

JULY  
2018

# Southern CROSS

THE NEWS MAGAZINE FOR SYDNEY ANGLICANS

## Singled out

DO OUR CHURCHES FORGET "NON-MARRIEDS"?

PLUS

**Jesus: iron fist, velvet glove**

**Royal Commission lessons**

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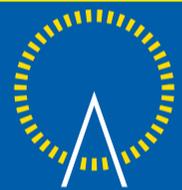


**“...vulnerability and fragility [are] core to being Christian and human.”**

**Jessica Lyons**  
Sydney News

## Southern CROSS JULY 2018

volume 24 number 6



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\$44.00 per annum (Australia)

**PRINTED BY:** Southern Colour



## Job share for Jesus

Discipler: Brian Tran, centre, chats to the Rev Canon Chris Allan (left) and the Rev Peter Wrench.

IT'S NOT YOUR AVERAGE JOB-SHARE ARRANGEMENT. PARTLY BECAUSE THE SAME MAN – BRIAN TRAN – is doing both jobs, and partly because his two employers are St Andrew's Cathedral School (SACS) and the Cathedral itself.

"Brian presents an amazing opportunity for the school as well as for the Cathedral," says the head chaplain at SACS, the Rev Peter Wrench. "The Cathedral operates like an old-fashioned English village church in that it's part of its community... the students are very familiar with the Cathedral – they go there every week.

"Churches often lack a direct link to the community, but Brian is here, sitting among 1300 students. His brief is to train up our Cru [Christian group] leaders and disciple our students, to equip them to be able to defend the faith and commend the gospel in an appropriate way. He's also chaplain to the chapel band... goes along to their practice, helps them sing – he can sort of do everything!"

Mr Wrench adds that part of the discipleship for Christian students is ensuring they're in a good youth group at their local church and supporting them in their faith walk. However, for students who live locally, or have no church/youth group, "it's very natural for them to go to the Cathedral. And the youth group there is straight after school on a Friday, so it's like going to soccer training. It's something you do after school."

Handily, with his job straddling both locations, Mr Tran is also responsible for this Friday youth group. His role involves two days at the Cathedral, and three at the school.

The acting Dean at the Cathedral, the Rev Canon Chris Allan, says that, "From our end his is basically a youth minister's job, taking in Friday and Sunday. The whole point is that it's a bridge between the school and the Cathedral... we see the ministries as working in tandem".

Mr Tran is a trained social worker with a theology degree, and also undertook MTS at the Cathedral about five years ago. He describes his new job as "a challenging opportunity", and expects he will need "to put all my experience and knowledge together to problem solve and create new ministry strategies and opportunities".

This includes creating a city youth model, where teens from Church Hill Anglican – who are already part of the Cathedral's youth program – and other Anglican churches in the city can be confident there is "a place where you can fellowship and learn about God's work... it belongs to you as well".

"I'm not trying to reinvent the wheel, but I'm trying to make the wheel work for this particular environment," he says.

Canon Allan, who was Mr Tran's trainer when he did MTS, adds that during his earlier period at the Cathedral "all the kids loved Brian. He's enthusiastic, highly relational and empathetic, and he can really get beside people.

"And with his background in social work he's worked with the very hardest of hard children in children's refuges and things like that. So he's got a lot of experience at both ends of the spectrum."

## Parishes urged to action on DV

THE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE TASKFORCE HAS URGED rectors and parish councils to adopt domestic abuse policies for their churches.

The call follows the issuing of a flowchart to parishes, which illustrates the action that should be taken once church staff or members become aware of the possibility of violence in a relationship.

The taskforce brought a Domestic Violence policy to Synod in 2017 and since then has been gathering feedback from churches and experts to refine the policy.

"I've been really encouraged to notice how many ministers appear to have begun to better understand domestic abuse as it impacts people in our churches," says taskforce chairman, the Rev Canon Sandy Grant (right).

"However, there is an important role for church members in this, too. For example, a fellow growth group member might be the person someone chooses to confide in. Therefore it is important for rectors and parish councils to consider ways of raising awareness of our stance on domestic abuse. One way to achieve this is to consider passing a local domestic abuse policy. Our parish in Wollongong has already done so."

The flowchart lists a number of steps to take once a person discloses domestic abuse. In the first section, "Respect and Listen", people are urged to listen with acceptance, not ask for proof, assure the victim it's not their fault, talk about confidentiality and assess the immediate risk of harm.

The document then outlines a "Safety First" strategy that may involve calling police and lists a number of contacts for people to call – especially if there is immediate risk of harm.

"A very helpful step is to use noticeboards in your church buildings to highlight the key contact phone numbers and websites for places to get help," Canon Grant says.

A number of churches have already put up posters in toilets and other areas. Contacts include the 1800 Respect national helpline, Anglicare Domestic Violence Adviser, the Aurora and Daisy phone apps or the NSW Domestic Violence Line.

The final step of the flowchart leads to two alternatives: action involving police or authorities, or no formal action. Even if no formal action results, the flowchart says, "Your time was well spent. A victim knows they have been believed, is not in the wrong, and can return to you for further help".



Book celebration (from left): Dr Brian Dickey, Associate Professor Stuart Piggin, the Rev Canon Len Abbott (to whom the book is dedicated) and John Anderson.

IT WAS JUST ONE OF THOSE EVENTS – EVERYONE SEEMED TO BE THERE. EMINENT HISTORIANS, bishops, politicians past and present, and students of history crowded into the Scots Church in York Street for the launch of a book by Associate Professor Stuart Piggin and Professor Robert D. Linder titled *The Fountain of Public Prosperity: Evangelical Christians in Australian History, 1740-1914*.

The State Minister for Education, Rob Stokes, described the book in his opening welcome as "extraordinarily significant", and "the culmination of the lifetime's work thus far of Stuart Piggin and Robert Linder".

Fellow historian Dr Brian Dickey, who helped launch the book, spoke of a time decades ago when he and the authors had "talked for days about writing a history of Evangelical Christianity in Australia, [with] Protestant Evangelical Christianity back where it belongs at the centre".

He talked of a faith in earlier Australians "that was vital, not nominal – an anthropology which insisted on the equality of all people in the sight of God, justice for the wronged and compassion for the needy". He added that the book helped readers "reimagine the past and indeed the future of Australia with Evangelical Christianity written back in".

Former Deputy Prime Minister John Anderson, who also launched the book, praised its authors for giving readers a clear picture of the impact of the gospel on our country, starting in Britain in the generations before the colony was established.

He noted the "huge debt" owed to Professors Piggin and Linder in detailing the biblical faith of parliamentarians, businesspeople and farming families, those committed to women's suffrage and to the proper treatment of indigenous people – despite the "sorry history" of much of our interactions with our first nations.

"The colonisers were not perfect... but by any objective measure the heritage they gave us was extraordinarily valuable, really giving us the foundation stones for one of the freest and most open societies on earth," Mr Anderson said.

"I believe this book is extraordinarily valuable... I found myself aching to believe that this will produce a rethink – that it will fill in vitally important gaps [and] give heroes again to people who lack heroes in our own heritage."

Professor Piggin also made some remarks – receiving a standing ovation before and after he spoke. He said the book "tells one of the many untold stories about Australian history", adding that, "It's a more positive story than you might expect!". He explained that the book's 674 pages were divided into three eras – pre-1835, 1836-1870, and 1870-1914 – and the actions of all Protestant denominations were included.

"What united this Christian family was much more significant than what divided them," he said. "[There should be] no letting up on the fashioning of one humanity. Bible-believing Christians must be part of that."

*The Fountain of Public Prosperity: Evangelical Christians in Australian History, 1740-1914 is printed by Monash University Publishing.*

## Sydney joins Federal redress

THE DIOCESE OF SYDNEY HAS AGREED TO PARTICIPATE IN THE COMMONWEALTH GOVERNMENT'S Redress Scheme for survivors of child sexual abuse.

In March, the Diocese welcomed the Prime Minister's announcement of the scheme and, in a statement, reiterated its commitment to "meeting its responsibilities towards those who have suffered because of the appalling acts which have been perpetrated on vulnerable children in our care".

A diocesan redress policy has provided care and assistance payments for survivors of child sexual abuse since 2004 and the Standing Committee of the Diocese has now officially confirmed its participation in the Commonwealth Redress Scheme for institutional Child Sexual Abuse.

The Archbishop of Sydney, Dr Glenn Davies, also welcomed the decision and commended the Federal Government for establishing the scheme, the legislation for which is currently before the Senate.

"The suffering of those who have been abused can never be overestimated," Dr Davies said. "We must face any failures of the past with integrity, honour, repentance and compassion."

As further details of arrangements become known, the Diocese will work in conjunction with the Federal Government, through the new company being established by the General Synod of the Anglican Church of Australia.

## New safe ministry courses

AN ONLINE VERSION OF THE JUNIOR LEADERS SAFE ministry training course is now available, continuing the work of ensuring all leaders and volunteers in churches are equipped to serve safely.

Recognising that the two standard safe ministry training options – the Essentials and Refresher courses – aren't written for those under 18, the team at Safe Ministry Training developed an age-appropriate mode of education.

This is aimed at young people between the ages of 14 and 17 and involves a combination of online modules and one-to-one mentoring to ensure the teen leaders are supported at every stage.

"We know that younger brains are not fully developed enough to understand consequences of actions," says the Rev Neil Atwood (right), Safe Ministry's parish consultant.

"A training mentor in the young leader's own church will be providing a standing ovation before and after he spoke. They will be given resources to help them sit down and discuss face to face with young leaders."

With the Bible not specifying an age group for leadership, it was important that the junior training course provide clear guidelines for those young people God has entrusted with leadership responsibilities in their local parishes.

"They are vulnerable people, and yet they are given the opportunity to have a position of power and responsibility," says Safe Ministry training consultant Mrs Kylie Williams, who worked on developing the training material.

"We're asking them to think carefully and make sure they have a good community of people around them so that leadership is not in isolation.

"If you're going to care for God's flock, you're a shepherd and you're going to serve. We want them to understand that leadership is serving people with the power you have."

Junior leader training is not the only course that has been in the works. The team is aiming to develop optional modules for its existing courses to better support the wide range of people who are ministered to across the Diocese.

Says Mr Atwood: "We've got plans to produce optional training modules that cover working with vulnerable adults in different contexts, such as ESL classes, refugees, seniors and intellectually disabled people".

The team also hopes to see the course translated into other languages, focusing first on Mandarin – a task that may prove quite challenging.

"From what we understand, there are words and phrases and concepts [in English] that have no direct translation in Mandarin," Mr Atwood explains.

"There are also big cultural hurdles to overcome that mitigate talking about certain issues."

Throughout all of these developments, Mr Atwood's aim is to see that ministry is conducted in a way that ensures all people are safe and cared for.

"We know we have a statutory duty to protect children, but we have a strong moral imperative to protect vulnerable adults in our churches, too," he says.

"These are a natural extension of our core training material."



Above: Phillip Heath. Below, from top: Michael Jones, Bill Clark and Bernard Stewart.

