

MARCH  
2019

# Southern CROSS

THE JOURNAL FOR SYDNEY ANGLICANS

## Crossing cultures

MINISTRY BY EVERYONE, TO EVERYONE

PLUS

**The great Australian vice**

**Telling BCA's 100-year story**

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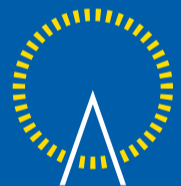


**“When a new principal comes, it’s the staff that tell them, ‘Look after the Scripture teachers’.”**

Mrs Judy Bronger  
Sydney News

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# Purposeful partners for Pakistan

Smiles amid struggle: Anna Thompson makes bricks with Gulnaz.

**HOWEVER** PLUGGED INTO CURRENT AFFAIRS SOME TEENAGERS MIGHT BE, MOST ARE FOCUSED more on school, friends, sport and the latest smart phone than they are on the plight of people half a world away.

But when Anna Thompson met Angela Michael from the Miracle School anti-slavery and education ministry, her great desire to help others – wherever they might be – became a reality.

Miss Thompson, now 17, is one of the daughters of Moore College principal the Rev Dr Mark Thompson – who introduced her to Miss Michael three years ago.

“My dad suggested I meet this woman, seeing that I was very into civil rights and community service and slavery today,” Miss Thompson says. “She was telling me about the work that Miracle School does – which I found incredible – and at the end of our talk she said to me, ‘You have to see this! You have to come!’ It’s classic Angela: she’s so bubbly and excited and on fire for the gospel.”

As much as Miss Thompson loved the idea of going to Pakistan, it was something she never thought would happen. But Miss Michael was absolutely serious about her offer. When she began asking her young friend about travelling once her school studies were over, Miss Thompson realised this was for real and they began to plan.

Midway through last year, Miss Michael noted “‘how great it would be if we could get your Dad to come’... [and pretty soon after that] he found out he was going to Pakistan,” Miss Thompson says with a laugh.

Dr Thompson was mainly involved in speaking at churches and colleges – particularly about the Preliminary Theological Certificate, which Miss Michael teaches as a partner of the college’s Centre for Global Mission. For Miss Thompson, though, the interest was more personal.

“I wanted to see the work... the things Angela had been telling me about for years,” she says. “I wanted to know what I could do to help, but I also wanted to meet children that had been praying for me since the first time I met Angela.

“She takes selfies all the time and she took one with me, took it back to Pakistan and told all the children there I was coming: that I was going to see them and meet them, and I loved them and cared about them and was praying for them. And they would also pray for me.”

One thing that affected Miss Thompson very much on her trip was the young children working in the brick kilns – enmeshed in that environment almost from birth and making bricks from as young as the age of three.

She was taught to make a brick by a seven-year-old named Gulnaz, who “found it so funny that I could make a brick in maybe two minutes, and it was awful, and she could do it in a minute – picking up several kilograms of clay and throwing it around. And all this while she’s not being fed enough.

“It was the personal stories like this that got to me the most,” Miss Thompson adds.

“Gulnaz’s dad didn’t want her to be educated at the school, so she wasn’t allowed to go: she was working and looking after her younger siblings. Her mother had died six months before and yet she had a huge smile on her face from having someone who wanted to play with her. It was beautiful but also so incredibly sad.”

Miss Thompson returned to Sydney determined to help the ministry in whatever way she could.

She and others will speak about their experiences in Pakistan at an Anglican Aid fundraising dinner for Miracle Schools next month– at which the Rev Simon Gillham from the Centre for Global Mission will also be speaking.

“We’ve enabled Miracle School to enrol their own PTC students and set up their own process for training people in Pakistan,” he says, “but Anglican Aid really wants Angela to employ a person to do the teaching rather than stretching herself more thinly.”

Mr Gillham says the dinner will help provide information about the different facets of Miracle School’s ministry that people can support – from children’s education, to adult literacy and empowerment, to health care initiatives.

“It’s much, much broader than just running the school,” he says. “It’s such an amazing ministry.”

Says Miss Thompson: “I can’t keep Pakistan and my experiences out of my head. I have dreams about it. I think about it all the time; having seen it first-hand I can’t ignore it. I’ve come back with this renewed drive to support them – to do whatever I can do.”

*The Partnering with Pakistan dinner will be held in the Moore College dining room on April 3 from 6.30pm.*

*For details see [www.trybooking.com/472077](http://www.trybooking.com/472077).*



# Kwashi warns of dangers within

The incoming General Secretary of GAFCON, Archbishop Ben Kwashi, with Dr Peter Jensen at GAFCON in Jerusalem last year. PHOTO: Stephen Nelson

THE ARCHBISHOP OF JOS IN NIGERIA, BEN KWASHI, HAS BEGUN HIS NEW ROLE AS GENERAL Secretary of the worldwide network of Anglican churches, GAFCON, taking over from Dr Peter Jensen.

In the past decade, the Global Anglican Future Conference has developed as the leading movement of theologically orthodox Anglican churches and now includes the leadership of provinces representing the majority of Anglican Christians worldwide.

“Peter Jensen, a faithful servant of God, led GAFCON as its General Secretary for 10 years,” Archbishop Kwashi said in a videotaped message. “He successfully led three conferences of GAFCON. He held the GAFCON families and provinces together.

“What a joy for me to step into the shoes of such a man, but with fear and trepidation, because these boots are too big for me. But I believe that with your prayers, and with your support, I may not be able to do like Peter Jensen has done but certainly I will not ruin what the servant of God has invested in this ministry.”

The changeover also sees the leader of the Anglican Church in North America, Archbishop Foley Beach, succeeding the previous chairman, Nigeria’s Primate and Archbishop, Nicholas Okoh.

In his February letter to GAFCON members, Archbishop Okoh reinforced the advice of the Jerusalem conference last year against attending the conference of bishops next year in England.

“It came to light last month that the Archbishop of Canterbury’s newly appointed envoy to the Vatican had a history of disputing core Christian doctrine, including a widely circulated video in which he calls for people to be ‘set free’ from belief in a physical resurrection,” Archbishop Okoh said.

“We have also learned with deep concern that the Assistant Bishop of Toronto, Kevin Robertson, entered into a same-sex union using the marriage service in St James’ Cathedral, Toronto.

