

Southern CROSS

THE NEWS MAGAZINE FOR SYDNEY ANGLICANS

NOV
EMBER
2017

God's love in all things

SYNOD'S CALL TO CARE

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Anxiety and God's response

&

Porn: resistance amid the chaos

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We would all like to see more people in our churches ... and we need to consider how we can do that better.

Bishop Peter Lin
Synod News

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The ice man loveth



Love shared simply: Dave Vincent in his "ice" shirt, with his wife Beverley.

A MT DRUITT MAN HAS DEVELOPED A SIMPLE MINISTRY TO HIS COMMUNITY, TRYING TO RAISE awareness and encourage open conversations about the destructive force of crystal methamphetamine. The drug, known commonly as "ice", has been highlighted by Government and health services as a growing problem in Australia. The most recent National Drug Strategy Household Survey indicated one in 70 Australians had used the drug in the past year, with a reported rise in rates of hospitalisation, psychotic episodes and deaths.

David Vincent, a member of Minchinbury Anglican Church, says he and his wife have seen the drug's effects in their community and heard stories from those whose lives have been affected.

"It started when I read about a young boy and his grandmother who were murdered by a man on ice," Mr Vincent says.

"There was a photo in the paper and it hit me so hard that I felt I had to do something about it.

"My wife Beverley and I have been doing children's work since we graduated from Bible college. Being involved with camps and Scripture in schools, the impact on children really struck us – they are often the innocent victims caught in the middle of these things.

"Ice in particular seems to be relatively cheap and its effect is so powerful and destructive for the people who use it, and their families."

Mr Vincent's idea for his ministry and awareness campaign has been simple: he has donned his own custom shirt and worn it going about his everyday life. This has opened doors to conversations he hopes has helped to keep the issue front and centre for people.

"It's easily hidden, that's one of the key things about it," he says. "It feels like I've spoken to hundreds of people over these three years about its impacts. One woman I spoke to in Parramatta, she lost her daughter to an ice addiction and I felt so terribly sad hearing that.

"A lot of people have walked past me and said they liked the shirt. Others have a look of sadness, which has made me think perhaps they have a story they either don't want to share or just haven't got time to share."

Mr Vincent's ministry has been motivated by his faith in Jesus and the love Jesus shows to all people, especially children.

"As a Christian, I think life is priceless," he says. "God created life and he has given his okay to each and every person to be born.

"Life is not meant to be wrecked by things like alcohol or ice or any drug, and knowing how this affects families... It's not just about the person using ice. They are not the only ones who suffer. Their spouses suffer, their children suffer and the thought of thousands of children in particular suffering because of this is terrible.

"Jesus loves them, so we feel like we can't just go so far and then stop."

Outside in with inside out



Inside look: Anglicare CEO Grant Millard (right) inspects the new retirement village project at Rooty Hill. PHOTO: Janine Jones

AN INSIDE OUT VILLAGE PLANNED FOR ROOTY HILL IS A NEW ANGLICARE PROJECT THAT SEEKS to create retirement options designed, from the ground up, to be a part of the local community rather than isolated from it.

"The older concept of a retirement village as being a gated, secure, isolated, compound is outdated," says Anglicare CEO Grant Millard. "If you look at overseas trends... and at what retirees want, they do want to be integrated with an outside community while also enjoying the benefits of a retirement community."

The village will provide traditional services for residents while serving as a hub for other community services such as restaurants, shops, child care and a medical centre. These services will follow the completion of the Stage 1 complex of 66 one- and two-bedroom apartments – which will be up for sale from next May, with occupancy within 12 months. Roughly a third of units will be available for rent, making them more accessible to those in the local area.

"The building development itself is going well – we're ahead of schedule," Mr Millard says.

An information centre is open at the site, providing details about retirement and residential aged care options. It also offers a free dementia advice service, which provides testing and lends support to the elderly and their families.

In addition to teaming up with local community services, the village will continue Anglicare's practice of partnering with local churches.

"Anglicare staff have been very involved with communicating with us and even being involved with some of our ministries as well," says the rector of St Alban's MBM at Rooty Hill, the Rev Ray Galea. "Residents will be in our parish, and so we're looking to explore how we can minister to them.

"The fact that a number of units are available through rent makes it easier for those already in the area who may not have a significant asset to launch from into retirement living. It opens the door to ministry to a wider demographic"

Mr Millard says the organisation believes the "inside out" style of development "is going to meet a need of the future".

"One of the sensitivities people have about going into retirement living is giving up the life they were used to and losing connections with the community around them. I think this model will hopefully bring the best of both worlds by providing a supportive environment and security of tenure, but actively looking to promote people's connections with the wider community – and, in fact, bring the wider community in."

Anglicare is also looking to expand the concept to other locations, with a site at Minto in the early planning stages.

Chaplaincy turns 10



John Howard (centre) watches the 10th anniversary celebration with Generate chair James Millar (right) and Archbishop Davies. PHOTO: Daryl Charles

IT MAY NOT HAVE BEEN THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DECISION MADE BY FORMER PRIME MINISTER John Howard but the public school chaplaincy program he introduced in 2007 is still making a difference in the lives of 2000 students a week.

Mr Howard knows this because he sat in the front row at the Museum of Sydney last month as chaplain after chaplain told stories of lives changed and prospects made brighter by their work. From the young student anxious over the possibility that her mother's cancer might return, to the older boy who wanted to gain a place in a selective school in order to get a good job to support a struggling family.

A public school principal told how the chaplaincy program "adds soul to our school" and that, aside from supporting the students, the chaplain had now organised fathers into a group to encourage each other to be better parents. Almost all the fathers in the school, in Sydney's south, were involved.

These stories were shared at the tenth anniversary celebration of the chaplaincy program. Representatives of several providers were present, including Generate Ministries, which is the largest provider of chaplains in NSW state schools with over 220 positions.

The general manager of Generate, James Flavin, quoted Mr Howard's words when he first unveiled the scheme in 2007: "Chaplains will be expected to provide pastoral care, general religious and personal advice, and comfort and support to all students and staff – irrespective of their religious beliefs"

Added Mr Flavin: "From what we have heard this morning, Mr Howard's words were definitely prophetic. This is a very popular program, with the last funding round oversubscribed by 200 schools."

The former PM was clearly delighted by the stories of the good work chaplains have been doing. "Today is a celebration of something that was sneered at, at the time," he said. "It was labelled as an invasion of the separation of church and state but in reality, it was fulfilling an increasingly growing need."

Mr Howard said the value needed to be stressed to governments. "The best thing I heard was that there was an oversubscription of 200," he said. "In other words, more and more people want chaplains. If communities want this program, in the end, can I tell you that governments will keep it."

Pitch perfect innovation



Mission plans: the successful candidates from ADM's funding day hold up their certificates. Pictured, from left, are ADM's CEO Dr Kate Harrison Brennan, Erica Yi, ADM director Julianne Jones, Olivia Jones, Penny Attwells, Jemma Nicolls, Lisa Bateup, ADM director the Rev Phil Wheeler and Dr Megan Best.

ANGLICAN DEACONESS MINISTRIES HAS HELD ITS SECOND ANNUAL FUNDING EVENT, A UNIQUE day designed to help Christian women articulate and refine innovative approaches to ministry.

It takes some of its cues from entrepreneurial pitching practices in the corporate sphere, but very deliberately retools them in a way that is co-operative and affirming.

"We want the day to be celebratory," says ADM's CEO Dr Kate Harrison Brennan. "It's an opportunity for everyone to hear the diverse ways in which women are using their gifts to serve God. It's all done in one room – everyone can hear everyone else's pitches... Everybody had only five minutes to pitch, and five minutes for questions from the panel.

"When you're trying to... find new ways to serve people, you need to be as clear and concise as possible and you need to be able to bring people along with your ideas."

Funding was awarded from a pool of \$60,000 across four categories: mission and ministry, mercy and justice, arts and culture, and mental health and pastoral care.