THE HEAD OF BARKER COLLEGE, PHILLIP HEATH, IS AMONG ANGLICANS HONOURED IN THE Queen's birthday list for 2018.

Mr Heath, who has been head of the college since 2014, previously spent 14 years as head of St Andrew's Cathedral School – where he helped establish the Gawura campus for indigenous inner city children in 2007. While at Barker, Mr Heath has established the Darkinjung Barker School for primary-aged indigenous students.

He has been made a member in the General Division of the Order of Australia (AM) for service to education through executive roles, creating greater opportunities for indigenous students, and to professional associations.

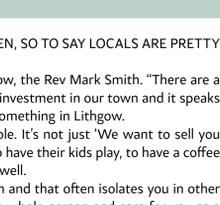
Mr Heath has held significant roles with the Association of Heads of Independent Schools, the NSW Board of Studies and Anglican Schools Australia.

Also honoured for his work in education was Michael Jones, given a Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM). Mr Jones, a member of St John's, Willoughby Park, has given significant service to a variety of schools – including almost 20 years' involvement at Tara Anglican School for Girls in North Parramatta, where he chaired the school board for 15 years. He is also deputy chairman of the Association of Independent Schools, NSW.

Also receiving an OAM is Dr William (Bill) Clark, who has been the director of music at St Mark's, Darling Point since 1993. Dr Clark was honoured for service to music education – which includes a teaching career at The Scots College, Sydney, service in executive roles in the Music Teachers' Association of NSW and the Association of Independent Schools. He has also had a lengthy involvement with the Royal School of Church Music and served as its chairman for nine years.

Among distinguished medical recipients, Professor Bernard Stewart was made a member in the General Division of the Order of Australia (AM). Professor Stewart, a member of St George's, Paddington, holds senior positions in the field of cancer medicine. He is head of the Cancer Control Program for the South Sydney Public Health Unit and Professor at the School of Women's and Children's Health at the University of NSW. He is scientific advisor to the Cancer Council Australia and a member of the working party on cancer clusters for the National Health and Medical Research Council.

Professor Stewart's citation was for "significant service to medicine in the field of environmental carcinogenesis, as a researcher and advocate, and to professional medical organisations".



## School head honoured in Queen's list

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The Rev Mark Smith (left) with Lithgow locals and Anglicare staff at the shop.

LITHGOW IS A TOWN WHERE SHOPS CLOSE RATHER THAN OPEN, SO TO SAY LOCALS ARE PRETTY excited about the new Anglicare store is an understatement.

"It's a big deal in lots of ways," says the rector of St Paul's, Lithgow, the Rev Mark Smith. "There are a lot of empty shops on the main street... so it's exciting to have an investment in our town and it speaks to hope and optimism and care that people would want to start something in Lithgow."

"But more importantly than that is the care for people as a whole. It's not just 'We want to sell you something and we'll see you later', but creating space for people to have their kids play, to have a coffee and make connections – so it's about meeting practical needs as well.

"The people who come in might be doing it a bit financially tough and that often isolates you in other ways. [The idea behind the shop is] we want to welcome you as a whole person and care for you as a whole person."

It's Anglicare Sydney's 19th shop but its first new style of store, which the organisation's head of retail, Stephen Kuo, describes as "more intentionally missional".

"We chose Lithgow because, firstly, it's an area of need – socially and spiritually," he says. "Also it's quite an isolated place... and as part of the new Anglicare we're looking to expand our care within the Diocese. We engaged with Mark at the church and he was keen to work with us so we took things from there."

The idea behind the new model is that an Anglicare shop will do much more than just sell clothes. The Lithgow store has a kids' play space, a coffee bar and a lounge area, as well as a linked food pantry.

"We are trialling [the pantry] across some of our other shops but it's a very new thing," Mr Kuo says. "Someone can come in and, for \$10, fill up a bag with food that can have a value of up to \$60."

"Part of the benefit of this is that they don't need to show a social security card – it's open to anyone. We know there are a lot of people who are doing it tough who haven't qualified for one of these cards, so we're trying to care for that part of the community as well."

"We're aware there will always be an element in the community that might take advantage of this, but we don't want that small group to, I guess, bar others from benefiting from what we're doing."

Another important element is the hiring of a part-time pastoral worker whose role will be funded by the shop. Mr Kuo says it's not an evangelistic role but an opportunity to "show the love of Jesus" to the community.

"The shop is safe, neutral territory," he says. "Being a retail and hospitality space... it's somewhere the community feels comfortable to come in and shop and it's a place where you can just naturally have conversations. More often than not people will talk about life and challenges, and so there are also great opportunities to talk about God in a non-confrontational way."

The shop will have links to the local jail, helping to provide clothes for inmates upon their release, and there's also an ongoing conversation with the Lithgow parish about further opportunities to link its people with the work of the shop.

"Plenty of people in our church family have offered to be volunteers," Mark Smith says. "We're certainly talking with Anglicare about what things we can do as church members for the shop, and how the shop can promote what's happening in the church – just making those connections. What's really exciting is Anglicare's fresh vision to work through churches rather than just alongside them."

"Our area is an area of high need... [but for Anglicare] it was not a matter of the difficulty or the cost; they wanted to come and make it happen."

## Come jam with me

Sharing life: Jessica Lyons with her Uncle Pete.

IT'S A SUNDAY AFTERNOON AND A CONGLOMERATION OF INSTRUMENTS AND VOICES ARE PERFORMING "Wild Thing" by The Troggs.

Jessica Lyons has invited anyone who enjoys music to join in recreating classic tunes, and her invitation is clear: this is a jam for all people – those with and without disabilities.

A ministry of L'Arche, an international organisation that seeks to create communities in which those with and without disabilities can share life together, Miss Lyons – who attends St George's, Paddington – works with a team of volunteers to host monthly band jam afternoons.

"Everyone just loves music, and everyone can be involved," says Miss Lyons, who works as a high school music teacher during the week. "It's not just about people with disabilities making music, it's about a broader community coming together and sharing in music together."

Although the jam sessions only started in this format two months ago, making music has long been a priority for those in L'Arche communities.

"A number of members are non-verbal, they can't sing lyrics but they are very involved in music," she says. "You see them get so excited."

More meaningful than the music, however, is sharing life together.

"One of the wonderful things about hanging out with people with intellectual disabilities is that they're so honest," Miss Lyons says. "The only thing they care about is that you're there."

"When we are together sharing a meal, I'm sharing the meal with someone who sees me as another person and doesn't give two hoots about whether I'm excelling at my job. They just care that I'm a person there sharing that moment with them. This shows me what love is."

She has personally witnessed this in her own family, as she has an uncle living with intellectual disabilities. "After my aunt passed away, I became aware of just how lonely he was feeling with no other support network," she says. "I would invite him along to events with my friends, and he'd just come along and he loved it."

"He's a wonderful, friendly, extroverted person and it was a joy to watch him engage and build friendships." Miss Lyons hopes the regular jam sessions will build a stronger community, allow more friendships to grow and help others to see the gifts and insights that people with intellectual disabilities have to share with them.

"They show me different qualities of faith without being able to articulate them," she says. "We run from vulnerability. Everything in us tries to, [but] we are all going to be disabled – we are born in need and we die needing people."

"It's only in this middle bit that we think we are able, but we are completely reliant on God and on the communities we are in.

"They teach me to remember that vulnerability and fragility is not something to be ashamed of, but that it's core to being Christian and human."





## Holiday service

Crafty kids: St Clement's team members run activities at the Broome kids' club.

AS WE JUMP INTO THE MID-YEAR SCHOOL HOLIDAYS, THE RECTOR OF BROOME ANGLICAN Church, the Rev Michael Baines, wants to encourage Sydney Anglicans to stop and think about ways they can use their "time, talent and treasure to serve the Lord in another part of Australia".

And he ought to know how valuable it is. In the April school holidays a group of six men and women from St Clement's, Mosman came to his church to run a kids' club and revamp the parish's ministry centre. Three months later he's still talking about it.

"It meant such a great deal to us," he says, "because we don't always have a lot of resources in churches in North West Australia, and so we're really grateful that the people from Mosman came up to help us out.

"They not only helped us with ministry... but did a huge amount of work to renovate the building we use as our ministry centre. There had not been any work done on it for a long time and some members of Mosman church also contributed money that helped to buy paint and other things we needed."

The trip came about after Mr Baines' sister, the Rev Bec Baines (who is in charge of kids' ministry at St Clement's), visited her brother a year ago and talked about it afterwards with her rector, the Rev Stuart Smith.

"I spoke to him about the wonderful experience visiting Mike and what he does in Broome, but I also told him about the indigenous ministry and how I'd connected with the young boys there," she recalls. "And I think through sharing what was going on, he then suggested we do a mission.

"So I called Mike and he said 'Yes!' straight away. He was stoked that we could do this, and so towards the end of last year we asked for expressions of interest and had five people who were able to come – and they were all people in their 70s. They were so keen to come and serve."

Miss Baines ran the kids' club with help from the women in the group, and all of them got stuck into the much-needed repairs.

"All Mike was thinking about for the ministry centre was a fresh coat of paint and bit of a clean-up," she says. "The team just went above and beyond anything that was asked of them – they pretty much fixed the whole centre, and put a lot of detail and thought into how they cleaned, repainted and repaired.