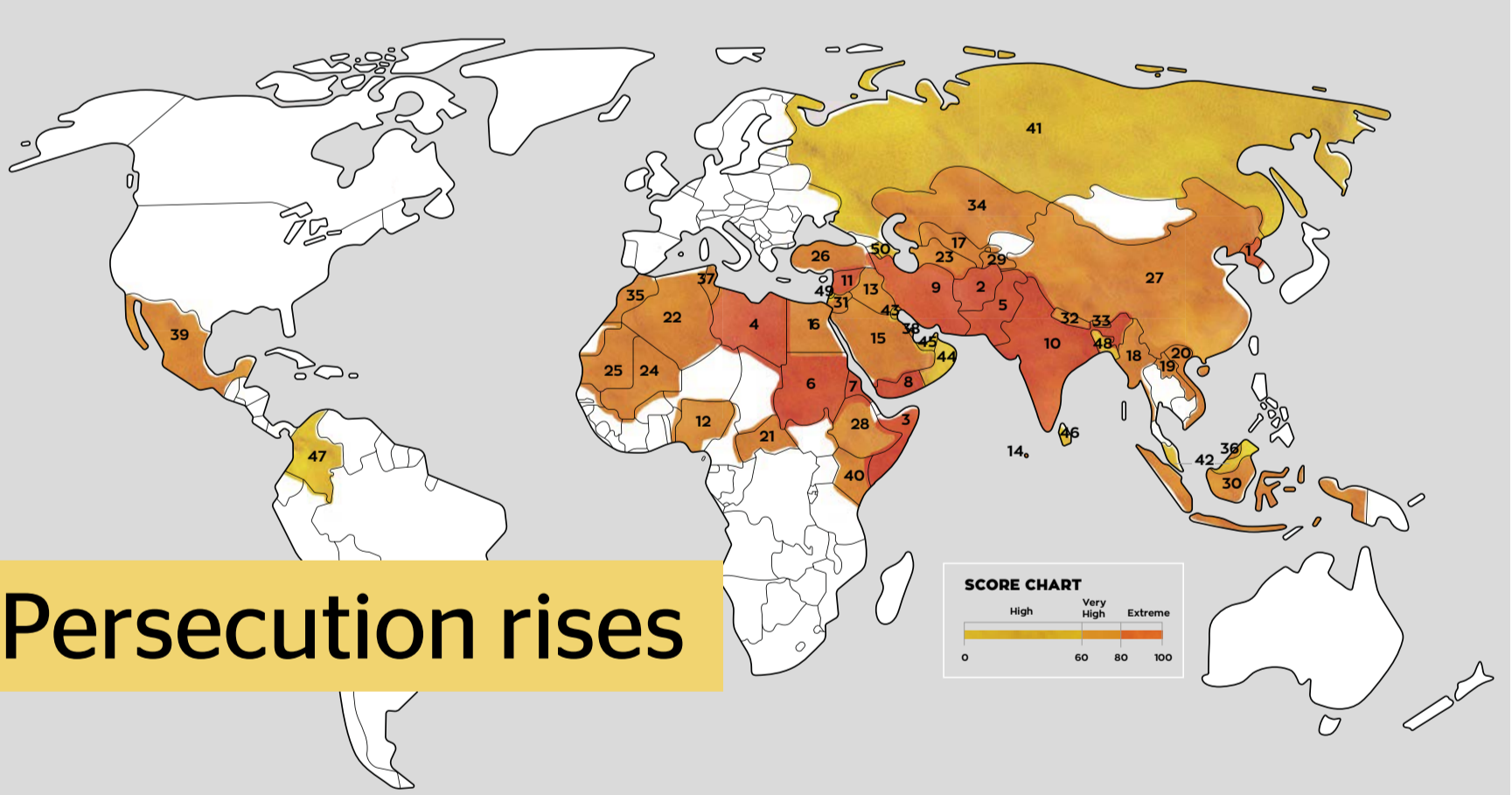
“This step by the Anglican Church of Canada underlines the urgency of our advice in the Jerusalem 2018 ‘Letter to the Churches’ warning against attending the 2020 Lambeth Conference as currently constituted. For the first time assistant bishops and their spouses will be invited, so we can expect that Bishop Robertson and his partner will be attending and received in good standing.

“With great sadness we therefore have to conclude that the Lambeth Conference of 2020 will itself be an obstacle to the gospel by embracing teaching and a pattern of life which are profoundly at odds with the biblical witness and apostolic Christianity through the ages.”

Archbishop Kwashi lives in one of the most dangerous areas in the world to be a Christian, Plateau State in the Middle Belt of Nigeria. But in his first message, the normally ebullient Archbishop Kwashi echoed the warning of internal dangers for the Anglican communion.

“Before our own eyes we’re seeing some from within the church and outside the church teaching disobedience to the word of God, violating the very essence for which Jesus came into the world, died and was raised again,” he said.

“People are denying such truths, not only from outside the church but from within. We in GAFCON are determined to uphold the authority of Scripture, the teachings of Scripture, and especially to proclaim the salvation of Jesus Christ to the whole world.”



The 2019 World Watch List, courtesy Open Doors (opendoors.org.au).

A DOZEN MORE COUNTRIES HAVE BEEN ADDED TO the list of areas where Christians experience high persecution, according to Open Doors International.

The latest survey by the persecution watchdog shows one in nine Christians globally experience “high” levels of persecution, as compared to one in 12 the previous year. It is worst across Asia and the Middle East, where one in three Christians experience “high” levels of persecution.

Open Doors also warns that new laws in China and Vietnam are part of an effort to control all religious expression. In China, the wave of persecution is as high as that experienced during the cultural revolution of Mao Zedong in the 1970s. Many churches have been forced to close down, crosses have been removed from a number of buildings and some believers have been sent to “re-education camps”.

The annual ranking of religious persecution in 50 countries indicates that at least 245 million Christians in 73 countries experience high levels of persecution – up from 215 million in 58 countries last year. The sources of persecution vary from government and nationalist crackdowns to Hindu and Islamic attacks.

North Korea remains the world’s worst persecution hotspot, as it has been every year since 2002. Persecution rose in Myanmar – it is now up to 18th position from 24th – and Indonesia rises to 30 from 38th position last year, mainly due to suicide bombing attacks against churches. China moved up 16 positions to number 27.

