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# Southern CROSS

THE JOURNAL OF SYDNEY ANGLICANS

## Culture club

TRANSLATING CHRISTIANITY TO PEOPLE FROM  
NON-ENGLISH SPEAKING BACKGROUNDS

- + General Synod wrap-up
- & Windsor's double century

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**I think our faith shouldn't be blind but centred on knowledge and critical thinking.**

**Michelle Lucas**  
Sydney News

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**PUBLISHER:** Anglican Media Sydney  
PO Box W185  
Parramatta Westfield 2150

**PHONE:** 02 8860 8860

**FAX:** 02 8860 8899

**EMAIL:** [info@anglicanmedia.com.au](mailto:info@anglicanmedia.com.au)

**MANAGING EDITOR:** Russell Powell

**EDITOR:** Judy Adamson

**ART DIRECTOR:** Stephen Mason

**ADVERTISING MANAGER:** Kylie Schleicher

**PHONE:** 02 8860 8850

**EMAIL:** [ads@anglicanmedia.com.au](mailto:ads@anglicanmedia.com.au)

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**SUBSCRIPTIONS:** Garry Joy

**PHONE:** 02 8860 8861

**EMAIL:** [subs@anglicanmedia.com.au](mailto:subs@anglicanmedia.com.au)

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## A double ton for Jesus

Two centuries of service: Windsor rector the Rev Chris Jones studies a historical window from the church pulpit.  
PHOTO: Judy Adamson

FOR ANYTHING IN MODERN AUSTRALIA TO REACH ITS 200TH ANNIVERSARY IS NOTEWORTHY indeed, so it's not surprising that St Matthew's, Windsor is having a week-long celebration this month to mark the occasion.

The church's bicentenary, which marks the laying of its foundation stone on October 11, 1817 by Governor Lachlan Macquarie, will feature three main events: an educational church service for schools on October 11, a "Big Bash" in McQuade Park with a community fête, an RAAF fly-over, historical reenactments and a performance by Colin Buchanan (October 14), plus a church service on October 15 attended by Archbishop Glenn Davies, Governor of NSW General the Hon David Hurley, and the Mayor of Hawkesbury, Mary Lyons-Buckett.

A big focus is obviously the colourful history of the striking Georgian-era church, which takes in many of the early personalities of the colony.

"It's a church that has a very prominent place in early colonial history in Sydney," Windsor rector the Rev Chris Jones says. "Figures such as Arthur Greenway, Governor Lachlan Macquarie and others had prominent roles in the establishment and life of this church, and many early settlers were buried here, so many families can trace their history through us."

"Two of the first couples married by Richard Johnson in the colony lived and were buried here, for instance. Robert Cartwright was a minister here, at [St Luke's] Liverpool and at St James', King Street, and was also a correspondent of William Wilberforce in the UK."

"The history is rich, and this allows us an opportunity to invite the community in to experience that as well as the life of our church."

The foundation stone's own story is one worth telling. According to Mr Jones, on October 11, 1817, Governor Macquarie laid the first convict-marked sandstone block with a "holy" dollar underneath it, saying, "God prosper St Matthew's Church". The coin was stolen that night, but the stone was re-laid the next day with another "holy" dollar underneath it. When this too, was stolen the stone was laid for a third and final time – without the temptation of gold.

As much as he enjoys telling these tales, Mr Jones says the bicentennial celebrations – which are being put on with the support and involvement of local government, local associations and other groups such as the National Trust – are an example of the church's desire to show off its history in a way that draws people into the story of Jesus.

"We're trying to tell our stories to the wider Australian community, whose histories often intersect here, but we also want to grow the body of Christ here, and for each of us to support each other in that," he says.

"We want to be a credible presence for Jesus Christ in the Hawkesbury, which reminds us to watch our behaviour, but it also says to those outside that we want to be on about Jesus. There's a series of people around us who love our buildings but don't yet love Jesus, and we want to work on that."

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## Service to high flyers



The Force is with him: Flight Lieutenant Stephen Gibbins with his wife Hayley and son Tommy.  
PHOTO: CPL Shannon McCarthy, Department of Defence

AIR FORCE CHAPLAINCY IS CONTINUING TO GROW AS AN INCREASING NUMBER OF CHAPLAINS cater to the emotional and spiritual needs of men and women serving Australia in difficult jobs – often in far-flung locations.

The Ven Kevin Russell, Archdeacon to the Air Force and head of RAAF's chaplaincy program, says that in many respects the job of an Air Force chaplain is like that of other personnel: varied, fast-paced and frequently unpredictable.

"It's a very expeditionary ministry in many respects," he says. "We can go at the drop of a hat, we have people on 24 hours' notice to go all the time, and there is a mix of people – some in part-time ministries in main centres here in Australia, others on deployment in conflict areas or operating bases around the world."

"At the end of the day there's a lot of caring for people, being present for those dealing with stressful situations, whether it be people in remote deployments, in training, or in areas at the high end with command responsibility. We are chaplains not just for one segment of the Air Force, but for all of it."

Stephen Gibbins is a first-year student at Moore College who served in the RAAF as a C17A Globemaster III pilot, but he left this high-flying, well-paid job after two tours to answer a call to ministry and deepen his own knowledge of God. He is studying in a RAAF-sponsored undergraduate scheme, aiming to complete a Bachelor in Theology before serving as a parish assistant for two years, then being commissioned as an Anglican chaplain to the Air Force.

"When I first joined the Air Force I was encouraged by a guy I was reading the Bible with to consider full-time ministry," he says. "That was the first time anyone had suggested that to me, and I was pretty locked in to being a pilot at that stage. But ever since then that was an open question in my mind – while still trusting in God's sovereignty and that he had placed me where I was."

"But eventually I saw an opportunity in the undergraduate traineeship for Air Force chaplaincy to not only further my own knowledge of God at college, but eventually be able to serve the force and to serve Jesus in a different way, as a chaplain."

Gibbins says he got a few surprised responses from fellow pilots on announcing his career swap, but was also surprised by how warmly it was generally received.

"Perhaps it's because of the circles I was in [that] people were fairly supportive," he says. "I think also some people were excited to think about having a chaplain who has been exactly where they've been. All chaplains, by nature, are empathetic people, but I think it will be helpful to go in having first-hand experience in the same job the people I chat to are doing."

Michelle Philp came to chaplaincy from another direction – through a long-held love for ministry in regional areas. A native of Wagga Wagga who also has ministry experience in centres such as Sydney and Canberra, she was introduced to the idea of Air Force chaplaincy through chance conversations.

"I was mostly focusing on my ministry, T2Women, at the time, which [gives] women outside the college and ministry apprenticeship systems training in leading one-to-one Bible reading," she says. "While I was getting that started in more regional areas, people were mentioning to me the opportunities available in Air Force chaplaincy."

"I've been in a lot of different churches and met a lot of defence personnel, particularly in Canberra, so it was something I had been curious about but hadn't explored deeply. I went to a chaplaincy open day in August last year, thought it was something I could be involved in, so I signed up and have been working three days a week since."

Ms Philp says the experience of being a chaplain has shown her the kinds of stresses and experiences that come with being a serviceman or woman in the Air Force, and the need for there to be chaplains who provide a safe space.

"There are separate medical and psychological departments and we would refer people in real need to those services straight away," she says, "but if people need a confidential listening ear, or somewhere to talk about the bigger questions of life, that is what we are here for."

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# Fine ministry on the Rhine

**SAILING DOWN THE RHINE** MIGHT SOUND MORE LIKE A HOLIDAY THAN A MISSION FIELD BUT AN international group of volunteers – including a few Australians – is looking to flip expectations by taking a boat down the river and running evangelism and mission activities in riverside towns and communities.

The team, put together by Operation Mobilisation, is trialling the new venture in a three-month tour, sailing the riverboat *Andante* from Arnhem in The Netherlands to Strasbourg in France from late December to the end of March.

David and Jeanie Ough, members of Sylvania Anglican Church, will be serving onboard as, respectively, manager of operations and assistant to the director of operations.

“We don’t often think of unreached people in Europe, but the reality is there are many people in Europe who haven’t heard about the gospel – including many migrants who have arrived in the past few years and live near riverside communities,” Mr Ough says.

“So this is really an opportunity for OM to take its ship-based ministries and retool them on a riverboat.”

One of the volunteers for the Rhine boat mission, Craig Jordan (right), has been working with OM for two years and, at the time of writing, was volunteering on the *Logos Hope* for its tour of the Caribbean and Central and South America.

A native of Albany in Western Australia, he says his calling to shipboard ministry has made use of his skills as a tradesman.

“My home church, Albany Baptist, has long been a big supporter of missions and I remember growing up and hearing the missionaries come on a Sunday and tell their stories,” he says. “So I have always known about the OM ship ministry and even had the opportunity to visit one of their ships when it came to Albany.”

By the Spirit’s promptings some years later Mr Jordan was himself challenged to “take a step of faith, leave my comfortable life and go serve God where I would have to trust and find my strength in him”. So he joined OM on its seafaring missions.

A typical day for Mr Jordan on the *Logos Hope* involves helping to maintain the vessel and managing deck maintenance stores, but other roles on the ship deal more directly with visitors, including a book ministry. All crew, regardless of their official role, have at least one day set aside a week for interacting with visitors.

He is yet to hear what particular role he will have on the *Andante*, but adds that anyone involved with OM ministry must start with a heart for service – the rest will follow.