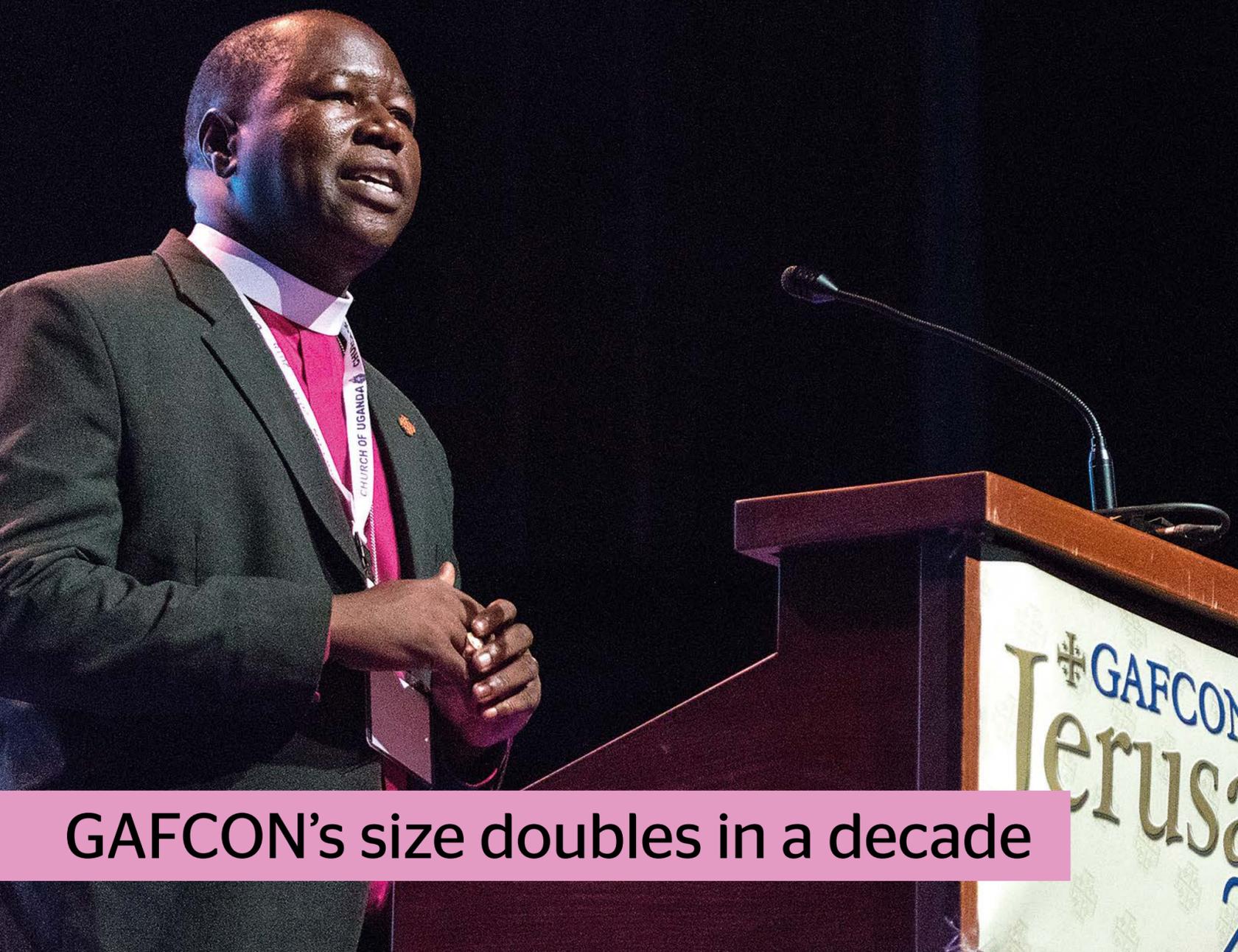
"There were gaps in the walls and holes in the floor – you could see outside, anywhere you looked! They fixed up a lot of it and sealed it all in, cleaned it all up, rebuilt the bathroom vanity and just made it a much more attractive place that's useful for kids' ministry and events during the week.

"And the team loved doing it. [They said,] 'This is what we're called to do – to serve. We love serving – we do it with joy'. It was amazing."

Mr Baines says a lot of retirees travel to Broome as it's a popular tourist destination, but he encourages those who've hung up their official work boots to think like the group from St Clement's.

"They've got plenty to give churches, and we're certainly beneficiaries of that – and lot of churches in the North West are, through groups like the BCA Nomads," he says.

"God gives gifts to all of his people, however young or old they are, for the benefit of the church, and I find that some of the people who serve this way have a better time coming for the purpose of serving than they would if they just came for a straight-up holiday!"



## GAFCON's size doubles in a decade

Bishop Alfred Olwa speaks to conference delegates. PHOTO: Jessie Parks

**"NOT TO CHOOSE TO EMBRACE JESUS IS TO CHOOSE TO REJECT JESUS."** THIS STIRRING CALL TO Christ-centred mission and biblical faithfulness came from Ugandan Bishop Alfred Olwa at the start of the Global Anglican Future Conference 2018 in Jerusalem.

The meeting, held last month, was the third GAFCON and came 10 years after the first gathering, which established a movement to promote Bible-based, mission-focused ministry in the Anglican Church. The conference is unique because, unlike other Anglican Communion gatherings, lay people participate as well as clergy and bishops.

GAFCON 2018 met in the Jerusalem International Convention Centre in order to fit the 2000 delegates – almost twice the number that met in 2008. The topic of the conference, "Proclaiming Christ faithfully to the nations" took up the twin themes of mission and scriptural authority.

Bishop Olwa declared that in the Anglican Communion today "some people reject Jesus because they won't make a stand, and avoid taking a stand, for Jesus. The line is drawn by Jesus. You are either in or you are out. There is no sitting on the fence. We must proclaim Christ faithfully to the nations."

The sentiment was echoed by GAFCON's chairman, the Primate of Nigeria, Archbishop Nicholas Okoh, who said many churches in the West had lost the essence of the gospel.

"Any distortion of the Scriptures is a distortion of the gospel of God and therefore a false gospel," he said. "The authentic gospel means we are no longer in charge because we have been bought with the blood of Jesus Christ."

Later, at a news conference with GAFCON secretary Dr Peter Jensen, Archbishop Okoh also denounced the distortion of the Scriptures that had led to "prosperity" teaching across Africa. He said many who had been led astray by the lure of wealth had returned to the church once they discovered the empty promises of prosperity preachers.

He spoke about the growth of GAFCON, foreshadowing the appointment of regional deputy secretaries, as well as networks being formed for theological education, church planting, youth and children's ministry and sustainable development.

"We are in the largest gathering of Anglicans for 50 years," the Primate of the Anglican Church in North America, Archbishop Foley Beach, told a meeting of the American delegation.

The conference produced a statement and reinforced the significance of the Jerusalem Declaration, a confessional document produced at the 2008 meeting and endorsed by Anglican leaders representing a clear majority of the world's practising Anglicans.

As well as delegates from most areas of the Anglican Communion, hundreds of Australians went to Jerusalem and the Rev Canon Daniel Willis from Sydney was conference director.

The rector of Croydon, the Rev Alan Lukabyo, hosted several sessions and Sydney and Australian volunteers had a significant role in organisation and staffing at the event.

Archbishop Glenn Davies chaired the conference Statement Committee, while South Sydney's bishop the Rt Rev Michael Stead served as secretary and the Rev Dr Mark Thompson from Moore College was a committee member.



Above: A Nigerian choir sings on the first day of GAFCON. PHOTO: Stephen Nelson



## CHAPLAINCY LEADER

On August 1 the **Rev Canon Stephen Gibson** becomes Anglicare Sydney's manager of health and justice chaplains, leaving his previous position as rector of St Luke's, Miranda – where he has ministered for 15 years.

"[My wife] Susie and I had been praying and seeking the Lord's guidance over the past couple of years as to what the future might look like in his service," he says. "Should we stay [at Miranda] until retirement or is it best for St Luke's and for us to have some healthy change?"

He says that earlier this year he was approached by Anglicare (along with others) to consider applying for the position, which he describes as "a pastor to the invisible pastors who do such good work in our public hospitals, psych hospitals, prisons and with police".

For many years Miranda has had links with the Rev Peter Baines, one of the chaplains at Long Bay Correctional Complex – and members of the congregation also volunteer at the jail.

"The health and justice chaplains are presently a group of 27 chaplains, men and women, ordained and lay, who quietly bring God's word to people in times of difficulty and crisis," Canon Gibson says. "Their role is so valuable yet often hidden and they can seem isolated. However, it will be my goal to better support, recruit and love these chaplains and connect their important ministries with our parishes."

In breaking the news to members at Miranda, he said, "It is with much sadness and yet thankfulness to God that we take this step. Above all else, we want to thank St Luke's for their ministry to our family over the last 15 years. We will miss everything about St Luke's and especially the wonderful team ministry here and the many brilliant and servant-minded lay leaders in this place.

"Susie and I give great thanks to God for 'your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus' (Phil 1:5-6)."

But Canon Gibson also looks forward to the ministry he will be able to nurture in his new position, saying, "Sometimes God's best work will not be done at church but in the cancer ward or the delivery suite or the emergency department. It is when our self-sufficiency is peeled away that we see how weak we really are and our need for God.

"Often we struggle as Christians to know how we can connect with our secular culture more effectively, and yet these secular places like hospitals are great opportunities to see God at work in people's lives. We can connect there."

In other Anglicare chaplaincy moves, the previous manager of health services chaplaincy, the **Rev Barry McGrath**, is now head of the Anglicare Centre for Pastoral Development, where he will run and facilitate a range of pastoral training from introductory through to Masters level.

The **Rev Roger Green**, who began working for Anglicare mid-way through last year as manager of justice chaplaincy and parish partnerships, will now focus solely on the partnership development role. He will also guide an Anglicare community chaplaincy pilot program in association with Eagle Vale Anglican Church.

The **Rev Rob Denham** has become chaplain to Westmead Children's Hospital. The **Rev Katherine Hilton** has moved from the Prince of Wales Hospital to become chaplain to Royal Prince Alfred Hospital, while the RPA chaplain, the **Rev Bronwyn Kyngdon**, has joined the POW team.

## VALE

The **Rev Ken Gilmore** died on April 28, aged 91.

Born Kenneth Clarence Gilmore on March 19, 1927, he grew up in Sydney's inner-western suburbs. In 1942 Mr Gilmore's father, concerned that he himself might be conscripted into the Army to fight the Japanese, took Ken out of school to begin earning an income for the family.

Mr Gilmore sold cars while studying accounting at night, but over time was convinced God was guiding him towards the ministry and completed his school studies in order to attend Moore College.

He was ordained in 1956 and served two years as a curate to St Philip's, Church Hill, followed by a further two years in Lithgow. Mr Gilmore then became rector of Denham Court with Rossmore (1959-62), a parish that, at the time, consisted of six churches.

Speaking at his funeral, his son Howard Gilmore said of this busy period that, "Mum did not see much of him on Sundays!"

Further service followed at Croydon Park (1962-67), after which Mr Gilmore and his family moved to St Mark's, Harbord (now Freshwater), where he was curate-in-charge, and then rector, until 1985. Mr Gilmore and his wife Elva then left their four children "glued to the northern beaches" to go to the parish of Lidcombe with Berala, where he was rector until his retirement in 1992.

"Dad brought the word of God to many people over many years – in congregations, communities, hospitals, nursing homes and schools," Howard Gilmore said. "Retirement did not slow him completely – he provided locum support at Broome and Kangaroo Island and other [places]."

Mr Gilmore retired to the northern beaches, and he and Elva returned to the parish of Freshwater. The rector at St Mark's, the Rev Terry Bowers, said of Mr Gilmore that, "In the 15½ years I knew Ken he continued his single-minded passion for people to know Christ.

"He helped to begin our monthly seniors ministry and, with Elva, was our greatest inviter. Each month he would visit a list of people to invite them along. In his final months Ken organised for a Gospel of Luke so he could give it to his roommate at the nursing home."



The **Rev Brian Watt** died on May 19, aged 89.

Born Brian Val Watt on January 2, 1929 in Chatswood, he grew up on Sydney's North Shore and the family attended St Paul's, Chatswood. He trained and worked as an accountant but, after he was married to Enid and already had two sons, Mr Watt felt a strong calling to the ministry and went to Moore College.

He was ordained in 1963 and became curate at Miranda, then curate-in-charge at Sylvania Heights, before taking on the rectorship of St Paul's, Lithgow in 1965.

Mr Watt came back to suburban Sydney in 1969, to Forestville – where he was first curate-in-charge and then rector, moving in 1977 to the parish of East Lindfield.

In 1981 he became precentor of St Andrew's Cathedral and, according to his son Bruce, "during this time working with Lance Shilton and managing the choir [he] was honoured by being invited to speak in some of the great cathedrals of the world. This was quite an international ministry."