Nigeria suffered the most deaths through persecution. In the north and Middle Belt of Nigeria, 3731 Christians were killed in the past year for their faith. That’s almost double the number recorded the previous year and accounts for 90 per cent of the number of recorded persecution deaths worldwide.

Open Doors reports that Nigerian villages were completely abandoned by Christians, forced to flee from the violence as armed attackers moved in and settled. Persecution comes mainly from the nomadic, Muslim-majority Fulani herdsmen, and the Islamic extremist group Boko Haram.

Persecution dropped, though, in Iraq, which fell five places to the rank of 13th on the 2019 World Watch List. This is due to the defeat of the Islamic State insurgency in the country and the return of thousands of Christians to rebuild and resettle, especially in the Nineveh region.

TOP 50			
1	North Korea	6	Sudan
2	Afghanistan	7	Eritrea
3	Somalia	8	Yemen
4	Libya	9	Iran
5	Pakistan	10	India
11	Syria	31	Jordan
12	Nigeria	32	Nepal
13	Iraq	33	Bhutan
14	Maldives	34	Kazakhstan
15	Saudi Arabia	35	Morocco
16	Egypt	36	Brunei
17	Uzbekistan	37	Tunisia
18	Myanmar	38	Qatar
19	Laos	39	Mexico
20	Vietnam	40	Kenya
21	Central African Republic	41	Russia
22	Algeria	42	Malaysia
23	Turkmenistan	43	Kuwait
24	Mali	44	Oman
25	Mauritania	45	United Arab Emirates
26	Turkey	46	Sri Lanka
27	China	47	Colombia
28	Ethiopia	48	Bangladesh
29	Tajikistan	49	Palestine
30	Indonesia	50	Azerbaijan

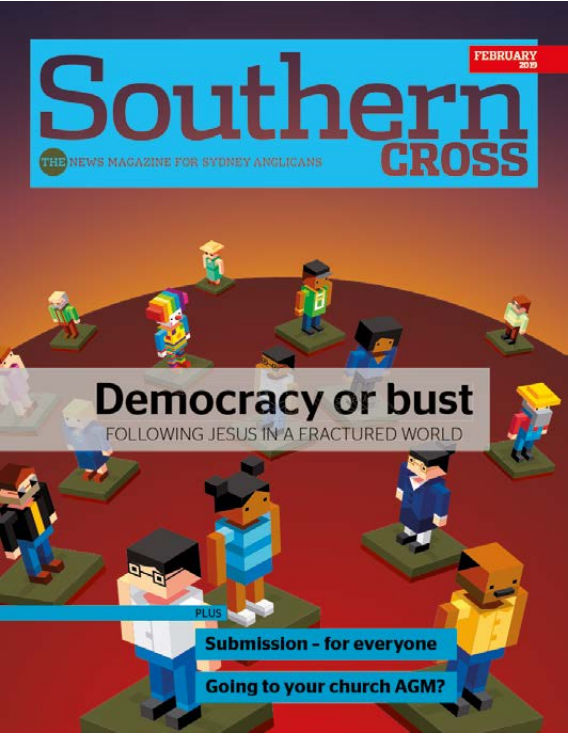
GOOGLING FOR GOD

In response to the article about communicating cross-culturally (SC, February), there were two ladies sitting together at our 8am “traditional” church today. They were Googling on their phones for much of the time.

The regular member met the other standing outside church and, with a wave and the word “Come”, she convinced her to step inside. The newcomer had no English. When she pulled out Google Translate on her phone the regular did the same. The regular was then able to explain what was going on and the newcomer asked her questions, with the former typing English and the latter typing Mandarin while Google translated.

It is the first time I have seen Google used as part of our church welcoming.

Denise Lake  
Silverwater



“SOULIES” LEADERS

I was thrilled to see in the most recent *Southern Cross* that Soul Revival continues to grow in its outreach efforts to the Shire (SC, February).

I was a churchwarden at GyMEA when Stuart Crawshaw headed up the youth community, called Soulies. What most impressed me about those young people was that, despite much fun, prayer played a major role.

A pile of shoes outside someone’s front door indicated a prayer meeting inside. On the one evening that I attended a meeting, I was glad it was not on an upper floor or I might have fallen out of the window, asleep, as the praying continued past midnight. There were no long breaks for suppers!

So, it’s not surprising that three church leaders have come out of that GyMEAN youth community: Stuart Crawshaw – now at Kirrawee; Tim Baldwin at EV’s Saturday evening service; and Craig Stalder, now associate minister at GyMEA.

Irene Voysey  
Pymble

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THE TOWER OF BABBLE

David Hewetson

Me and 'Opeful 'Arry was workin' on the Tower.  
The job was good, the pay was good (when paid off by the hour)  
Our boss was Nebu Chad, the prince of building men  
(I'm sure we'll never see the likes of 'im again).

'is dreams was big, 'is 'opes was tall and reachin' for the sky.  
'is Tower would nearly reach the stars – beyond where eagles fly.  
And when 'e showed us all 'is plans, with all his charts unfurled  
I whispered then to me old mate – "'e wants to rule the world!"