The first place award went to Empowering Ethics, a project of Dr Megan Best and Erica Yi, exploring ways to engage the public and the church on important ethical issues. Their pitch centred around a website proposal intended to become a hub for reliable information and assessments about the rapidly evolving biomedical landscape.

"The process forces you to find and emphasise what is most important," Dr Best says. "It also helped us establish our priorities in terms of what we were going to use any potential funding for."

She says a highlight of the day was hearing what other women are doing in fields completely different to her own, yet similarly focused on serving God, the church and the world through their ministries.

"I didn't know how they were going to decide between all the projects, honestly – there were just so many different but important ideas on the day... but I certainly benefited just from hearing about all these things people are doing in their respective areas. It's not an opportunity you really get anywhere else."

Afterwards, Dr Harrison Brennan received an email from one of the woman who didn't receive an award but regarded the process of writing a pitch as "strengthening", even though she had found it difficult. "It made her reflect again on how what she's doing connects with God's purposes in the world, and how to make those connections clearly when talking to others," she says.



Growth, goals and GAFCON

Faith across the miles: Synod hears from Tanzanian Bishop Mwita Akiri.

MISSIONARY HOUR AT THIS YEAR'S SYNOD FOCUSED ON THE GROWTH OF THE TANZANIAN church and the way in which Tanzanian bishops – and others across the world – have benefited from fellowship within GAFCON.

A key aspect of the presentation was the 90-year long partnership between the Diocese of Sydney and the Anglican Church in Tanzania. A three-day consultation was recently held in Tanzania with 25 of the 28 Anglican bishops in the country, representatives from the Church Missionary Society and others from the Diocese of Sydney. During that meeting the question was asked: What direct role, if any, should Sydney continue to have in the work of the gospel in Tanzania?

The federal secretary of CMS, the Rev Canon Peter Rodgers, said, "The task for bishops in Tanzania is a hard one. They are geographically isolated from each other, under-resourced, and most of their clergy only have Certificate level training at best. It's hard going for them and the overriding message from these bishops at the consultation was, 'Please don't abandon us'. It's been 90 years, and they're telling us now is not the time to pull back."

In a video presentation the Bishop of the Southern Highlands, the Rt Rev Julius Lugendo, said the bishops had been very grateful for the conference and the Diocese's support to make it happen. "We have learned a lot and had a great sense of this cross-cultural experience, but also we are looking forward to strengthening our unity in the future," he said.

The head of the department of mission at Moore College, the Rev Simon Gillham, gave a presentation about the use of the college's Preliminary Theological Certificate in Tanzania. The first six books of the PTC have been translated into Swahili, and two Tanzanian dioceses are exploring their use as a course for ordained clergy who have completed graduate degrees in Swahili – the idea being to train them as future trainers of others.

In closing missionary hour the general secretary of the Global Anglican Future Conference (GAFCON), Dr Peter Jensen, discussed its role in providing support for the Tanzanian bishops and others – particularly those dislocated, on theological grounds, from their home churches (citing some Scottish Episcopal churches as a recent example). Dr Jensen encouraged Synod to consider sponsoring some of these people to GAFCON 2018 in Jerusalem.

"When you're thinking of the special relationship the Sydney Diocese has with Tanzania, my challenge to you is to think about whether we can get the Tanzanian bishops to GAFCON and experience the fellowship there," Dr Jensen said. "If we can, I have a few other suggestions as well: we have to think about Sri Lanka, we have to think about Papua New Guinea, we have to think about Fiji. We need to get these people there to experience this, to be reaffirmed in their faith and to be set on fire for mission."

In support of this Synod heard via video from the Bishop of Tarime, the Rt Rev Mwita Akiri.

"The way we feel in Tanzania is that the liberal forces are coming [in] through programs, and we feel it is important for us as bishops to be able to have this link with GAFCON," he said. "We want to support it and be supported by it, so that we can keep focus on the important matters of the gospel, our commitment to the Bible and the orthodox faith."

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Valley's village values



A hands-on community: Kangaroo Valley rector the Rev Andrew Paterson (Front), with Ron Bower, Cecily Paterson and Dave Short. PHOTO: Judy Adamson

IT'S NOT OFTEN A CHURCH CAN SAY ITS LIFE BEGAN AT A FANCY BAZAAR, BUT THAT IS THE CASE with the Church of the Good Shepherd in Kangaroo Valley.

In 1867, Mrs Isabel Osborne organised the bazaar to raise money for an Anglican church in the valley. From this event, and others, £600 was raised. The foundation stone was laid in 1870 – on land gifted by Mrs Osborne – with the first service held in January 1872.

"We praise the Lord for Isabel's gospel vision all those years ago," said Kangaroo Valley's rector the Rev Andrew Paterson, speaking to Synod as his provisional parish sought members' approval to be reclassified as a full parish.

He said the congregation were "earthy, hands-on people, practical doers and great prayers" – aware they had to be "prepared in and out of season to present the gospel of Jesus... Our evangelism comes from our church family actively participating and walking alongside those in our community for its good, to get a hearing for the gospel."

"KV" was linked to the Berry parish for more than 20 years, becoming a provisional parish again in 2013. Mr Paterson became assistant minister under Berry rector the Rev Neil Percival in 2009, with the plan to make KV an independent parish again if possible.

Talking to Mr Paterson, his wife Cecily, rector's warden Ron Bower and treasurer Dave Short before Synod, the independent spirit of the community was clearly apparent.

Said Cecily Paterson: "When we arrived here I had more conversations about the area than any other place I've ever lived. Every conversation was about the valley!"

Added Mr Paterson: "You see the same people every day, so they quickly work out your character. We all make mistakes, but as Christians our faith is always on display. It's a rural village and it's fantastic to have those relationships."

In one example of local spirit, Mr Bower was in charge of the Pathways volunteer group, which raised funds – and constructed – 2.5 kilometres of footpath through the village down to Hampden Bridge. This provides safer walkways for locals and tourists.

He said the thank you didn't have to pay for the section in front of the church but did anyway. The church ran a "thank you" event afterwards.

Said Mr Paterson: "People at church have an entry into every little network in the community. Our role is to support them in being salt and light in these subgroups: arts, sports, garden clubs, etc."

The parish has an active Sunday school, youth group and kids' club, four SRE teachers for the public school, groups for men, women and "retired KV-ers", and links with the Shoalhaven Aboriginal Community Church. There's also an array of community events to reach out as well as bring people in, and the gates are always open to visitors who want to relax with a coffee under the trees next to the church.

Mr Short said that although church membership hadn't grown enormously over recent years the financial support had, "because people are seeing, and are part of, more outreach, so they're responding in kind, if you like".

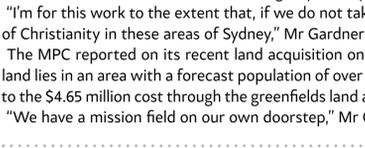
Said Mr Paterson: "The parish is the whole of Kangaroo Valley... even if they don't come to church. Through all this community participation, and walking alongside locals... we have earned the privilege to share the gospel of the Lord Jesus."

"For the past eight years there has been at least one person every year [who has come to Christ]... We praise God for his Spirit that opens the eyes of the lost."

MPC and NCNC update

SYNOD HAS HEARD FROM THE MISSION PROPERTY COMMITTEE AND THE ARCHBISHOP'S NEW Churches for New Communities about their work in procuring sites in strategic locations for new churches, and efforts to raise funds for other church facilities.

The Synod presentation focused particularly on a site purchased at Briggely adjacent to the growth corridor anticipated for Badgerys Creek airport, plus the completion of facilities for the Leppington Hope Church plant led by the Rev Luther Symons.



"I would love for you to visit and see the difference this church is already making in Leppington," Mr Symons said in a video shown to Synod. "The estate behind me is just bursting at the seams and we need to reach those people."