Mr Watt became a field representative for the then Anglican Home Mission Society (now Anglicare) in 1986, and a chaplain at ARV in Castle Hill in 1989 – retiring as ARV's senior chaplain in 1994 – then had an ongoing ministry at St Swithun's, Pymble, where for some years he was honorary assistant minister.

"Dad's was a life well lived," Bruce Watt said at the funeral, recalling many examples of his father's character and humour – including providing a vivid picture of "the greatest time of all... a game of cricket with Dad out the front of the rectory... trying to avoid a hook shot through the stained glass windows as Dad came in off the fence at pace, hurling down a bouncer, quite often with his robes billowing in his wake."

He added that his father "loved working with youth, and the Forestville years in our teens were the greatest years of our lives. There are about 30 of us from that fellowship era who still remain friends to this day, many of whom... say Dad had an enormous influence on their young lives and challenged them in the establishment of their own personal journeys of faith.

"Dad devoted his life and ministry in seeking to share the significance of [God's] magnificent eternal love. We rejoice that he's now enfolded in its glorious arms forever."

## ONLY THE CHRISTIANS HELP

Brian Doak's application of the parable of the Good Samaritan (Letters, SC, June) is certainly novel. The proposition is that refugee advocates should be expected to voluntarily bear the costs of resettlement. Logically, this could be extended to requiring advocates for the disabled, the aged and those suffering abuse to pay for the costs associated with their support. Fortunately, this view has played no part in either Christian or secular thinking in Australia.

A stateless Rohingya asylum seeker family I have been assisting has had its village destroyed. Ali's\* younger 11-year-old sister was murdered last year by the Burmese army. Reza\* is an Iranian asylum seeker friend. His business was burnt down and he suffered at the hands of the brutal Basij in Iran because he assisted a Baha'i family in finding accommodation.

There has always been prejudice towards those who are different. The actions of the Samaritan, however, should be an inspiration and not used for an abrogation of responsibility. Fortunately, many asylum seekers from a Muslim background whom I know have, along their journeys, come into contact with a kinder expression of the gospel with a common observation that, "It is only the Christians who have helped us".

**Phillip Hellman**

Beecroft

\*names have been changed

It is problematic to use the details of a parable to argue, as Brian Doak does in your June edition ("Asylum at a cost", Letters, SC), for a connection between the Good Samaritan and the treatment of refugees today.

To begin with, the (single) victim was not a refugee and it was the Samaritan who was the foreigner. A more appropriate parable would be that of the Great Assize where Jesus says to the blessed: "I was hungry, a stranger, sick and in prison and you ministered to me" (Matt. 25:31f).

Yes, it may very well be cheaper to help refugees in their own countries or on their borders but, as one in 113 people in the world is displaced, it is a pretty tall order. Not to speak of the logistics of helping people in temporary shelters during a severe winter or the monsoon season.

I see a connection with the reported address of John Howard ("Tea and friendship at Lavender Bay", SC, June). In a kind of utilitarianism, Mr Howard believes that Judeo-Christian values (not defined in the article) should be preserved because they are useful to society. It seems that the ethics of Matthew 25 were not considered positive enough in the successful Tampa campaign of 2001. Yet countries with Islamic values, principally Jordan, Turkey, Pakistan, Lebanon and Iran, host millions of refugees – with inadequate support from nations with a Judeo-Christian background.

**Marie McInnes**

Springwood

## LEARNING THROUGH PODCASTS

Hannah Thiem hit the nail on the head with her article on podcasts (SC, June).

We are new to Canberra and I suffer from TMB (Too Many Birthdays) so I find it difficult to go out. Consequently I have very little Christian fellowship.

However, I put myself to sleep each night listening to sermons on my mobile. I listen to them again in the morning while I am getting dressed so I do not miss the end of the sermons.

First I listen to our son, Allan, who downloads his sermons into Dropbox. I find his sermons thoughtfully prepared and biblical, helping me to "grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ". Then I listen to a couple of local sermons. For the rest of the week I head to the Sydney Diocese.

I am currently listening to sermons from St Barnabas', Broadway. The preachers at Barneys amaze me with the way they understand modern Australian culture. Uni students are often unchurched, with some attending Barneys having attended no church in their childhood. The preachers do not condemn any non-Christian values of uni students, but point to a better way of living – the way God intends us to live, as written in the Bible. In that way the Holy Spirit convicts seekers of "sin and righteousness and judgement".

**Rewa Bate**

Coombs ACT

## RYLE ON PERSEVERANCE

In May's *Southern Cross*, a letter I wrote focused on the point that Christians cannot fall away and lose their salvation. June's issue printed a response but there was a problem with its opening sentence. Mine read, 'In an article in the March edition of *Southern Cross* the words "fall" and "fall away" were used'. The letter in response opened by saying, 'The Rev Harold Hinton does not accept that believing Christians can "fall" or "fall away"'. The truth is that I do believe that a Christian can fall into sin, but not fall away. The Bible gives instances: Abraham, Moses, David, Peter and Paul may slip, may fall for a season, but they never entirely depart from God. They never perish.

Last month's letter quoted three Bible verses the writer claimed as evidence about falling away. This by no means matches the 39 verses to the contrary, quoted in full in the book *Old Paths* by J.C. Ryle. He also quotes Article 17 of the Thirty-Nine Articles: "[Christians] at length, by God's mercy, attain to everlasting felicity".

*Old Paths* is on the internet and I highly recommend that people read it. Chapter 19 is titled "Perseverance", and contains 40 pages of very readable matter on this subject. Enjoy!

**The Rev Harold Hinton**

Fairfield



# Messages from the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse: what can we learn?

LIZ REIMER

A FEW YEARS AGO I WAS PRIVILEGED TO WORK AS A RESEARCHER FOR THE ROYAL COMMISSION into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. This research yielded profoundly distressing details about what abusers did to the children and young people they were supposed to be caring for. One counsellor even said workers at the Commission were “marinading” in abuse.

The research shows there is no definitive formula for what an abuser looks like. We can't just hold a list of features up to someone and say this person is an abuser. However, we do have some guidance about how abusers create conditions that make it possible for them to abuse others, so there are key lessons to learn to make sure this never happens again.

- 1 Abusers target those who are vulnerable. They notice, for example, when someone is alone or isolated. Abusers also “prepare” adults in the victim's life – building relationships and establishing themselves as a good, caring and trustworthy person (“He wouldn't do that. He is such a good bloke”). They might also meet a family member's needs, thus becoming a bit of a “saint” or hero.
- 2 Abuse takes many forms and covers a wide range of acts. It doesn't even always have to cause physical or emotional pain. This can make it difficult to discern as abuse. During the Commission we heard of many obvious acts of abuse that really amounted to torture. But we also heard many accounts of sexual abuse that reasonable people – including the victim – might struggle to consider abusive.
- 3 The Commission has taught us that abusers rarely perform extreme acts as a starting point. They test the water to see how much they can get away with. Often they increase the level of abuse gradually – “grooming” or preparing victims and others in their lives for what will come later. In many ways it is the same as someone trying to pursue an intimate relationship with another person, but here the “relationship” is usually from someone in a position of authority or power. The victim may be unsuspecting, may initially feel special through the attention, or might be too scared to respond appropriately.
- 4 Another environment that enables abuse is the “closed” institution, which has limited or no contact with the outside world – thus holding power over those both inside and outside. A closed institution might also be one that is regarded as ethical and competent. Workers might dismiss attempts by family and friends to see the victim, or dismiss concerns they might have, or make excuses for why family can't see the victim (e.g. they are too sick to use the phone). In such situations there is no accountability or transparency, and victims' lives become controlled by the institution or abuser.
- 5 Abusers also create an environment of fear, disbelief and abuse as “normal”. Being from an esteemed profession or position creates doubt in the minds of outsiders whom victims might tell about the abuse. Or, abusers undermine victims by establishing the idea that no one cares for them because they were sent away to be looked after. Often if victims do tell they are not believed, or they may feel compelled to *not* speak out or challenge the abuser.

One of the biggest lessons we can learn from all this is about how complicit people have been in the past, and how this has led to abuse.

I have come to realise there is no such thing as an innocent bystander (where a bystander is a person with some level of awareness of the abuse). I'm not talking about family, friends or others in the institutional environment that had no idea of what was occurring. I'm talking about those who knew something was not quite right but did nothing to stop it.

We can use the parable of the Good Samaritan as an analogy, and think about it as Dr Martin Luther King, jr did: “And so the first question that the priest asked, the first question that the Levite asked, was, ‘If I stop to help this man, what will happen to me?’... But then the Good Samaritan came by, and he reversed the question: ‘If I do not stop to help this man, what will happen to him?’”

Abuse happened in our church schools, our church care homes, and in our churches – in youth groups, Sunday schools and congregations. It happened right under our noses.

Many survivors talk about how other adults knew the abuse was happening but they were ignored, disbelieved or dismissed. “Innocent bystanders” ignored victims' cries for help (which can include difficult behaviour from trying to escape the situation). The Commission showed repeatedly that there were opportunities for abuse to be stopped soon after it had begun.

We should not think this kind of thing cannot happen again. I believe there are basic things we can do to stop abusers now and in the future, and they are things Jesus taught us.

First, we need to be attentive to others and active in our care for them. This means building caring relationships with neighbours and strangers. Get to know people, become friends, be active in their lives and let them be active in yours. This way you will help ensure they are not targeted as vulnerable, and you may also learn about people who may be getting hurt.

This is important because if you know people well it is more likely you will notice a change in behaviour, or get a “gut” feeling when someone is too afraid to speak about something. It might also mean they will trust you enough to tell you that how someone acts towards them makes them feel scared or uncomfortable.

The second thing we can do is share our network of friends and caring people with them. Abusers target those who are isolated. If we connect those around us with our networks, they are less isolated. Encourage people to be involved in activities, and build relationships with people, outside the institution.

Finally, I think we should challenge people who we hear are acting in ways that are making others feel scared or uncomfortable. If you can't do this yourself, tell someone you trust outside the institution about your concerns.

“Keep on loving one another as brothers and sisters. Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by so doing some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it. Continue to remember those in prison as if you were together with them in prison, and those who are mistreated as if you yourselves were suffering” (Hebrews 13:1-3).

*Dr Liz Reimer is a senior lecturer at Southern Cross University, a member of the Professional Standards Committee of the Diocese of Grafton, and grew up as a “preacher's kid” in the Sydney Diocese. This is an edited version of a talk she gave at her current church, St Cuthbert's, Tweed Heads.*

# Living on prayer

DR GLENN DAVIES



**H**AVING JUST RETURNED FROM JERUSALEM, ATTENDING THE THIRD GLOBAL Anglican Future Conference (GAFCON), I was again reminded of the history of the old city, where God's glory was made manifest in the presence of the incarnate Jesus. Of course, ancient monuments to Old Testament times are also present, with none more prominent than the Western Wall of the temple. Nothing is left of Solomon's Temple, destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar in 586 BC, but the Western Wall of Herod's Temple still stands some 2000 years after it was completed in AD 20. Herod's Temple was an enlargement of the temple of Zerubbabel (built after the Exile), however, it was destroyed by the Romans in AD 70.