“There are many practical skills that have been handy to have from my previous experience as a vehicle upholsterer,” Mr Jordan says.

“But above all you need a willingness to serve and put others before yourself. Or as OM would put it, being FAT [flexible, adaptable and teachable] is most important. Anyone can learn skills but having a servant heart comes from God and it’s only from him that we have the capacity to serve sacrificially for him.”

OM Australia is recruiting for its *Andante* riverboat tour. For information click on “short-term mission trips” at [www.om.org.au](http://www.om.org.au)



# Decisions at General Synod

All hands: taking a vote at General Synod.

RUSSELL POWELL

## National church unified on child protection

DISCUSSIONS ON CHILD PROTECTION AND REDRESS FOR SURVIVORS DOMINATED THE TRIENNIAL Synod of the Anglican Church of Australia held last month in Queensland.

More than 250 delegates from across Australia met at the Twin Waters resort on the Sunshine Coast, just days after hearing the news that the Bishop of Gippsland, Kay Goldsworthy, was elected the first female Archbishop in Australia.

Bishop Goldsworthy will replace Archbishop Roger Herft, who stepped down one year early after criticism at the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse that he had not acted decisively on allegations of child abuse while Bishop of Newcastle.

She will take up her position in February next year.

On the opening day of Synod the Primate, Melbourne Archbishop Philip Freier, renewed an apology to survivors and their families.

"Anglicans have been truly shocked and dismayed at the unfolding in the Royal Commission of the scope of our failure to tackle child sexual abuse within the Church, and the depth of survivors' pain and suffering," he said. "We are deeply ashamed of the many ways in which we have let down survivors, both in the way we have acted and the way we have failed to act."

Debate on child protection took most of the first two days, leading to a resolution that introduced national rules, binding on church workers and subject to regular independent and public audits.



The legislation was moved by Garth Blake, SC (left), who headed General Synod's Royal Commission working group.

Mr Blake, from Sydney, called it "a seminal moment for the Anglican Church because the rules were binding for the first time and because the church would be publicly accountable".

The legislation, the Safe Ministry to Children Canon, passed unanimously but the measures also need to be passed at each diocesan Synod.

Earlier, General Synod had been addressed by Robert Fitzgerald, one of the commissioners of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.

He called for a clear response from Synod members, saying, "We obviously hope that this church can be a leader among religious institutions" in responding to the problem of child abuse.

At the next day's session, Synod voted to establish an independent company to handle complaints from and compensation to abuse survivors. Such a move will enable the Church to participate in the Commonwealth redress scheme when it is introduced.

Mr Blake told Synod that the Church needed to face its moral responsibility, including financial consequences, to the survivors of child sexual abuse.

He said the Anglican Church had paid more than \$30 million to victims so far, but the financial commitment required next would be much greater than that.

"It will cause significant pain and hardship, but nonetheless is the right thing to do," Mr Blake said. "We will be paying for a long time to come for the sins of our fathers and of our colleagues."

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## Man-woman marriage reinforced

The issue of same-sex marriage was raised in the Primate's opening address to General Synod, when he indicated he would vote "No" in the Government's postal survey and added that "the doctrine of the *Book of Common Prayer* remains unchanged, that marriage is between a man and a woman, under God, forsaking all others until death parts them".

Synod also acknowledged relationship with the Scottish Episcopal Church had been impaired by the SEC's Canon on Marriage being altered to remove the definition that marriage is between a man and a woman, allowing same-sex couples to marry in church.

The Dean of Sydney, Kanishka Raffel, said, "Across the Anglican communion, churches are trying to work out how best to love people of diverse sexual orientation. This is important because all people are made in God's image; and God hates nothing that he has made. It is important because all people are to be valued, honoured and loved not only because they are created in God's image but because of Christ's costly redeeming love for them."

He said the Scottish decision was "a well-intentioned but tragic misstep. It fails to love gay people by misunderstanding marriage. It fails to honour the Lord by rejecting his word. It fails to preserve the unity of the Church which is founded on that word". In seconding Dean Raffel's motion, Archdeacon David Bassett of Adelaide said it was "not about the postal vote or whether the Government will legalise same-sex marriage. This is about the doctrine of our church... what does Scripture teach us about marriage?"

The motion included a prayer that the SEC "will return to the doctrine of Christ in this matter and that impaired relationships will be restored".

## Double move on domestic violence

IN TWO MOTIONS, THE SYNOD MOVED TO CONDEMN DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE IN ALL its forms, saying churches are committed to being safe places for all people, especially children and vulnerable adults.

In the first motion, moved by Melbourne's Bishop Stephen Hale and seconded by Sydney's Archdeacon Kara Hartley, Synod described domestic violence as sin, saying Scripture should never be twisted to justify or excuse any abuse.

The motion said, "No victim of domestic abuse should ever be pressured to forgive, submit to, or restore a relationship with an offender".

General Synod affirmed that churches should "work to protect those experiencing domestic abuse as a first priority".

The speeches made it clear that domestic violence encompassed not only physical but also psychological abuse such as denigration, controlling and isolating behaviour.



In her seconding speech Archdeacon Hartley (left), the Archdeacon for Women in Sydney, spoke passionately about the effects of domestic violence, saying it was "a problem in our country and it's a problem in our church. One case is a case too many. For some in this room, this very debate may be a very painful discussion on a personal level.

"As the Primate said in his address, there is no biblical teaching which endorses violence in marriage. There is no biblical teaching, for example, which says a wife has simply to endure such violence.

"The biblical principle of marriage is self-sacrificial love. In passages like Ephesians 5, a husband is called to love his wife as Christ loved the church, giving himself up for her. There simply is no demand to slave-like servility of a wife to her husband. It is a misuse or twisting of Scripture for a husband to justify this evil behaviour from the Bible.

"This is a moment where we as a national church can affirm our commitment to care and support victims of domestic violence in our churches, calling perpetrators to repent, and making churches safe places for all people."

The motion also gave thanks "for those women and men, clergy and lay people, who have faithfully supported, cared for and protected such victims in our churches and communities. However, we also confess with deep shame that domestic abuse has occurred among those who attend our churches, and even among some in leadership. We apologise for those times our teaching and pastoral care has failed to adequately support victims and call perpetrators to account."

After the initial motion, the Synod also voted to consider studying the prevalence of family violence inside the church.

The General Synod requested its Standing Committee to look at professionally designed and independent research into the nature and extent of family violence among Anglicans. Other churches may be invited to join the research.

University of Western Australia lecturer Dr Renae Barker said a recent ABC series on violence inside the church relied on outdated overseas research with little relevance to Australia. It was important to have proper evidence to set against these claims, she said.

## Contact MPs on these social issues, Anglicans told

The final day of General Synod saw motions raised on two pressing social issues.

Members voted to urge the Federal Government to take another 12,000 refugees from Syria and Iraq, especially Christians and other minorities.

The Church also asked the Government to resettle in Australia, by Christmas, any refugees and asylum seekers still on Manus Island and Nauru as of October 1 – and for the Government to partner with churches in healing and resettling the refugees.



The second motion was on euthanasia and assisted suicide legislation, moved by Dr Denise Cooper-Clarke (left) from Melbourne and seconded by Sydney delegate Dr Karin Sowada. It noted General Synod resolution 81/10, passed seven years ago, affirming the sanctity of life: that life is God's gift and that our task is to protect, nurture and sustain life to the best of our ability. Synod previously expressed its opposition to euthanasia in 1995 in response to legislation passed in the Northern Territory, later overturned by Federal Parliament.

"Suicide is a major social problem and we rightly spend resources aimed at reducing the suicide rate," Dr Cooper-Clarke told the Synod. "If assisted dying were legalised we would, on one hand, be promoting suicide prevention and on the other, promoting suicide as a legitimate choice."

Dr Sowada cited the short-lived Northern Territory legislation as the only time a Parliament has voted in favour of euthanasia. "Since then it has not been legal anywhere, despite numerous attempts in various parliaments," she said.

The motion recognised the contribution made by people of faith to public debate and urged Australian Anglicans to contact their MPs to express their views, particularly in NSW and Victoria where legislation on euthanasia and assisted suicide will be debated this year.

# New head for big province



President of the Seychelles Danny Faure (left) congratulates the new Primate of the Indian Ocean, Archbishop James Wong.

**BISHOP JAMES WONG OF THE SEYCHELLES HAS BEEN ELECTED AND CONSECRATED AS THE NEW Archbishop and Primate of the Province of the Indian Ocean, replacing Archbishop Ian Ernest – who has been Primate for the past 11 years.**

The province covers more than 230,000 square kilometres in a broad sweep of ocean east of the African continent, overseeing former French territories and French-speaking islands evangelised in the 19th century.

It comprises a population of more than 14 million people in Madagascar, Mauritius and the Seychelles, and will soon be joined by the French island of Reunion.

The new archbishop has been Bishop of the Seychelles since 2009. Before that, he was active in ministry on Mauritius – serving as an archdeacon and as general secretary of the Fellowship of Christian Churches of Mauritius, as well as chairing the local branch of Scripture Union.

Archbishop Wong was born on the small island of Rodrigues (650 kilometres east of Mauritius) but two years ago was granted Seychelles citizenship by President Danny Faure – who congratulated him on becoming the second Bishop of the Diocese of Seychelles to be elected to the position.