The executive director of NCNC, the Rev Glenn Gardner (left), reported that NCNC had raised \$1.1 million in 2017 towards the construction of facilities for new churches, with a further \$600,000 in pledges. However, he said NCNC's target was to raise \$20 million over five years, and it was thus looking to diversify its sources of funding from a small selection of wealthy donors to parishes and other individuals.

"I've emailed a number of parishes to explore... if it is possible for 100 parishes throughout the Diocese to give \$5000 each a year for three years," Mr Gardner said. He will also recommend to the NCNC board that it establish of a "Friends of NCNC" group to help raise the organisation's work and profile further.

"I'm for this work to the extent that, if we do not take this window of opportunity, I fear for the future of Christianity in these areas of Sydney," Mr Gardner said.

The MPC reported on its recent land acquisition on Badgerys Creek Road. The three-hectare block of land lies in an area with a forecast population of over 50,000, and all parishes in the Diocese contributed to the \$4.65 million cost through the greenfields land acquisition levy brought into force by Synod in 2013. "We have a mission field on our own doorstep," Mr Gardner said.

Senior executive appointed

SYNOD FAREWELLED THE DIOCESAN SECRETARY Robert Wicks (right) as the Sydney Diocesan Secretariat (SDS) prepared to welcome him as its new Chief Executive Officer. Archbishop Glenn Davies and the SDS chairman Ross Smith announced that Mr Wicks would be the new CEO, effective immediately.

The secretariat supports the mission of the Diocese by providing a range of professional services to diocesan organisations and parishes. Mr Wicks, who has been acting CEO for almost 12 months, has had lengthy experience in diocesan management, having held the post of Diocesan Secretary since 2004. He has also headed Diocesan and Corporate Services for the past 10 years.

Archbishop Davies announced the appointment of Mr Wicks in his Presidential Address saying, "This is a great honour [for Mr Wicks] and an appointment with which I heartily concur. Rob has demonstrated the ability and skills necessary for taking up this position on a permanent basis."

The new CEO is a graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors and holds positions on a number of significant boards and committees including Freedom for Faith, the Standing Committee of the Diocese of Sydney and the General Synod of the Anglican Church of Australia.

Mr Wicks holds a Bachelor of Laws (Hons) and Bachelor of Science of the University of Sydney and has been part of the executive development program at the Kellogg School of Management in Chicago. Prior to joining SDS he was a lawyer with a major bank.

Mr Smith said Mr Wicks brings to his new position the professional skills and experience SDS needs at this time, as well as a strong personal commitment to seeing the secretariat's work advance the cause of Christ.

Mr Wicks is a central figure at Synod, often having to intervene in difficult situations. Synod passed by acclamation a motion "warmly" congratulating him on the appointment and expressing its "deep affection for him, and gratitude to God for his tireless and faithful service to this house over many years as Secretary of Synod".



Kyngdon retires

FORMER HEAD OF THE MISSION PROPERTY Committee, Mr Geoffrey Kyngdon (left), was farewellled at Synod from his official roles in the Diocese with a vote of thanks.

The motion, moved by Bishop of Wollongong the Rt Rev Peter Hayward, noted that Mr Kyngdon had undertaken a number of roles – many at the same time – including 25 years of continuous service on Standing Committee, 12 years as chairman of the MPC, membership of the Sydney, Provincial and General synods as well as work on school councils. He also listed a range of responsibilities in the Wollongong Region such as SRE teaching, work as the Bishop's assistant and membership of the regional council.

"His last Standing Committee was on his 70th birthday, and he still turned up!" Bishop Hayward said. "As head of the Mission Property

Committee he has given an extraordinary amount of time to you as a Diocese... countless hours that he's given unselfishly in every way. And he's still going to be on Synod, because he's a servant."

Bishop Hayward then spoke directly to Mr Kyngdon, noting his cheerfulness and "godly demeanour" amid a heavy workload, and recognising his willingness to sacrificially serve, his "care and thoughtfulness in considering all aspects of a matter before it's dealt with [and ability to] work through matters of dispute and not take things personally.

"So, Geoff, thank you for 25 years of devoted service to the gospel in the wider life of the Diocese."

The motion passed by acclamation, after which the Rev Jodie McNeill – rector at Mr Kyngdon's parish of Oak Flats – thanked God for Mr Kyngdon's expertise, tireless work over many years, "passion and defence" of the Bible and his heart for the gospel.

"Lord, we pray you will raise up more men and women in our Diocese to continue his legacy as active lay leaders," Mr McNeill said.

Intergenerational ministry

A YOUTHWORKS PRESENTATION AT SYNOD HAS UPDATED THE DIOCESE ON ITS CURRENT WORK, including an emphasis on intergenerational ministry and traineeships for prospective youth ministers.

Youthworks' newly appointed CEO, the Rev Craig Roberts, said the demand for children and youth ministers had continued to grow due to a range of factors, including demands on volunteer time and the loss of youth and youth leaders from the church – either completely or to areas outside Sydney.

"Despite all of this, I want to affirm that Youthworks is working towards a goal of seeing our God glorified through an effective youth and children's ministry in every church," Mr Roberts said. "For some of you struggling to resource children's and youth ministries, effective intergenerational ministry might seem like a pipe dream. But churches like Earlwood Anglican show us that it doesn't have to be."

A video presentation featured Earlwood rector the Rev Brendan McLaughlin and children's minister Tamara Robson, showing the focus the church has taken since Ms Robson arrived to create an intergenerational dynamic.

"We have a vision to see people delighting in God," Ms Robson said. "The difference now is that kids and parents are... all learning together. Our job as a children's ministry is to supplement what's happening at home... We're doing this for a reason, and it will pay off."

The presentation also highlighted the partnership between the Ministry Training Scheme (MTS) and Youthworks College, offering on-the-job training in churches while also providing a Youthworks education.

Engaging graciously



ABC's Q&A panellists smile for the camera: (from left) Jesuit priest Father Brennan, actor Magda Szubanski, lawyer Karina Abbott and Archbishop Davies.

ARCHBISHOP GLENN DAVIES HAS TOLD A NATIONAL TELEVISION AUDIENCE THAT HE AND OTHER church leaders would recognise same-sex marriage as law if the postal survey voted for it, but they would continue to uphold God's design for marriage.

Dr Davies' appearance on the ABC's Q&A program came a week after the end of Synod, in which he spoke passionately on the issue. "Some have questioned whether the money [\$1 million given to the "No" case] would have been better spent on social justice issues," he said.

"The reality is, however, that our participation in the Coalition for Marriage is not at the expense of our commitment to social justice but because of it. We believe the best way for Anglicare and other Christian agencies to serve the social good is for them to be able to operate on the basis of a Christian ethos, and to recruit Christian staff and volunteers. A legal recognition of same-sex marriage will significantly affect Anglican bodies who wish to maintain and promote a Christian understanding of marriage in opposition to the law of the land."

On Q&A the Archbishop defended the right of Christians to express a view in the debate. "Christians have a right to speak. They don't have more of a right to speak than anyone else, nor less of a right to speak. And what we want to do is actually bring to the light what we believe marriage is.

"After all, from my point of view, it's God's idea, and Jesus' view of marriage is the view that I want to follow. That's how I come to the view that I come to. And I want to recommend that to the people of Australia. In fact, I'd rather have more people follow Jesus than even be concerned which way they're going to vote."

Issues of religious freedom came to the fore in the debate, with overseas examples of restrictions of religious freedom. Even "Yes" vote panellist, Catholic priest Father Frank Brennan, acknowledged the need for broader protection for religious freedom if same-sex marriage was legalised.

On the night the survey figures are released, November 15, Dr Davies will be speaking at a fundraising event for the Freedom for Faith think tank at St Andrew's Cathedral. Dr Davies told Q&A that when the plebiscite was being considered, he promised the Prime Minister that if the vote was "Yes", church leaders "would recognise that would become the law of the land".