The remnant of the Western Wall is some 50 metres long and 20 metres high, though it extends much deeper into the earth. It is most notable for the presence of many Jewish pilgrims who come to the Wall to pray, wedging written prayer requests between the giant limestone courses as they stand and sway, expressing their prayers in audible tones of lament. The term "Wailing Wall" was coined by European travellers centuries ago who witnessed the mournful vigils of pious Jews before the relic of the sacred temple, praying for its restoration.

Of course, the association of prayer and temple is not new. Prayer in the presence of God is the appropriate response of those made in the image of God, who know they fall short of the glory of God, yet who rest upon his promise of forgiveness when they stand before their Maker. Thus when Abraham built an altar, he called upon the name of the Lord (Genesis 12:8; 13:4), as did Isaac (Genesis 26:25). David's desire to build a temple was marked by prayer (2 Samuel 7:18-29), as was Solomon's dedication of the temple when it was completed (1 Kings 8:22-53). The house where God's name was to dwell was the place where Israel would call upon his name (Deuteronomy 12:5), "my house of prayer" (Isaiah 56:7).

In the New Testament, Anna is described as regularly praying in the temple (Luke 2:36-38), where Simeon led by the Spirit of God offers his prayer when he encounters the Christ child (Luke 2:27-32). Jesus introduces his parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector with the words: "Two men went up to the temple to pray" (Luke 18:10). Moreover, in rebutting the moneychangers in the temple, Jesus declares: "Is it not written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations'?" (Mark 11:17), citing Isaiah 56:7.

Yet, we have no temples under the new covenant, at least none of bricks and mortar. Our church buildings are not temples of God. For Jesus foretold a different arena for our worship: "Neither on this mountain [speaking of Mt Gerizim] nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father... the hour is coming when the true worshippers will worship the Father in Spirit and truth, for such the Father seeks to worship him" (John 4:21-23).

As Jesus had foretold the destruction of Herod's Temple, to the astonishment of his listeners (John 2:19-21), he predicted the raising up of the temple of his body. This concept is further expounded by the apostle Paul where he speaks of our union with Christ as our being the temple of the Holy Spirit.

Significantly, God's temple is not only the gathered people of God (1 Corinthians 3:9, 16-17) but every believer's body is also a temple (1 Corinthians 6:19; cf 1 Peter 2:4-5).

As temples of the Holy Spirit, joined to Christ as our cornerstone, we are always in God's presence. The Holy Spirit has taken up temple-residence in our bodies. This is a remarkable thought in itself, and one worth meditating upon when we are tempted to sin. It also means that we are always in the place of prayer: our access to God is immediate. God has come to dwell with us, our Immanuel, and so we are always in his presence.

When Paul invites the church of the Thessalonians to "rejoice always, pray constantly and give thanks in all circumstances" (1 Thessalonians 5:17-18) he is speaking of prayer and praise from the temple of our bodies.

Of course, when we gather as one body, then the richness of our temple worship is magnified, as we gather in the presence of angels. One of God's angels then mixes incense with the prayers of all the saints in the golden altar before the throne of God in heaven (Revelation 5:8; 8:3-4). This is a breathtaking image, which should humble us in our prayers, knowing God is using them for his purposes.

The reminder of our temple status should give us a renewed appreciation of the holiness of life to which we are called, and the life of prayer that characterises those who dwell in God's temple. SC

## A PRAYER FOR MISSION 2020

Our heavenly Father, fill our lives with the fruit of your Spirit, so that we may walk in joyful obedience, share your love by word and deed, and see Christ honoured in every community as Lord and Saviour.

Amen

# The "problem" with singleness

Christian thinking manages to regard being single as a gift and a curse at the same time. **DANI TREWECK** investigates why, and what we can do about it.

IN A SERMON ON 1 CORINTHIANS 7 PREACHED IN 1976, THEN UP-AND-COMING AMERICAN evangelical pastor John MacArthur told his congregation that, "Single people do not need to be looked on as if they're different, strange, abnormal, unfulfilled, unqualified for certain service – not at all... we need to be accepting and loving with those that are single". In 2016, the now-renowned MacArthur told delegates at a large US ministry conference that "the most devastating attack on marriage is coming today at singleness. Singleness is an assault on marriage... I just see singleness as a disaster".

The yawning gap between MacArthur's early views about the place and purpose of singleness, and the position he now holds as he approaches the end of his era of public ministry, is nothing short of remarkable. Yet his voice is not a lone one. Evangelical Christianity here in Australia and overseas has a real problem with singleness. Or perhaps it is more accurate to say that we see singleness as a problem.

What is this problem? How did it come to be? Why is it so? And does it matter?

## THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PROBLEM

Trying to determine the actual percentage of our population that is single is an interesting – and frustrating – exercise, as the array of potential relationship arrangements in our society makes it near impossible. According to the 2016 Census, 47.7 per cent of our adult population were in a registered marriage, another 10.4 per cent were in a de facto marriage, while a full 41.9 per cent of Australian adults were not currently married. However, that last statistic also includes people who are in some sort of committed romantic relationship that is not a registered or de facto marriage.

Yet, if we look more closely we can spot some clues within the Census data that will help us. For example, not only have 35 per cent of adult Aussies never been married (with a further 5 per cent widowed and 8.5 per cent divorced), but almost one in four Aussie homes is occupied by someone who lives alone. I was rather taken aback by that last statistic when I came across it – it seems more Australians are "single" than we might first imagine.

If we compare these Census statistics to the latest National Church Life Survey data (see graph, left), one thing becomes clear: Australian Anglican congregations are over-represented by those who are married and under-represented by those who are not (except for widows and widowers). In fact, the number of never married and divorced individuals in our churches is about half that within the community around us.

This is one aspect of the contemporary Christian problem with singleness – our churches are disproportionately attracting and welcoming those in our wider community who are married, but failing to do the same for those who are not.

However, the "problem" is more significant than statistics can convey. It is not just the smaller number of single people in our churches that is troubling, but also the experiences they share of what it is like to be an unmarried single Christian.

While there is a lot of anecdotal evidence about the single experience within our Christian communities, there has been very little formal research done about it and, to the best of my knowledge, none within our



**AUSTRALIAN POPULATION COMPARED TO COMPOSITION OF AUSTRALIAN ANGLICAN CONGREGATIONS**  
 ■ POPULATION Registered Marital Status 2016 Census QuickStats - ABS  
 ■ ANGLICAN Marital status of church attendees by denomination 2016 (15+ years) 2016 NCLS Survey  
 NB: Graph does not display the 1% of Australian Anglicans with a de facto relationship status.

Australian context. Having said that, some limited insights are offered to us by handful of American and British researchers (see statistics on the next page), whose work generally confirms the anecdotal evidence: many single Christians – be they never married, divorced or widowed – struggle with feelings of isolation, marginalisation, disappointment and even invisibility within their church communities.

After spending almost the first full year of my postgraduate research reading every Christian book, article and blog post on singleness I could get my hands on, and listening to a multitude of sermons and podcasts on the topic, it became ever more clear to me why single Christians are feeling the way they do.

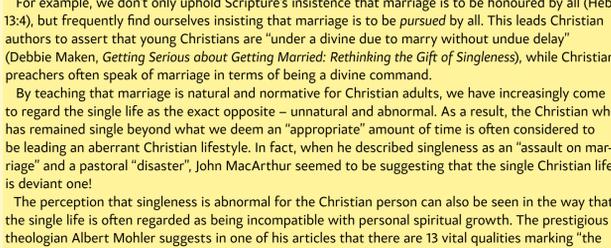
It is true. We evangelical Christians really do have a problem with singleness.

## A NEW MINISTRY LIFE

Jayne Dedrick – widow

I was married for 28 years until my husband died of cancer at the age of 56. We had always been a team, parenting our children together and supporting each other in our different interests. Without him I felt bereft and out of kilter.

While I had the peace and reassurance that comes from fellowship with God, and was well supported and loved by my church family, it still took me about three years to come to terms with being single. I felt somewhat adrift and unsure of what lay ahead for me. However, God answered my prayer for guidance, and after being a teacher for 39 years I retired in order to go straight back into the classroom – this time as a student at Moore College! Five years on from being widowed, I have graduated from theological college and am now working part-time at my church (ESL and kids' ministry) and part-time as the parish village chaplain at Goodwin Retirement Village.



I loved my "old life" serving my family and school community, and would never have made the decision to change my life and career. God, however, had other plans and I'm so grateful to have this opportunity to share his love with migrants, children, the elderly and my church family. I feel as if I've been remade into a new creation, complete with new possibilities for a future filled with hope.

## DIAGNOSING THE PROBLEM

The diagnosis of this problem with singleness is multi-faceted, but it begins with something as simple as the words that we use.

It is normal practice for us to use "unmarried" and "not married" as synonyms for "single". For example, "Oh, do you mean Jane? She's single. She's not married." This practice is sometimes even reflected in the titles that are given to Christian books on singleness, such as Marshall Segal's *Not Yet Married* (2017). But I wonder if you have ever stopped to consider that we never do the reverse. We never say, "Oh, Jack? He's married. He's unsingle".

While we never define the married person by their "unsingle" status, we consistently define the single person by their "unmarried" one.

Why is this important? Well, if you think about it, you'll realise that in using this one-sided language we characterise the single life by what it is not (i.e. not marriage) and the single person by who they are not (i.e. not a husband or a wife). At even the most fundamental level of how we speak about singleness, we define the single life as a state of lacking, a state of deficiency. Being single is all about what you don't have.

But not only do we regard singleness as deficient, we also tend to think of it as aberrant. Although marriage rates in the world around us have been in serious decline over the past 50 years, we Christians have rightly continued to embrace the significance of marriage within God's purposes for this world. However, in doing so we have too often turned marriage from being one of God's good gifts into the goal of the Christian life.

For example, we don't only uphold Scripture's insistence that marriage is to be honoured by all (Heb. 13:4), but frequently find ourselves insisting that marriage is to be pursued by all. This leads Christian authors to assert that young Christians are "under a divine due to marry without undue delay" (Debbie Maken, *Getting Serious about Getting Married: Rethinking the Gift of Singleness*), while Christian preachers often speak of marriage in terms of being a divine command.

By teaching that marriage is natural and normative for Christian adults, we have increasingly come to regard the single life as the exact opposite – unnatural and abnormal. As a result, the Christian who has remained single beyond what we deem an "appropriate" amount of time is often considered to be leading an aberrant Christian lifestyle. In fact, when he described singleness as an "assault on marriage" and a pastoral "disaster", John MacArthur seemed to be suggesting that the single Christian life is deviant one!

The perception that singleness is abnormal for the Christian person can also be seen in the way that the single life is often regarded as being incompatible with personal spiritual growth. The prestigious theologian Albert Mohler suggests in one of his articles that there are 13 vital qualities marking "the emergence of a man who will demonstrate true biblical masculinity" – and the first five of these focus entirely on his role as a husband and father.

Similarly, author Candace Watters has argued that "Scripture is clear that God will sanctify us largely through our marriages", while, in perhaps my favourite statement of irony ever, writer Gary Thomas has suggested that "if you want to become more like Jesus, I can't imagine any better thing to do than get married... marriage is the preferred route to becoming more like him".