“Seychelles is proud, and we pray that God strengthens your pastoral zeal and fills you with courage and wisdom as you continue to dedicate your life service to the church in your new responsibilities,” President Faure said.

Archbishop Wong, who took office just after his election at the end of August, is already planning a restructure. He has foreshadowed the creation of one province encompassing Madagascar alone, and then another which would cover Mauritius and the Seychelles.



**FROM ROSEVILLE EAST... TO ROSEVILLE EAST**

The Rev Alby Lam has changed jobs without moving his ministry by becoming rector of St Barnabas', Roseville East in August.

Mr Lam had been fellowship leader of Grace Anglican Church – a church plant of Evangelism and New Churches – for the past three years, and throughout that time the congregation has met at Roseville East. St Barnabas' earlier morning services had allowed for the 11am meeting Grace Anglican needed so its Sunday service could flow naturally on to a fellowship lunch afterwards.

"At Grace Anglican 95 per cent of the people are from an Asian background – a few people married to someone in the congregation are the other five per cent!" Mr Lam says. "Even though with Grace and Roseville East there were two English-speaking family services, we were reaching out to different groups. We also had opportunities to do some things in partnership together, and that was going well."

The previous rector, the Rev Michael Kellahan, went part-time in 2015 so he could also work with think tank Freedom For Faith so, in time, Mr Lam began to take care of Roseville East's 9.30am service. Then Mr Lam became acting rector of the parish a little over six months ago when Mr Kellahan's role with FFF increased and he decided to devote himself fully to that ministry.

"It's an unusual situation," Mr Lam says. "Normally appointments don't come from within the parish... although strictly speaking I wasn't 'in' the parish but part of a separate church plant."

Grace Anglican is coming off ENC's books to merge with Roseville East, and all the congregations and church plants are meeting together to consider what that means – now and in the future.

"We're preaching through a partnership series at the moment [and] the intention behind that is, from the front, to raise those questions about who we are and the opportunities we have," Mr Lam says. "How can we be partners in a way to see God's church grow through Roseville East – now as Barneys and Grace and Castle Cove together?"

"A number of people from each of the services have become an integration team of sorts, thinking through what that looks like, and how we bring these congregations together so we're all part of this in terms of where we want things to be heading as a church.

"God's paved the way here, so that's exciting... we look forward to seeing where God can take us and how he can use us in terms of mutual blessing together – and do the hard yards to keep growing things."



**FAMILY (SKILLS) FIRST**

After more than a decade as rector of the parish of Austimer in the Wollongong suburbs, the Rev Steve Dinning became Anglicare's first family skills facilitator at the beginning of last month.

"The aim, in time, is to have one of these roles in each region, but I'll be focusing first off in the Wollongong and the Georges River regions," he says. "Having been in the Wollongong region for some years it's a natural starting point with the connections and knowledge I have of the area and the churches here.

"The idea behind the role is to work with churches on an individual basis to equip and empower families to build family life – whether that's families within the church community or as a resource to the local community around them.

"It's a skills-based and capacity-building idea where families can be skilled up for parenting, for marriage, for relationships. What are you observing, what needs are in that area and what could be done to help families get better at parenting and growing in skills in their married life? How can Anglicare work with you in bringing that to bear?"

Mr Dinning trained as a social worker prior to entering full-time ministry, and says that as he considered whether he was the best person to stay at Austinmer "for the next chapter" of its life, he found his enthusiasm fired up by different types of counselling ministries.

"I still had energy and vision for leading the parish [but] I didn't want to get to the point where I had nothing left to give and people were wishing I'd left three years ago!" he says. "I didn't want to get to that point for myself or the parish.

"Part of the process of thinking what could happen in the future was a move into the counselling, family skills and relationship side and bringing the Christian worldview to bear in that area. That has always been a passion of mine so my prayer was, 'God, if this is a path you want me to go down, make the way!'"

Mr Dinning hoped that any return to a social work kind of role would be one he could combine openly with his faith – so when the new Anglicare job was advertised, he decided to apply.

He explains that part of the plan with the new job is to train people in parishes to train others in relationship and parenting skills, or facilitating the work of another trainer from Anglicare or elsewhere.

"The starting point is parenting and relationship skills, although you could easily foresee it moving into an area around mental health as well," he says. "But the key thing that will be driving it is to equip people for the building of family life and relationship under God."

**NEEDS IN EDEN**

The need for pastors and pastoral care on the NSW far south coast has resulted in the Rev Michael Palmer and his wife Petra packing up their lives after 13 years in the parish of Vaucluse and Rose Bay, and heading south for a range of new ministry opportunities in Eden.

Mr Palmer heard about a ministry need from some old friends who live in the area, and it got him thinking that he might be able to meet this need himself.

"The Sydney Diocese is rich in resources but our rural areas aren't," he says. "That's certainly true of small country towns and Eden is no exception.

"It's a great town but they do struggle to get clergy... the little church that I've been asked to become a pastor of [St George's, Uniting] is only able to pay me 30 per cent of a wage but it really punches above its weight locally. It runs community lunches, work for the dole programs, it's setting up a community pantry, it runs the local markets once a month... it's got a really interesting outreach in the community and is well respected.

"I did think about going there on a 30 per cent wage, going back on the tools – I used to be a carpenter – and being a tentmaker for this tiny little parish. But at the same time I was looking around for something that might have a greater synergy with the parish job. So I spoke to (the Bishop of Canberra-Goulburn) Stuart Robinson, told him of my interest in this little church and asked what opportunities there might be in the Anglican Church in the area where I could be of service."

As a result, Mr Palmer will do a three-year pilot of a rural chaplaincy program with Anglicare, operating two days a week out of the Anglicare shop in Eden. The aim is to pastorally follow up those who come to the shop, care for them, visit them and "seek to share with them the love of Jesus".

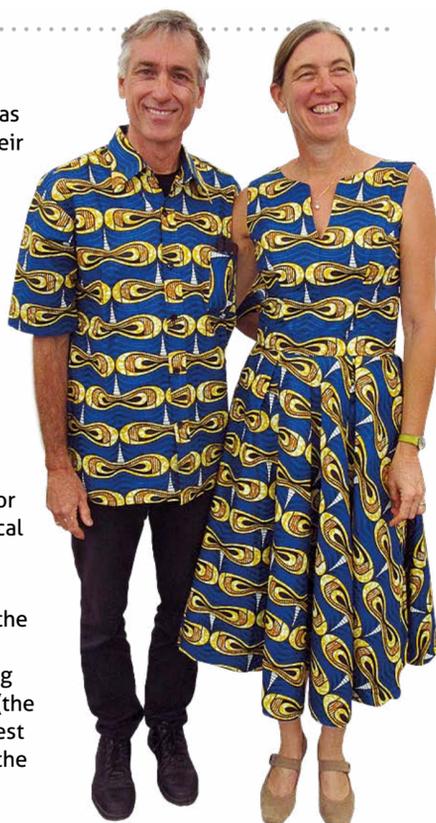
Another job has also been added to his list: "Lou Oakes from the Sapphire Coast Anglican Church contacted me and said they had been approached by Mission to Seafarers, asking if they would have enough staff capacity to spare one day a week for Mission to Seafarers' work out of Eden," he says.

"They realised they didn't have the spare capacity but they knew I was coming down... so they suggested the job to me. So, 60 per cent of my income will come from the Anglican Church through Anglicare and Mission to Seafarers, and 30 per cent through supplying ministry to the Uniting Church!"

There was sadness on all sides at the Palmers' departure from Vaucluse – they certainly hadn't been looking for a move before he heard about the needs in Eden. However, Mr Palmer says, "I think the parish is genuinely excited for us about this move and the opportunity it provides for Christian service.

"It's one of those situations where it all fell together in a strange sort of way, and if I'd said 'No' to all those roles [in Eden] it wasn't immediately obvious to me that they would be filled by somebody else. But I knew if I left St Michael's somebody else would come to minister and serve the parish.

"The Lord has opened up the doors for me to serve him in an under-resourced part of the world. We've put one foot forward in front of the other in following our Lord Jesus and this is just where it's taken us... It's going to be a privilege to work alongside a whole lot of diverse people in Eden – I'm really excited about it."



# Listen, learn, love

STEPHANIE KATE JUDD

THERE IS AN OCCASION FOR EVERYTHING, AND A TIME FOR EVERY ACTIVITY UNDER HEAVEN, says the Teacher. He surveys the breadth of human experience, observing a rhythm that governs it all: that, as the earth and all that fills it sways between times and seasons, so our human lives are also marked by different times. The key to living wisely is being able to recognise the occasion we inhabit and embrace the behaviours that befit it.

"A Time to Listen" was the name chosen by Northside Baptist for an event held last month on the topic of domestic and family violence (DFV) and the role of local churches in responding to it.

Given profile by the presence of ABC presenter Julia Baird on its platform, hundreds streamed into The Independent Theatre in North Sydney from across the denominational spectrum. The mood was as eager and hopeful for change as it was sombre and full of lament.

The format of the evening was primarily that of a panel discussion, facilitated by Baird. The conversation was wide-ranging, probing how DFV manifests itself in our church communities, what is already being done to respond to it and what each of us can do to make our churches safer.

To acknowledge that DFV is present in our communities is the crucial first step towards making them safer. It is an understandable human instinct to be reluctant to believe that the unthinkable could be playing out in our midst, but downplaying its reality is no longer an option available to church communities.

