while less than 1 per cent of people were already active followers of Christ, more than half were open to conversation, and more than 20 per cent were specifically open to talking more about the gospel.

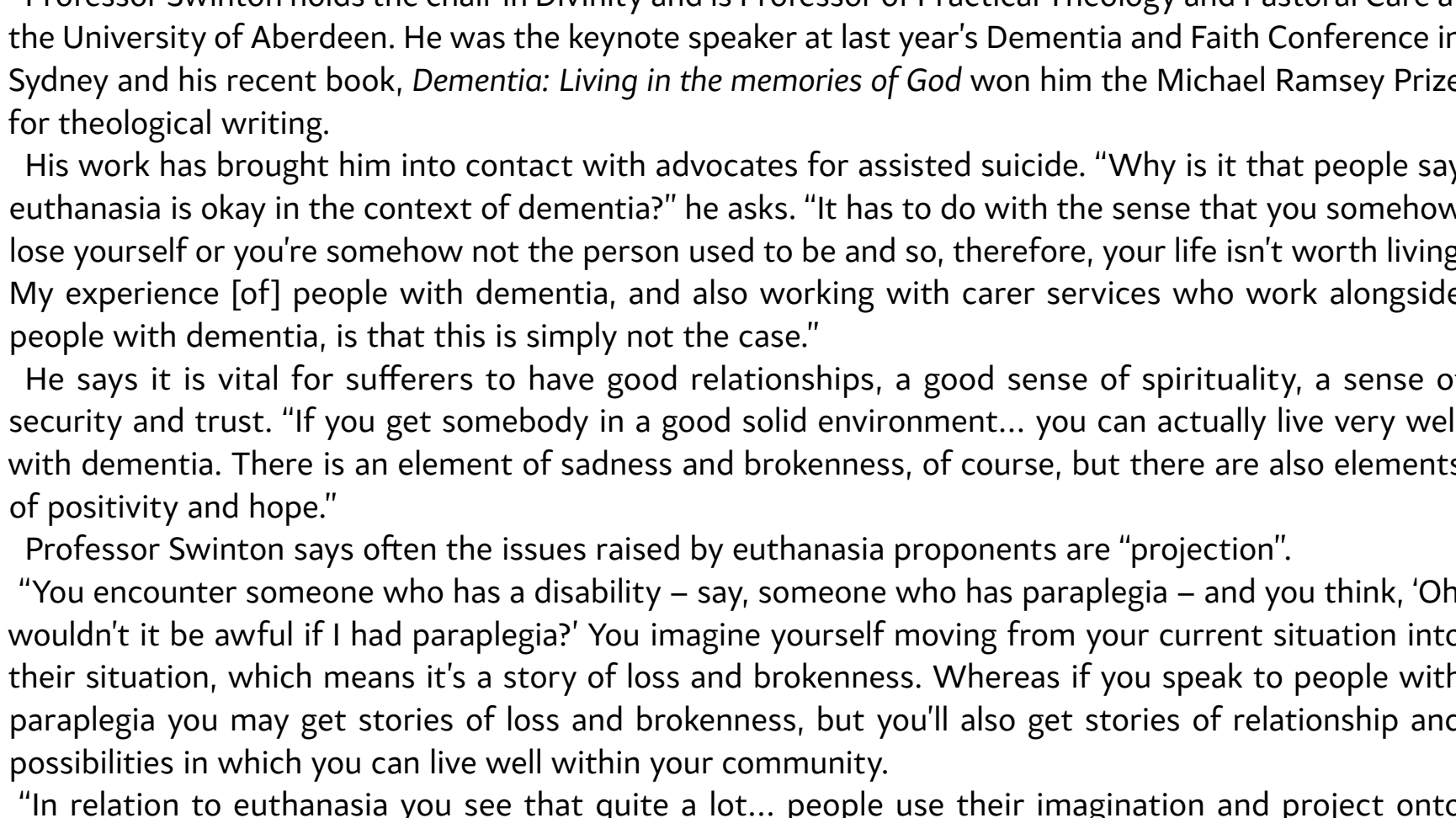
"I've done a lot of doorknocking over the past 10 years in Australia and abroad, and always the response from the people I train to go out is they find people more receptive than they thought," Mr Scheuer says. "Different areas are more receptive, and I find what we've discovered is that we have incredibly receptive communities here."

"We're above the national average with people that tick Christian faiths on the Census and even if they're not active in their faith, they're often receptive."

Several connections attended the church's Christmas services and have already joined small groups. The hope is the next phase of Connect will lead to the creation of more church Discovery groups, creating further potential for new connections in the community.

Following the success of the initiative, the parishes intend to run Connect again during the Easter season in conjunction with a holiday children's program.

Hope after job loss



Christian job-seeking support: Russell Adams (left) with Peter Hawkins.

AN ANGLICAN MAN IS WORKING TO SUPPORT PEOPLE CAST ADRIFT BY RETRENCHMENT – OR loss of a pathway to regular work – within a Christian context.

Russell Adams, a member of Toongabbie Anglican, says he felt compelled to support those at a loss for work to deal without work after his own retrenchment experiences.

"During my career I was retrenched a number of times, or would simply be on a fixed-term contract and at some point not have that renewed," he says.

"Being retrenched was very difficult, particularly the first time. It came out of left field and I felt devalued, betrayed – all types of things. And of course, pragmatically, you then have to find a new job quickly. It was those kinds of experiences that led me to decide, when I retired, to support others who went through these things."

Mr Adams' professional life as a public servant and a manager within a number of social welfare NGOs made him very much aware of the holes people can fall into with long periods between employment. Many are even unaware of where to start in approaching new jobs or being reskilled.

"Often retrenchment can turn into a lack-of-the-draw type of affair – or at least feel that way – and that can be compounded when applying for jobs as well because all sorts of factors go into who gets a job and who doesn't," Mr Adams says. "Many people have little idea about how to build a current resume, or may lack confidence when going for an interview. They might not know where to look or how to get access to job interviews in the first place."

"Given that some research puts underadvertised job rates as high as 80 per cent, that can be a difficult thing to navigate."

Peter Hawkins says the experience of being out of work as a building subcontractor led him to seek out Mr Adams' expertise. This has resulted in work for him with the postal service and the Australian Electoral Commission.

"It was at the point where I was just really looking for anything to tide me over," Mr Hawkins says. "He was very helpful in just helping me with things like cover letters and resumés, looking for different kinds of jobs outside of the sector I had been working in previously."

"He was also good just as a support to talk to and pray with, would follow up and actively help me look for things. It can be hard to have support like that."

For Mr Adams, it has also been critical to bring a Christian context to his work. "As a Christian I felt I wasn't on my own – that God was in control and that other people were praying for me and supporting me," he says. "That was important to me, and so I try to bring a Christian perspective to the work that I do."

Tara unveils new chapel

TARA ANGLICAN SCHOOL FOR GIRLS IS CELEBRATING THE CONSTRUCTION OF A CHAPEL ON ITS school grounds, representing what is likely the first new chapel built by a Sydney Anglican school for the past 40 years.

"This is more than just a building, it's who we are," says principal Susan Middlebrook. "I think it's important as an Anglican school that we stand up for our faith."

"Not everyone who comes to our school has a Christian background, of course, so I think being able to prioritise that and have this [chapel] is also a powerful symbol and representation of who we are and want to be."

To mark the chapel's opening, a celebration event was held on February 28. In attendance were students and their families, Tara alumni, and past and present staff. The Archbishop of Sydney and president of the Anglican Church Council the Most Rev Dr Glenn Davies – along with the Bishop of Western Sydney the Rt Rev Ivan Lee – were special guests.

This year is also the 120th anniversary of the school, which began under Miss Joan Waugh in a range of locations in Parramatta – including her home, which was named Tara. The school moved to its current site on Mason Drive, North Parramatta, in 1958.

"I think it took this long [to build a chapel] because, in a school, there are always demands on your money," Mrs Middlebrook says. "Part of the value of this project is that, even with all these competing priorities, we were making a statement by choosing to build a chapel."

Marking the prominence of chapel and faith at the school, students and others with connections to the school were invited to donate a personalised paver to the chapel's landscaping.

Tara chaplain the Rev Nicholas Russell says, "The greatest thing we can do is to worship God and so having that time for the girls each week is vital."

"The building itself is very important because it has now pride of place in the school and is a statement about the value we place on faith, but it also has practical value as a space that isn't a classroom but is instead set aside for worship, for prayer groups and lunchtime small groups."

The chapel's clean, modern design features a large, well-lit foyer, multiple separate meeting areas and a main church space for services. There is also a middle aisle included – at the request of the Old Girls community – for use in wedding ceremonies.

Euthanasia challenged

Professor Swinton with Marie Alford, Head of Implementation, Dementia Centre (left) and Natalie Duggan, Head of Western Region, HammondCare At Home (right).

SCOTTISH THEOLOGIAN PROFESSOR JOHN SWINTON, WHO IS IN AUSTRALIA CONSULTING FOR the HammondCare health and aged care group, has urged Christians to resist the renewed push for the introduction of assisted suicide.

Professor Swinton holds the chair in Divinity and is Professor of Practical Theology and Pastoral Care at the University of Aberdeen. He was the keynote speaker at last year's Dementia and Faith Conference in Sydney and his recent book, *Dementia: Living in the memories of God* won him the Michael Ramsey Prize for theological writing.

His work has brought him into contact with advocates for assisted suicide. "Why is it that people say euthanasia is okay in the context of dementia?" he asks. "It has to do with the sense that you somehow lose yourself or you're somehow not the person used to be and so, therefore, your life isn't worth living. My experience [of] people with dementia, and also working with carer services who work alongside people with dementia, is that this is simply not the case."

He says it is vital for sufferers to have good relationships, a good sense of spirituality, a sense of security and trust. "If you get somebody in a good solid environment... you can actually live very well with dementia. There is an element of sadness and brokenness, of course, but there are also elements of positivity and hope."

Professor Swinton says often the issues raised by euthanasia proponents are "projection".

"You encounter someone who has a disability – say, someone who has paraplegia – and you think, 'Oh, wouldn't it be awful if I had paraplegia?' You imagine yourself moving from your current situation into their situation, which means it's a story of loss and brokenness. Whereas if you speak to people with paraplegia you may get stories of loss and brokenness, but you'll also get stories of relationship and possibilities in which you can live well within your community."

"In relation to euthanasia you see that quite a lot... people use their imagination and project onto individuals what they think it would be like to have this particular experience, and use that as a rationale for a kind of ethical argument for euthanasia. Whereas if you are living through certain things the experience is oftentimes very, very different – assuming that you have good quality of care and a solid community around you."

Media personality Andrew Denton has used his father's battle with heart disease as an example of why the law should allow assisted suicide. Victoria is considering a Euthanasia Bill and there will be pressure for similar legislation in NSW as early as this year.

Professor Swinton says we should learn from the experiences of countries where assisted suicide has been introduced. "They are starting to see the downside, particularly in something like dementia, because the way – as I understand – the legislation runs, basically, you see as you have a diagnosis of dementia you can, in principle, ask to be euthanised," he says.