Because we Christians so often understand marriage and parenting to be the primary arenas in which God promises to sanctify us, we have increasingly come to regard Christian singleness as a lifestyle that perpetuates selfishness and spiritual immaturity.

Indeed, books, articles and sermons frequently identify singleness as a much more sin-prone lifestyle than marriage, even though the Bible teaches that temptation and sinfulness is something all of us struggle with (regardless of whether we wear a wedding ring or not).

## HOW SINGLES FEEL

**67 per cent** of single British Christians felt that marriage was the expected and accepted lifestyle in the church

**43%** of single British Christians agreed that the church didn't know what to do with them because they were single

**37 per cent** of single British Christians claimed that although the church says it is a family, it doesn't treat singles as family members (this figure rose to more than 50 per cent for respondents over the age of 45)

**50%** of unmarried American Christians often feel treated with ambivalence within their church community

**61.85 per cent** of single British Christians felt their church leader's advice on relationships and issues of singleness was either not relevant, unhelpful or virtually non-existent

**Almost 60 per cent** of single Americans have considered leaving their church, or stopping going to church altogether, due in some part to their singleness

**Only one third** of single British Christians had ever discussed their singleness with a church leader on a one-to-one basis (with only a quarter of those conversations having been instigated by the leader themselves)

SOURCES: David Pullinger, "Singleness in the UK Church: DATA – Survey Numbers Summer/2012"; Kathryn Wehr, "Virginity, singleness and celibacy: late fourth-century and recent Evangelical visions of unmarried Christians," *Theology & Sexuality* 17, no. 1 (2011); Christine A. Colón and Bonnie Field, *Singled Out: Why Celibacy must be Reinvented in Today's Church* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Brazos Press, 2009).

## DIAGNOSING THE PROBLEM

The diagnosis of this problem with singleness is multi-faceted, but it begins with something as simple as the words that we use.

It is normal practice for us to use "unmarried" and "not married" as synonyms for "single". For example, "Oh, do you mean Jane? She's single. She's not married." This practice is sometimes even reflected in the titles that are given to Christian books on singleness, such as Marshall Segal's *Not Yet Married* (2017). But I wonder if you have ever stopped to consider that we never do the reverse. We never say, "Oh, Jack? He's married. He's unsingle".

While we never define the married person by their "unsingle" status, we consistently define the single person by their "unmarried" one.

Why is this important? Well, if you think about it, you'll realise that in using this one-sided language we characterise the single life by what it is not (i.e. not marriage) and the single person by who they are not (i.e. not a husband or a wife). At even the most fundamental level of how we speak about singleness, we define the single life as a state of lacking, a state of deficiency. Being single is all about what you don't have.

But not only do we regard singleness as deficient, we also tend to think of it as aberrant. Although marriage rates in the world around us have been in serious decline over the past 50 years, we Christians have rightly continued to embrace the significance of marriage within God's purposes for this world. However, in doing so we have too often turned marriage from being one of God's good gifts into the goal of the Christian life.

For example, we don't only uphold Scripture's insistence that marriage is to be honoured by all (Heb. 13:4), but frequently find ourselves insisting that marriage is to be pursued by all. This leads Christian authors to assert that young Christians are "under a divine due to marry without undue delay" (Debbie Maken, *Getting Serious about Getting Married: Rethinking the Gift of Singleness*), while Christian preachers often speak of marriage in terms of being a divine command.

By teaching that marriage is natural and normative for Christian adults, we have increasingly come to regard the single life as the exact opposite – unnatural and abnormal. As a result, the Christian who has remained single beyond what we deem an "appropriate" amount of time is often considered to be leading an aberrant Christian lifestyle. In fact, when he described singleness as an "assault on marriage" and a pastoral "disaster", John MacArthur seemed to be suggesting that the single Christian life is deviant one!

The perception that singleness is abnormal for the Christian person can also be seen in the way that the single life is often regarded as being incompatible with personal spiritual growth. The prestigious theologian Albert Mohler suggests in one of his articles that there are 13 vital qualities marking "the emergence of a man who will demonstrate true biblical masculinity" – and the first five of these focus entirely on his role as a husband and father.

Similarly, author Candace Watters has argued that "Scripture is clear that God will sanctify us largely through our marriages", while, in perhaps my favourite statement of irony ever, writer Gary Thomas has suggested that "if you want to become more like Jesus, I can't imagine any better thing to do than get married... marriage is the preferred route to becoming more like him".

Because we Christians so often understand marriage and parenting to be the primary arenas in which God promises to sanctify us, we have increasingly come to regard Christian singleness as a lifestyle that perpetuates selfishness and spiritual immaturity.

Indeed, books, articles and sermons frequently identify singleness as a much more sin-prone lifestyle than marriage, even though the Bible teaches that temptation and sinfulness is something all of us struggle with (regardless of whether we wear a wedding ring or not).

## CHRISTIAN ENVIRONMENTS ARE "AWKWARD"

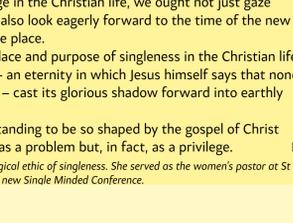
Chris Fitzgibbon – never married

While there are aspects of my singleness I would love to change, I can say that I have a level of contentment in my singleness. However I feel most awkward, ironically, in Christian environments.

It is the norm for Christians to marry relatively young and start a family. Churches organise themselves as such, with no specific ministries to single Christians over 30. This means having to choose between being the old guy at a uni or young worker-orientated service or the single guy in a family service. Neither of these allows me to feel like a fully involved and accepted member.

I really value my relationships with people and my friends are special to me. But while marriage might be a celebration of a specific relationship, for single people like myself it often marks the end of substantive friendships. For example, my mates who I used to hang out with frequently now have very limited time and opportunity to hang out with me, reducing many of these relationships to lunchtime exchanges on work days.

Personally, I would love church to be a place where we focus on investing in relationships with all of our brothers and sisters, not just spouses. After all, we will be brothers and sisters in Christ for an eternity and only married for a lifetime.



## UNFULFILLED?

The single Christian life is also often seen to be marked by a lack of personal fulfilment. In the last half a century, we evangelicals have continued to stand at odds with the world around us on important matters such as the significance of marriage and the purpose of sex. However, when it comes to the world's insistence of the centrality of romantic love as necessary for ultimate happiness and fulfilment we haven't always been as discerning.

To be fair, this issue isn't simply a modern one. The great reformer John Calvin once wrote that, "the wife is, as it were, the completing of the man". Yet what is distinctive about our modern church communities is that, within them, we very often elevate marriage as the ultimate place in which we can experience genuine human intimacy. We don't so much speak of "soulmates" as we do of a "Godmate" – the one whom God has created especially for us, the one who will fill the "spouse-shaped void" the created us with (yes, "spouse-shaped void" is a concept that is out there). In this sense, the single Christian – whether never married, divorced or widowed – is very often understood to be living an unfulfilled life, deprived of genuine intimacy and ultimate happiness.

The single Christian's lack of fulfilment is also frequently understood to extend to their sexuality. You see, the culture around us argues that the freedom to act on our sexuality is core to our individual sense of identity. Sadly, we Christians have absorbed elements of this secular perspective. In particular we tend to think of sexual lust as the one temptation that the Christian will ultimately be unable to resist.

As Colón and Field explain, "[t]he supposition is that [Christian] individuals can't go to sex; they can only wait. And the hope is that Christian singles will get married before eventually giving in to the temptation". As a result, Christians all too regularly regard the virgin or celibate life as both pitiable and hopelessly idealistic – as Martin Luther himself put it, without marriage the Christian person "will be bound to commit heinous [sexual] sins without end". Ouch.

This is where the so-called "gift" of singleness (defined as a special empowerment of the Holy Spirit for a select few, so they might live a perfectly contented single life without any romantic or sexual frustration whatsoever) comes into play – but we'll need to leave a discussion of that topic for another time!

If you recognise the bleakness of this picture for the heterosexual Christian who has never married, is widowed or is divorced, let me encourage you to spare a thought for the single Christian who struggles with an exclusively same-sex attraction.

While we rightly encourage these brothers and sisters to refrain from engaging in homosexual activity and instead commit themselves to celibate living, we also simultaneously argue that such a life is doomed to be ultimately impossible. Not only does this rob our same-sex attracted Christian friends of hope, it also suggests that there are restrictions upon the Holy Spirit's ability to cultivate the spiritual fruit of self-control within us (Gal. 5:23).

Finally, we understand the single Christian life to be absent of any sense of real purpose. Let me explain what I mean by that. When we think about marriage, we don't simply consider its functional purpose as the context in which we nurture an intimate relationship and have children. We also rightly speak of it as having an intrinsic theological purpose. Marriage is something that points all of us (married or not) towards the heavenly wedding that will take place between Christ and his Church (Eph. 5:31-32).

Even though human marriages are frequently messy, we understand there is something good about the essence of marriage that transcends this messiness.

Yet the same cannot be said for our understanding of singleness. We tend to only understand singleness as good insofar as the single Christian lives the good single life – that is, when the single Christian uses their singleness to serve.

Now, please don't get me wrong. When that happens (and it should!) it is a wonderful thing. However, by locating the ultimate purpose of singleness solely in how the single life is lived we reduce singleness' goodness to simply being a matter of utility, rather than having anything to do with its essence.

This prompts a lot of single Christians to be primarily motivated to gospel service out of a sense of duty and even guilt, and can also create an unhelpful dichotomy between the ability of single and married Christians to live a life of practical and godly devotion to Jesus through their unique life situations, in response to their salvation.

## GET INFORMED

Single Minded is a new conference that is about singleness, but intended for everyone. It seeks to:

- encourage single Christians in their gospel maturity, contentment and service;
- equip married Christians (including ministers) to better love and pastor the single members of their Christian family; and
- do all this by teaching what the Bible really says about singleness.

The program includes British speaker and author Sam Allberry, plus a Q&A and other options.

One event is in the evening on Friday, September 21 and the other all day on Saturday, September 22, at Village Church, Annandale. Tickets are available for Friday, Saturday is sold out, but livestreaming options are available.

For more information or to register see [www.singlemindedconference.com](http://www.singlemindedconference.com)



## RESOLVING THE PROBLEM

After the diagnosis, I hesitate to speak of "resolving" the problem, because the word may imply that a quick and easy resolution is possible. In fact, nothing could be further from the truth!

While the first 1500 years of the Christian church resulted in an unbiblical and unhelpful elevation of celibacy and denigration of marriage, the 500 years that have passed since the Reformation have achieved just the opposite. When pastoral attitudes and theology are 500 years in the making, there can be no quick fix. Nevertheless, if we wish to be committed to loving and honouring our never married, divorced or widowed Christian friends and family, here are a few ways forward for us to consider.

First, most single Christians long to experience an authentic sense of belonging within their church families. Very often our church calendar and culture are dominated by children's activities, youth events, parenting classes, marriage courses and outreach to local families. The clear majority of our ministers tend to be married family men and sermons can be full of family-based illustrations and applications.