It is worth noting that this acknowledgement does not require an acceptance of a causal relationship between the teaching of male headship and domestic and family violence. If complementarian theology was the cause of DFV in our churches, then DFV would not be a problem in largely egalitarian dioceses such as Melbourne. Instead, DFV is pervasive throughout all of Australian society, without exception. What can be said is that DFV takes on a unique set of traits in the context of the doctrine of male headship.

The solution to redressing it in our churches isn't in the surgical removal of this teaching – that would be a misdiagnosis of the problem. It is in being alive to, and taking responsibility for, the ways in which the doctrine is susceptible to manipulation. It is in ensuring that we don't allow the patriarchy into the expression of our theology. It is in ensuring that the voices of women are heard, esteemed and attended to.

It is in being alert to the indicators of its misuse by abusers. It is in equipping our leaders to teach it in a way that specifically rejects DFV in all of its forms. It is in educating ourselves about the particular incarnations that DFV is likely to take in our church context.

The way of Christ is to abandon the posture of defensive self-justification and humbly confess our failures. So, it was proper for the tone of the evening to be one of repentance.

The rector of Darling Point – and a member of the panel – the Rev Dr Michael Jensen, apologised for being oblivious in the past to the ways abusers charm those in authority, and for the ways in which clergy may have inadvertently colluded with those who perpetrate harm. The Rev Dr Graham Hill from Morling College apologised for our collective failure to listen, and for failing to preserve churches as safe places for the vulnerable.

But this season of repentance and listening is not just beginning in our Diocese. While it has by no means finished its task, the wheels have been in motion for some years now.

Four years ago Sydney's Synod voted to provide clergy with more education about DFV and, in 2015, Standing Committee appointed a taskforce to address DFV in the Diocese. As a result, Moore College has a domestic and family violence policy, its students receive DFV training, and those who go on to be ordained attend an intensive workshop run by external experts.

The formal apology issued by the General Synod last month to victims of DFV was not a knee-jerk reaction to unfavourable media attention; it is the product of sustained efforts by those in leadership across the country over some time.

Many have been listening. Not all, and not always well. But there is a growing commitment to improve the way DFV is dealt with, so that our pastors may better shepherd those the Lord has entrusted to their care.

It was also proper for the emphasis of the evening to be one of practical action towards change, given repentance necessarily assumes an active posture. After training our leaders to better identify and respond to DFV, the next step is ensuring our church communities are educated about the particular characteristics of DFV in the context of the local church. This is key to becoming active people who are better equipped to spot abuse.

To this end, advocacy group Common Grace has been developing a catalogue of resources titled "Safer", to be launched late this year on its website. Next year BaptistCare will roll out a pilot DFV program ("More than Skin Deep") to 1000 Baptist churches, which will be available to other churches upon request.

Several friends noted that a key take-home of the night was how an important part of making our communities safer is to teach young people about what healthy relationships – and healthy conflict in particular – look like, rather than just teaching them to restrain desire until marriage. Another reflected on the importance of being aware of the narratives being weaved into our church cultures about the nature of masculinity and the roles played by men and women.

I found it devastating to realise that forgiveness and endurance, both powerful tools in the Christian life, can be turned into weapons in the hands of an abuser to pressure a victim to remain in an abusive relationship. But we can take heart in the knowledge that he who dwells in us is greater than the powers at work in the world, and we can arm ourselves with resources to make us better observers of the undercurrents in our communities, and better listeners to those who share their stories with us.

We need to adopt a posture of repentant action to change any unhelpful culture in our communities, but in order for that change to be effective we need to understand better what is happening so we know what actions to take. At the heart of that understanding is listening – not passively, but actively and attentively.

May the Lord give us ears to hear.

# There he stood



DR GLENN DAVIES

**5**00 YEARS AGO, A YOUNG (34-YEAR-OLD) MONK POSTED A NOTICE ON THE DOOR of the castle church in Wittenberg. This was the normal place for posting notices and, like an early 16<sup>th</sup>-century Facebook (or Facedoor), it was used for the purpose of inviting discussion. Little did Martin Luther know that his 95 *Theses* would start a movement which would see the reformation of the church, the benefits of which we still enjoy today.

His reason for posting these short, individual theses was to provoke debate about the whole concept of indulgences. Pope Leo X was short of money for the reconstruction of St Peter's Basilica in Rome, which his predecessor had demolished to make way for a grander edifice on the same site, suitably adorned with Michelangelo's artwork.

Indulgences had developed from the acts of contrition for doing penance to make amends for sin and to shorten one's time in purgatory. For those with fewer sins, their penance could be applied to those currently in purgatory, thus setting them free for their journey to heaven. However, it suited the purpose of Pope Leo to grant indulgences not merely upon the saying of a few Hail Marys or acts of contrition, but by the payment of money, which had the double benefit of shortening one's time in purgatory as well as adding to the Pope's coffers for the reconstruction of St Peter's.

Johann Tetzel, a Dominican friar, was one of the chief spruikers for this fundraising campaign and it was his arrival in Germany that sparked Luther's outrage.

Tetzel's plea to the people was summarised by the ditty: "As soon as the coin in the coffer rings, the soul from purgatory springs."

By contrast, Luther stated:

"Every truly repentant Christian has a right to full remission of penalty and guilt, even without letters of pardon" (Thesis 36).

"Christians are to be taught that if the Pope knew the exactions of the pardon-preachers, he would rather that St Peter's church should go to ashes, than that it should be built up with the skin, flesh and bones of his sheep" (Thesis 51).

"The true treasure of the church is the most holy gospel of the glory and grace of God" (Thesis 62).

Luther's 95 *Theses* gained more attention than he had expected and he soon found himself engaged in both private and public debates about the authority of the Scriptures over the authority of the Pope. During the ensuing years his thinking matured as he came to realise that justification is the article by which a church stands or falls. Thus his famous statement at the Diet of Worms in 1521. When asked to recant his writings, he declared.

"I cannot withdraw, for I am subject to the Scriptures I have quoted; my conscience is captive to the Word of God. It is unsafe and dangerous to do anything against one's conscience. Here I stand; I cannot do otherwise. So help me God. Amen."

As a Professor of Bible at the University of Wittenberg since 1512, Luther lectured students, preached sermons, debated scholars and became the most published author in Europe, writing more than 950 books – thus a book a fortnight for over 30 years! He translated the New Testament into German in 1522 and, in collaboration with others, the Old Testament was translated in 1534.

In the providence of God, the teachings of Luther came to England. Thomas Cranmer came into personal contact with the Continental Reformation on a visit to Germany in 1532, where he saw first hand the powerful effects of Luther's theology on the city of Nuremberg. When Henry VIII died in 1547, a year after Luther's death, Cranmer was ready to publish the *First Book of Homilies*, to be read in every English church.

His first homily addressed the ignorance of the Bible among the English people, under the title: "Fruitful Exhortation to the Reading of Holy Scripture". Like Luther, Cranmer turned to the Scriptures as the only authority for Christian faith and re-established the apostolic doctrine of justification by faith.

We have much to be thankful for, in the providence of God, that these men stood their ground amid the corruption of the church and the corruption of the gospel. As Anglicans we have a great heritage, for which Thomas Cranmer was willing to die. For he understood the great truth of the Scriptures that it is God alone who saves us from the wrath to come, through the life and death of his Son.

Though written 470 years ago, Cranmer's homily on salvation still rings true:

"For the more full understanding hereof, it is our parts and duty ever to remember the great mercy of God; how that, all the world being wrapped in sin by breaking of the law, God sent his only Son our Saviour Christ into this world to fulfil the law for us, and by the shedding of his most precious blood to make a sacrifice and satisfaction or (as it may be called) amends to his Father for our sins, to assuage his wrath and indignation conceived against us for the same."

SC

## A PRAYER FOR THE MONTHS OF SEPTEMBER AND OCTOBER

Father God, we praise you that we are fearfully and wonderfully made in your image, male and female, to live for your glory and the honour of your name. We thank you for the gift of marriage, your plan for the nurture of children and the health of our society. We pray for our nation, as it contemplates overturning your good design for men and women. Give us courage to serve you without fear as we declare your truth for the good of all Australians. Give us wisdom and grace as we seek to persuade our friends and family that God's way is best. Grant us humility, compassion and steadfastness when we encounter views to the contrary.

May you be pleased to bless our nation so that marriage remains as the union of a husband and wife, in accordance with your purposes and the benefit of all. We ask this in the name of your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ.

Amen

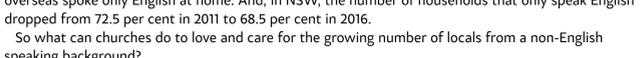


Help with English: Michael Hickman assists a student from Argentina. PHOTO: Anna Radkovic

As Australia becomes ever more multicultural, we need to gain skills in relating to people from a non-English speaking background – and introducing them to Jesus, writes **TARA SING**.

**A** CHINESE FATHER SAW A NEW SIGN OUTSIDE ROSEMEADOW ANGLICAN Church and concluded that this would be a good place to hear about Jesus. The very next Sunday, he arrived with his family and two very important questions. "He turned up one Sunday and asked me, 'Is there anyone here who can help us to know Jesus? Is there anyone here who can speak our language?'" says the Rev Brett Hall, rector of Rosemeadow and Appin. "I replied, 'Do you speak Cantonese? My wife speaks Cantonese. Let me go and get her.'"