"This means people end up being euthanised at stages in their lives when actually they seem to be quite together. You could imagine your great-aunt Sophie, who suddenly disappears. The last thing you saw she had a diagnosis and then you don't see her again. That's very traumatic for families but it's also very traumatic for doctors and medical staff who have to actually engage in these practices."

Professor Swinton says there should be a clear Christian voice in the public discussion. "I think it is a very important thing to have on the agenda because the Christian perspective on what a human being is, what human life is and what human value is, is fundamentally important for the conversation. Whether we 'win' or whether we 'lose' is not the point. The key thing is that we must have a voice in the conversation and... alternatives need to be clearly and fairly laid out."

"One of my concerns about the conversation around euthanasia is that it kind of masquerades as an ethical discussion but actually it is like a clash of worlds. A Christian perspective says human life is inherently valuable because God places value on it. Society tends to think the only thing that is valuable is choice – to live a life where you have choice, freedom and autonomy."

"So it's not simply a matter of ethics, right and wrong. It is actually two completely different ways of looking at the world."

Water funds help life flow

Get wet for the world: the Rev David Mansfield (in goggles) is joined by supporters and fellow swimmers to raise money for WaterWorks projects.

THE ARCHBISHOP OF SYDNEY'S ANGLICAN AID HAS EMBARKED ON A SERIES OF INITIATIVES TO raise money for important water infrastructure projects around the world.

The WaterWorks for a Thirsty World scheme has been inviting churches, schools and individuals to take on a water-related challenge and use that as a community fundraiser, with funds going to specific projects in some of the poorest areas on the planet.

"There's a recognition generally – really, it's a no-brainer – that communities without water infrastructure are amongst the poorest communities in the world, if not actually *the* poorest," says the director of Anglican Aid, the Rev David Mansfield.

"Water is so basic to life, health, food security, that coming alongside any community without it involves first meeting that fundamental need. That's what we're trying to emphasise and to help solve with this initiative."

Events have included marathon escapades in the pool, water rationing or avoiding non-water beverages. The challenges are not only designed to raise money but raise awareness about the scarcity of the most basic of human needs in many places across the globe.

"It's been encouraging to see how people have begun to catch on to the 'fun' side of what we do, if I can use that kind of expression," Mr Mansfield says. "We're using something very serious in a fun way to bring people together and to do something worthwhile for those outside of our own communities."

"I mean, my extreme challenge was to swim 100 laps of 10 different Olympic pools over the week, but we've had all sorts of things. People at the Donald Robinson Village [in Kirrawee] got involved with a walkathon, churches and parishes have gotten involved – all in different ways, simple ways, but with real effects."

While the WaterWorks challenge officially ran from February 19-26, several churches and organisations are running the challenge at other times in the year, and Anglican Aid encourages people to participate whenever they can.

"People are doing things in April or in May because that suits them better as a parish, for instance," Mr Mansfield says. "In a way, I think people have only just really been clicking into what we're trying to do over this month – even though this *is* the WaterWorks month. But we're really encouraged to see people taking this fun thing as seriously as the issue deserves."

WaterWorks week also coincided with a celebration service at St Andrew's Cathedral at which Anglican Aid unveiled its new global Ambassadors – including the Dean of St Andrew's Cathedral the Very Rev Kanishka Raffel, former Zimbabwean test cricketer Henry Olonga and the co-founder of Miracle School Ministries in Pakistan, Angela Michael.

At the time of writing almost \$40,000 had been raised by WaterWorks challenges. For information see waterworks.org.au.

Note this: report not noted

Marriage report: Church of England General Synod. PHOTO: Diocese of Oxford

THE GENERAL SYNOD OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND HAS VOTED AGAINST “TAKING NOTE” OF A bishop's report, which upheld traditional teaching on marriage. The vote came after confusion over voting and strong lobbying efforts to snub the report.

The report from the House of Bishops on Marriage and Same Sex Relationships reaffirmed that marriage is between a man and a woman, but called for “maximum freedom” within Church law.

Prior to the Synod the report was both welcomed and criticised. Nigerian Archbishop Nicholas Okoh, chairman of the GAFCON group, saw the report as contradictory and said the bishops “recommended the right thing for the wrong reason”.

“They have retained the Church's traditional teaching but [this is] because they think that holding opposite views together will eventually produce a consensus, not because it represents an apostolic boundary,” Archbishop Okoh said.

The Synod voted to ignore the report, although one bishop admitted he was confused and pressed the wrong button during electronic voting.

Andrea Williams, chief executive of Christian Concern and a member of General Synod, said despite spin in the news media the vote was not a victory for the LGBT lobby.

“The effect of the vote is that there is no change in doctrine or practice,” she said. “Marriage remains, as it has for all Christendom, a lifelong union between a man and a woman. The bishops' report on Marriage and Same Sex Relationships was in danger of weakening the Church's teaching. It sought to hold together two positions that are irreconcilable – I had wrestled long and hard about whether to ‘take note’ of the report.

“I was pleased that the bishops had upheld the doctrine but realised, as the debate progressed, that the LGBT lobby would not stop until they got their way of full approval in the Church.

“The Church can't call right what its sole source of authority calls wrong.”

Oxford evangelical the Rev Sam Allberry, who is same-sex attracted, said the Synod was not a “safe place” for him. “I was bullied at school for being gay,” he said. “I now feel I'm being bullied at Synod for being same-sex attracted and faithful to the teaching of Jesus on marriage.”

PREACH IT, BROTHER

Peter Jensen's research on preaching in Sydney Anglican churches (SC, February) is very enlightening. I was encouraged to hear that in any Anglican church you would hear the Bible read and expounded – and that has been my experience (64 years since ordination).

Many feel that this was a legacy of John Stott's visits to Australia. He himself wrote: "it is my contention that all true Christian preaching is expository". I agree, but my question here is, "How is it done?"

I have sat through innumerable Bible "studies" in which the preacher has made his way (sometimes ponderously) through each verse in his passage without perhaps giving us its dominant thought. I have gone home thinking, "Accurate enough, but what was the point of all that?" Why could he/she not have made the passage endorse and illumine the dominant thought; why could I not go home confident of relating what he/she said?

Of course preachers are all different in type, temperament and ability. Some are more poetical than others, able to use imagination in illustrating vividly what they have to say. But all can spend enough time in reading so as to improve their stock of words and how to use them (reading: another Stott imperative). All can work at good illustrations; the best ones are like street lamps, which illuminate without being conspicuous.

Rev Canon David Hewetson
Castle Hill

The discussion within the Diocese on the nature of teaching in churches is a valuable one to have. Peter Jensen's analysis of 40 sermons from churches across the Diocese clearly established the importance of teaching and drew some encouraging conclusions.

Evaluating church teaching in terms of "matter, manner and method" is certainly a worthwhile thing but I do wonder if there is a more fundamental question that needs to be asked. Does the linear, teacher-student transmission of knowledge approach that sermons typically represent really best serve our churches? Indeed, does a sermon – whatever its length, and even aided by PowerPoint – represent what we now know about how people learn?

In an age when educators in schools, universities and the corporate world are moving away from traditional "knowledge transmission" pedagogies it might be worthwhile for us, likewise, to look at more dynamic ways of teaching the word of God. Most parishes across the Diocese contain experienced educators who could make a valuable contribution to this process. I encourage clergy to seek them out and to draw on their experience and expertise.

Dr Michael Molkentin
Albion Park

A HOLY KISS?

Our Archbishop wrote with authority on the "holy kiss" in your February issue. His article reminded me of when the (then) Bishop Loane was lecturing on the epistles at Moore College.

"Excuse me, bishop," asked a young deaconess, "could you please explain what is meant by a 'holy kiss'?" Short pause, then, "I don't know". Longer pause. "I don't believe I've ever really had one."

Donald Howard
Elderslie

REFORMATION AND PERSECUTION

The 500th anniversary Reformation commemoration (SC, December) will, I hope, not be one-sided. We can rejoice in true reforms with benefits then and more benefits for us all in the long term but we should not forget the tragic consequences of the divisions.

I think of the destruction of much beauty and the loss of monastic social services in England and elsewhere, the loss of much genuine spirituality and the seeds of secularisation.

Far worse was mutual persecution and intolerance, the burning of witches – especially in Calvinist territories – the massacre of Protestants in France and religious elements added to wars in Europe and in Britain.

I think of Sir Thomas More helping to hunt down Tyndale and of the Marian Martyrs, but also of Margaret Clitheroe judicially crushed to death (horrifying Queen Elizabeth herself), of the burning of Servetus – welcomed by Calvin and other leading Reformers – of simple Unitarian Bible Christians whom Cranmer, Coverdale and Ridley in court sentenced to death by burning, of Quaker Mary Dyer hanged in Boston by the Puritans, and of Edward Wightman, burnt to death for heresy in England as late as 1612.

Worst of all, I think of Luther's appalling verbal attacks upon the Jews that sowed more seeds of dreadful anti-Judaism, bearing evil fruit under the Nazis who happily quoted him. Archdeacon T.C. Hammond wrote of this long ago but Thomas Kaufmann's recent scholarly, balanced and meticulous study *Luther's Jews: The Journey into Anti-Semitism* leaves Luther condemned.

I should observe, not Luther's action at Wittenberg on October 31, 1517, but the birthdate of Erasmus – eirenic Roman Catholic priest and reformer – on October 28, 50 years earlier. One could add October 18, 1412, when Jan Hus (opponent of indulgences long before Luther, and later martyred) affirmed Jesus as our supreme judge.

Certainly any commemoration of the Reformation should not be without honest regret and shame – and some reconciliation, I hope, between Christians, but also between Christians and our Lord's own people who have suffered so terribly at Christian hands before, during and since the Reformation.

Rev Dr John Bunyan
Campbelltown



CORRECTION

In last month's edition the caption on the "Dundas moves out" story incorrectly referred to the Rev Graeme Begbie's wife as Sally, rather than Stella. Our apologies for the error.



THE BISHOP OF EPPING

On March 24, the Rt Rev Ross Nicholson will be inducted as the new rector of St Alban's and St Aidan's in Epping.

He and his wife Jenny return to Sydney after more than 11 years in Tasmania at the helm of St John's, Launceston. In 2008, Bishop Nicholson was made a Missioner Bishop (Training and Projects) for the Diocese of Tasmania while still continuing as half-time rector at St John's.

"I was ordained bishop to oversee The Imagine Project – looking at creative ways of engaging the wider community in mission," he says. "We did a church plant up on the north coast, had a report of a church in Launceston and began a university ministry. And then we had a third ministry in an area of southern Tasmania that was focused on the arts and horse riding. So there were some quite innovative things."

Early last year Bishop Nicholson says he did a "360 review", which all clergy in Tasmania do after a number of years in a certain ministry.

"As I reflected on it, I thought, 'I've brought this parish as far as I can take it,'" he recalls. "I think it's important to know when you've reached your use-by date, when you've done what God has called you to do. So we knew our time at St John's was drawing to a close, but we weren't sure where we were going to end up."

Enter Archbishop Glenn Davies, who heard that Bishop Nicholson was looking for his next step in ministry and rang him as he pondered his options to ask whether he would consider Epping.