"However, I won't stop saying what Jesus defines marriage to be and how God has designed marriage," he said.

"I would be prepared to go to jail if necessary... so [that] I have an opportunity and a right as a citizen in this country, which loves free speech, freedom of conscience, freedom of belief, so that I can actually say what I believe, even though the law might be different."



OPPORTUNITIES IN KOGARAH

The parish of St George in Kogarah welcomed the **Rev David Yung** as its new rector in late September, following his 11 years of ministry at St John's Cathedral in Parramatta – first as the parish's student minister, then its Cantonese minister, youth minister and finally as senior assistant.

"Parramatta is a great place," he says. "St John's, Parramatta has a lot of opportunities so in a real sense we could have stayed there and continued to do more gospel work. But in Kogarah there is a Chinese congregation we can work with as well as an English congregation, and the training St John's gave me with different ministries – and different styles of ministry – has prepared me for Kogarah.

"Also, just looking at Kogarah there's a lot of potential... there's a school next door, there are a few high schools in the area and when we were looking to come there was no youth ministry here. Being someone who worked as a youth minister for five years or so, we saw they really needed that, so that was another incentive for us to come."

Mr Yung was first approached by the local bishop, Peter Lin, about the possibility of moving to St George. At the time, the family had never been to Kogarah and didn't know much about the area.

"After a few months of prayer we decided to speak to the nominators, aware of the need and the potential here in Kogarah, and then, again, after lot of prayer and a lot of discussion with my wife we decided to come," he says. "Jenny is pretty excited at the prospect of starting a new ministry and serving the people here!"

The couple's three children are finishing the year at their previous school before moving somewhere local. Mr Yung says that, at first, they were very sad to leave Parramatta, but understood that this is where their parents wanted the family to serve Jesus together.

"Now they're very active in thinking what they can do to help the youth ministry here at Kogarah," he says. "Two of them were part of the first youth Bible study here last week, they're all involved in playing music and want to learn to play for the youth group, so that's really positive.

"We're also going to restart a youth Bible study this week and the kids are very excited about it."

At the moment St George has a traditional liturgical service as well as a Mandarin service. Mr Yung isn't fluent in Mandarin so at that service his Cantonese sermon is being translated.

"We're exploring to see what we can do about that in the future, but my concern is that there are many other cultures here in Kogarah and we want to reach all of them," he says. "Chinese is obviously the closest language I know, so we'll start there with the hope of bringing the gospel to other nations as well."



MOVE FOR YOUTH

After eight years as rector of the parish of Abbotsford, the **Rev Paul O'Brien** will become an assistant minister at St Matthew's, West Pymble on November 19.

He is keen for others to know that at the heart of his decision to move is the desire to avoid burnout and choose a more suitable role where he can continue to serve God most effectively using his gifts.

"Sometimes you just hear the great success stories and you don't hear so much about stories of quiet and faithful struggle," he says, "but I'm interested in being real about it to let people know that there are other stories – and other ways of moving forward positively in ministry."

Mr O'Brien says the Abbotsford church is peopled with a mainly older demographic of "really beautiful, faithful people who are very caring of each other... They want to pass the baton on and reach out to the young families in the area, but trying to get some relational momentum with that new group is something we haven't been able to crack."

He says many couples move into new apartments in the area, then make contact with the church when they have their first child, interested in baptism. Taking them through a five-week course prior to the baptism is often the first time many have heard the gospel.

"It's been very exciting," he says. "We often have unchurched people come and connect with us, you get to share the gospel with them and some of them do come to Christ. It might take two years before they're becoming regular at church and really starting to get it – but then they have their second child, the apartment's too small and they need to move out of the area.

"We might get half a dozen to 10 people in that younger group, we just start to feel we are getting somewhere and then they'll all leave for different reasons – all good reasons. That's happened three times while I've been there, where that distinct new core group has moved on... and then you're starting right back at scratch."

Being the sole minister has gradually taken its toll, bringing Mr O'Brien close to burnout on a couple of occasions, and he is thrilled that there is a growing awareness of, and support for, such issues in the Diocese. And despite the love he has for the saints at Abbotsford he knew he needed to step back from rectorship, let someone else have an opportunity to lead them and seek another role – one where he could focus on his pastoral and teaching strengths as part of a team without the added responsibilities of being senior minister.

In his new role at West Pymble Mr O'Brien will run the young adults evening service – something he is delighted about because of his roots in student ministry.

"I became a Christian at uni and grew a lot there," he says. "I was also on the staff team at Sydney University for about four years, working with young adults in that setting where people are often growing and developing their theology very quickly – getting into the Bible and learning to think in a Christian way. "That's where I cut my teeth in ministry and I really enjoy it, so this is an opportunity to get back to that 'sweet spot' in terms of my gifts. And I like working as part of a team. I don't need to be up front and the head honcho – in fact I probably feel more comfortable letting someone else do that! So I'm looking forward to the ministry I will be doing, while letting someone else take that role. I'm there to serve."

UP THE ROAD TO GLEBE

The **Rev Mark Wormell** has moved from Barneys at Broadway to become rector of St John's, Glebe. He says after the previous rector, the Rev Paul Perini, indicated his plans to retire, "the nominators started asking around for thoughts on people who might be able to work with Glebe's diverse needs".

As someone who spent 28 years at Barneys – the last three as an assistant minister, in addition to involvement with Barneys' student accommodation – Mr Wormell was certainly well acquainted with inner Sydney. In addition, he has written and spoken about a Christian response to dementia as well as lecturing in the Ministry with Seniors course at Mary Andrews College – handy skills for a parish with links to an Anglicare retirement village.

The parish encompasses the whole social and economic spectrum, from affluent professionals to people in housing commission, plus students and the elderly.

"The nominators said they wanted to have someone who's had some life experience... but also I'm happy with a range of different ways of worshipping and I'm not going to try and force them one way or another," Mr Wormell says. "It's important to work with the congregation... Glebe is also one of the churches in Sydney that welcomes women into the pulpit. I'm happy with women preaching and using their gifts to the full, and that had an impact as well."

One aspect of his at Barneys Mr Wormell is very keen to continue is links with locals who originate from overseas – particularly Asia.

"For the past eight years I've been involved with ministry to international students and there are quite a few living in Glebe... it's also a popular place for people to continue to live after they finish their studies," he says.

"At Barneys I was very involved with the Chinese congregation and I'm keen to see us reach the people from South-East Asia and China who live within the parish. There are one or two who come along but the church doesn't, at the moment, represent the breadth of ethnic backgrounds within the parish and I'd like to see that grow."

Mr Wormell's wife Kah-Lin will be busy alongside him, he says, as they work as a team. And together they plan to enjoy the very different dynamic of a smaller church. "At Broadway we had more than 1000 people on the books and at Glebe there is less than a 100," he says. "It will be a far more intimate experience than the past 28 years! I'm looking forward to really getting to know the people I worship with."



RARE OPPORTUNITY IN POSTAL SURVEY

The postal survey about the redefinition of marriage is a highly relevant issue for Australia and thankfully the Church has shown a wise understanding of feared implications. The item "For the benefit of all" by Dr Glenn Davies (SC, September) was a continuation of the excellent material the Diocese has published on this vital social and moral concern.

Maybe we are seeing the possibilities for a future beneficial role of our church, which is in the world but not of the world. New members will be attracted to a relevant movement assertively conservative in a world of revolutionary thinking where funding from foundations and extremely wealthy individuals is available for anarchy and disruption.

Progressive or revolutionary thinking is the dominant paradigm in the universities and the media – particularly publicly funded media. The Australian "gender fluidity" theories emanated from a university in Melbourne with the intent of imposing the ideas on all schools. Parent complaints were met by media and government obfuscation.

Certainly Christian and Western advocacy, unlike Muslim advocacy, is for the separation of church and state. However in a democracy where every citizen is required to determine the form and policies of government we cannot opt out of a most rare and fortunate opportunity to express our opinion. The Lord Jesus lived under a dictatorial system where he frequently contested moral issues with the Pharisees, defended women and children and supported traditional marriage.