Hall had only married recently, and marvels at God's providence of someone bilingual who was able to help a new family at their church.



Brett Hall with Andy, a Cantonese speaker interested in finding out about Jesus.

But what about the rest of us? The reality is that not every church has a bilingual member ready to assist in interpreting and welcoming people in their native tongue.

However, the chances of someone walking into an Australian church who is familiar with another language is increasing daily, with last year's Census reporting that fewer than half of those born overseas spoke only English at home. And, in NSW, the number of households that only speak English dropped from 72.5 per cent in 2011 to 68.5 per cent in 2016.

So what can churches do to love and care for the growing number of locals from a non-English speaking background?

"The question is, how do we make people feel most comfortable coming to church, especially if they are from a non-English speaking background and they feel that everyone else is a native English speaker?" asks the Rev John Bartik, rector at Bankstown. "They might question if Christianity is actually something for them."

Bartik knows what he's on about – he also works with Anglicare as the English as a Second Language (ESL) co-ordinator for the Georges River Region, helping churches to do ESL ministry effectively.

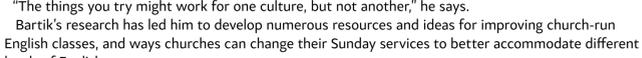
With his church located in an area that is highly multicultural, he sees that sharing the gospel with his local community must involve working hard to minister well to people from a non-English speaking background.

"We can't give up on ministering to all people just because society has become extraordinarily diverse," he says. "It means we have to put effort into this. The challenge for churches is to reach out to all kinds of people in such a way that they resonate with the truth without compromising the heart, depth and glory of those truths. Paul talks about this – being a Greek to Greeks and a Jew to Jews. He really wrestled with making the gospel appropriate for all people."

Despite what seems like a clear biblical call to minister to all nations, Bartik still comes across churches and people who are not enthusiastic about accommodating people from a non-English speaking background.

"There are churches who don't see the need," he says, adding that their resistance is often well-intentioned. "Their opposition is based on what has to happen to their regular members to properly accommodate low-level English speakers. They are concerned that it's patronising for native speakers who want to be engaged intellectually."

However, he is convinced that this shouldn't mean the teaching is dumbed down. He hopes to see churches working hard to present core gospel truths in a way that is challenging for English speakers, but clear and accessible for those who are still grasping the language.



Practice time: students and volunteers take a morning tea break as part of an ESL class at St Paul's, Carlingford.

## SERVE BY TEACHING

Bartik's role with Anglicare sees him equipping churches to do this well. He runs regular ESL training days where he trains churches in conversation skills so that people can engage despite language barriers.

He supports those who are teaching English in various ESL classes across different parishes. He also researches and proposes creative methods for doing effective ministry to people from a non-English speaking background. And one thing he has observed is there isn't a one-size-fits-all answer.

"The things you try might work for one culture, but not another," he says.

Bartik's research has led him to develop numerous resources and ideas for improving church-run English classes, and ways churches can change their Sunday services to better accommodate different levels of English.

His primary method for helping churches engage with people from a non-English speaking background is through English classes. These have been a great first step for people who have limited English to be cared for in a very practical way by members of a church community.

It is often also where people from different backgrounds and faiths will get the opportunity to meet and build friendships with Christians.

What makes an effective church ESL class? According to Bartik, it must teach clear language skills, have a time for morning tea and general conversation practice and also feature the Bible in some way. Some classes feature the Bible in English practice, whereas other churches may offer easy English Bible studies after the class or on another day.

He says the most successful English classes are run by people with a natural passion for evangelism and crossing cultures with the gospel.

"It's all about the person running the class," he says. "We have a woman [at the Bankstown church] who runs a simple English Bible study where she goes through Christian materials. She's very passionate, warm, loving and welcoming. She has such a knack for it so she does quite well. She's well fed and eager about seeing the gospel go forward."

"These people always have success because they spot those who are longing for something deeper in their lives and they give Christianity to them."

Bartik worries that in an attempt to reach people from a non-English speaking background, teachers may unintentionally water down the gospel and miss the rich Christian worldview that is there. "Our tendency is to boil things down and people will miss the rich Christian worldview that is there," he says. "We shy away from theology because we are scared that those attending class can't handle it. And at many times, they can't – but it still has to be there."

As teachers of ESL classes, we need to think about how we can stretch their understanding. What are they missing? What are we missing in our teaching to them? How can we take them to the next level? There needs to be an interchange between meeting them where they're at and showing them the bigger picture of the gospel."

## ESL SUPPORT

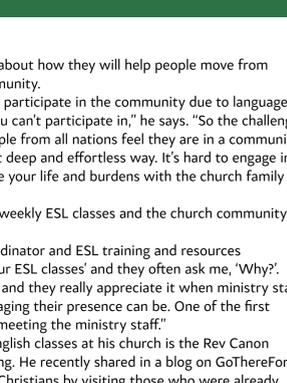
The team at Anglicare is keen to help churches in their ministry to people from a non-English speaking background. The primary way this happens is through supporting a parish's ESL ministry.

"We aim to help churches have the support they need to do ESL ministry effectively," says Mikey Bayliss, Anglicare's ESL training and resources co-ordinator. "We provide training, consultation and resources to churches. One thing we love to do is help churches connect with each other and share their ideas, joys and challenges."

He is always delighted to see churches working in partnership with one another and says that while Anglicare cannot provide teachers or physically teach ESL classes at so many different locations, it seeks to offer a network of assistance. "We can provide support through training or helping church classes share information and learn from each other," he says. "We want to help them continue serving and being sustainable."

In order to help churches begin an ESL ministry Anglicare offers basic training that covers a range of topics including cross-cultural communication, teaching skills and how to use the Bible as a text in class.

"It's a hard ministry," Bayliss says. "Some churches think that their standard of teaching should be better but we assure them that their students feel loved and so they are doing a great job. It's hard because students come and go and there can be a lack of stability. But English classes are a way to serve people from a non-English speaking background and it blesses the local community and the church community."



Anglicare's Northern Region ESL co-ordinator, Trish Bell, gives a presentation at one of the organisation's ESL training days.

## BUILDING BRIDGES

Bartik is also keen to see churches think strategically about how they will help people move from English classes to belonging to the wider church community.

"Christianity is so community-based that if you can't participate in the community due to language barriers, it feels like Christianity itself is something you can't participate in," he says. "So the challenge for us as churches is to provide a language where people from all nations feel they are in a community that knows them, loves them and engages in the most deep and effortless way. It's hard to engage in gospel truths alone, and if you don't feel you can share your life and burdens with the church family then it's not quite working."

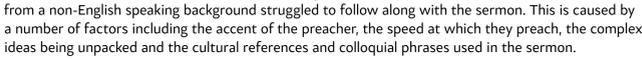
An easy way for churches to build bridges between weekly ESL classes and the church community is by having regular visits to ministry staff.

Mikey Bayliss, Anglicare's ESL Western Region co-ordinator and ESL training and resources co-ordinator, says: "I say to ministers, 'Go and visit your ESL classes' and they often ask me, 'Why?' But the students have such a respect for the minister and they really appreciate it when ministry staff attend. Ministry staff underestimate just how encouraging their presence can be. One of the first steps to people from ESL classes attending church is meeting the ministry staff."

One minister who has seen fruit from visiting the English classes at his church is the Rev Canon Sandy Grant from St Michael's Cathedral in Wollongong. He recently shared in a blog on GoThereFor.com that he hadn't realised he could easily meet non-Christians by visiting those who were already on church property. "Every week, people from all sorts of different backgrounds come voluntarily to our church to receive a genuinely useful service offered freely and lovingly," he writes. "They are frequently keen to make friends. So now I go along to the English classes every week possible, just for the 30-minute morning tea time of conversation practice."

"Every week I have fascinating discussions, learning about people's families, backgrounds, cultures, interests and often sharing something of my own family. They generally realise I am the minister, and sometimes that results in questions. Other times I find the natural opportunity to raise a matter of belief, moral values, or of practices like praying that are somehow related to God, Jesus, the Bible, or something that we do or get involved in at our church."

Grant has also tried to strengthen relationships by taking the friendship outside the classroom context, such as inviting some of the male students to join him in a "cultural occasion" like watching State of Origin together. He suggests others can do this in different ways – perhaps inviting students over for a meal, going out for coffee, or helping them with tasks and errands.



Take this down: intermediate English students from China, Sri Lanka and Iraq. PHOTO: Anna Radkovic

## GOOGLE IT?

As part of his quest to help churches include those with a lower level of English, Bartik has brainstormed several methods for accommodating people in a Sunday service. He noticed that many from a non-English speaking background struggled to follow along with the sermon. This is caused by a number of factors including the accent of the preacher, the speed at which they preach, the complex ideas being unpacked and the cultural references and colloquial phrases used in the sermon.

To help people follow along, he began to use Google Translate to adapt English sermons to other languages. He started by writing a simplified English sermon, pasted it into the translation program, and printed off copies of the sermon in a range of languages for his congregation.

With delight, he found it helped some cultures to engage with his Bible teaching. However, as he expanded to other languages, he ran into difficulties.

"Google Translate has worked quite well for Urdu, French and Spanish," he says, "but it doesn't work for Chinese or Arabic. Somehow the algorithms match for some languages but not for others."