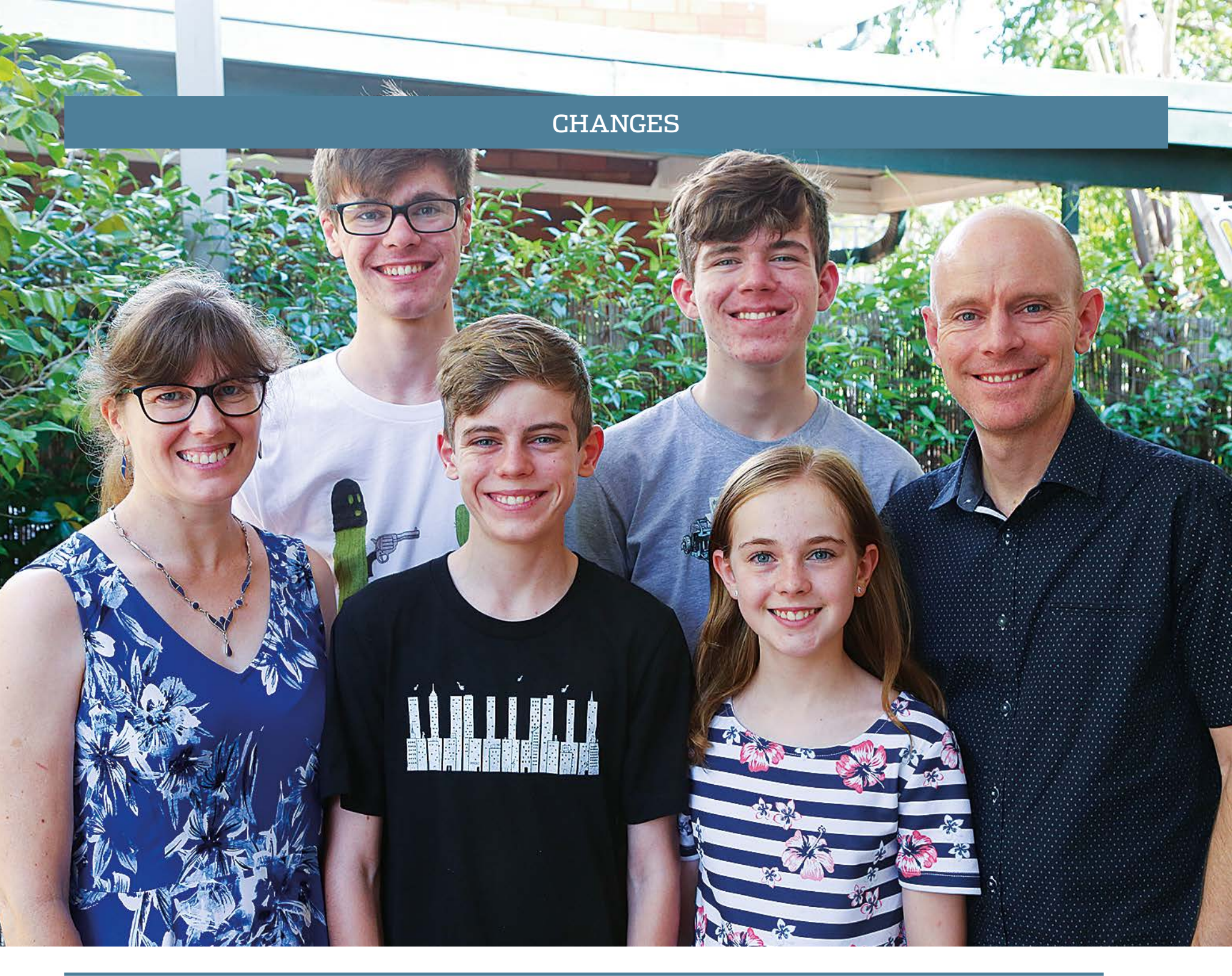
"We've better bricks and better ways," said Neb, with glowing pride.  
"This bright new techno-lodgey leaves others cut and dried."  
So me and 'Arry worked like slaves to finish old Neb's dream,  
to rule the world from up on high – a towering building scheme.

We burned the bricks and mortared 'em, and stuck 'em all with tar,  
we built a thing that all could see, from right nearby and far.  
But in the sweat and bother a funny thing occurred,  
I tried to talk to 'Arry, but then couldn't find the word.

I said, "Send up a brick".  
'e said, "You think I'm thick?"  
I said, "Send up a plank."  
'e said, "Who says I stank?!"  
Then I said, "Send up twine".  
Old 'Opeful took a swing at me – "No one calls me a swine!"

Our words just got all scrambled, all weird and back to front.  
Old 'Arry made some funny sounds – some squawkings and a grunt!  
So Nebu Chad's big project was comin' well unstuck –  
The words from all of us were like a sick or dying duck!

So all you Big Bananas with plans to rival God,  
take care the local lingo don't come out soundin' odd.  
When 'eaven comes to visit you – a message from on 'igh  
look up to God and bow your head and eat some 'umble pie.



## “GATHER, GROW AND GO” IN THE SOUTHWEST

After spending the past two years as the assistant minister at Fairfield with Bossley Park – which had been without a senior minister for 3½ years – the **Rev Stephen Shead** became rector of the parish on January 1.

“I wasn’t looking for a rector position at all because I have theological education experience more than parish experience,” he says. “But the parish had been without an official senior minister for such a long time [so] it was process of testing things out... my approach was to push on some doors and see if they closed.”

They didn’t – rather, they swung right open. When the decision was announced, members of the church were so delighted to hear Mr Shead was becoming their senior minister that they welcomed the news with spontaneous applause.

The family spent 12 years in Chile with CMS, choosing to work in southwestern Sydney on their return because of the many cross-cultural opportunities. As part of their joint ministry to the parish Mr Shead’s wife Rebecca has become part of the women’s ministry training team and leads a Bible study group, in addition to studying part-time.

Mr Shead has been heavily involved in setting a new vision for the church, beginning six months after his arrival in 2017 at a parish-wide weekend away.