Returning to Sydney wasn't what the Nicholsons were seeking or expecting, but the more the bishop looked at the parish and its profile, the more connections he could see.

"In Tasmania the churches have that more traditional style you see at Epping," he says, "and the prayer book I've used in Tasmania for 11 years is what they use in Epping so there's a degree of familiarity for me."

"Before it was announced we came up to Sydney for my son's engagement party and went along to the church – this was before they knew we were coming. And we found a very friendly congregation who greeted us so warmly. It is just the way they respond to people – with a real generosity of spirit."

Bishop Nicholson says they are really looking forward to engaging with the Epping congregation and the local community. "The nominators recognised that as something in their strategic plan," he says. "They recognised they have not made the contact with the wider community that they could have, so there is that desire to be reaching out."

"I had a look at the demographics of Epping and something like 25 per cent of the population is Mandarin speaking, so there's the potential for reaching out into that community. Children's ministry is another area I'd like to engage in – it was one of the things we also did in Tasmania."

"We're really quite excited about the ministry opportunities!"

new head at ROSEVILLE

Ms Deb Magill has begun the 2017 school year as the tenth principal of Roseville College.

The chairman of the college council, David Minty, described Ms Magill as "the stand-out leader among an exceptional field of candidates".

"Having a clear plan to see both students and staff excel, Ms Magill has an exceptional understanding of how girls learn and she has been instrumental in augmenting the college's academic program," Mr Minty said. "She also has a compassionate heart for the welfare of the girls under her care."

"Among her professional expertise and strong credentials, Ms Magill's specialisation in learning enrichment will further strengthen the college's reputation for caring for each student as she learns and grows in our strong Christian and highly encouraging school."

Ms Magill, who attends Naremburn-Cammeray Anglican Church with her family, has spent the past six years as Roseville's Director of Learning and was already a member of the college executive. She has a Masters in Education and is a member of the Australian College of Educators and the Australian Council of Educational Leaders.

Ms Magill will be officially welcomed at a commissioning service on March 21.



ADELAIDE CALLING



Ready to work: the Ven Mee Ping Lau at his December commissioning service in Unley, surrounded by his family.

The Rev Mee Ping Lau has taken a leap westward from the parish of St George in Kogarah to become rector of St Augustine's, Unley in the Diocese of Adelaide, as well as Archdeacon of Asian Ministry in the diocese.

Archdeacon Lau spent more than 12 years at Kogarah but was contacted by the previous Archbishop of Adelaide, Jeffrey Driver, early last year to consider a move – after one of Archbishop Driver's archdeacons and Archbishop Glenn Davies had both suggested him as a potential candidate.

"Archbishop Jeffrey said, 'We're looking for someone to come and look after this parish and also do Asian ministry in the Diocese of Adelaide,'" Archdeacon Lau says. "He invited me to come over in March last year and I got more understanding of the situation."

"My heart was still for the ministry I was doing in Sydney and... in terms of my family situation we were just in the last phase of staying together so it was very hard for me as a family person."

"But the real point that got me was that, before I returned to Sydney, Archbishop Jeffrey said, 'I know you're the right person to come'. He said, 'Time is not the issue but the person that we are looking for... I hope you can hear the voice of the Macedonians'. And that really touched me."

After 2½ years searching for a senior minister, the congregation at St Augustine's wanted Archdeacon Lau to start as soon as possible, so although he could not be in Adelaide permanently until last month, he was inducted into the parish in December.

With its central location the Unley parish is well placed to reach out to locals, international students and the growing Asian community in Adelaide. The English and Chinese congregations (served by assistant ministers) are growing, and the parish also runs an op shop.

"Unley Road is one of the main roads into the city," Archdeacon Lau says. "A lot of families drop their children at child care and then go to work in town, and we're hoping this will be a centre where we can reach out to the community and those young families."

"Unley is the second wealthiest suburb in Adelaide and it's the most popular for mainland Chinese investors – they want to buy property here. But up until the end of last month the diocese only had this one Chinese congregation. Now there's a second congregation in another parish. We also want to reach out to the uni students and we're hopeful we can begin a campus gospel ministry this term – we have all the people lined up to go in. We also plan to start another Chinese congregation in June in another parish."

"It looks like a very promising future, but keep us in your prayers."

OPEN DOOR TO THE HILLS

After six years as rector of Blakehurst Anglican Church the Rev Paul Lucas became an assistant minister at St Paul's, Castle Hill early last month.

"We were looking for a different and new challenge and so we prayed that God would open – or not open – a door," Mr Lucas says. "We were happy there we were, enjoyed working at Blakehurst and everything that was happening there, but then this door opened, and because we had prayed that God would open a door we walked through it."

Mr Lucas says he is enjoying working in a team environment again and is looking forward to learning from others at Castle Hill, just as he hopes he has something to offer them. "God has done a lot with us over the six years at Blakehurst and we've learned a lot."

His official title at Castle Hill is director of discipleship, which is a parish-wide role that covers all four congregations and their small groups.

"They decide on the preaching program and I'm part of that collaborative teaching effort, with particular focus on putting together outlines for the sermon series and the small group studies – ensuring people there are being supported and looked after," he says. "The church has a 'Bring, Build, Send' mission and I see my role as part of the build/send element."



SCANDRETT SERVES AGAIN



Anglican Youthworks has appointed an interim CEO after the recent departure of the Rev Zac Veron, announcing that Dr Laurie Scandrett will take on the role. Dr Scandrett retired last year after 17 years as CEO of the Anglican Schools Corporation.

The chairman of the Youthworks council, the Rev Chris Braga, said, "This is a significant moment in Youthworks' history as we search for the right person to lead Youthworks into the next exciting phase of its mission."

"I have every confidence that Laurie will steer the organisation forward while this search continues to take place. Laurie's commitment to the cause of the gospel and his skills in leading a large, complex organisation will serve Youthworks well."

Dr Scandrett described it as "an opportunity I couldn't let pass me by", adding: "The Youthworks vision of 'seeing the churches of our Diocese filled with children, youth and families oriented for life in Jesus Christ' resonates completely with my previous work and ministry. I can't wait to get started!"

He begins his work as interim CEO on April 6.

CHAPLAINCY SERVICE

Three Anglican chaplains have retired after, collectively, almost 120 years of ordained service across the Diocese and beyond.

The Rev Lindsay Johnstone started working part-time at Royal Prince Alfred Hospital in 2006, while still rector at the parish of Clovelly (a position he held for 26 years). He served the hospital full-time from 2010 until mid-way through last year. During his ordained ministry – which began in 1970 – Mr Johnstone also served with CMS in Africa and as a field officer for the then Diocesan Board of Education.

The Rev Dr David Pettett entered chaplaincy in 1992 with the Royal Australian Naval Reserve, keeping up his work there after joining Anglicare to serve at the Prince of Wales Hospital in 1998. In 2004 he began to focus on prison ministry – first at Silverwater and then, four years later, at Lithgow.

Dr Pettett became Anglicare's Assistant Director – Chaplaincy in 2011, a position he held until late last year. In 38 years of ordained ministry he has also worked as a missionary in Japan and around the Diocese as a rector and curate.

The Rev Graham McKay (right) began his ordained ministry in 1981. He worked as a part-time chaplain from 1988-1990 at the then Royal Alexandra Hospital for Children in Camperdown, while he was also rector of Annandale. After nine subsequent years as rector of Minto, Mr McKay became chaplain at Royal Prince Alfred Hospital (1998-2003). He then spent the following seven years as Anglicare's Assistant Director – Chaplaincy, before returning to work as chaplain to Liverpool Hospital from 2011 until his retirement in January.

Anglicare's Manager of Health Services – Chaplaincy, the Rev Barry McGrath, said, "Chaplains have the opportunity to connect with people who would never engage with the local church. David, Lindsay and Graham have spent decades in the very privileged position of presenting Christ to those in hardship and suffering."



Practical ways to celebrate the Reformation’s 500th anniversary

MARK GILBERT

IF YOU

- are at peace with God because you believe the sacrifice of Jesus has assured you of eternal life;
- know God clearly and directly because you have been taught how to read the Bible for yourself;
- relate to God personally through his Spirit who dwells in your heart and not through some other mediator;
- are eternally united to your Father by adoption and therefor united to every other Christian as a spiritual brother or sister regardless of denomination or institution...

Then you really do have reason to celebrate the wisdom and the sacrifices of the Reformers and those who followed, who held onto these truths despite persistent opposition, even to this day.
But what is the best way to celebrate? To give gifts, of course! When we have received so much it is easy to give.

Growing up a committed Roman Catholic, when I first discovered these truths I was very angry. How dare those who put themselves forward as the spokesmen of God and shepherds of his sheep so carelessly, if not deliberately and persistently, misrepresent these truths that are so plainly spoken of in the Scriptures? Over time I realised that there was nothing special about me that I should come to understand and believe these things – it was all God’s grace. So I decided to commit my life to being generous to my Catholic neighbours and family and friends so they might know these truths, too.

If you want to celebrate the Reformation may I suggest one of the best ways to do it is to recommit yourself to sharing these truths with your Catholic friends, many of whom are searching.

In the popular ABC TV series from a couple of years ago, *Judith Lucy’s Spiritual Journey*, Judith Lucy went to school convinced she’d become a nun. By the time she’d left school she was a committed atheist. Now she is convinced there is something between these two extremes – she just doesn’t have a clue what it is. The series struck a nerve among a large proportion of our city: non-practising, searching Catholics.

As a former Catholic who spent 30 years in the Catholic Church, here are my three top tips to be most effective in sharing the gospel with Catholics.

1. Keep inviting Catholics to belong to things – youth groups, Bible study groups, mother’s groups, your church, sporting groups or even just to belong to you. Catholics are taught that religion is all about belonging to the Catholic Church. By inviting them to belong to these other things you can help them belong to God.
2. Keep sharing your story with them – what it is like for you to be a Christian, how you became one, how it affects your life now. Catholics are taught to look for religious experiences – especially through the sacraments, which for them are physical experiences of God, so share your experience with them. When you do it often opens up questions such as, “How can you be sure you are going to heaven?” and, “When you read the Bible how does it make sense to you?”
3. Show them how to read the Bible for themselves. For me to leave the Catholic Church I needed to trust my ability to read and understand the Bible more than I trusted the priest. Your Catholic friend may not trust you but they will usually trust the Bible. If you can show them how to read it, God’s word will do all the work.

There are some great tools to help Christians read the Bible with people who are not used to reading it for themselves. The Word 121 (www.theword121.com) is a fantastic tool, and very popular with Catholics, produced by a London insurance broker based on the sermon notes of William Taylor from St Helen’s, Bishopsgate – one of the leading evangelical teachers in London.

The booklets divide John’s gospel into coffee break-sized chunks with some very helpful notes that enable almost any Christian to read the Bible with their Catholic friend. In fact, Catholics are much more likely to say “Yes” to an invitation to read the Bible than anyone else you might ask because they still believe it is the word of God.

So there you have it. If you really want to celebrate all you’ve received from God, especially the things that were fought for and held onto in the Reformation, then keep sharing this gift with your Catholic friends and neighbours and family. Keep inviting them to belong to things, keep sharing your story with them and keep showing them how to read the Bible for themselves. Because if by God’s grace they receive the gift, the celebration will go on forever!