Brian Doak
Lindfield

RHINE MINISTRY NEED

I was recently sent a *Southern Cross* article about the upcoming riverboat ministry on the Rhine (SC, October). Daniel and Jeanie Ough, mentioned in the story, are very dear friends who will be helping to organise and launch this glorious ministry.

Having lived in Italy and Germany for six years, I know first hand the state of Christianity in Europe. It is shockingly weak to near non-existent. The beautiful Heiliggeist Kirche in Heidelberg had so few members that the church served both Catholic and Protestant worshippers.

I remember visiting Prague, where the churches were used primarily as venues for classical concerts – wonderful music, but the churches in a sad state.

I am happy to see that this riverboat ministry will be launched into the rich land of early Christianity and hopefully reawaken a faith long dormant. May God richly bless this endeavour to stir up the faith in nations that revel in its blessings but ignore its calling.

Thank you for the article.

Katherine Powers
Casey (ACT)

THROWING OUT THE BABY

In response to Paul Williamson ("Losing our religion?", SC, September), yes, we are in danger of throwing the baby out with the bathwater.

While there has been an emphasis on evangelism recently religion is, and has been understood for aeons to be, a belief system that includes salvation by works.

Older Christians understand the importance of ritual – not just in church but in their daily lives. What disturbs them, and others, is the constant haranguing from the pulpit regarding idolatrous practices.

Is the cross merely a symbol of idolatry, or does it remind us that Christ was crucified for our sins? Through him we have eternal life.

The cross may be worn merely as a decoration, however the references to the cross throughout the Bible highlight the importance of the cross for our salvation.

James does end his first chapter with a contrast between worthless and acceptable religion. Who decides, then?

How helpful is it to have a minister remove all of the significant symbols from the church that are relevant to those who worship there while preaching about evangelism and idolatry?

Yes! We should stand against the tide of 21st century utilitarianism and care for those people God is deeply concerned about. However, the irony of this is the number of younger ministers who refuse to do pastoral care and engage with the broader community in a meaningful way, while claiming to evangelise.

Yes! We are in danger of losing our religion – and our credibility.

Margaret Elder
Burradoo





Changing, unchanged

With so much change in society and the wider world, Jesus' followers need to stand firm in the truths of the gospel as they love the lost and distressed, says

DR GLENN DAVIES.

This is an edited version of the Presidential Address delivered on the opening night of Synod 2017.

AS WE GATHER TOGETHER IN THE PRESENCE OF GOD, I ACKNOWLEDGE THE traditional owners of the land upon which we meet. Recognising those who have been custodians of this land is not a perfunctory gesture but an acknowledgement that many have gone before us and will come after us – we are passing through. While we have much to regret in the establishment of a British colony that dispossessed the Aboriginal people of their land and led to the destruction of Aboriginal culture, we do rejoice in the ministry of people like Richard Johnson and Thomas Hassall, who reached out to the indigenous population of their day with the gospel of God's love. That task continues to be our first priority – a gospel for all people.

THE UNCHANGING GOSPEL

I am not sure what activities were taking place in Sydney 500 years ago, but in another land far removed from here a young monk was nailing 95 propositions on the door of the castle church in Wittenberg. He, too, was concerned with the gospel of God's grace, which he saw as distorted and corrupted by the teachings and practices of the Roman Church. While posting ideas for discussion was not necessarily controversial, Martin Luther's 95 theses, nailed to that church door on October 31, 1517, began a debate of such moment that it sparked what we now know as the Reformation.

While principally confined to the reformation of the church, Luther's call to Christendom to return to the Scriptures for the final authority in matters of faith and doctrine revolutionised society. Luther's commitment to the authority of Scripture and Christ's saving work as the only ground of our justification before God galvanised many in Europe, England and Scotland. It also, sadly, galvanised the Roman Church to oppose this movement with such ferocity that many lost their lives for the sake of the gospel. We cannot assume that our own people, let alone the general population of Sydney, fully understand the significance of the Reformation upon the church of God, grounded in the rediscovery of the authority of the word of God. Every opportunity we have to shine the light of the gospel into the darkness of our society ought to be welcomed with open arms.

The 2016 Census data indicate Australia is a religiously diverse nation with Christianity remaining the most common religion at 52 per cent of the population, compared with 88 per cent a mere 50 years ago. It is sobering that more than 30 per cent of Australians now declare themselves to have no religion. We are seeing a significant drift away from any willingness to identify in some way with Christianity, for we all know 52 per cent of the population do not attend church each week! Of this number, only a small proportion gather weekly with God's people for prayer and praise, which ought to be a reliable indicator of a lively faith in the Lord Jesus. The mission field in our own Diocese, let alone the nation, is wide open.

Our Mission 2020 values have not changed and our priorities continue to be relevant to the communities in which we live. While we can be heartened by progress made in some areas, the challenge to reach out to all the lost remains imperative. It needs, of course, a spiritual maturity among our members so they fully grasp the plight of the lost, the reality of hell and the coming judgment of God. It also means we need to be equipped to exercise our gifts for kingdom growth as we encounter the changing face of our society. Above all it requires prayerful dependence upon the Holy Spirit to glorify God and love our neighbour by proclaiming the Lord Jesus Christ, calling upon people to repent and living lives worthy of him. Our vision is to see Christ honoured as Lord and Saviour in every community. That starts with each one of us.

I am pleased to hear of many parishes training their members and undertaking local evangelism. Many take the opportunity of engaging a Moore College team of students who set aside a week for mission each year. In 2018, at the initiative of Bishop Peter Hayward, the Wollongong regional mission will involve all its parishes in partnership with Evangelism and New Churches, Anglicare and Anglican schools, with a special emphasis during the Moore College mission week of March 18-25. In 2019, Bishop Edwards is planning a Northern regional mission, as is Bishop Lin for the Georges River Region. Do pray for these special opportunities for gospel proclamation, as it is only by the Spirit of God that people are converted and become disciples of the Lord Jesus.

A CHANGING WORLD

As the penetration of the gospel diminishes in our society, permissive forces that espouse the virtue of "tolerance" are seeking to impose restrictions on those who wish to maintain the values upon which our nation was founded. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the debate surrounding same-sex marriage.

While advocates of the "Yes" campaign have been unrelenting in their attempts to redefine marriage, they have also been virulent in their opposition to those who hold a contrary view. The innocent inclusion of drinking Coopers beer in the Bible Society's promotion of an informed, civilised debate between two politicians – each holding opposing views on same-sex marriage – resulted in an uncivilised, unwarranted and malicious campaign to boycott Coopers Breweries. A Christian doctor who appeared in an advertisement opposing same-sex marriage was subjected to a campaign to have her medical registration withdrawn, and there was a ludicrous attempt to rename Margaret Court Arena merely because one of our greatest athletes went public in her opposition to same-sex marriage.

This year we produced the booklet *What has God joined together? Jesus' Good Message about Marriage for Australia*, which was distributed to all parishes and made available on the Sydney Anglicans website. I am grateful to Bishop Michael Stead for his chairmanship of the committee that composed this document, which I am pleased to say other denominations, with our permission, have readily republished as their own (casting aside the Anglican logo in the process!). It is worthy of careful reading, yet I still meet Anglicans who are unaware of its existence. As a Diocese we have also become a founding member of the Coalition for Marriage, along with the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney, Marriage Alliance and the Australian Christian Lobby. A further 80 organisations have since joined in common cause.

Standing Committee has enthusiastically backed our participation in the Coalition for Marriage and taken the bold step of drawing down \$1 million from the Diocesan Endowment to promote the "No" case. Brothers and sisters, the stakes are high and the cost is high. Yet the cause is just and it is a consequence of our discipleship to uphold the gift of marriage as God has designed it – a creation ordinance for all people. By so doing, the wisdom of God is made manifest.