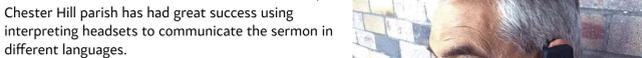
While Bartik was once a big advocate of Google Translate, he encouraged other churches to take advantage of the free translation platform online, he has since concluded there is no one approach to catering for a church's multi-language congregations.

"It's a shifting sands situation and there's no silver bullet, so my thinking must keep changing," he says. "The fact is that things don't work out for every culture, and this means that the work of adapting and including has to be an active work. You have to be willing to change thinking and directions. You can't be static."

Although there are many creative ways to help people of a non-English speaking background understand the gospel and connect to the church family, Bartik believes it is important for believers to have a common language, and for sermons to aim to challenge fluent English speakers and also accommodate those with lower English levels.

"The means of engaging lower-level English speakers doesn't have to compromise the native levels of language," he says. "There are times where a church is strong enough to provide a translation of a sermon, but that's pretty labour intensive and that can make it more difficult. It's quite powerful though, and the people who come along feel well looked after."

"Other churches will do a digest of a sermon – where someone who is bilingual will walk through the main points of a sermon after it has been preached. They can have native English-level input, and then process the content in their own language afterwards. That's quite powerful as well."



Getting started: a beginners' English class at St Paul's, Carlingford.

## IN-SERMON TRANSLATION

Down the road from Bartik's church in Bankstown, Chester Hill parish has had great success using interpreting headsets to communicate the sermon in different languages.

"Several languages started coming to our church," says assistant minister the Rev Nathan Cheung. "They kept coming because they enjoyed the warm fellowship and because of their faith in God, even though they understood very little of the service."

"It was really important for them to be included in the service, and God's word is given to us to understand so we really wanted them to have it in their heart language. We had a contact from another church who very generously came to translate for us, and so we bought headsets."

The full script of each sermon is sent to a translator a few days prior to preaching, and a speaker translates from English to Arabic can take four hours. During the sermon, the translator speaks into a small microphone that is then wirelessly transmitted to the earpieces. "It means I need to speak slower as well, which is an art to learn!" Cheung says.

He adds that buying the headsets has been revolutionary for the Syrian families at Chester Hill. "The first week we tried it, they had massive smiles across their faces and they were nearly in tears. One Syrian man said, 'I used to understand 0 per cent, now I understand 100 per cent.' It's allowed us to actually interact about the Bible now, as opposed to just small talk over morning tea."

Since introducing the headsets, one of the Syrian ladies in the congregation has stepped up to help with translation, and a Mandarin speaker has taken the initiative to start translation and a Mandarin Bible study, too. The parish team is looking at a range of creative ways to implement this during the service.

"Last month we trialled live Mandarin translation using hands-free on mobile phones and conference calls to each person as a makeshift solution!" Cheung says.



Headsets in action: listening to a sermon in Arabic.

## THE LANGUAGE BARRIER

Not speaking the same language is a problem that is often difficult to overcome, and this compromises our fellowship with other believers. However, our God is a speaking God and able to overcome any language barrier with his word.

Because we follow a God who invites people from all languages and cultures into his kingdom, we must work hard at overcoming language barriers with others and engaging in fellowship with them. Here are John Bartik's tips for encouraging conversation and relationship with people from non-English speaking backgrounds.

### 1. How you should speak

It's important to grade your own language and learn to adapt to the ability of the person you are speaking to. Do not try speaking loudly or like a robot – this doesn't work. Here's a more effective way:

- Use common, everyday words.
- Use short sentences.
- Use body language to assist what you're saying.
- Use pauses between phrases to allow people to process what you are saying.

### 2. What you should speak about

- Start with basic get-to-know-you questions. These are phrases they will have learnt. Ask about their family, job and where they live. To find out their English ability try asking a question with advanced grammar, such as "How long have you been living in Australia?" If they don't understand, simplify your question, such as "When did you come to Australia?"
- Embrace small talk. Chat about the weather, the news and daily life. The questions remain the same but the answers change, which allows them to continue exploring the English language. Repeat these questions whenever you see them to help them remember, and gradually extend the conversation.
- Compare cultures with each other. Find out about the hospitals, roads, shops and other aspects of life in their previous country.

Try using these ideas to help your conversations with people to overcome the language barrier and to improve your fellowship with each other.



These tips come from a video resource developed by John Bartik called "Overcoming the Language Barrier" (pictured). See <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3PTdIB7At0k&app=desktop>

## DIFFERENT LANGUAGE BIBLES

At Rosemeadow, Brett Hall's wife has continued to interpret for the Chinese family during the service and also at Bible study. "The father of the Chinese family often says, 'I feel bad that you work so hard to interpret', but he seems very appreciative," Hall says.

He works to ensure people have the Scriptures in the language they find easiest to read. Passages are printed from the internet for the Chinese family, and the church uses different resources to help those who speak other languages. But Hall reflects that having people from non-English speaking backgrounds in the parish has helped his congregation as a whole to grow in their sensitivity to others, especially in his Bible study.

At the moment, study members are working through the Gospel of Luke using an audio Bible. Sisi (left), who is originally from Rwanda, also listens along to a Rwandan version of the Bible with the YuVersion app. Hall also provides his group with Bible study questions a week in advance so those who are from a non-English speaking background can take them home and prepare.

"I think because we have other ethnicities represented at our church, there was already an awareness of other cultures," he says. "Sisi has been in our Bible study for a while, but we hadn't thought about how to better help her until the Chinese family arrived. It's caused us to consider different ways we can be helping people who have different levels of English in our church."

## FOR ALL NATIONS

While some churches are working well for some churches, and others are trying new methods to communicate cross-culturally, John Bartik encourages all Anglicans to continue persevering in this vital ministry.

"The gospel is for everyone, including those who don't speak English," he says. "Everyone should have access to the Lord Jesus, and this is an international need... We have to think holistically about what we are doing. If a church did this well, there would be an interchange between meeting [people] where they are at and showing them the bigger picture."

"Our responses need to be in the spectrum of reaching out and preparing things for them, and doing what we do excellently. It could be hosting dinners and meeting them in fellowship, it could be easy English Bible studies. It's not just how we reach people from other countries, but how we speak to other people. At the end of the day we present truths that speak to the heart, that change people's hearts and glorify Jesus from the core."

## REFRESH RESPOND REFORM

## THE THREE



There are so many life and faith changes to give thanks for in the Reformation, writes **MARK THOMPSON.**

**S**EVERAL TIMES THIS YEAR I HAVE BEEN ASKED WHY THE REFORMATION STILL matters. After all, the key events happened 500 years ago and a lot has happened since then. A century of ecumenical endeavour has led some to insist that the Reformation is no longer needed or relevant. Who wants to celebrate a moment of division?

My by-now well-rehearsed answer (it is October after all!) is that the Reformation still matters because of the changes that were made, the doctrine that was taught, the blood that was spilt, the error that persists, and the gospel mission that remains.

The Reformation changed our world. That is a big claim but it is true. The Reformation changed the nature of family life, the nature of church life (and even architecture), the nature of Christian ministry and the relationship of church and state.

Protestant homes were different in many ways from Catholic homes. The prominence of reading the Bible versus dependence upon sacramental grace dispensed by the priest is just one example.

Family life received new attention as the centrepiece of a new piety. Luther himself rejoiced at the pigtailed on the pillow beside him in the morning and opportunities to play with his children. These weren't distractions from the Christian life but an integral part of it. The earthy demands of family life were every bit as honouring to God as the dedicated celibate life of faithful priests and monks.

Church life changed from being something you attended while everything was done at the front by the priest and the choir, to something in which you genuinely participated. Cranmer's liturgy, with its emphasis on hearing the word of God together, common prayer and common praise, is one of the best examples of this. Hearing God speak was more central than the sacramental activity of the priest. The sacraments were not jettisoned altogether – the Reformers were convinced that both baptism and the Lord's Supper were biblical and important – but they were put in a proper context.

I remember a set of lectures given by the late George Yule years ago where he showed slides demonstrating the changes in church architecture over the centuries. In a pre-Reformation church the altar was central and a rood screen often separated the "holy" part of the church from the place where ordinary parishioners would gather to listen and receive that part of the sacrament they were allowed to receive.

Come the Reformation the pulpit or even the lectern took centre stage, with the communion table – and sometimes the font – put behind them and sometimes in a different room. The elaborate decorations that made Christian faith a very visual thing were often removed and the importance of the word and hearing it were recognised afresh.

We could also look at ministry, with a fresh focus upon the teaching and administration of the word and rejection of the notion of a priest who represented the sacrifice of Christ; or church and state where, for good or ill, the state tended to have much more involvement in the life of the church than it did before. Henry VIII insisted he was the earthly supreme head of the church in his commonwealth.

The big change, though, was in the doctrine that was taught. At the heart of Reformation teaching is the biblical doctrine of justification only by faith. There is nothing in us that we can plead with God as a basis for, or contribution towards, our salvation. We are sinful even when we are at our best. We have no hope but Christ and we come to him with an empty-handed trust.

Of course, flowing out of our new justified state is a new commitment to faithfulness, love and mercy, alongside proclaiming the same gospel by which we have been saved. We are not left where we were. Both faith and repentance are ongoing characteristics of the Christian life. Yet nothing we or the church can do prepares us for grace or is to be added to grace. It is only by faith that we are declared in the right with God. Luther believed everything he and the other Reformers taught depended on this one central truth.