The Rev Mark Gilbert is an assistant minister at Freshwater and editor of the book Stepping Out in Faith: former Catholics tell their stories.



Reputation and repentance

DR GLENN DAVIES

LAST MONTH SAW SOME SIGNIFICANT MEDIA ATTENTION FOCUSED ON THE ROYAL Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse as the commissioners conducted their wrap-up hearing with regard to the Roman Catholic Church in Australia.

Most of the archbishops around the Metropolitan Sees were called and the extent of the appalling abuse of young children by priests and lay brothers was revealed.

Archbishop Mark Coleridge of the Archdiocese of Brisbane sent a message to all congregations warning them that many Catholics would be shocked, as well as saddened, by these revelations, but he stressed the importance of the changes the Church had made in recent years, despite the fact that cultural change takes time.

This month, the Anglican Church of Australia will have its wrap-up hearing with the Royal Commissioners. Commencing March 17, four days have been set aside for these hearings. Although this might be a reflection of the smaller number of cases that have come before the commission from within the Anglican Church of Australia, let us not forget that even one episode of child sexual abuse is one too many.

We cannot hide behind any pretence that we are blameless as a Diocese in the way in which, over the past decades, some of our clergy and lay people have responded to allegations of child sexual abuse, let alone the stark and confronting reality that some church workers, including clergy, have been guilty of committing such heinous crimes.

Our reputation will no doubt be tarnished in the media reports when the cumulative effect of cases of sexual abuse across the Anglican Church of Australia is revealed. Regrettably some church workers chose to protect “reputation” over their obligation to protect the vulnerable and defenceless.

If reputation were the issue, then it is the reputation of Christ that should have been their chief concern. This would have involved clearly and unequivocally calling perpetrators of abuse to justice as well as repentance. Jesus’ comforting words about welcoming children among the saints are in stark contrast to the chilling reminder of the seriousness of abusing children. Jesus’ judgment upon such evildoers is crystal clear: “It would be better for them to have a large millstone hung around their neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea” (Matthew 18:6).

One of the reasons that some of our clergy in the past acted in the way they did, when receiving reports of abuse, was due to a flawed understanding of repentance and forgiveness. In the Bible, “repentance” means a “turning around” – a “change of mind” that issues in a “change of direction”.

When John the Baptist went about preaching a baptism of repentance, he was asked by the crowd, “What should we do?” He responded by explaining what repentance would look like with practical examples of changed behaviour (Luke 3:10-14). To those who were feigning repentance, he declared: “Produce fruit in keeping with repentance, and do not begin to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father’.”

In other words, true repentance has consequences. For Zacchaeus, it meant restitution for those whom he had defrauded (Luke 19:8). For all Christians, it means taking up our cross daily and following Jesus – a life of sacrifice and self-denial.

Of course, the joy for Christians is that it is Jesus who has provided the ultimate restitution for our wrongdoings by his death on our behalf and his gift of righteousness. Yet the costly forgiveness that God offers his repentant people is also an example for us, showing the way in which we are to repent of sinful behaviour towards others. They may not forgive us but our responsibility is to repent and bring forth the fruit of repentance.

Repentance and faith are our daily diet, for we still sin. At the very least, repentance involves confession of wrongdoing, an apology to those whom we have hurt and the offer of appropriate restitution, for our relationship with God will be marred if we do not seek reconciliation with those whom we have hurt (Matthew 5:23-24).

For victims of child sexual abuse these are difficult concepts. Such has been the betrayal of trust – with respect to spiritual, as well as physical and sexual abuse – by those who should have represented Christ’s care towards them, that it may be difficult for them to believe in God, let alone trust him again. While we cannot go back and undo the past, we can show forth the love of Christ to those who have been sexually abused within the ministry of our Church.

Like my predecessors before me, I have had the privilege of offering an apology to survivors of abuse, as an integral part of the Diocese’s Care and Assistance package. Where the Church expresses true repentance for past wrongs, there is the beginning of hope. Where the Church offers some form of restitution, there is the beginning of faith. Where there is a genuine care for those who have suffered so much, there is the beginning of love. May we as a Diocese continue to seek God’s grace, that faith, hope and love might characterise our common life.

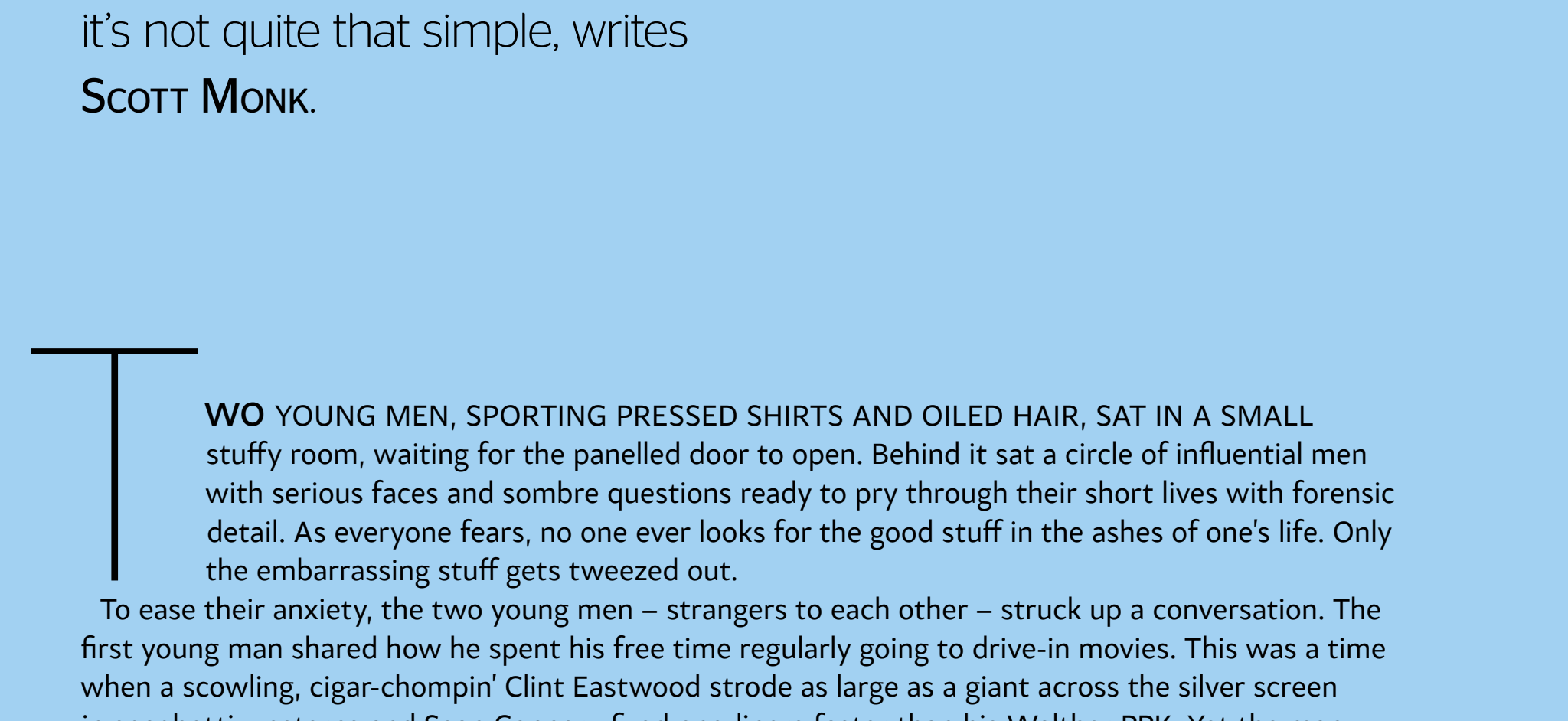
SC

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

God on the line



Most Christians regard full-time ministry as something you're either called to or not. But maybe it's not quite that simple, writes

SCOTT MONK.

TWO YOUNG MEN, SPORTING PRESSED SHIRTS AND OILED HAIR, SAT IN A SMALL stuffy room, waiting for the panelled door to open. Behind it sat a circle of influential men with serious faces and sombre questions ready to pry through their short lives with forensic detail. As everyone fears, no one ever looks for the good stuff in the ashes of one's life. Only the embarrassing stuff gets tweezed out.

To ease their anxiety, the two young men – strangers to each other – struck up a conversation. The first young man shared how he spent his free time regularly going to drive-in movies. This was a time when a scowling, cigar-chompin' Clint Eastwood strode as large as a giant across the silver screen in spaghetti westerns and Sean Connery fired one-liners faster than his Walther PPK. Yet the man confessed it wasn't the cowboys and spies he enjoyed the most, but the back seat exploits with his girlfriend.

Amazed at such shameless bragging in light of what was waiting for them behind those doors, the second young man shifted the conversation to the question – the same question that the circle of old men would want an answer to in a few moments.

"Why do you feel God is calling you into the ministry?"

"Recently," the first young man said, "the minister of my church was going to be away on holidays and he asked me whether I would lead one of the church services in his absence. I had never done this before, but I agreed to help."

"When I entered the church to begin the service, the whole congregation stood up. Now, no one had ever stood up for me before and I enjoyed this so much that I decided I would like to go into ministry full-time!"

After that door opened, the first young man was never seen again. Five decades later the second young man, Michael Bennett, who developed *Christianity Explained*, is now a retired pastor and recounts this real-life story in his book *Do You Feel Called By God?*

He asked the pressing question back in 1965 because he himself had no clear "call". Fifty-two years of ministry later, he is still waiting for heaven's hotline to ring.

THE ROYAL TELEPHONE

The Call. Those two little words create such controversy because they are completely misunderstood. Mention that you have it and people will react in one of two ways: first, uneasiness from Christians who themselves have never heard the call, or second, scepticism from non-believers because they're afraid you're suddenly hearing voices from heaven.

The reality is the call has little to do with divine spotlights and more to do with a lot of soul searching. As the firebrand Billy Graham admits in his autobiography *Just As I Am*, his call wasn't instantaneous, comfortable or heralded with trumpets. In fact, he was already ministering God's word before deciding to go into full-time paid "ministry".

"My teachers and classmates seemed to affirm that this ministry was good and right for me," he writes. "But did I want to preach for a lifetime? I asked myself that question for the umpteenth time on one of my night-time walks around the golf course. The inner, irresistible urge would not subside."

"Finally, one night, I got down on my knees at the edge of one of the greens. Then I prostrated myself on the dewy turf. 'O God,' I sobbed, 'if you want me to serve you, I will.'"

"The moonlight, the moss, the breeze, the green, the golf course – all the surroundings stayed the same. No sign in the heavens. No voice from above. But in my spirit I knew I had been called to the ministry. And I knew my answer was 'Yes.'"

IN MINISTRY – LIKE IT OR NOT

Without denying that the Lord has and does occasionally call people into ministry by supernatural means, Michael Bennett says this is not usually his method today.

"In the year of the 500th anniversary of the Reformation we are reminded of its basic principle, *Sola Scriptura*," he says. "What we are to believe is to be based on Scripture alone, not on religious traditions or some sort of pious folk religion. I argue that 'I feel God is calling me' has no basis in Scripture – either Old Testament or New."