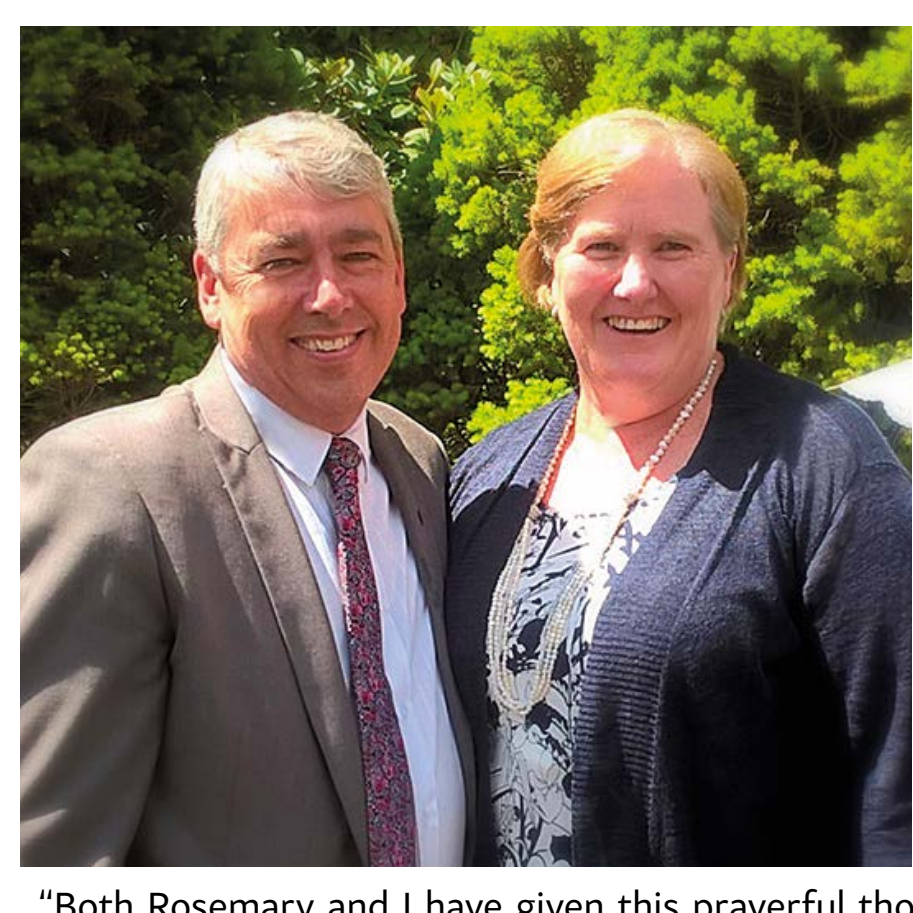
“When I joined the staff team we decided to work really hard to bring the different congregations of the parish together,” he says. “One of the things that struck me was that there were four congregations that didn’t really have very much to do with each other. There was very little sense of belonging together... people might not have even known that others went to the same church.

“So we did something of a relaunch: [we would be] a church for all nations and a church that would ‘gather, grow and go’. So we ran the weekend away to launch all of that and bring people together under the three G’s.

“We want to set ourselves towards a trajectory of evangelism and bringing new people in, but in order to do that we need to depend on God and realise that he’s the one who’s going to give the growth.

“So, rather than jumping straight into intense evangelism or something like that, last year we had a year of prayer and doing a number of things to try and grow ourselves in terms of our dependence on God and life with God in prayer... On the way we have seen some growth as well, which has been very encouraging.”

## ONE WATER VIEW TO ANOTHER



“Both Rosemary and I have given this prayerful thought and believe it is God’s good timing. We will miss the people of Sans Souci but look forward to making new friends with the people of Abbotsford and sharing in an ‘all-age’ gospel ministry with them”.

Mr Young will continue his ministry as an Army Reserve chaplain – providing pastoral care and advice to Army cadets within NSW – plus the encouraging and equipping ministry of lay people within Sydney Anglican Cursillo.

“We never planned it that way”, says the **Rev Trevor Young**, “but whenever we move parishes we seem to get closer to the water. Don’t get me wrong, I am not complaining!”

After 14 years as rector of Sans Souci Mr Young and his wife Rosemary have moved to the provisional parish of Abbotsford and began their ministry on February 25.

“There comes a time when a minister knows that it’s time to leave and it will be okay,” he says. “A time when ministry is going well and God’s people are encouraged; a time to leave when the church is in the hands of competent people under God; a time when it’s good for the rectory family; a time when fresh leadership is needed and the church can consolidate and continue to move forward.

## FROM CITY, TO CITY SCHOOL



Mr Tubman says the staff at SACS are a “really welcoming and encouraging bunch”, and he is also enjoying the early days of his interaction with students from across the age spectrum in the K-12 school.

He has a real desire to support the Christian students as well as reach non-believers in the school, saying he has “spent a lot of energy – really since finishing university – thinking about ways to do this sort of ministry well.

“One of the key things – especially with Christian Development classes and also with any global school environment – is that we have to do our best to care for the Christian students,” he says. “They’re the one who have to face whatever feedback comes from stuff that a chaplain might say up front. Sometimes the students will speak to you personally about it... but often most of [the discussion] will happen between the students.

“We don’t want to throw the Christian students a hospital pass where they’re the ones who have to deal with the positive or negative flow-on. We want to work very hard on our tone and our words in how we present the gospel, so we’re more of a blessing.

“You have to consider how to speak consistently into a large group of people who don’t yet believe the gospel, in a way that actually presents something good and offers a positive invitation to them. We’ve got a good team this year, so I hope and pray we’ll move in that direction.”

The **Rev Craig Tubman** has begun the new school year as senior chaplain at St Andrew’s Cathedral School, after 3½ years as assistant minister at the city parish of Church Hill, in charge of the Garrison Church in Millers Point.

Mr Tubman has spent most of his ordained ministry in school chaplaincy positions, having worked as assistant chaplain (and classroom teacher) at Barker College in 2011-12, and chaplain to Cranbrook School from 2012 to 2015.

“Ideally we would have loved to have remained in that particular role in parish for another year or two, because I was loving that parish role and really value our two congregations at the Garrison, but long term I do want to invest in building and creating a tone and a ministry in a school,” he says.

“When the opportunity here came up it was a little earlier than we were hoping, but then we thought, ‘Let’s just pursue it and see what happens’ – and all the doors opened so we decided to make the move.”



## MILDENHALLS MOVE

The **Rev Tim Mildenhall**, who was chaplain at Robert Menzies College at Macquarie University for the past four years – as well as pastor at the college and Trinity Chapel Macquarie – became rector of the parish of Beverly Hills with Kingsgrove on February 7.

“University and college ministry is extraordinarily strategic, and there’s a wonderful bunch of people at Trinity Chapel who are ministry minded and sacrificial in their reaching out to students, so it was a really hard decision to leave – but we’re very excited to be at Beverly Hills-Kingsgrove,” he says.

A year ago the family had been contemplating an overseas ministry with CMS that didn’t eventuate.

However, with a keenness to minister in a cross-cultural way in the community, and also use the skills learned in previous parishes and university ministry, when the opportunity arose to serve at Beverly Hills-Kingsgrove it was one that really spoke to Mr Mildenhall and his wife Kathy.

“Unlike any time in the past there’s a real cross-cultural opportunity, and if we don’t get hold of that now, we’re out the back door, humanly speaking,” he says.