None of these are bad things in and of themselves, but together they often leave single Christians feeling somewhat invisible, lonely and perhaps even unwelcome in their churches. One of the ways forward must surely be to encourage families to welcome single church members into the family life of the church.

It is also important for us to remember that all of us have been adopted as sons and daughters into one, new, primary family. Single Christians don't want to be made to feel like their church families are trying to create a place of belonging for them so much as they long for their church families to recognise that, in Christ, they already belong, truly and equally.

How might your church family commit itself to honouring the vitally important place that single people of all circumstances already have within your midst, as those with whom you have been united in Christ?

Second, as Christians who live in a global, technological and individualistic age, it is important for us to recognise the impact and influence the world around us has on our own attitudes and thinking. Just the other day I was listening to a podcast that warned Christians of the potential danger we now face of being unwittingly "colonised" by the culture around us. Is our elevation of marriage a result of what the Bible says about it or are there unquestioned elements of non-biblical idealisation and perhaps even idolisation in our thinking on this topic?

Even we thought carefully about whether romantic love and sexual intimacy really are absolutely necessary for personal fulfilment, and how that relates to what Scripture says about ultimate satisfaction being found in Christ?

How can we think rightly about the place of our nuclear families given that Jesus himself redefines the very notion of family (Matthew 12:46-50) and calls us into a new, primary and eternal family? How does all of this affect the way that we think and talk about God's good gift of singleness for all who are single? Are we properly honouring those who have received that gift as he would have us do? As God's people we need to keep questioning our assumptions about marriage, singleness and sexuality against what Scripture teaches.

Finally, how might we think about singleness and marriage in light of the full revelation of God's word? As I spent that first year of my PhD reading and listening to all those resources, I realised just how much of our thinking about marriage is firmly grounded in the creation accounts of Genesis 1-2. That is obviously a very good place for us to start, but it is not a good place for us to end. The storyline of Scripture has a trajectory from creation in Genesis to new creation in Revelation, with Jesus at its very heart and centre.

As we consider the place of singleness and marriage in the Christian life, we ought not just gaze back over our shoulders to the time of creation, but also look eagerly forward to the time of the new creation and the ultimate wedding that will then take place.

What might our understanding of the goodness, place and purpose of singleness in the Christian life look like if we were to allow the picture of eternity – an eternity in which Jesus himself says that none of us will be married to each other (Matthew 22:30) – cast its glorious shadow forward into earthly life here and now?

The challenge for each of us is to allow our understanding to be so shaped by the gospel of Christ that we see the single life as God truly sees it – not as a problem but, in fact, as a privilege.

The Rev Dani Trewick is undertaking doctoral research into a theological ethic of singleness. She served as the women's pastor at St Matthias', Centennial Park for almost seven years and is chair of the new Single Minded Conference.



# Iron fist, velvet glove

To win others for Christ we need to have his strength as well as his compassion, writes **PAUL GRIMMOND**.

**HAVE** A DEAR OLD FRIEND IN MINISTRY, WHO EARLY ON IN MY MINISTRY LIFE WAS A SIGNIFICANT mentor. More than once I heard others describe him as an “iron fist in a velvet glove”.

It was such an apt description of a man who acted with gentleness, integrity, grace and wisdom in all of his relationships. Yet at the same time he lived so clearly in light of his convictions about the truth. He believed in right and wrong and would stand up fiercely for God’s name.

The longer I have gone on in the Christian life, the more I have longed for this to be true of me. For it seems to me that if we are going to be faithful evangelists and godly pastors and servants of each other, this is the exact combination of qualities that will be required.

So, what does it mean to be an iron fist in a velvet glove?

If we were going to use this description of anyone in the Bible, then surely we must use it of Jesus! We see this characteristic of Jesus, even in the most fleeting of examples. Very early in Mark’s gospel, Jesus goes to visit the house of Simon and Andrew. It is an episode that takes just three verses to recount – blink and you’ll miss it. But it says so much.

*And immediately he left the synagogue and entered the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John. Now Simon’s mother-in-law lay ill with a fever, and immediately they told him about her. And he came and took her by the hand and lifted her up, and the fever left her, and she began to serve them (Mark 1:29–31).*

In a world of antibiotics and expert medical care, a fever sounds like a mild illness. But in the ancient world, a fever could spell death. Luke (the physician!), in his gospel, uses a word here that describes a great fever. Simon’s mother-in-law is very ill, perhaps gravely so. And what does Jesus do? The three actions of verse 31 are so simple and yet so beautiful. Upon hearing of the illness, Jesus came. He hears of her distress and comes to alleviate it.

Then, more radically, he takes her by the hand. A simple act of human kindness: the willingness to touch a woman sick with fever. An act of compassion and grace that brings healing and wholeness. And he lifted her up. It’s the word that is used to describe the Father raising Jesus from the dead. He raised her up. Jesus has brought her from death to life.

We are so quick to pass over this moment, but somehow the economy and simplicity with which it is told expresses more than a thousand words ever could. There is a gentle wonder in this moment. Jesus hears of her distress. He acts with grace and care and brings her to life.

This picture of Jesus’ compassion and kindness is repeated so many times in the gospels. Jesus cares for the sick, protects the outcast, weeps over Jerusalem and sees the unseen. Let me share just one more example.

*And he sat down opposite the treasury and watched the people putting money into the offering box. Many rich people put in large sums. And a poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which make a penny. And he called his disciples to him and said to them, “Truly, I say to you, this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the offering box. For they all contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had, all she had to live on” (Mark 12:41–44).*

Such simple stories. Yet such beautiful portraits of our Lord. Here is the very definition of a velvet glove. The fearful, the tired, the sick, the lonely, the unlovely and the shunned – all are able to approach, knowing that they will be heard, understood, accepted, forgiven and healed. Anyone willing to approach Jesus with trembling finds welcome. Think again of the bleeding woman who reaches out to Jesus in the crowd, hoping just to touch his robe and not trouble the great teacher. No matter who you are, you can come to Jesus.

But the trembling hints at something else. If Jesus is a velvet glove, then it is a velvet glove occupied by an iron fist. There is a clarity of conviction and a strength of character that is terrifyingly wonderful to behold.

The Pharisees send a man to trap him with a question: “Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar?” Jesus cannot answer without offending someone, surely. Yet somehow, he answers with a clarity and truth that silences the critics while at the same time completely avoiding self-righteousness or vindictiveness. He asks for a coin. He asks whose inscription is upon it. The answer comes back: “Caesar”. And Jesus ends the argument. “Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s” (Matt 22:21).

Jesus doesn’t dodge the question. He isn’t the politician who ignores the question and answers his own question. He doesn’t umm and ahh, phone a friend, or pray for an ad break. He just speaks the truth fearlessly and calls on all who will listen to give themselves to God.

At every point in Jesus’ story, when he is confronted by evil and unrighteousness, he does not flinch. He doesn’t try to win friends and influence people. He doesn’t answer with long-winded, philosophical sophistry. He just speaks what is true, convinced that God is able to keep, protect and use him.

Indeed, on the way to cross, with his own death looming, Jesus doesn’t accuse or argue, or dodge or weede. Jesus simply speaks the truth and entrusts to him who judges justly. Who can do that? How is this even possible? And yet our Lord does just that.

How much do we need to cry out to God that he might work the character of Jesus in us? At a moment when we as Christians feel the tide of history flowing against us, when people denounce the God who would kill his own son and reject in so many ways (sex, marriage, euthanasia to name a few) the very character of the world that God made, it is so easy for his people to react either by attacking the world or retreating in fear. But surely, what we need more than anything is the work of God’s Spirit to form Jesus’ character in us.

Because perhaps the most remarkable thing about Jesus was his ability to compassionately forgive and then call on people to repent. In John 5, Jesus commands the man who cannot make it to the pool of healing quickly enough, “Get up, take your bed, and walk”. And the man does as he is told! The man walks off, chats with the Pharisees and, later in the day, Jesus meets him again in the temple. Jesus hasn’t finished with this man. There is one more thing to say. “See, you are well! Sin no more, that nothing worse may happen to you.”

Jesus, in his compassion, is gracious enough to speak the difficult word. Jesus’ forgiveness is not a call to the acceptance of sin. In fact, Jesus loves this man enough that, having brought to him healing, he warns him of the seriousness of sin and calls him to repent. As I watch Jesus do this, I am reminded again of that little saying: an iron fist in a velvet glove.

How do we take the gospel to a world that is speaking with increasing anger and anxiety against Christians and Christianity? The answer must surely be that we need to be like our Lord. We need to cry out and ask God to make us iron fists in velvet gloves. We need to cry out for God’s help to flee the fear of men and speak the truth. But we need God’s help not to speak it in anger, or to win the argument. We need God’s help to speak it in love, living with such compassion and grace that when we call on our world to repent, though they long to revile us, they might have nothing bad to say about us.

Will you pray to God that we might learn to be iron fists in velvet gloves, so that many might be saved?

*The Rev Paul Grimmond is the Dean of students at Moore College.*

## 101 not out at Castle Hill



THE 10AM CONGREGATION AT ST PAUL'S, CASTLE HILL WERE ALL SMILES ON JUNE 10 AS THEY celebrated the 101st birthday of a dear church family member, Margery Lane, with a glamorous cake and a rousing rendition of "Happy Birthday".

Castle Hill's rector the Rev John Gray surprised Margery with the announcement and cake during the service, noting that she had been brought up in a Christian family and walked with Jesus always. He added that such faithfulness throughout her long life was an encouragement to everyone.

PHOTO: Adrian Lee

## "Know the light" at Vivid

AS BUILDINGS IN Sydney's CBD lit up in May and June for the Vivid festival, the congregation at St Alban's, Epping thought it was time they took part in the event.

Since Vivid began in 2009, light displays have gradually appeared in the suburbs as well, and this year the church at Epping decided to use the festival as a way to highlight its presence in the community.

Fifty lights were installed and programmed across the church and tower, and to underscore the reason behind the move a sign was added, saying, "Jesus is the light of the world – know the light".

Parish rector Bishop Ross Nicholson says he'd like to see other churches light up their windows and make it more of a diocesan activity, adding that plans are already afoot to talk to the local school about including music and video in Epping's light show next year.

He says parishioners were "thrilled" about the display and locals were also appreciative, saying: "Why go into city when we have Vivid here!"

PHOTO: John Sowden



## Creative village



LUKE WOODHOUSE

### Lord Of All

by Village Church Music



**A**N ENCOURAGING TREND IN RECENT YEARS IS CHURCH MUSIC TEAMS WRITING and recording their own congregational songs and releasing them for the blessing of the wider Christian community. The new album *Lord of All*, by the team at Village Church in Annandale, is another example.

Full of creative arrangements, refreshing harmonic choices and evocative sonic textures, the songs are honest about the human condition without Christ, realistic about life with Christ and unambiguous about the certain hope of his return.