"God has given us feelings, but feelings must be tested through the prism of God's word. It is so easy to deceive ourselves even into sin by prefixing our action with 'I feel God wants me to do this.'"

Instead, he says people are called in two ways. First, to be Christians and disciples of Jesus and second, to be holy – to grow in Christlikeness.

To say "I feel God is calling me" is wrong because a Christian can never go "into ministry", Bennett explains.

"You are 'in the ministry' from the moment of your conversion to Christ," he says. "You enter the human race by human birth and you enter the ministry by new birth. You are already in the ministry whether you like it or not."

He points to Ephesians 4:11-13 as his key text: 'So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.'

Bennett argues that these four ministries of God's word – apostle, prophet, evangelist and pastor/teacher – are the most important and vital of all the gifts of the Spirit and vital for the health of the church, but they're to equip believers so they themselves can also do ministry and build up the church.

"All believers are in the ministry full-time, from conversion, for life," he says. "You may not be paid like a pastor, you may choose to work in some field of 'secular' employment, but you are still in the ministry, full-time."

"In my own case, I was trained as an architect and enjoyed the profession and would have gladly returned to it, but I came to the conclusion the 'carer' ministry would offer me more opportunity for practical ministry with people. I still believe that decision was a correct one for me."

"I had a friend, also an architect, who went through Moore College with me who chose to return to the building profession. That was his God-given choice and he has had a productive ministry."



From ballet to Bible: Ruth Schroeter.

A NATURAL PROGRESSION

Recently appointed to the staff team at St Andrew's Cathedral, Ruth Schroeter is one of many who have discovered that ministry is not a call so much as a natural maturation of faith.

A decade ago Schroeter was a ballet teacher working with wonderfully gifted teenage girls who each day stretched the London chill from their taut muscles before subjecting every pirouette, every pointed toe, every – "Chin up!" – facial expression to her scrutiny.

Schroeter herself had been dancing since the age of seven before being accepted into a full-time ballet school at 16 and then teaching as an adult in the Channel Islands, America, Norway and finally London.

Her commitment paid off, with several students graduating as professional dancers and teachers themselves. But just as Schroeter was shaping the future lives of these young women, the Lord was shaping hers.

"I became a Christian during a 10-year period in London," she says. "I spent six weeks doing a *Christianity Explored* course and at the end of it I thought, 'I'm not sold on this but something's got me. I don't want to walk away from this' – so I was caught in some way. I started tentatively going to church and there was a women's minister there who patiently fielded my questions, showed me who Jesus was and taught me about grace."

"At the same time I was still teaching ballet. So the two things were working alongside each other. When I became a Christian 18 months later I wanted to relate to others differently. This impacted how I taught. I think I became less focused on results and more interested in getting the best out of my students personally, not just physically. That came out of an understanding of who they were in God's sight."

However, the Lord didn't just stop with Schroeter's conversion.

"Having become a Christian, I immediately had a strong desire to go into vocational ministry but wise people, who would later encourage me to go to theological college, said, 'Slow down! You've only been a Christian for five minutes!'

"And maybe everyone feels like that when they first become a Christian. So I did slow down and I started studying the Bible, reading carefully and getting to know God. Then five years after becoming a Christian there was still a strong pull towards formal ministry."

"I think it would be a mistake to think of the call as simply something you hear or feel," says the 41-year-old, who has since moved to Sydney, graduated Moore College and served for two years at Riverside Anglican in Moorebank.

"I think there are three questions that need to be asked: do you have a deep desire to do it; is it backed up by Scripture; and do godly people who know you well say, 'Yes, we believe you can do this?'

"That, for me, was my calling. I did wonder if that was enough, and whether my believing meant it wasn't genuine. The lead-up to my ordination was the time when I really grappled with the concept of a calling."

"The Bible is clear that all Christians are called to ministry in a variety of contexts – some to full-time, ordained ministry. I had my Moses moment. I asked God, 'Are you really calling me to be set apart to do this for the rest of my life?'"

GIFTS FOR HIS SERVICE



Most Christians aren't destined for a life pastoring a church but there are ministry opportunities for everyone – even introverts – as 36-year-old Susanna Baldwin discovered.

"It started when a guy... came to my church in England and gave a talk about translation," she says. "He gave us an insight into Bible translation in various parts around the world, what it looks like and the needs that are there. I found it very interesting and I remember saying to a friend afterwards: 'I can see myself doing that'."

"But I shelved it and didn't really think about it until six years later when I'd moved to Australia and was in a job here. A guy challenged me: 'Do you think all Christians should at least consider vocational ministry?'

"I was very excited and happy to have [my job] and I thought that was what I was supposed to do in life. So I said... that some Christians have a calling in the secular workforce and I very much thought that was my calling."

"I was very sure about that but, because I wanted to win that argument decisively, I went away and did a little bit of reading, research and reflection to come to a watertight view about this. Something happened to me while I was doing that... it was this raw sense of restlessness and unfulfilled vocation that had sort of dogged me throughout previous jobs as well. I'd never felt fully satisfied, even in jobs that I'd really enjoyed. There was something that was always missing; something else that I'd feel a bit more suited to and a bit more excited about."

"At that point, the memory of that [church] talk came back as I started to think... if I was going to pursue a ministry path what would that look like? I didn't really want to be a church worker. I didn't want to be a university worker."

"But I love words, I love language and I love writing. I find languages easy to learn and work with. I also recognise there's a huge need for the Bible to be translated into those languages that don't yet have it written down. So as I started to explore that idea of going into ministry it was really Bible translation that was my focus from the get-go."

A conversation with Baldwin's minister also helped to get the ball rolling.

"Out of the blue he pulled me aside at church and said: 'I know this is a bit random but I've been thinking about you and your gifts. I really want to encourage you to think about taking a year out from your job to do some theological study and be more equipped for ministry, and then perhaps divert your whole career into ministry instead,'" she recalls.

"That was a powerful little confirmation that it wasn't just all in my head. Other people were thinking along similar lines to me and the more I talked to people and asked their opinions, the more they encouraged me to pursue that ministry path. That's what led me to the decision to leave that job after only two years and start going to Moore College."

Baldwin graduated last year after four years of thriving in Greek, Hebrew and Aramaic classes – and in the latter, she was the only student. She has set her sights on Africa as her mission field, where she hopes her calling will help people "actually hear God speak to them in their own language... the language that they think and feel in".

MINISTRY MANAGER

These are questions that David Anthonisz has wrestled with regularly after giving up a successful 28-year career as an engineer to pursue ministry. This husband, mortgage manager and father of two teenagers walked away from his last role as a senior manager of 35 project managers to study at Moore College full-time. He is now in second year.

Prayer, time and counting the cost: David Anthonisz.

"When I became a Christian I was really keen to lead and I got involved in leading Bible study groups and youth groups," the 50-year-old says. "I didn't get any formal training but sort of went with it and spent time reading the Bible."

"Then I went in the workforce, even though I felt I'd make a good minister. I didn't know if I was being called into ministry, so I guess the idea was always sitting there."

"My wife Michelle and I talked a lot about it. We'd also seen ministers' kids growing up and just how much being in ministry affected them, so we had a concern for our family. In the back of our minds, if it was going to happen it would happen at a point when the kids had developed to a point that they knew who they were."

Then 18 months ago, Anthonisz recalls, when he and Michelle were praying, "it came out in Michelle's prayer that we should consider ministry. We talked about it and we thought: 'Well, okay. Is now the time?' We had been told by many that we should go into ministry but was that God's will and God's time? I had always prayed that if God was calling us into ministry that Michelle would know it as well."

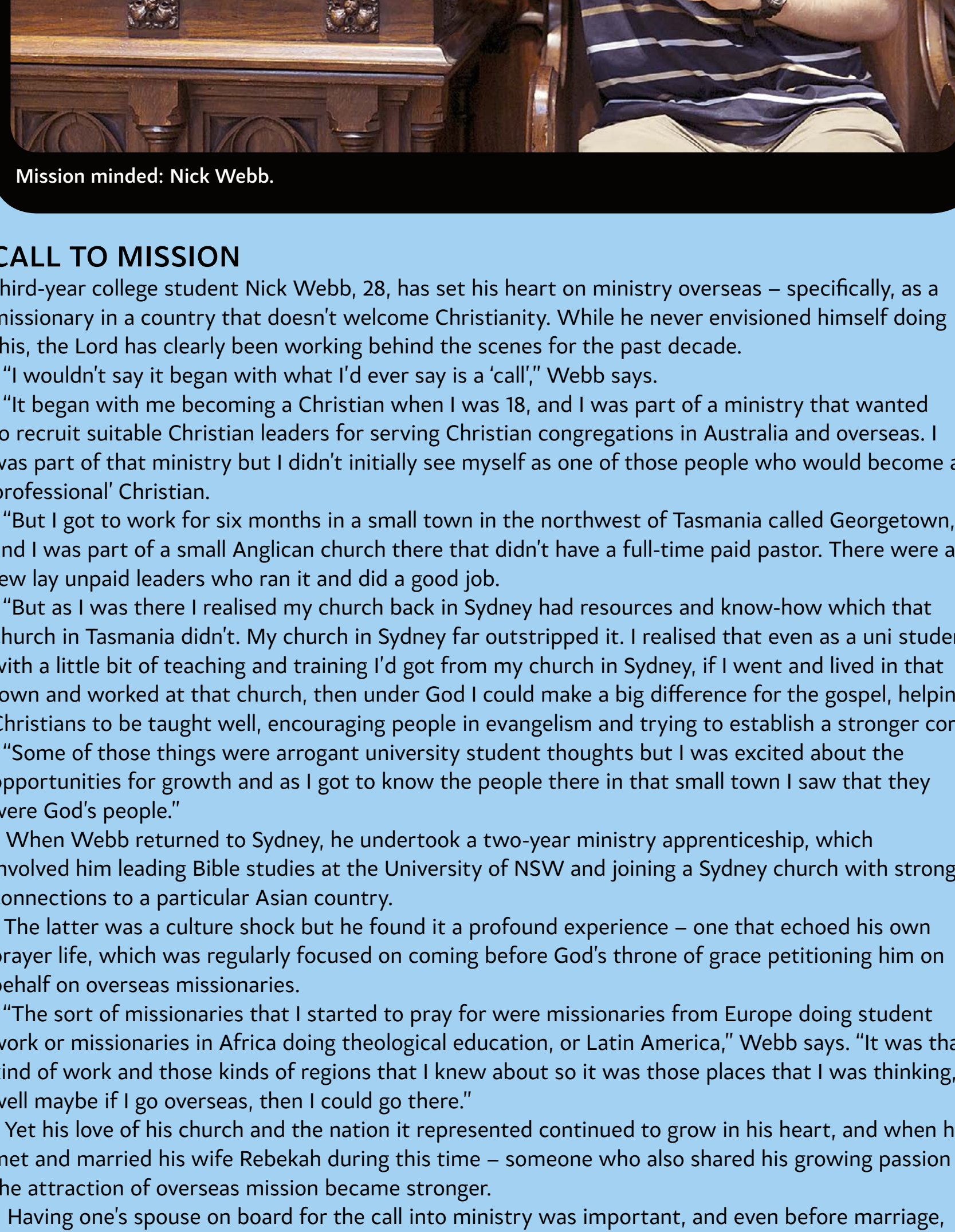
"I guess I used that as a validation. Sometimes you can get illusions of grandeur about the call, thinking, 'Oh yeah, I'd be really good at this, people say I have a gift and I reckon God's calling me'. But that's a great thing about prayer and having a Christian partner who's there for you and as a check on any calling."