I make no apology for encouraging all Australians, especially Anglicans, to vote "No" in this postal survey. I believe a change in the definition of marriage is unwarranted, not just because it is in opposition to the teaching of Scripture and our Lord himself in Matthew 19, but because I believe marriage, traditionally understood as a union of one man and one woman, is a positive good, where marriage and the procreation of children are bound together as the foundational fabric of our society – notwithstanding the sad reality that not all married couples are able to conceive. Moreover, I consider the consequences of removing gender from marriage will have irreparable consequences for society, for our freedom of speech, freedom of conscience and freedom of religion. It is disingenuous to think otherwise given evidence to the contrary in Canada, the US and the UK.

It is a sad reflection upon the state of the Anglican Communion that some have been so moulded into the patterns of the surrounding culture that they now approve the marriage of same-sex couples and purport to pronounce God's blessing upon them. The Scottish Episcopal Church has taken this perilous path, and it is likely Canada and the US will soon change their canons to follow suit. These developments confirm the importance of GAFCON as a renewal movement within the Anglican Communion, committed to the truth and authority of the Bible.

In Australia the outcome of the postal survey is yet to be determined but the question of how we manage to hold different views in a democratic and free society remains. The Prime Minister recently stated that he believes in religious freedom "even more strongly" than same-sex marriage, yet it would not appear such a sentiment is widely held in our society. The challenges that lie ahead of us as Christians are not merely the proposed changes to the Marriage Act, but in the freedom to speak of what we believe as it affects the nurture of our children, the teaching in our churches and the education of our students in Anglican schools.

LOVE FOR ALL, FOR LIFE

Proposals to change the Marriage Act are not the only dynamics at work against the Christian ethos. In recent days we have seen the introduction of bills into the Legislative Council of NSW to allow for late-term abortions and to legalise assisted suicide with minimal protections for the elderly. The latter Bill is still before the Upper House, and we are expecting a further attempt to legislate for abortion following the defeat of the former Bill. These matters were uncontested a generation ago but now receive significant public support.

I have written on your behalf to our parliamentarians expressing my opposition to each of these bills as they demean the value of human life, whether at its beginning or its end. Abortion and euthanasia abandon the truth that all humans are made in God's image and therefore all life is precious in his sight. Indeed, this fundamental doctrine affects all our dealings in life. It also motivates our evangelism, that his image bearers might be forgiven and restored to the glorious inheritance God has promised for his people.

During this Synod we shall receive two reports of major significance: one on domestic abuse and the other on sexual identity. Sadly, domestic abuse in its physical manifestation of violence, or in its psychological manifestation of spiritual or emotional manipulation, seems to be on the increase. Even more alarming is the fact that such abuse occurs in Christian families, and even clergy families, which should never be the case as it dishonours both God and his image bearers.

The Domestic Violence Taskforce has done us a great service in developing a provisional Domestic Abuse Policy. The provisional nature of this policy will allow Synod to provide feedback with a view to the final form of the policy being adopted next year. I am very grateful for the hard work undertaken by the Taskforce, particularly Canon Sandy Grant (as chairman) and Archdeacon Kara Hartley, and trust Synod members will give careful attention to their proposals so our awareness of the pernicious nature of domestic abuse might be enhanced and responded to both with justice and pastoral sensitivity.

The second significant report concerns sexual identity. We have been well served by the Social Issues Committee, the Doctrine Commission and other specialists in this area who have provided us with a theological and pastoral sensitive analysis of gender dysphoria or gender identity disorder. I trust you have read this report, despite the confronting nature of its topic.

The image of God is at the heart of who we are as humans, physically and spiritually, so the current rise in gender confusion is a topic that demands careful investigation. I am grateful for the careful and comprehensive work produced by the Social Issues Committee – especially the contributions of Dr Karin Sowada, Dr Claire Smith and Dr Megan Best. There is more work to be done, but the more we can train our clergy to address these issues biblically, theologically and sensitively the better we shall be able to help those suffering from the effects of living in a fallen world.

As Christians we also need to model tolerance and grace in dealing with contentious matters and listening to opposing views, as not all Australians will agree with our beliefs regarding ethical and social issues. In the marketplace of ideas, including social media outlets, our speech should be full of grace and humility, winsome and wise, persuasive in argument but courteous in tone.

SYRIAN/IRAQI REFUGEES

Two years ago, in response to the Federal Government's decision to allow an additional 12,000 Syrian/Iraqi refugees into Australia, I launched an appeal to assist those fleeing the political crisis engulfing their homeland. I am grateful to Anglicare for co-ordinating our response and appreciative of other organisations, such as Anglican Diocessary Ministries, Moore College, Anglican Aid and Youthworks, for offering assistance.

However, I want to extend my heartfelt thanks to you, the diocesan family, for donating more than \$746,000 to this appeal. This is an extraordinary level of commitment for the many calls upon your resources. To this amount Anglicare has provided an additional \$200,000, for which I am also very grateful, so the total expenditure by the time the program concludes in June 2018 is expected to be just short of \$1 million.

Between July 2015 and June 2016 there were approximately 4000 humanitarian visa entrants, with 12,000 the following financial year. The Fairfield and Liverpool areas have received the greatest number of these, while others have settled in Bankstown, Auburn, Blacktown, Wollongong, Mount Druitt, Ryde, Merrylands and Parramatta. Anglicare has worked closely with Government agencies, diocesan organisations and churches in resettlement.

Mobile pantries have been well received in the Bankstown and Liverpool areas, as have trauma counselling, ESL classes, complex settlement casework by Arabic-speaking staff members, Early Learning Through Play (for children), distribution of bibles in Arabic provided by the Bible Society, and material aid.

Some refugees have been Christian, others have not. Yet our response has been equally generous to all. When I launched the appeal I received criticism for including Muslims among those whom we would assist; I also received criticism from those who thought we should only be reaching out to non-Christian refugees. I am glad to say Anglicare has followed the advice of the apostle Paul: "as we have opportunity, we are to do good to all people, especially the household of faith" (Galatians 6:10).

I encourage you to continue to welcome refugees and people seeking asylum into our communities and look for ways to reach out in cross-cultural ministries and show God's love both in practical help and through sharing the gospel.

GENERAL SYNOD LEGISLATION

General Synod met in Queensland last month where a raft of legislation, known as canons, were passed – many related to issues raised by the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. While the Anglican Church may share different views on a number of issues, there is fundamental agreement concerning the importance of protecting children from abuse.

Regrettably, our Church has suffered children and other vulnerable people in the past, through little screening of lay ministers and clergy, poor understanding of the effects of abuse and inadequate training in knowing how to deal with survivors and perpetrators. Although legislation is never the panacea for the evil of child sexual abuse, it is an important aspect of the Church's response as it can make provision for representatives from our Diocese have been involved in the composition of these canons and I am especially grateful to Mr Garth Blake SC, whose championing the cause of ensuring our churches are places of safety for all people, particularly children, has been a driving force in our national Church for many years.

I trust the Synod will carefully consider each of these adopting ordinances with a view to passing them to demonstrate to our society that we consider the safety of children in our midst to be of paramount concern.

FINAL REMARKS

Times may change, new questions may be formulated, new criticisms may be advanced, and fresh challenges will be encountered by the church, but by God's grace the gospel will continue to be proclaimed. Our time is no different – notwithstanding the significant shifts in community values and expectations – because we have an eternal gospel, just as Martin Luther had. When our Lord returns, "the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places made plain. And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed and all flesh shall see it together, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken" (Isaiah 40:3-5).

That is our inheritance and our future. Let us not lose heart but trust in the promises of God and the return of Christ our King. ☩

NEW BISHOPSCOURT ANNOUNCED

Archbishop Davies revealed in his address that an agreement had been reached to build a new Bishopscourt close to the CBD.