Yet Luther and others brought other revolutionary doctrinal changes, too. They spoke of Scripture as its own interpreter. The authoritative interpretations of the Pope and the scholars were unnecessary and had, in fact, obscured the plain meaning of the Bible. Every believer should have access to the written word of God in their own language. Every doctrine taught by men and women in the churches should be tested against the only infallible standard, the words of Scripture themselves.

Our access to God is immediate and does not come through the ministrations of the church. This does not make the church dispensable or irrelevant. The church is precious in the sight of God and must be guarded and nurtured by the word of God. Yet the priests do not have a special status. Instead they serve God's people by exercising a particular ministry. They are not priestly mediators. We have only one mediator and that is Christ. What is more, in the most important sense all believers are priests, as the apostle Peter says: "a royal priesthood".

The Lord's Supper is a visible word, reminding us of what has been done for us. It is not a mechanism by which the church dispenses grace to God's people. We recognise a single sacrifice, that of Christ, and only one altar – the cross of Calvary. The role of the priest (or pastor) is to speak the words that make sense of this memorial meal, the words of the gospel that focus not so much on what we do as what has been done for us, once for all.

Yet as well as the changes made and the doctrine taught, the Reformation saw men and women courageously stand, and many lose their lives, for their testimony to the authority of God's word, the unrepeatable nature of Christ's sacrifice, our justification only by faith, the priesthood of all believers, and even the necessity of having the word of God in our own heart language.

The first Reformation martyrs were Johann Esch and Heinrich Voes, young men burnt at the stake in Brussels on July 1, 1523. Luther wrote his first-ever hymn celebrating their example of faith.

Yet soon they would be joined by many others – men and women. William Tyndale the Bible translator, strangled and burnt in Antwerp on the orders of the King; the three bishops burnt outside the north gate in Oxford – Nicholas Ridley, Hugh Latimer and Thomas Cranmer; Anne Askew, that extraordinary woman whose proclamation of Christ crucified and justification by faith led to her execution, but not before weeks and months of the most gruelling torture, intended to force her to disown the Reformation. Yet these are just a few. There were many others.

The Reformation still matters because the price of its revolutionary change was so high – the blood of these men and women. The Reformation still matters, too, because the error against which the Reformers fought and for which some gave their lives still persists.

A great deal of effort has been put into ecumenical discussion over the past century. However, a careful examination of the documents these discussions have produced reveals that the Catholic Church has not budged an inch on doctrine, for all its changes in practice and appearance. It says what it has always said. Faith is still joined to works of love as the basis of our justification. Mary and the saints are still intercessors to whom we are encouraged to pray. The sacraments are still necessary means of receiving grace. The authority of the church remains inviolable alongside that of Scripture.

It is the Protestants involved in these conversations that have most often lost their nerve and surrendered the distinctives of the Reformation.

Yet it is worth reminding ourselves that, when all is said, the Reformation was a missionary, evangelistic movement. Luther, Calvin, Cranmer and the rest wanted the people of Germany or Geneva or England to hear and respond to the gospel of grace. They wanted to see men and women come to faith and grow in godliness. They wanted to give them access to the pure, life-changing word of God.

Luther spoke of how the real treasure of the church was the gospel of Christ and it had been locked away from those who needed to hear it. Tyndale dreamed of the day when the boy at the plough as well as the scholar at his desk and the noble at court would know and rejoice in the teaching of the Bible.

Five hundred years on and on the other side of the world, the Reformation definitely still matters. It is nowhere near over yet. The word still needs to be heard. The gospel still needs to be proclaimed. Lives and patterns of living – the lives of God's people and the practice of the churches – still need to change in line with the teaching of the Bible.

I suspect we do not know the Reformation, its people and its teaching, as well as we should. This is a great year to become acquainted all over again with those brothers and sisters of a long ago age who risked everything to ensure that we could hear and respond to the gospel preached by Christ and his apostles. There is a great deal for which to thank God. ☪

*The Rev Dr Mark Thompson is principal of MTC as well as head of department of theology, philosophy and ethics. A longer form of this article was delivered in Belfast in March 2017 as the Clive West Memorial Lecture, and in New Zealand in August 2017 as the William Orange Memorial Lecture.*



Members of St Aidan's run a coffee service for locals during the parish's 90th birthday celebrations.

## 90TH BIRTHDAY FOR ST AIDAN'S

Hurstville Grove Anglican Church recently celebrated its 90th birthday with a series of invitation days, welcoming back old faces and inviting new ones to experience the history and community of the church.

"We had roughly 400 people in attendance, including visitors," says the rector of St Aidan's, the Rev Mat Yeo. "Ivan Lee, who was here as rector before he became bishop, came on stage and we had a discussion about the history of the church. There was a photographic historical display and Colin Buchanan also came and performed for us. We even had a coffee service out on the street for passers by. Everything over the three days of celebration was invitational by design. We wanted people to feel able to bring friends and neighbours along."

The church has been attended and led by many people who have gone on to wider ministry in varying capacities, including Bishop Lee, Bishop Reg Piper, Archdeacon Deryck Howell and John Chapman.

"The story of Hurstville Grove is one of steady, hard work, being a light for Christ in the area," Mr Yeo says. "That's been aided by a string of leaders within the church, including many rectors, [a number] of whom have become bishops, archdeacons or similar, and continued in ministry in that way."

Mr Yeo also says that modern Hurstville Grove is, in some respects, a world apart from where it was 90 years ago.

"Like many churches, the ethnicity and culture of the area has changed fairly significantly in the last 10 years, with a large number of Chinese-background people in the area. Even before that, what used to be a secondary road, Hillcrest Ave, has become the main road. The area has become much busier so we're working hard to do ministry that works with those changes and continues to proclaim Christ to Hurstville Grove."



# Yes, we caused this

JUDY ADAMSON

Blue

Rated PG

**P**UT ASIDE WHETHER OR NOT YOU BELIEVE CLIMATE CHANGE IS REAL AND PAY attention: we are failing – laughably, tragically – in our God-given role as protectors and carers of this planet.

It's unpalatable to hear. It's unpleasant to recognise. But it's also unavoidable.

*Blue* is an Australian-made film that traverses the world to show what is happening to marine life and the creatures and communities that depend on the ocean for income and sustenance. These changes are happening as a result of the choices we make every day about what to buy, what to eat and what to throw away.

Feel uncomfortable? You should. I did for almost the entire time I watched this excellent documentary, which is why you should make every effort to see it.

While statistics can underscore the point (there'll be more plastic than fish in our oceans by 2050, half of all marine life became extinct in the past 40 years), those involved in the film are aware that viewing such changes first hand is much more powerful. And so we follow a range of everyday scientists, researchers, rangers and conservationists – underwater and on land – to see what they see every day.

And it's heartbreaking. But there's no portentous music or histrionics. We don't need them. The voices are quiet and matter-of-fact as we are shown baby seabirds with stomachs full of plastic; industrial fishing trawlers that – with the help of GPS trackers – scoop up more fish in a day than a small fishing boat can catch in a year; a community that survives on catching sharks for the Asian fin trade (sad in itself, but it's getting harder to catch what they need and, yes, they do sometimes fish illegally).

Then there's Kamilo Beach in Hawaii, which has currents that have always brought in unexpected gifts from the ocean. In the past, that was wonderful. Now, it's known as "rubbish beach" because a tonne of garbage has to be removed every month. Or consider the Cape York rangers whose job includes checking their beaches for the thousands of "ghost" nets discarded by fishermen hundreds of kilometres away – nets that capture and drown countless marine animals as they drift.

The photography, both on land and underwater, is stunning. The film is a visual feast, which may seem ironic given the story it's telling. But *Blue's* director Karina Holden has done this purposely, seeking "beauty in the imagery, despite the subject". She wants an emotional response from her audience that's natural rather than manipulated.

Sure, she's all for conservation of species and habitat, for sustainable fishing and preservation of communities and oceans, otherwise she wouldn't have made the film. But she ensures those onscreen aren't telling us their experiences with tears and emotive language. We're told, and we're shown, and that's more than enough.

The clincher for me was the juvenile seabirds on Lord Howe Island that are dying because of a "rainbow soup" of plastic in their stomachs, fed into them by unsuspecting parents. We watch as marine exo-toxicologist Dr Jennifer Lavers feels the tummy of one bird, and you can hear the plastic crunching. It's sickening.

We're even shown plankton ingesting microscopic bits of plastic, and of course the plankton ends up in the bellies of sea creatures higher up the food chain... and eventually gets eaten by us. Tasty.

Don't want to hear all this? I don't blame you. I'm capable of as much inertia as anybody. But just as this life is not our own, so this planet was given to us with the express instruction to care for it – not to drown it in garbage, overfish species to extinction and cause the death of marine life through our actions, or inaction.

In a statement she wrote about making the film, Holden clearly appreciates that seeing such things is not easy.

"I get it," she says. "It's heartbreaking to see wild places in decline. It's a bitter story to tell of a species heading for extinction. But are we to close our eyes and our ears and pretend this isn't happening? Are we to look away at a time when our actions could be the very thing to turn the situation around?"

Good questions. And they need answers. So see *Blue* and be prepared to take action. Not because you're a "greenie" – or whatever you might want to call it – but because you're a child of God.