The shift from being a full-time, senior consulting manager who travelled the world to a full-time student commuting to Newtown has come at a cost for the family.

"Because of the kids it was a massive financial decision for us," Anthonisz says. "Its impact was, and to some degree still is, severe in terms of where we were at in our lives and where we are now. I didn't realise how much of a total change it would be for me or our family. We needed to go back and check with each other to see where we're up to – always checking what we believe God's will is for us and our family."

"It's had a massive impact on Michelle," he adds. "Where she didn't have to work full-time and was undertaking a masters in pastoral counselling, now over this past year she's had to work full-time and has temporarily placed on hold both her course as well as her work as our church's pastoral carer. It's difficult, because part of the vision for us going into ministry is so that we can minister together."

However, together the family is driven by the knowledge that they are serving Christ sacrificially. Says Anthonisz: "No matter what decision you make, as long you make it for God, God will be pleased with your heart and will honour it."



Mission minded: Nick Webb.

CALL TO MISSION

Third-year college student Nick Webb, 28, has set his heart on ministry overseas – specifically, as a missionary in a country that doesn't welcome Christianity. While he never envisioned himself doing this, the Lord has clearly been working behind the scenes for the past decade.

"I wouldn't say it began with what I'd ever say is a 'call'," Webb says.

"It began with me becoming a Christian when I was 18, and I was part of a ministry that wanted to recruit suitable Christian leaders for serving Christian congregations in Australia and overseas. I was part of that ministry but I didn't initially see myself as one of those people who would become a 'professional' Christian."

"But I got to work for six months in a small town in the northwest of Tasmania called Georgetown, and I was part of a small Anglican church there that didn't have a full-time paid pastor. There were a few lay unpaid leaders who ran it and did a good job."

"But as I was there I realised my church back in Sydney had resources and know-how which that church in Tasmania didn't. My church in Sydney far outstripped it. I realised that even as a uni student with a little bit of teaching and training I'd got from my church in Sydney, if I went and lived in that town and worked at that church, then under God I could make a big difference for the gospel, helping Christians to be taught well, encouraging people in evangelism and trying to establish a stronger core."

"Some of those things were arrogant university student thoughts but I was excited about the opportunities for growth and as I got to know the people there in that small town I saw that they were God's people."

When Webb returned to Sydney, he undertook a two-year ministry apprenticeship, which involved him leading Bible studies at the University of NSW and joining a Sydney church with strong connections to a particular Asian country.

The latter was a culture shock but he found it a profound experience – one that echoed his own prayer life, which was regularly focused on coming before God's throne of grace petitioning him on behalf of overseas missionaries.

"The sort of missionaries that I started to pray for were missionaries from Europe doing student work or missionaries in Africa doing theological education, or Latin America," Webb says. "It was that kind of work and those kinds of regions that I knew about so it was those places that I was thinking, well maybe if I go overseas, then I could go there."

Yet his love of his church and the nation it represented continued to grow in his heart, and when he met and married his wife Rebekah during this time – someone who also shared his growing passion – the attraction of overseas mission became stronger.

Having one's spouse on board for the call into ministry was important, and even before marriage, Webb says.

"Rebekah and I got married at the beginning of 2015 and in the very early stages of our dating and courtship we talked about our longer term plans," he says. "I was keen to find someone interested in going overseas and thankfully Rebekah was also happy to serve overseas."

"For a while she's seen overseas mission and overseas service as a good thing to do. So from early on in our dating we worked out that we were on the same page. In our first two years of marriage we've been trying to think about where we can go so we've been talking with CMS, hearing their thoughts and trying to learn a little bit more about... other countries as we're able."

MINISTRY FOR LIFE

Whether you feel a "call" to a ministry career or not, there's always room to expand on the ministry gifts God has given you. Michael Bennett says those wanting to do so should be speaking to Christian friends, pastors and mentors.

"Also I think a kind of trial-and-error process can be useful," he says. "'What am I good at?' 'What do I like doing?' can be good questions to ask."

"There is no foolproof process. Because I may fail in some form of ministry – as I have – this is not the end of that ministry. You pick yourself up, say sorry to God and then look around for some other avenue of productive ministry."

"But you can never 'leave the ministry' except by the same process by which you leave the human race – death."

WHAT TO DO NEXT

Seek wisdom Talk and pray with Christian mentors, leaders, family and missionaries.

Attend Open days and public events at theological colleges are helpful for guidance.

Focus your goals Do you want

to work for a big or small church? Overseas? On campus?

In children's ministry? For a parachurch organisation?

Be patient Think twice about jumping into a theological course fresh out of university because your job didn't work out. Secular

employment equips people with invaluable life skills and networks that are useful later in paid ministry.

Take a risk Serve as a student minister at another church to broaden your understanding of the wider Christian fellowship.

Real faith

in a performance-dominated world

Don't fall for society's thinking that our rightness before God depends on anything we may do,

writes **LIONEL WINDSOR**.

WE LIVE IN A WORLD THAT CONSTANTLY JUDGES US BY HOW WELL WE perform. From preschool reports to professional annual reviews, performance assessments are everywhere.

Of course, in many cases it is entirely appropriate to assess performance. Businesses need to perform for their customers, politicians for their constituents, employees for their employers, sportspeople and artists for their fans. Assessing performance can help us make wise decisions about whom to buy from, vote for, employ, watch or listen to.

However, this focus on performance can easily become a burden. In our workplaces the anxiety of being constantly measured and assessed can be a major source of stress and depression. Even worse, the demand for performance can affect our friendships, our relationships and our family life.

Is our relationship with God based on our performance? Does God "assess" us to determine our standing with him?

This year marks the 500th anniversary of the beginning of the European Reformation. At the time of the Reformation, the medieval Catholic Church taught that our standing before God depended in a significant measure on our moral and religious performance. Yes, they said, God gives us grace – but still, he demands performance and if our performance doesn't measure up, judgment awaits.

The Reformers, however, went back to the Bible and rediscovered an amazing truth: when it comes to God we are "justified", not at all by our performance but only by "faith". Justification only by faith. Martin Luther saw it as a truth by which the church stands or falls. Thomas Cranmer hardwired it into the doctrine and prayers of the Church of England in the *Book of Common Prayer*. Justification only by faith mattered deeply to them.

So what does this amazing truth mean? And does it still matter today, 500 years on?

JUSTIFIED BY FAITH

To understand justification only by faith, we first need to take a step back to consider some important biblical truths about God.

For starters, we need to understand that God is our creator. He made the world and he made us. As creator, God has the right to tell us what to do. He has standards of right and wrong. God our creator wants us to measure up to his standards. That's what being "righteous" means in the Bible: measuring up to God's standards.

But because God is our creator, he is also our judge. The Bible speaks about God assessing us based on our righteousness. This is where the word "justified" comes in. It's a law court word. Being justified means being declared righteous or innocent. "Justification" is a declaration by God the judge that we have measured up to his standards.

But we have a massive problem here. We're not righteous (see e.g. Romans 3:10). We've rebelled against God and rejected his right to rule us. So we don't measure up. We don't perform. As it says in Romans 3:23, "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God".

On the face of it, this is terrible news. But the Bible tells us that sinners can, in fact, be justified – through Jesus Christ. As it goes on to say in Romans 3:24, we are "justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus".

By rights, of course, we deserve condemnation from God for our sin. But Jesus, the perfectly righteous one, died for our sins, in our place, taking that judgment on himself (Romans 3:25). So through Jesus, we can go free. We can be justified before God! This justification happens, not through our performance, but through *faith* – which is all about Jesus, not us. That is why God is described as "the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus" (Romans 3:26).

JUSTIFIED ONLY BY FAITH

We're justified by faith. But more than that, we're justified *only* by faith. That is, we can't add even a tiny amount of performance (or "works") into the equation as part of the criteria for justification before God.

That's because justification by faith is completely incompatible with justification by performance. In a normal working life we get rewarded for our performance. But justification by faith doesn't work that way at all. It's the opposite: it's a gift of God's grace.

As Paul says in Romans 4: 'Now to the one who works, his wages are not counted as a gift but as his due. And to the one who does not work but believes in him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted as righteousness' (Romans 4:4-5).

So our right standing before God is not about deserving things from God. Rather, it's about a gift – a gift of forgiveness (Romans 4:6-7). That means we are justified *only* by faith. Our performance has nothing to do with our standing before God. Incredibly God is, as the Bible says, the one who "justifies the ungodly".

We can't approach our relationship with God the way we approach our employment. We can't earn a right standing before God, like we earn wages. Worse than that, if we presume we can earn God's favour and achieve eternal life as a reward in any way, we're fundamentally denying his gift through Jesus. No. We're justified only by faith.

GETTING FAITH RIGHT

But what is this faith by which we are justified? The word "faith" means different things to people today, and many of them are quite different from what the Bible means by the concept.

Some people assume that faith means something like "leaving your brain behind". But that has very little to do with the Bible's understanding of faith. In Romans, Paul talks about Abraham as the great pattern of faith. It says Abraham 'grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God, fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised. That is why his faith was "counted to him as righteousness"' (Romans 4:20-22).

Faith, for Paul, isn't about being anti-intellectual; it just means trusting God's word. It's about believing that God will keep his promises. God has promised to forgive us through Jesus' death for us. He has promised to justify us and not condemn us. He has promised to love us. He has promised to give us eternal life with him forever, through his Son whom he raised from the dead. Faith is trusting in that word of God.

Others assume that faith is purely an act of the intellect. This is the kind of problem James was facing as he wrote his letter (James 2:17-19). There were people who said they had "faith", but it was a dead faith that merely involved affirming theological facts. James pointed out that even demons believe theological facts (e.g. "God is one") and it doesn't help them.

Faith isn't just about affirming facts or ideas; it means trusting God. If you trust God, you'll give your life over to him, which must produce results, otherwise it's not real. Faith produces works. But we need to keep remembering that those works aren't the basis of our relationship with God – they are the fruit of it.

Sometimes people object to the idea that we are justified only by faith by raising the issue of "incentives". They ask: If we're completely forgiven through faith, what incentive do we have to perform? Surely we can just take the free ticket to heaven and then live however we want? But this also is to misunderstand faith completely. In fact, it is to misunderstand God completely!

God is not like some distant technocrat or boss dispensing an impersonal system of rewards and punishments to make us behave. And faith is not a matter of applying for a random reprieve from God's system of incentives. No, it's about having God as our loving heavenly Father, secure in his care. Being justified by faith means we have a whole new life to live as a child of our Father, now and forever. God, through his Son Jesus Christ, is the perfect father. He made us, he forgives us, he loves us and he wants us to live for him. There's actually no greater incentive than that.