"Since early 2016 my wife and I have been living in Haberfield in rented accommodation, while the Endowment of the See committee has been vigorously seeking a new residence for the Archbishop of Sydney," he said. "This has been a protracted exercise as few houses are suitable to the kind of living and hospitality that is appropriate to the office of Archbishop, as well as being relatively close to the city.

"I am therefore pleased to announce that after examining numerous possibilities, the Endowment of the See committee has come to an arrangement with the parish of St Barnabas', Broadway to surrender their interest in part of their land in Forest Lodge for the purposes of building both a residence and a function centre for the Archbishop."

Dr Davies said \$3.25 million would be paid to the parish "from part of the proceeds of the sale of Bishopscourt, earmarked for the acquisition of a new Bishopscourt".

"This has been a very pleasing outcome as we are now able to construct a purpose-built residence for the Archbishop, close to the city, with suitable accommodation for guests and a function centre for larger gatherings.

"It is also anticipated that with a second storey on the function centre a further meeting room might be constructed for the parish's ongoing ministry to university students as well as for other diocesan needs.

"I am very grateful to the parish council and the congregation for their goodwill and generosity in supporting the return of this land for the benefit of the Diocese, as well as the Endowment of the See."

Planning and building the new Bishopscourt and function centre is expected to take up to two years.

Is that all God's got to say?



The Bible says we shouldn't be anxious, so how do people gripped by anxiety respond in this fallen world, asks **PAUL GRIMMOND**.

I'VE STRUGGLED WITH ANXIETY IN DIFFERENT WAYS ALL THROUGH MY LIFE. THE MOST significant and obvious episode was a series of panic attacks and hospitalisation in my late twenties in the months leading up to the birth of my first child. It also manifested itself in a period of burnout that saw me leave my job in pastoral ministry for a time.

As it turns out, I'm not alone. The incidences of anxiety in our community and in our churches are growing. And for Christians who struggle with anxiety, that's a big problem because we all know what the Bible has to say:

"Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God" (Phil 4:6). If you're someone who struggles with anxiety, here's a command from God that you're sure you must be disobeying. So the question I want to ask is, does God have anything else to say about anxiety?

The short answer is, yes! And it's good news. The longer answer involves understanding the purpose and place of anxiety in God's world.

To understand that place and purpose, we can begin by noticing that the New Testament has one main word for anxiety: *merimnao* (don't worry if you can't pronounce it – most Bible college students struggle with it as well). However, that word isn't always translated the same way in our English bibles. Sometimes it's translated with words like "worry" or "anxiety" (e.g. Phil 4:6, Matt 6:25). But other times it is translated as "concern" (e.g. 1 Cor 12:24-25, Phil 2:19-20, 2 Cor 11:28). What's interesting is that in this second set of uses the word isn't negative, it's positive. Christians are to be concerned (anxious) for the welfare and Christian growth of other believers. Sometimes God wants us to be anxious!

This is such an important starting point. We tend to speak about anxiety as a negative thing, but the Bible can speak about it as a positive thing. Anxiety is not always sinful; sometimes it is a right response to living in a broken world.

Which leads us to the bigger picture. When you think about anxiety for a moment, you realise that it's not something that was needed in the world before the fall – when we walked with God in the cool of the day – nor will it be needed in the new heavens and the new earth, when Jesus removes all mourning, death, crying and pain. But in God's plan, anxiety does have a helpful part to play in this world now.

I would go as far as to say that anxiety is a good, God-given gift because in our sin-scarred world sometimes anxiety is a right emotion. There are things to fear. Dogs bite. People hurt each other. Death is terrible. And we love people and want what is best for them but we can't control the future. Anxiety has its place.

However, while anxiety is sometimes good and right, like everything else we experience, anxiety can be twisted by sin and bring terrible results. I may become more anxious about what other people think of me than what God thinks of me. I may become more anxious about things like food, drink and clothing than about God's kingdom and his righteousness.

So what is anxiety? It is God's good gift for a fallen world. It is a reminder that I live in a broken place where things are dangerous. Anxiety often protects us from things that we need to be protected from. But like all things, it is sometimes an expression of our sinfulness. We can lose perspective and become anxious about things that draw us away from God.

What does all this mean for the person who struggles with anxiety?

This is where things become a bit tricky for Christians, because it's difficult to differentiate between anxiety that is a result of the fallenness of our world and unhealthy anxiety that is a part of my sinful response to this broken world.

Am I feeling anxious because I have a body that chemically over-reacts to threats, or am I feeling anxious because I have let sin take control? That's not always an easy question to answer. But once we understand that both things can be true, it creates a helpful perspective from which to take responsibility for something that we can't fully control. This means understanding that anxiety happens at two levels and taking responsibility at both of these levels.

Anxiety is in part a bodily, chemical reality that we are not in complete control of. But that doesn't mean we take no responsibility. Regular exercise, improved diet and good sleep are all helpful. Of course, doing better at each of these things won't fix the problem completely or immediately. I could start exercising regularly today and it might be months before I start to notice an effect. So part of taking-responsibility-for-something-I-can't-control is choosing to work on things that will cause some changes and take some time to work (this will include, for some, accepting God's gracious provision of medication). This is hard work, and is something that wise brothers and sisters in Christ can really help with.

But of course, the second reality for anxiety sufferers is that while our anxiety is bodily, it's not true to say that our anxiety is completely free from sin! Just like all other people, we need the gospel to address our anxiety. And we need the gospel to address our anxieties at many different levels.

At the primary level, we need to remember that our relationship with God is not dependent on our performance but on God's grace to us in Christ. And I think that the Bible's teaching on adoption is extremely important here. When God sets his Spirit on us through faith in Christ, we are adopted into his family. Adopted children don't move in and out of the family depending on whether they have had a more obedient day. They are part of the family. And that is such a precious truth.

Through Christ we stand in a place of grace with God who treats us tenderly. When the anxiety comes, my first reaction doesn't need to be, "There is sin and I need to stamp it out" but rather, "It's so hard some days living in this fallen body, but God loves me and knows me and graciously holds me in Jesus".

A great danger for anxious people is that even the gospel can become a law. It goes something like this: I feel anxious today, but I know God doesn't want me to be anxious, so now I feel guilty about that. But of course, if I really understood the gospel, I wouldn't feel guilty, so now I feel guilty for feeling guilty (there are endless unhelpful chains of logic to follow)!

As we learn to apply the gospel to our anxiety we need to keep remembering that we stand in a place of grace in our relationship with God and that God is for us, not standing against us waiting to get us into trouble.

It is having this understanding of the place of grace in which we stand that then enables us to wrestle with the ways sin can be involved in anxiety. One example for me was learning that my fear of conflict is driven by a fear of people that is greater than my fear of God. By God's grace I am learning that the tightness in my stomach when I detect the possibility of conflict is not a sign that I should run away but that I need to express what I'm thinking graciously and respectfully. Knowing that Jesus is my king and my Saviour has challenged and encouraged me to face some of the ways my anxiety is driven by my sinfulness and to begin to tackle that anxiety in a less anxious way.

The reality is that I've learned I will probably always wrestle with anxiety in certain situations. It's something that's not in my control. But through God helping me to take responsibility for myself (by applying the gospel wisely, learning to face my own sinfulness and taking care of some of the basics like exercise and diet) I have in God's grace become a little less anxious and a little more able to rest in his kindness, as I long for the day when I will see Jesus face to face and all my anxiety will be carried away.

What a day that will be!

The Rev Paul Grimmond is Dean of Students at MTC.

WINDSOR CELEBRATES

Let the party commence! The town crier and a British soldier stop for a quick photo amid 200th birthday celebrations for St Matthew's, Windsor.

St Matthew's, Windsor has celebrated its double century with a trio of community events.

On October 11 a special service included students from Arndell Anglican College and Windsor High School. It showcased the old and the new, allowing students to get a taste of the church's history while hearing a sermon delivered with a fresh twist – through puppetry.