Opening with the gritty and raw title track, which combines rock rhythms with stark strumming of the electric guitar, "Lord of All" is lyrically tenacious. Within the first 30 seconds, the rescue mission of God is unashamedly front and centre, followed by bare statements of truth like, "We are sick and in need of cure". In contrast, the following track, "Only His Life", focuses on the liberating forgiveness won for us in Christ. It has a driving-on-the-open-road feel, with acoustic guitars and a light drum groove pushing the song forward, and electric guitars soaring in the background.

"Love Unknown", the third track, is different again, beginning with a naked, sparse grand piano, followed by a hip-hop-esque acoustic drum groove. It has a modern, almost cinematic vibe, yet when the vocals begin you realise that despite the modern feel the lyrics (a rewrite of "My Song is Love Unknown") are more than 300 years old. The sparsest song is "A Gathering Prayer", opening with a solo trumpet/horn, then transitioning (musically) to a Ryan Adams-style ballad. Lyrically, it is a prayer for God to still our hearts before we hear his word, followed by a prayer for unity and faithfulness in response to hearing his word.

"Your Love" is a catchy treat for fans of the late Johnny Cash. Musically the song evokes joy and anticipation, running forward towards the prize, although from my first few listens I wonder whether the music is the best fit for the confessional nature of the lyrics. The next song, "Lonely Man", starts with a cosmic reflection on the profundity of God's wisdom and subsequent care for us. The chorus raises the searching question of how the God of the universe would not only come to us, but go on to die a lonely man.

"Oh Blessed Trinity" is a song of adoration, exploring the wonder of the biblical doctrine of the Trinity. The second verse makes it clear that God didn't need us to make his love complete and the refrain in the chorus reinforces this wonder: "How can it be that we share in this divine and perfect glory?" "Pastures and Valleys" is a new take on Psalm 23, starting with a simple finger picking folk feel and basic accompaniment. To me, the feel of this song is just right. Psalm 23 is a psalm of hope in the context of a world in darkness. Musically the song works because it keeps us moving, yet in a restrained way. I also love how more voices are introduced towards the end, reminding us that this is not just a song for the individual but for the people of God in Christ.

"Chase the Wind" is a prayer that we would cast all our burdens and anxiety on God, and that our lives will no longer be "Chasing after the wind" (as the author of Ecclesiastes says). The album closes with "Farther Up, Farther In" – another folk ballad, calling us to look forward to the future for God's people. It is a prayer for us to live in light of that final day.

The producers of the album have gathered a collection of songs that no doubt lyric in their local church setting, yet they have not been constrained creatively by a wider congregational purpose.

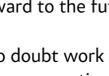
It is musically diverse, as well as refreshing in the unashamed confessional nature of the lyrics – especially in the first half. While there are a lot of words and lyrical content and it is hard to absorb everything on first listen, the beauty of a 40-odd minute album, compared to the equivalent length sermon, is that it is designed to reward multiple listens.

The Rev Luke Woodhouse is minister of Bobbin Head Anglican Church and a member of the Voyage songwriting partnership.

MIKE BEGBIE

### Grace Has Won

by Voyage



**G**RACE HAS WON IS THE FIRST FULL-LENGTH ALBUM FROM SONGWRITING PARTNERS Gavin Perkins, Greg Cooper and Luke Woodhouse. Past songs from the trio such as "Alive", "In His Name" and "Perfect But Painful" have been well received by listeners and widely used in churches.

With *Grace Has Won*, the team has worked hard to create an album that feels holistic in its sound while still doing justice to the style of each songwriter and the emotional intention of each song. The overall feel is quite relaxed, which is a nice change from the complicated electronic pop that has found its way into mainstream Christian music.

The album is at its most energetic with songs such as "Children of His Grace", which has a driving folk feel (think Rend Collective). A large portion of it is given to acoustic guitar-driven songs backed by a band, such as the opening track "I Am Washed and I Will Wait" – though the trio show the breadth of their skills in also offering a beautiful piano version of "Love Divine, All Loves Excelling" to close the album.

*Grace Has Won* crosses into multiple territories for its use. There are certainly songs that could be sung congregationally, such as "Out of Our Darkness". I can hear that the team has worked hard to create arrangements that are interesting, even surprising, yet still accessible for local church music teams. There are also songs that would work as items.

I found the album both encouraging and thought provoking to listen to, and this is where *Grace Has Won* and the broader ministry of Voyage achieve their goal.

On their website they confess a "desire to pair preachers with musicians in the writing of church songs". As a musician, a preacher and fundamentally a disciple of the Lord Jesus, I could hear them offering me something in each song: a song to teach if I preached through Ephesians; an item to play after a sermon engaging with the complexity of being both justified and a sinner; a song to help me reflect more deeply as I read Psalms or simply a moment to enjoy the knowledge that I am loved by my Father in Heaven.

*Grace Has Won* is well worth having as a resource for preachers, a source of new songs for music teams and an encouragement for each of us as we live the life of faith – or as the trio would call it, the voyage to eternity.

The Rev Mike Begbie is the rector at Hornsby Heights Anglican Church and also works with EMU music in its Word In Song conference ministry.

## Musical voyage to eternity

## Family ties



JUDY ADAMSON

### Back to Burgundy

Rated M

**I**T'S A PITY THE MAKERS OF THIS FILM FELT IT NECESSARY TO CHANGE THE NAME FOR AN English-speaking audience, as the original title, *Ce Qui Nous Lie* (or "What binds us"), goes a long way to encapsulating what the movie is about.

In a nutshell, Jean (Pio Marmaï) returns home to the family vineyard after a decade away because his father is gravely ill. He is the eldest of three siblings and Jean's Jérémie had put a lot of pressure on him – not only to look after sister Juliette (Ana Girardot) and brother Jérémie (François Civil), but also to take over the responsibilities of winemaker when the time came.

Jean felt stifled and unappreciated, as well as burdened by responsibility, so he left. Yet he couldn't stay away from winemaking: after a number of years travelling the world he has put down roots in Australia and bought a small vineyard with his partner.

His return is complicated, but love and family are always complicated. There is a welcome from his siblings as well as anger for his desertion – they haven't heard from him in nearly five years, and Jérémie is now married with a child than Jean didn't know existed.

Juliette has been virtually in charge of making the wine as their father has grown sicker and, when he dies shortly after Jean's return, there is a huge inheritance tax to pay. What on earth should they do? Can or should they sell some of their land, their wine stock, or their family home? Or everything? This year's wine won't wait to be made, yet at the same time there are life-altering plans they must decide on together about their future, and that of the vineyards.

For those who have issues with alcohol, this is one you might need to give a miss. Wine is made, drunk, tested and talked about, so you can't escape it. The language is also pretty fruity in places and, given that there are subtitles most of the time, you also get it written onscreen. So you have been warned.

But *Back to Burgundy* has a tremendous amount to recommend it, not least of which is the land itself. It's a central character along with the siblings, and their lives move seamlessly to the rhythm of the seasons and the needs of earth and vine. The movie was also shot over a 12-month period, so we get to see and experience these changes from harvest to harvest, which is not only clever but visually stunning.

What is even more enjoyable is the story. In a Hollywood-style movie much of the action can be painfully predictable, along with the colour-by-numbers plot twists. Here, it's everyday life that makes the drama, with a smart, simple and accessible script. Jean, Juliette and Jérémie have to rediscover each other as siblings and as people, then use the skills they've learned from the cradle – and their innate sense of taste – to make their first vintage together.

We're shown snippets of their lives as children, providing poignant memories as well as insights into the family dynamic and why they have grown up as they have. Despite their squabbles they are fiercely loyal to each other, and to their land – even though that comes as something of a surprise to Jean.

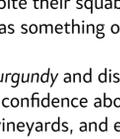
In different ways each of the siblings has to grow up during *Back to Burgundy* and discover, or relearn, what is most important in life. They must develop wisdom and confidence about the battles to fight or ignore, and make choices about relationships, the wine, the vineyards, and each other.

There is plenty of sentiment here – but no sentimentality – plus a generous dollop of good humour. And there's certainly scope for us as viewers to be challenged through the story to consider what is truly important, and whether we are living our lives, and loving others, as we ought to.

PAUL BARNETT

### Anglican Evangelicalism in Sydney, 1897 to 1953

by John A. McIntosh (Wipf and Stock)



**J**OHAN MCINTOSH'S BOOK IS BASED ON MANY YEARS OF RESEARCH, INCLUDING FOR HIS PHD from the University of NSW. As a friend and fellow congregant I was aware of the challenges John faced, first in the research phase and then in the preparation of his text for publishing. I knew that his focus was on three principals of Moore College: Nathaniel Jones, D.J. Davies and T.C. Hammond. What I didn't know, but now do know, is what a truly significant book in other respects was to issue from his research.

The book brings alive the stories of those three men – an Englishman (Jones), a Welshman (Davies) and an Irishman (Hammond). These studies span almost 60 years of Australian history that encompassed the two great wars.

Each man was academically distinguished. Jones and Davies graduated from Cambridge with First Class Honours. Hammond, a graduate from Trinity College Dublin, was a brilliant philosopher, historian and theologian with an international reputation. D.B. Knox, a subsequent principal, for many years based his doctrine lectures on Hammond's *In Understanding Be Men*. Hammond lived on through Knox.

Each principal was appointed by the direct choice of the Archbishop of the day, and in line with his theological position – the conservative William Saumarez Smith appointed Jones, the liberal evangelical John Wright appointed Davies, and the conservative Howard Mowll appointed Hammond. Such was the connection between the Archbishop of Sydney and the principal of Moore College, reflecting as it did the Archbishop's concern for the training of those he would ordain and licence.

It is no secret that the author is a committed Reformation evangelical whose theological viewpoint would be sympathetic to Jones and Hammond. He is decidedly not a liberal evangelical. Yet his study of Davies is objective and fair, praising him for his social conscience and accomplishments as a historian.

I assumed, wrongly, that my friend's book would be mainly a series of biographical studies. In fact, the life stories of the three men, although very interesting, are by no means his focus.

The author does two other things, and it is these that make the book so important. The first is to identify the currents of scientific, philosophical and theological thought that swirled about in the late 1800s and the early 1900s.

Darwin's *On the Origin of the Species* called into question the Christian understanding of the created order. Geologist Sir George Lyell exploded the idea of a "young" earth. The German Higher Critics were attacking the historical accuracy of the narratives of the Old and New Testaments. The anti-Reformation Oxford Tractarian Movement had begun to win support. F.D. Maurice's rejection of the objectivity of the atoning death of the Son of God was proving influential.

These and other radical ideas, Liberalism in particular, were current when our three men were engaged in their studies and were being shaped for their future ministries. Jones' Keswick Theology inoculated him against Liberalism; the great Hammond confronted it head on; but it seized Davies.

Second, but no less important, is John McIntosh's exposition of the written works of Jones, Davies and Hammond. He methodically analyses their published works, sermons and minor papers and well as contemporary commentaries on those works.

The result is that we have three books in one: biographies of Jones, Davies and Hammond; an account of the world of ideas from that era; and the responses of the three men to those ideas. This is the achievement of a lifetime of scholarship, meticulously researched and at the same time accessibly readable.

Bishop Paul Barnett is a New Testament scholar, historian and former Bishop of North Sydney.

## Our faith history brought to life