Faith, then, is not anti-intellectualism, or a bare intellectualism, or a get-out-of-jail free card. It is at the core of a relationship with God as our loving Father through Jesus. This is the faith by which we are justified. And this relationship with God gives us the power to live for him, in all circumstances (Rom 5:1-5).

WHY IT MATTERS

This truth – that we are justified only by faith – really, really matters. It's about our orientation towards God, at the deepest level. Justification only by faith reminds us that our relationship with God is not about our performance. It's about admitting that we have sinned, that we have nothing in ourselves to make us worthy before God and that we need Jesus' death and resurrection to be forgiven and to live the life that God graciously gives us to live.

If we deny this truth, we end up with a Christian life that starts to rely on our moral and religious performance. And that is a terrible road to go down because it ultimately ends up denying God's gracious gift to us through Jesus.

Justification only by faith must affect everything about our lives. For example, it affects our prayer. We come to God as dependent children to a loving Father, secure in his care, asking for our needs.

It also must affect how we treat each other. In our performance-dominated world it's so easy to relate to one another in terms of our work, or our status, or our success, or our marital status, or our property. This makes us afraid to admit our weaknesses to one another and drives us to try to impress each other. Yet justification only by faith shatters this pretence. It reminds us that we are God's children together – people who sin and fail, yet who are loved, forgiven and called by our Father to do what is right. That is what defines us, together. And it must change everything.

So performance assessments have nothing to do with our standing before God! We're forgiven completely by what Jesus has done for us. We are justified only by faith. That's a truth to hold on to with all we've got. It's a truth to live by. And it's a truth to proclaim to the world.

The Rev Dr Lionel Windsor lectures in New Testament, Greek and Hebrew at MTC.

BISHOP CHALLENGES ORDINANDS

The Bishop of Western Sydney, the Rt Rev Ivan Lee, has recalled his inspiration for ministry in challenging 34 men and women being ordained as deacons.

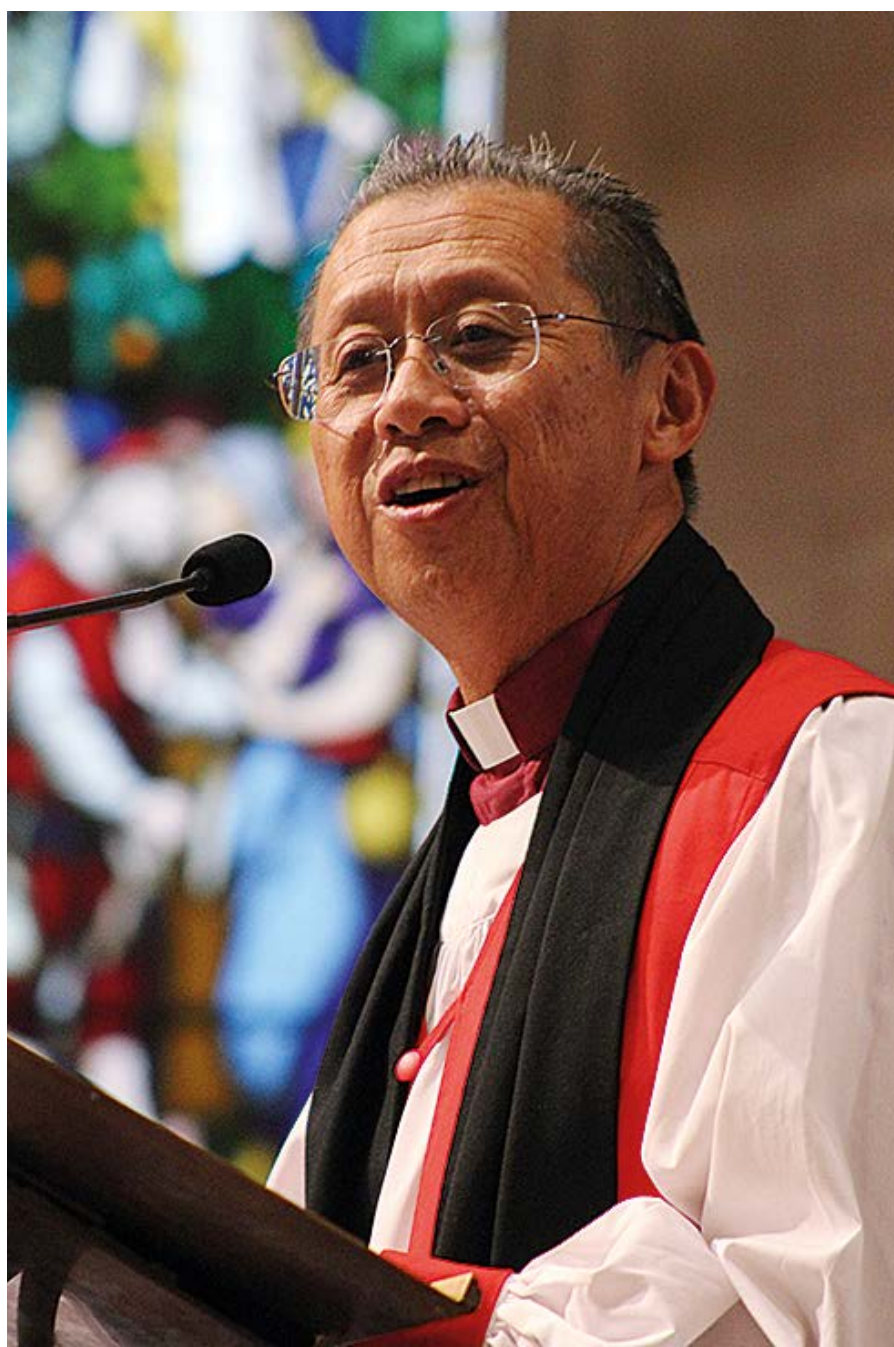
The group gathered at St Andrew's Cathedral in front of family and friends to be ordained by Archbishop Glenn Davies on Saturday, February 18. Their ministries range across the Diocese and in various roles from church planting to school chaplaincy, youth work and as assistants in parishes.

Bishop Lee (right) spoke from Matthew chapters 9 and 10 about the calling of the disciples and Jesus' famous phrase, "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few". The bishop, who underwent treatment for cancer in the past year, recalled an incident from his university days.

"I was sitting down having a chat with the Anglican chaplain... we were in the chaplaincy building looking out the window and the conversation went something like this: 'Ivan, what do you see?' I looked out at the huge numbers of students going back and forth and I said, 'Uh, I don't know, students, trying to get to their lectures on time?'"

"And he said back to me, slowly and with great sadness in his voice, 'You know what I see? All I see are hundreds and thousands of lost souls, young people who need to know about Jesus'. That one moment has had a lifelong effect on me so that, to this very day, whenever I look upon a crowd – which is pretty much every day – I see lost souls, without God in their lives."

Bishop Lee exhorted the ordinands to have the same motivation. "I'd like to say to the ordinands, if your heart is not truly broken, not grieving for lost people, then ministry will become a profession, and church growth a KPI – a key performance indicator! But what really matters to Jesus, and ought to matter to us, is lost people and the spiritual need all around us."



Sydney's newly ordained deacons for 2017 outside St Andrew's Cathedral with Archbishop Glenn Davies; the Dean of Sydney, Kanishka Raffel; the Archdeacon for Women's Ministry, Kara Hartley; and the Diocese's five regional bishops – Peter Lin, Ivan Lee, Michael Stead, Peter Hayward and Chris Edwards.

The ordinands included several who already have other family members in full-time ministry including Bronwyn Kyngdon, whose father was the former assistant to the Bishop of Wollongong and whose brother was ordained in 2015; and James Galea, son of the rector of Rooty Hill, the Rev Ray Galea.

The Cathedral was packed with family and supporters. Ordinand Philip Rademaker, an assistant minister at Belrose, was supported by a contingent from his congregation. "My wife just gave birth two days ago and I am running on adrenalin," he said. "Through just the gravity of what we are promising but also the support of seeing so many people there affirming us I am feeling the weight, but also I am really excited to be part of God's mission."

Mr Rademaker's situation is unusual as he has muscular dystrophy. "My reflection on the service and the whole process leading up to ordination is that it is now more accessible and easier than ever for people with disabilities to serve God as clergy," he said.

"It is an encouragement to me that as we read the New Testament and see people from all tribes, all nations, all backgrounds, [that] every different type of person is called to serve in ministry as they are gifted. So I would really be encouraged to see other people with disabilities ordained, serving in ministry, using the gifts that God has given them and being seen as gifts to the church."

James Dayhew had a long road to ordination, having been a teacher and involved in parachurch ministry since the 1990s. He has been chaplain at Nowra Anglican College for three years.

"Today was really special, it actually exceeded my expectations," he said. "The school was exceptionally supportive – I have the principal and some council members here. They were very supportive in giving me the time and freedom to do extra study and prepare for this, and the students were really excited, too. I have had one student for the past year say, 'When can we start calling you "Rev"'? So I saw him on Friday and I said, 'On Monday!'"

THE FULL LIST OF ORDINANDS

Joshua Ackland
Eastgardens

Benjamin Allen
Toongabbie

Thomas Batty
Harbour Church

Timothy Beilharz
Youthworks

Mark Bolas
Penrith

Christopher Booth
Guildford with Villawood

Grant Borg
Rooty Hill

David Brackenbury
Unichurch (UNSW)

Andrew Brown
Barker College

Andrew Bryan
Surry Hills

Nathan Cheung
Chester Hill with Sefton

James Dayhew
Nowra Anglican College

Jennifer Everist
Miranda

James Galea
Kirribilli

Suzanne Gorham
Roseville College

Mitchell Herps
Camden

Hugh Jonas
St Philip's, Auburn

Bronwyn Kyngdon
Anglicare

Andrew Kyrios
Sans Souci

Craig Langstaff
West Wollongong

Esmond Lau
Liverpool

Jason Law
Malabar

Ian Lobb
Wilberforce

Philip Lui
Riverwood-Punchbowl

John Mahoney
Mulgoa

Joshua Murphy
Nowra

Cameron Noakes
Leppington (ENC)

Philip Rademaker
Belrose

Mark Schroder
Broughton Anglican College/Campbelltown

Elizabeth Strachan
Robert Menzies College/Macquarie University

Matthew Straw
Willoughby

Michael Taylor
Forestville

Peter Tuck
Castle Hill

Edward Yorston
Kirribilli



Death in Jones town

JUDY ADAMSON

Jasper Jones

Rated M

MUCH AS I LOVE SEEING AUSTRALIAN STORIES ON FILM, SO OFTEN THE subject matter is unappealing or the work saturated in "humour" that I find distinctly unfunny.

I came to *Jasper Jones* knowing very little, apart from it being a recent novel by a much-awarded young writer that has already been on the high school English curriculum for some years. Which sounds positive, as far as it goes. That means it's a good book – but would it be a good film?

With the practised hand of Shaun Grant beside him, author Craig Silvey has refashioned his novel for the screen and – with the help of a fine cast – created a piece of cinema that, despite its flaws, speaks to who we were, who we are and who we need to become.