“God’s much bigger than us, but not only is there cross-cultural work to be done in terms of the various peoples who’ve come to Sydney but there’s also the cross-cultural environment of explaining why we’re Christians and being the plausibility structure for the gospel.”

Kathy Mildenhall is the member care and project officer for African Enterprise, helping to facilitate the provision of Moore College’s Preliminary Theological Certificate in locations across Africa.

But however fruitful such a job is, Mr Mildenhall says, his wife only ever wants it to be part-time so she can be fully involved in ministries at church.

“She can’t not do that – she’s one of the most amazing women in terms of getting alongside people,” he says.

“Kathy has ministered to a wide variety of people for Jesus’ sake and she does it without any fuss, and that’s what she wants to be in this parish. She wants to support the church through supporting me.”

Mr Mildenhall is very enthusiastic about the saints in the new parish and the ministry opportunities that await.

“Beverly Hills is the kind of place where people are dead-set keen about the gospel, love Jesus, love the Bible, they’re absolutely convinced that it’s the hope of the world and the hope of Sydney,” he says. “We want to help them go forward with that mission.”

## DR DICKSON’S MINISTRY OF “UNDECEPTION”



While rector of Roseville Dr Dickson wrote four books, taught about the life of Jesus at the University of Sydney, was a Fellow of the Ancient History department at Macquarie University and took part in the creation and presentation of the documentary *For the Love of God: Why Christianity is better + worse than you ever imagined*.

He will continue teaching at the University of Sydney and is also a visiting academic at Oxford until the end of this year, researching how early Christians used the educational tool of memory to preserve the teachings of Jesus.

Plenty of options are on the horizon – including leading history tours to Israel and further documentaries – but the agenda for the remainder of 2019 includes a book, *The Doubter’s Guide to the Christian Faith*, and a podcast entitled “Undeceptions”.

“It’s an old English word that means to speak in a way that undecives people and reveals to them the truth,” Dr Dickson says. “It’s really exploding myths about the Christian faith.”

At the end of this month the **Rev Dr John Dickson** officially steps down as rector of St Andrew’s, Roseville – what he termed his “beautiful church” when announcing his move in December.

Dr Dickson began in the rector’s role nine years ago, and also spent the years from 2001-2005 as the parish’s assistant minister.

He is leaving Roseville in order to devote himself full time to “commending Christ to the public through writing, speaking and academic research”.

“I’m pretty pumped,” he says. “It’s been a privilege being a rector... but I’ve been trying to do both [lead a church plus other work] for nearly 10 years and felt I really had to choose. And there’s just no doubt in my mind that I’m wired to try and engage the public with the Christian faith.”

# 10 per cent vision exceeded

STEPHEN GIBSON

**THERE ARE TWO PARTS OF THE DIOCESE WHERE WE CONSISTENTLY HAVE MORE THAN 10 PER cent of the population in Bible-believing churches: prison chapels and aged care. As Jesus said: "But many who are first will be last, and the last first" (Mark 10:31).**

Anglicare prison chaplains often see significant numbers in chapel and Bible study and a great openness to God's word. I have had the privilege of preaching and sharing Bible study in correctional centres and have seen this first hand.

As one prison chaplaincy volunteer from the Pennant Hills area said to me, "Almost every week someone asks for a Bible and says, 'Where should I start?' If only more people in Pennant Hills asked the same question."

NSW started as a prison colony with Richard Johnson as the first minister and prison chaplain. Meredith Lake, in her excellent book *The Bible in Australia*, says that "on most Sundays, convicts also attended religious services where they heard the Bible read, preached and prayed. In early 1790s Sydney, when church attendance was effectively voluntary, between a quarter and a half of all convicts went along. Later, church attendance was made compulsory – a new development evidently resented by those who burned Johnson's first church to the ground."

Aged care is also a place where our chapels and Bible studies are very well attended. In the Sutherland Shire, for example, the use of the chapels at Donald Robinson Village and Woollooware Shores have exceeded the architect's vision from day one. Both these chapels were built with an openable wall for larger services. The wall is *always* open, as the regular Sunday services are larger than anyone expected. Praise God!

Why are most Australians so resistant to the gospel? The reasons are complex and beyond the scope of this short piece.

However, it would appear that most Australians have well-practiced defences against the gospel of our Lord Jesus. They have resisted Jesus for many decades but sometimes a crack appears in their system, a chink in their armour. It might be illness, cancer and an admission to hospital. It might be their world being tipped upside down and finding themselves in prison. It might simply be downsizing from the suburbs to one of our Anglicare retirement villages.

In one of these places they may encounter an Anglican chaplain or the chapel community and find Jesus and his love and grace.

We live in a time in Sydney where some opportunities for Christian witness are contracting and yet, conversely, opportunities for Christian chaplaincy of all types is expanding.

*The Rev Stephen Gibson is the manager of health and justice chaplaincy at Anglicare Sydney.*

# A specific honour

DR GLENN DAVIES



**L**AST MONTH I HAD THE PRIVILEGE OF ORDAINING 28 MEN AND WOMEN TO THE holy order of deacon. The Cathedral of St Andrew was full to overflowing, with more than 900 people present. It was a grand occasion, with all the regional bishops joining me in laying hands on the ordinands.

It is a solemn occasion as those to be ordained are publicly interrogated concerning their doctrine, their manner of life, their commitment to teach the Scriptures, their desire to serve Christ and his people, and their responsibility to reach out into the community with the love of Christ. The opening words of instruction to the candidates capture the importance of the office of a deacon:

*You are to serve the church of God and to work with its members in caring for the sick, the needy, and all who are in trouble. By your teaching and your life you are to show Christ's people that in serving others we are serving Christ himself. You are to make his redemptive love known, by word and example, to those among whom you live, and work, and worship.*

*You are to share with the community the love of Christ and his gospel of reconciliation and hope. You are to pray and work for peace and justice in the world.*

*As deacons you are to model your life according to the word of God. You are to be faithful in prayer, and take your place with bishop, presbyter and people in public worship and at the administration of the sacraments.*

Solemn promises are made, prayer is offered, and God's blessing is invoked. While a day of celebration and joy for the deacons and their families, one does not leave the Cathedral without sensing the gravity and solemnity of the occasion.