"The plan was always to create events that bring in all the different arms of the community we intersect with," says rector the Rev Chris Jones. "We wanted, for instance, the education service to be a time of not only worship, but also of education, about the history of this place and how Christianity intersects with that."

The weekend of October 14-15 featured a Saturday Big Birthday Bash in the park next door, headlined by Colin Buchanan but also featuring the Wagana Aboriginal Dancers, the Australian Army Lancer Band and bands from Arndell and Windsor High School. The Richmond Players re-enacted the laying of the church's foundation stone while patron of the celebrations, former Governor of NSW Dame Marie Bashir, offered formal birthday wishes to the church and community.

The Sunday church service was led by Archbishop Glenn Davies and Mr Jones, and attended by the Lieutenant Governor of NSW the Hon Tom Bathurst. A packed church celebrated its history and the work of the gospel in Windsor and wider Hawkesbury region.

"The Hawkesbury Museum also put some of our things on display... including a communion cup that was a gift from King George IV," Mr Jones said. "Early on we formed a bicentennial team to bring community members in to help run this, because the scale of the occasion was beyond the resources we had. We had Rotary helping with barbecues [and] the local council sponsored us and helped with design and souvenir booklets.

"It's been a fantastic example of the church and community pulling together to remember the history of the area and the place the gospel has in our history."



Overthought, underdone

JUDY ADAMSON

Three Summers

Rated M

AS MUCH AS I'D LOVE TO SAY THIS FILM WAS FABULOUS – BECAUSE IT'S Australian made and packed with great Aussie talent – it's sweet and sometimes moving at best, and sanctimoniously preachy at worst.

What's even more annoying is that said Aussie talent is, for the most part, under-utilised in slight roles, with the action flitting from one person to another so often that very few performances are memorable.

The film's writer and director Ben Elton is known to most from his salad days penning the likes of *Blackadder*, *The Young Ones* and *The Thin Blue Line*, or from his work for the stage (including *Popcorn* and the Queen musical *We Will Rock You*).

He has lived in Australia for decades, and *Three Summers* was born out of his family's annual trips to the Fairbridge Folk Festival in Western Australia and a desire to encapsulate the changes that occur as regular attendees (families and performers) return year after year. Who comes back? Who moves on? Who breaks up, or makes up, or grows up? And what happens when they do?

It's not a bad premise, but the promise doesn't really deliver. Which is all the more frustrating with a cast that includes Magda Szubanski, Michael Caton, John Waters, Deborah Mailman, Peter Rowsthorn and Jacqueline McKenzie.

The story, as the title suggests, follows three years in the life of "Westival" – an annual folk event held in regional WA. Szubanski plays Queenie, a local radio personality whose cheery voice rings out across the festival grounds each year, welcoming all comers and giving polite air time to even the most irritating and self-important of performers.

Yes, some of this is funny. Anyone who has had to endure the self-righteous pontifications of "artists" knows that they're ripe for comedy. But, of course, these are Ben Elton's causes, too. And while the human decency of caring for refugees and recognising indigenous rights and culture is of tremendous importance, the lack of nuance is painful.

What could have been thoughtful and considered observations amid the humour are shovelled on so thickly that your brain hurts.

The story's main plotline revolves around an on-again, off-again romance between earnest Irish theremin player Roland (Robert Sheehan), and free-spirit fiddler Keevey (Rebecca Breeds). These two are excellent – thoroughly believable and a pleasure to watch, as is John Waters as Keevey's father Eamon.

Eamon and Keevey are members of an Irish folk band, and some of the film's best moments are when that band is performing. Breeds manages to sing, dance and make a good show of playing the fiddle (all at once!) while Waters steals the show with a heartfelt rendition of the song "When You Were Sweet Sixteen". It's a real pity the film doesn't offer more moments like this.

Elton has worked hard to the changes in people and relationships over time – while many things around them stay the same – and has also created some genuine humour and pathos. There's great value in underscoring the importance of doing what you love, being willing to face up to your failings and looking beyond yourself to understand the experiences and needs of others. It's just a shame it's often presented with the subtlety of a brick through a window.

The hook-ups through "dating" app Tinder leave me shaking my head, and the total waste of Deborah Mailman in a bit-part counsellor role had me grinding my teeth, but if you can live with that (and with Elton's try-hard table thumping) you'll probably be reasonably entertained by *Three Summers*.

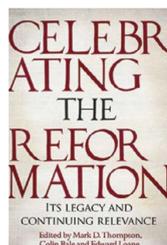
It certainly looks like those making the film had a whale of a time – and there are worse ways to spend an afternoon than watching an Australian cast tell an Australian story, with a soundtrack packed with music by Aussie bands. The level of enjoyment versus embarrassed squirming will depend entirely on your own taste. SC

Protestant promise assessed

GERALD BRAY

Celebrating the Reformation: Its Legacy and Continuing Relevance

Edited by Mark D. Thompson, Colin Bale and Edward Loane, IVP (Apollos), \$30



THIS BOOK IS A COLLECTION OF PAPERS DELIVERED AT OR WRITTEN IN CONJUNCTION WITH the Moore College School of Theology (September 13-14, 2017). There are 17 contributors representing four Protestant denominations – Anglican, Presbyterian, Lutheran and Baptist – and all Australian states except Tasmania. Seven of the contributors are full-time Moore College faculty members and four more are graduates, making the volume a tribute to the high standards of research and the commitment to Reformation principles which characterise the college.

The papers are grouped into three categories covering the major Reformers as individuals, their distinctive doctrines and their subsequent influence. The first section is the longest, introducing readers to Martin Luther, Huldrych Zwingli, Philip Melancthon, John Calvin, Heinrich Bullinger, Martin Bucer and Thomas Cranmer.

There is also an intriguing chapter devoted to the career of Katherine Zell, a woman who had a great influence on her husband Matthew and, through him, on the development of the Reformation in Strasbourg. On the other hand, the radical Reformers (Anabaptists) are passed over in silence, perhaps because their careers and emphases were rather different from the mainline or "magisterial" theologians mentioned here.

The second section deals with Reformation doctrines, covering salvation through Christ, justification by faith, the supremacy of Scripture, the priesthood of all believers and the nature of Christian discipleship. Many of these themes will be familiar but they are presented here with a fresh focus.

The final section looks at the way the Reformation has influenced the development of the church – especially Protestantism – in the centuries since Martin Luther launched his protest against the Church of Rome. There is even a chapter that discusses how the legacy of the Reformation has been received in Australia, which will be of special interest to readers who may not know much about this.

The papers were written and published before the School of Theology, when they were presented in a somewhat abridged form, so readers of the book will benefit even more than those who heard the papers delivered in person. The standard of scholarship is uniformly high and the presentation is exemplary. Contributors have taken account of the latest findings in the field of Reformation studies and, while they are committed to Protestant teachings, they are not blind to the faults and failures of those who first proclaimed them.

The successes the Reformers had in changing the nature of the medieval church are balanced by their inability to make common cause with each other, provoking what today seem like minor and avoidable divisions. The contributors to the book tackle this legacy with scrupulous fairness and an often remarkable attention to detailed analysis, but they do so in a way that retains the interest of non-specialist readers. Those with little knowledge of the subject will not be subjected to incomprehensible scholarly jargon, and everyone can gain a great deal from what the book has to say.

The contributors bring their subjects alive with apposite illustrations and give readers a taste of what it must have felt like to be caught up in the great historical movement of the Reformation. Spiritual concerns are always very much to the fore in the presentations, both in the detailed study of individual Reformers and in the treatment of the key doctrines they espoused.

The end product is a cohesive and reliable account of the origins of Protestantism, which conveys the animated spirit of those who lived in its formative years. It is to be highly commended to all who have an interest in the history of the church and in the central themes of the Christian life. This book is a great achievement, of which Moore College and the Diocese of Sydney may be justly proud. SC

The Rev Dr Gerald Bray is the Research Professor of Divinity at Beeson Divinity School in Alabama, USA.