In small-town Western Australia in 1969 we are introduced to 14-year-old Charlie Bucktin (gotta love that surname) as he and his best friend Jeffrey argue over the relative value of different superheroes. Soon after, we see Charlie (Levi Miller) reading Mark Twain. So, it's clear: Charlie is a nerd. Message received.

Unlike some films where the drama escalates slowly, after these introductory scenes we're dropped right in it. Charlie's in bed when, suddenly, older youth Jasper Jones (Aaron McGrath) appears at his window, begging him for help. In what I find to be one of the least believable moments of the film, Charlie agrees to come, dresses and follows Jasper out into the night.

This pivotal scene may have worked better in the novel but here you're thinking, "Why would he go?" Is it curiosity? Inherent niceness? Or is he just easily persuaded?

It's hard to say, because the viewer really hasn't had time to get to know Charlie. What is more, as he follows Jasper into the woods near town we discover (through narration) that Jasper has *never* spoken to Charlie before. Which leaves you in doubt at a moment crucial to the whole story.

Jasper brings Charlie to "his place" in the woods where, to Charlie's horror, a girl is hanging from a tree – Laura Wishart, the older sister of his friend Eliza (Angourie Rice). Jasper urges Charlie to believe he is not responsible, then asks for his help in hiding the body and finding the culprit. Why? Because it's his place, his rope, his girlfriend and he's Aboriginal, so if she's found here he'll be blamed for her death.

At one level, that's fair enough. It's just that these two *don't* know each other. Jasper is asking Charlie, who's basically a stranger, if he can trust him with a matter of life and death. Charlie is likewise wondering if he can trust Jasper, and has nothing to base this on except gut instinct that Jasper's a good guy.

It's an awkward start – and quite unhelpful, given its importance. However, if you're willing to run with it the film takes off from here and doesn't let you go until the last moment, weaving together an absorbing story of small-town suspicion, racism, sexual abuse, love and loss. There's also humour, particularly through the lovable character of Charlie's friend Jeffrey – a cricket-mad kid who's full of crazy questions and refuses to be ignored by the local cricket team just because he's Chinese.

Jasper believes the person responsible for Laura's death is Mad Jack Lionel (Hugo Weaving), an anti-social bloke with a reputation for violence who lives on the outskirts of town. Jasper and Charlie seek to find out more about Jack at the same time as the town is made aware of Laura's disappearance. Local children are given a curfew and parents are filled with anxiety for their safety as they wonder who is to blame. Many, as Jasper predicted, point the finger at him. The different one.

What gives the story its depth, once it gets going, is the arresting portrait of a small town and its people. Local events, local coppers, local family life – charming, familiar and sometimes ugly. Toni Collette gives a heart-rending performance as Charlie's bubbly mum, whose unhappiness with her lot is slowly made clear. Hugo Weaving is, as ever, a magnet for the eyes whenever he is onscreen, and the younger actors do a sterling job with their emotion-charged roles – particularly Aaron McGrath.

Amid the need to see the wrongs of racism (then as now) and the importance of friendship, trust and faithfulness, *Jasper Jones* is essentially a story of growing up and shouldering responsibility – either in a hurry, as Charlie needs to do, or through force of circumstance, like some of the adults.

It's not a perfect film by any stretch, but it will resonate strongly because it's easy to see ourselves – personally or as a society – somewhere in the story. The challenge is whether we respond to that or not.

Ⓜ

Bite-size history

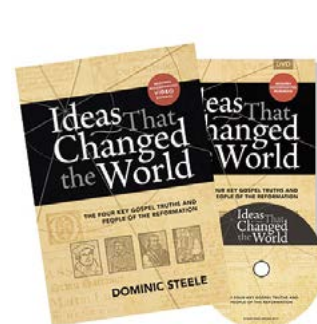


In his shoes: Dominic Steele stands in John Calvin's Geneva pulpit.

RUSSELL POWELL

Ideas That Changed The World

Matthias Media



IF YOU HAVE BEEN LEADING A BIBLE STUDY GROUP FOR A FEW YEARS YOU WILL HAVE TRIED most things. Chapter by chapter studies, devotional book studies, topical studies. You have probably done them all.

The rector of Annandale, Dominic Steele, has done us a great favour by giving us another alternative – one 500 years in the making. In this Reformation anniversary year, Steele and Matthias Media have produced *Ideas That Changed The World*, a video series that is part history, part Bible study and part discussion starter.

Four main characters of the Reformation are profiled, along with their special part in Christian (and Western) history. Watching it, I was reminded of Francis Schaeffer's *How Should We Then Live?* film series, or the more recent offerings on biblical archaeology and Western thought.

The difference with *Ideas That Changed The World* is that it is unashamedly theological. By this I mean that Dominic Steele is aiming, not for pre-evangelism or historical documentary, but to draw specific theological points from the Reformation and make sure his viewers understand their origins in the Bible, their profound historical influence and the changes they can make in your life today.

Let's leave it to the Oxford dons to do their anniversary histories (and no doubt excoriate Luther and Calvin) – this is bite-size Bible study with an historical background.

Steele travels to Europe and England to plot the course of these Reformation giants and sets the scene in the first segment of each of the four episodes: Faith Alone, Grace Alone, Bible Alone and Christ Alone. There's space between segments for guided discussion and then, back in Sydney, he tells a little of his own journey of faith and draws conclusions. The differences between Catholic and Protestant theology are well handled, with insights from the presenter's own experience growing up as a Catholic.

This is not Dominic Steele's first video series. His *Introducing God* DVDs have been well used here and overseas. He was formerly a radio journalist, now turned preacher. As such, video is probably not his most comfortable medium and the early scenes reveal that. But by the time he mounts Calvin's pulpit in Episode 2, he is into his stride and delivering a relaxed narrative.

The segments really move along so they hold the attention well. Filming makes the most of the historical locations and I particularly appreciate the snappy contributions of well-known faces such as Ashley Null, Kirsten Birkett and Mark Thompson. Andrew Atherstone from Wycliffe Hall in Oxford also gives some great insights, particularly in the segment about William Tyndale.

The DVDs are available for online purchase, along with workbooks for the discussion breaks. Given that we are nearly one quarter of the way through the Reformation's 500th anniversary year the series is well timed to get your group on board and seize the opportunity to celebrate the theological cornerstones of our faith. Because, to paraphrase Roy and HG, "Too much Reformation is never enough".

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For more information on the series you can go to matthiasmedia.com.au.

Prepare for culture change

BRUCE HALL

Changing Lanes, Crossing Cultures: Equipping Christians and churches for ministry in a culturally diverse society

by Andrew Schachtel, Choon-Hwa Lim and Michael K. Wilson

Independent Books



WHETHER YOU HAVE BEEN THINKING AND WORKING THROUGH CROSS-CULTURAL ministry issues for a long time or just beginning, whether you are ministering with your church or working somewhat independently, this book will stimulate, challenge and equip you for cross-cultural ministry.

The authors – who each have local and overseas cross-cultural ministry experience – take us on a journey through the why, what, how and when of reaching Australia's ethnic minorities and developing vibrant churches that are effective in ministering across cultures.

Changing Lanes, Crossing Cultures may be read with benefit or studied with others. There are six modules with an outline of how to proceed in each, examples from various ministry situations and discussion questions at the end of each module.

The modules examine the biblical motivation for ministry across cultures. How does this inform our cross-cultural ministry convictions?

Module 2 notes that a large proportion of our population was born overseas, that millions routinely speak languages other than English at home and large numbers follow a religion quite different from Christianity. What are the implications for Australian Christians? An appendix outlines these demographic realities.

Hindrances to ministry across cultures and possible solutions are dealt with in Module 3, while Module 4 looks at increasing our cultural intelligence and helps focus our attitude, thinking and skill development in ways that encourage us to behave sensitively and appropriately towards people of different backgrounds. It will also help us to acquire and practice relevant cross-cultural skills.

Module 5 looks at leadership in cross-cultural situations. The authors say that, "We are all leaders in one way or another, regardless of our cultural backgrounds. It is hoped that this module offers some practical approaches that everyone in the church, whatever their function... can take towards helping their church become more multiethnic and hence more relevant to... their community".

In Module 6 the question "Where to from here?" is asked. If you decide that some changes are needed to make your church more multicultural and to foster cross-cultural ministry, what are the next steps? The authors give 11 implementation tips that apply to many areas of planning but have particular application to cross-cultural ministry.

This book is a very helpful and practical guide to individuals and churches to move forward in serving the new communities that God is bringing to our country (you can order it online at interserve.org.au/learn/resources/books/changing-lanes/).

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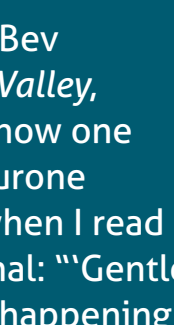
The Rev Bruce Hall is the Sydney Diocese's cross-cultural ministry consultant.

FOR THOU ART WITH ME...

Our Journey Through The Valley, by Mike and Bev Robinson

Self-published (see www.barnabasnetwork.com)

Review by Stuart Adamson



Motor neurone disease has rightly earned a reputation as one of the cruellest illnesses there is. As I understand it, it has no known cure, there is no known cause, no treatment and its progress leads inexorably to a death that renders the sufferer – and I use that word advisedly – increasingly unable to use their limbs, incapable of speaking, powerless and in pain until the muscles that sustain breathing fail and they die.

She writes this in the book's first section, which is a short, fly-on-the-wall account of what it was like for them both in the first year after her diagnosis. This statement seemed not at all about facing the reality of MND! Bev's writing was almost otherworldly in its idealism. But as I continued to read, I realised something I have

Not that there aren't heartbreaking flashes of emotion in Bev hinting at deeper pain. At one stage Mike sees her crying like a little girl in the

One of the most real aspects of the book is the way in which Mike, a Baptist pastor suffering from Parkinson's Disease, wrestles honestly with the deepest issues of his heart while never turning his back on God. He becomes a modern-

Amid her pain Bev shares searing insight, referenced in the third and longest part of the book, "Letters to Bev", in which Mike chronicles his process of grief after her death. He discovers

So as I turned the pages of Mike and Bev Robinson's *Our Journey Through The Valley*, subtitled "The inspirational story of how one couple faced the reality of Motor Neurone Disease", I became a bit suspicious when I read the following sentence in Bev's journal: "'Gentle' is the way I see the changes that are happening to my body; gentle in the way the disease moves along, almost as a backdrop to life".

come across a number of times in chaplaincy ministry: her words were those of someone being prayed for by many, many people at the time of writing. Her God-given heart's desire was to be a blessing to others and bring glory to Jesus. She also had been given eyes to see God's grace in many dimensions.

face of her suffering and the heartache of those around her. At another he writes tenderly of his wife's admission, "I can't do this any more".

day psalmist – bold, real and edgy, but faithful. He shares priceless insights with his readers that are clearly the product of his sustained reflection on life experience and Scripture.

the following fitting words in Bev's journal and shares them with readers: "The key is Christ in you, not you in another set of circumstances". Amen, sister. I am so glad God gave you the grace to live that truth out. Highly recommended.

The Rev Stuart Adamson is a hospital chaplain and pastoral supervisor.