For many it is the culmination of four years of theological study, coupled with parish ministry experience as a student minister. In the course of this time, these candidates are examined, tried and mentored so as to test their vocation for ordained ministry.

More than half of those ordained this year had already been serving as lay ministers in their parishes, or, in one case, as a chaplain with Anglicare. These men and women had already been engaged in full-time paid ministry over a number of years and, with the support and encouragement of the people and ministers whom they had served, they now wished to be ordained.

Yet why ordination? Can one not adequately serve as a lay minister? Do we really need to set apart people for a lifelong ministry? The late Donald Robinson, former Archbishop of Sydney, addressed this question in a number of essays, most notably "Ordination for What?", which is reproduced in Volume 2 of his *Selected Works* and is well worth reading (note that volumes 3 and 4 will be launched at Moore College on Saturday, March 16).

While Bishop Robinson was addressing the importance of the presbyter for oversight of a parish and his primary role as a teacher, his remarks also have application to deacons.

The office of deacon in the New Testament church is attested in Paul's letter to the Philippians, where he addresses the "overseers and deacons" of the congregation. The qualifications of these two distinct offices may also be found in Paul's first letter to Timothy and are reflected in our ordination services.

Although the seven men chosen for a specific ministry of service in Acts 6 are not referred to as "deacons", it is generally accepted that the origin of this office is found in this early appointment, as the *Book of Common Prayer* suggests. In other words, deacons are God's idea.

In the providence of God, the ordering of his church requires the office of overseer and deacon. Various denominations interpret these offices differently, but as Anglicans we have come to see the distinctiveness of the diaconate as an office with its own integrity.

While the presbyterate relates especially to the oversight of a parish, God reveals his purposes for congregations to be ordered and taught by presbyters, with deacons assisting them in this ministry as "servants" of Christ (noting the Greek word *diakonos* means "servant").

With ordination comes the world-wide recognition of one's gifts and calling to a lifelong ministry of the word. Where lay ministry is locally based and locally recognised, a deacon is made a "deacon in the church of God", wherever that may be. The title of "Reverend" reflects this honour and its recognition in society as well as the church.

It is an honour to be called to serve Christ in any vocation, yet it is a specific honour to be called to the office of a deacon. We should pray for those who have been recently ordained. We should also pray that God would continue to raise up gifted and godly men and women for this ministry so that the church of God might be rightly ordered, and by his grace might be the agent for making known his manifold wisdom to the principalities and powers in the heavenly realms (Ephesians 3:10).

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

# Multicultural workers and ministry

Growing diversity: a students' Bible study group at Moore College.

It's vital to have a mix of cultures leading our churches, writes **TARA SING**.

**S**YDNEY HAS SEEN CULTURE AFTER CULTURE ARRIVE AND SET UP HOMES, SHOPS and communities, introducing Australia to new foods, music and ways of life. However, as we look at the congregations in our Diocese and those who are leading them, the culture mix represented is often very different.

While our cities have sped ahead in becoming melting pots of culture and ethnicity, our church congregations and ministry teams have been slower to change – with people of non-Anglo backgrounds facing particular challenges when pursuing ministry training.

Bishop Peter Lin believes God's plan has always included all nations in the gospel. Most Christians would agree, and would support initiatives that see the gospel message proclaimed worldwide. But Lin has noticed that Sydney itself has a lack of people from every tribe and tongue ministering cross-culturally in Anglican churches.

"We definitely want multicultural teams," says the Bishop of the Georges River Region. "There aren't many people of ethnic background leading congregations of mixed cultures. Very few are rectors."

He has observed, with a few exceptions, that many rectors who minister to multicultural congregations are Anglo-Saxon, and those from other backgrounds are often leading monoethnic congregations.

"We need to start getting more people from non-English speaking backgrounds into ministry training," he says. "We're all struggling with that, but that's the first step."

## THE CHALLENGES

Ministry training isn't an easy task for most, but throw in language difficulties and cultural differences and it can be quite a challenge.

The rector of Mortdale, the Rev Denis Oliver (see p23), was born in Uruguay and had to grapple with a range of cultural differences when he was at college.

"No one ever treated me badly – the guys at Moore were lovely – but Anglos don't touch, they have a larger talking distance, they're more emotionally reserved," he says. "Passion is confused with anger in conversation and it's usually about rugby, cricket and boat shoes. There's nothing wrong with those things, but when you're not into it and that's the culture, it can be hard."

The Rev Paul Grimmond, Dean of Students at Moore College, says in his experience "lots of people are used to the problem, but working out the solution is hard".

He adds that while the composition of the student body is still predominantly Anglo, there is a growing group of multiethnic students.

"It's definitely more diverse than when I was a student, which is encouraging, and there's a larger proportion of students for whom English is an additional language," he says.

Grimmond recognises that while many students are perfectly capable of achieving the high academic standard required, different educational backgrounds need additional resources. "Our Western love is of independent thinking – and having your own opinion and disagreeing with lecturers is highly prized – but [for those] from a more Eastern tradition their academic value has been respecting and agreeing with your teacher."

The college is working hard at upskilling to best serve students facing these hurdles.

"We've employed someone to provide additional academic assistance for any student, and this has mostly been taken up by students from non-English speaking backgrounds or other academic backgrounds," Grimmond says.

"We want to do this better. We need people from every nation to talk about Jesus and preach the gospel. To see God in his grace has been raising people from different backgrounds, and watching their enthusiasm to reach people, is really exciting."

Jade Hajj, a Lebanese-born ministry apprentice at Grace City Church, Waterloo, says a lot of his training has been "rethinking church".

"In Lebanon it's a day for the Lord, more of an event," he says. "Here it's still a day for the Lord, but we do all that with an eye to the outsider, trying to preach the gospel and share faith and engage with the world around us as much as we can. God is still saving a lot of people through the work of my church in Lebanon, but I look back and see new ways of doing things."

"Dealing with cultural differences is hard... some are shocked at Australian culture. Because I'm so fresh off the boat, if you will,

I can still be shocked, too. When I walk into a room I think, why don't people say 'Hi'? In our culture people stop and say 'Hello', but in an Anglo's mind they're being rude to the others they're talking to.

"That makes a difference to how people feel at church. In Middle Eastern and Asian culture it's important that people in leadership acknowledge us."