# Music to our ears... and hearts

PAUL KERSHAW

**A**S A GENERATION OF CONTEMPORARY CHURCH MUSIC LEADERS REACH A certain point in their work and creative lives, the experiences gained and questions raised along the way are being unleashed in print to take stock of what's happened since popular music forms entered churches several decades ago. The result is a harvest of resources aimed at steering us forward on a God-honouring path with church music ministry.

## Songs of the Saints

by Mike Raiter and Rob Smith (Matthias Media)

The Mike Raiter and Rob Smith book *Songs Of The Saints* has a stated aim: a "call to revitalise congregational singing in our evangelical churches", because "in too many churches people, by and large, are not singing" (p152). It's a bold statement, but if true it needs to be addressed.

The discussion is creatively laid out using musical metaphors where related chapters are set within an opening overture, three movements and a finale. This approach communicates an intent to entertain the reader in a way that doesn't detract from the gravity of the content nor dispirit. In the brief overture, Raiter and Smith remind us of the power of song in everyday life before laying out terms of reference for what follows, including a call for the church to recapture its musical heritage within the biblical directive.

Within the first two movements, we are taken on a journey through the songs of Scripture where the authors deftly examine the circumstance and purpose of each song in the immediate context and a full biblical perspective.

An early observation that "saved people sing" (p33) might seem obvious, but as we are guided through the songs of Moses, Deborah, Hannah and the psalms, we are reminded that the who, how and why of our salvation is important information to include in our songs in order to overcome the declared "growth of biblical illiteracy" in the contemporary church.

Accordingly, there follows convincing argument that the songs of the Bible are not simply descriptive in biblical context, but prescriptive for the songs we ought to sing in our gatherings today. Building on this foundation, the discussion flows to much-favoured Scriptures (Ephesians 5:18-21, Colossian 3:15-17 and Revelation 4-5) to expose common misunderstandings and present solid insight on the form and purpose of our singing together – which is established "in shadow under the old covenant" and then fulfilled "in glorious brightness under the new".

Refocusing on the stated objective of the book, the third movement takes its cue from the first two and fleshes out practical implications with a discussion on motives for singing and a whole chapter devoted to the role of emotions. It is this chapter, and the emphasis on biblical literacy in song throughout the book, that make it stand out in its genre. It seems clear that the authors believe these two issues are paramount in addressing their objective.

It is also refreshing to read many references throughout the book to the contributions made on this subject by church forefathers such as Martin Luther, Augustine of Hippo, Isaac Watts, Charles Wesley, C.S. Lewis and Charles Spurgeon – as if to connect our thinking with those who strived to preserve and faithfully hand down the gospel to us.

During a brief journey into Psalms midway through the book, it was comforting to see a question rightly asked: "Where are the modern songs of lament?" (p92). In contrast to the pleasure-centred view of singing in our culture, the authors state that, "singing is one of the ways in which God sustains us in... turmoil. One of the reasons he has given us song is because singing helps us process pain and awaken hope" (p85). Wonderful counter-cultural insight!

While some of the ideas presented are not new, *Songs of the Saints* is a cutting-edge work addressing an understated issue for the modern church. It is without doubt an essential read for anyone involved in music ministry and a recommended read for any Christian.



## A Church Music Director's Handbook, Volume 1

by Greg Cooper, Steve Crain, Andy Judd and Mark Peterson (Mountain Street Media)

The reputation of the authors behind *A Church Music Director's Handbook, Volume 1* promises much, and given that it's about 20 years since I last saw a church music "handbook" (Trethewey/Milne, Matthias Media) a revision is certainly due.

The authors' contributions largely stay within their own chapters, with Judd's work predominating and providing bookends to the volume.

It's helpful when a book on a subtopic of Christian ministry pours the big picture first. Accordingly, Judd kicks off with a whistle-stop tour of the Bible, viewed through a lens of worship, scooping up jewels of information as he goes about what true worship might look like.

Building on this, he examines not just how worship may take place today, but also how we perceive the role of worship in our lives. He concludes that our worship cannot save us but is our response to Jesus' saving work – his death and resurrection.

Judd's language is quite hip without losing its clout (he's clearly younger than me!). There are moments of brilliance, such as his application of John 4:23: addressing the debate on knowledge versus spirit in our singing, affirming that we must have both together because "they are the kind of worshippers the Father seeks".

Cooper's chapters on music team culture are born of significant experience and present a Christ-like approach to leadership in music ministry. Crain bravely ventures to discuss spiritual gifts, and by example he includes guitar playing, where it is used to "serve Jesus and his church in an other-person-centred way".

Peterson's contribution is organisational rather than theological. He presents a summary of his personal journey through music ministry team building over the past 12 years in the context of a fairly large church (nine bands!). He offers various leadership models before homing in to suggest that most churches should aim to have an overall music director with band leaders for each team of musicians.

This is interwoven with hints and tips on the empowerment and encouragement of team members. If a handbook is an orderly set of instructions on a subject – a ready reference – I found this more like a series of insightful essays looking at aspects of music ministry from different perspectives, with each author predominantly contributing their own style and experiences. The reader then adapts between the differently authored sections – which is fine and adds colour, it's just that the book title set my expectations differently.

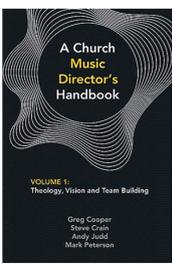
While the chapters have topical titles, priority for the division of the content is given to authorship rather than topic. Consequently,

I found there was some repetition on topics such as team management and the thorny subject of giving and receiving feedback. This information is very useful but I would want a handbook to collate these for me, allowing it to be more easily referenced.

Consequently (and having noted a number of typographical errors) I wonder if a multi-authored handbook might need more editing?

However, a standout chapter was the co-authored contribution by Crain and Judd on the subject of auditions, a task that many music leaders struggle to know how to approach for obvious reasons.

I thoroughly enjoyed reading *A Music Director's Handbook, Volume 1* and would recommend it for church musicians, music leaders and their pastors.



## The Worship Pastor

by Zac Hicks (Zondervan)

Now, to *The Worship Pastor*. For local readers who might be put off by the title, it's worth giving Zac Hicks a chance as he is quick to clarify his understanding of "worship" in this thoughtful work on an emerging role in many modern churches.

The book was published in the US late last year, but it's good to consider it at the same time as the two above. Its content is rich and creative, with the author using a range of metaphors (architect, curator, tour guide, doxological philosopher, theological dietician) to give new perspectives on the responsibilities a worship pastor might have.

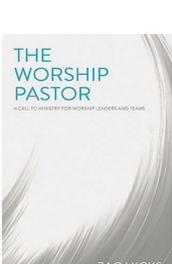
A theme running through most chapters is developed further toward the end of the book: the need to form gospel-shaped liturgies for our gatherings. Various models for achieving this are presented, each using the same pattern – "the glory of God", "the gravity of sin" and "the grandeur of grace" – packaged in different ways within the liturgy. Hicks reminds us this is an approach we once had but have largely lost and need to recapture.

Much of the material presented could only apply in larger churches and it is clear toward the end of the book that the title role has duties well beyond the directing of music. Accordingly, Hicks' worship pastor has responsibilities in shaping components of prayer, reading the Scriptures, preaching the word, ministering sacraments, transitioning between these elements and executing their flow in our church meetings.

Thankfully, he concludes by pointing out that his worship pastor does not exist, except as the man Jesus Christ, the "one true worship leader... every church longs for".

*The Worship Pastor* is recommended for anyone with a pastoral role in church leadership.

Paul Kershaw is the music director at Wild Street Anglican Church in Maroubra.



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**W**ORTHY THE WAIT

**N** SYDNEY EVANGELICAL MUSIC THERE ARE TWO NAMES THAT POP UP TIME AND AGAIN. Nicky Chiswell and Rob Smith have made many contributions over the years as congregational songwriters, as well as making singer-songwriter contributions of their own. Their last direct collaboration was *No Other Name*, an album that produced congregational stalwarts such as "New Song In My Heart" and "The Spirit Has Come", so a second instalment could fairly be considered overdue.

However, rather than being a series of co-writes this CD, titled *Worthy*, mostly alternates between tracks from each artist, recorded in their own studios with their own instrumentation and collaborators. While this spreads Chiswell's and Smith's songs evenly across the album and gives their collaborating styles a chance to shine, it does occasionally sound like one is listening to two different albums rather than a collaborative effort.

Another difference is that the title track appears twice on the album. The first version is a straight-ahead, rock-styled song about the worthiness of the name of the Lord; the second is slower with minimal instrumentation and a clearer intent as a congregational song.

It's a good reminder of the differing needs in different congregations, or even within congregations, for arrangements tailored to need and use, as well as an encouragement for bands to consider how songs can be made radically different through careful arrangement.

One of the album's highlights is Chiswell's "The Glory of God", an energetic poppy tune with a bluesy groove and soaring chorus. It combines an interesting, driving musical idea with a very singable melody and a lyric about the glory of God revealed in his actions in all circumstances, most especially in the person of Jesus. The rest of the album is a well-written, well-produced mix of ballads and more driving tunes, each easily recognisable as the work of their respective writers.

*Worthy* has been a long time coming and is well worth a listen for fans – and for anyone who has been a beneficiary of these long-standing contributors to Christian music.

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NICK GILBERT

Worthy

Nicky Chiswell and Rob Smith (EMU Music)