The advice of the rector of Westmead, the Rev George Kazogolo, who grew up in Tanzania (see opposite), is that people in ministry should always be prepared to learn – no matter how experienced they are.

"Even when you think you know, just listen and you might find something new or useful," he says. "Visiting people helps you to learn about them. I would sit and hear their stories, where they are at, what they think, and this gives me insight because I hear their lives."

Even a cup of tea can involve a culture shift: "In Tanzania, when visiting, they don't even ask you if you want a cup of tea. They just offer whatever they have and to say 'No' was to be rude. Here, I had to learn to say 'No' because my heart was racing!"

## WHAT HAS IT BEEN LIKE TO TRAIN FOR MINISTRY CROSS CULTURALLY?

JADE HAJJ

Ministry apprentice at Grace City Church, Waterloo

I lived most of my life in Lebanon, and moved to Sydney three years ago. Lebanon is a great country with very difficult neighbours, so we had political problems. This affects your childhood and how you think about things.

There was a period of six to seven months where we had a car bomb every Friday. We knew it would happen, and once it happened then we could go out and have fun. In 2006 we had a full-blown war with Israel. During that time there was no food or water, you eat what you have, beans and lentils. This makes people very sceptical.

Church life in Lebanon was very different to Grace City. One day, 50 Syrian refugees walked into church. We didn't expect this to happen and didn't have a structure for them to fit into. They listened to the sermon, and thanked us.

We had to now think through what it meant to have 50 Muslim Syrian refugees in our church. How would we bridge that gap? There's a lot of political history, so there are lots of emotions going on. Christians are challenged, wrestling with questions like, "How do I love these people who have hurt my family?" We tried to walk alongside them as they discovered the word of God that was different to how they had heard it before.

In Australia, I have to convince people that life *isn't* good. I never had to do that before in Lebanon – everyone there knows life sucks and there must be justice. As an Australian with Medicare, I don't need justice. I'm comfortable. Here people think they're in full control of their lives until a death or a financial crisis shows them they're not.

The church in Lebanon is very human-resource poor. My pastor died of cancer at 33, and we couldn't find another pastor. The committee searching decided that I, along with two others, should be the leaders of the church. I had no Christian family, no theological training and I was meant to lead the church!

I led the church for three years until I moved to Australia. That's why I am doing a ministry apprenticeship with MTS. There's no time for training in Lebanon, the resources are small and the urgency so real that no one has time to train before serving. There was no financial support in Lebanon for training, most would train in college and be working on the side and serving in full-time ministry.

Grace City used to be mostly Anglo, but more people of Asian background are coming. Part of my role is figuring out how we can foster environments that encourage organic care. I deal with all the nationalities at our church: Australians, British, Asians – people who have been here a few weeks and people who were born here.

A lot of the time the barrier [to faith] has nothing to do with the gospel. Lots of people say, 'I don't have a problem with God. I have a problem with Christians'. From a cultural perspective, everyone's background is complicated. You have to try and be sensitive and not cocky.

I think it's extremely valuable for people from all backgrounds to be trained in ministry. I identify with the cultures I know, but there will be people in my life who can see what I can't see in other cultures.

That's the point, for us to share the gospel clearly and lessen the barriers between the person and Jesus. If the barrier is that he doesn't want to submit to Christ, that's his problem. If the barrier is that I explained the gospel in a way that is unhelpful, that's my problem. We're trying to lessen our problems.

SUM CHIM HO  
Third year, Moore Theological College

I grew up in Hong Kong. When I came to Australia seven years ago, I found the Chinese here are very different to Hong Kong recently. If they came 20 years ago, they brought that culture to Australia.

People in Sydney are busy and always in a rush. People are more independent in Sydney than Hong Kong. They have their own thoughts, but they still respect each other to open up and express their thinking, especially in class.

In a Hong Kong class, we wouldn't challenge the lecturer, but I think even in Bible college the students are happy to not always agree with the lecturer. If we don't agree in Hong Kong, we keep it to ourselves or share with our peers but we would never challenge the teacher.

This year I will be serving at Sylvania and focusing on elderly ministry. I'm encouraged by many people to go out and learn and explore. Sylvania is all English. There are not many of Asian background at Sylvania church.

I was in a Moore College promotion video, and Sylvania played that video three times before I started. So I arrived and many people knew my name, which I felt very embarrassed about because I couldn't call their name!

Even on the first day I felt a very warm welcome. For Chinese, even if they love you they won't show it on the outside. They always keep it in their hearts, not saying or expressing all the time. In Sylvania, I found by their body language, by what they express, they really show they like you. It's very direct!

I am nervous about language. I still find I'm not very good at using English and communicating well. This is the first thing I worry about, coming from a Chinese church to an English church. Even though I'm in college, I'm not familiar with using English to help others, to teach, to comfort others.

I think it's important that church leaders are from a variety of cultures. I think it's good that the minister at Sylvania can look forward. The Shire has a growing Chinese community, and to have someone from a Chinese background go to church to help them connect is important. Ministry is always cross-cultural, because people you serve always have different mindsets and different cultural views.

TAKESHI SHIBUYA

Fourth year, Sydney Missionary and Bible College

I grew up in the northern part of Japan. Both my parents are Christians. Yes! It's quite a rare case to be raised under Christian parents in Japan, especially since the Christian population has remained at less than 1 per cent for a long time.

I served as one of the student ministers at St Paul's, Chatswood for a year. St Paul's has a multicultural congregation and people from all different backgrounds including Chinese, Filipino, Japanese, Korean, Indonesian and Irapino.

I wanted to learn how multicultural church encourages cross-cultural married couples. In my previous Japanese-focused ministries in Australia, I saw many cross-cultural couples. Apart from a few exceptions, the non-Japanese speaking partners found it a great challenge to engage with the Japanese barrier, but cultural differences between the Japanese and their non-Japanese speaking partners.

For example, since Japanese people are a collective culture, after the service they spend a long time with food and fellowship at church. In contrast, some non-Japanese speaking partners who come from Australian churches think afternoon tea shouldn't take too much time every single Sunday.

I've faced several challenges in doing cross-cultural ministry. Firstly, there needs to be much more intentional conversation and active communication. When people use English to communicate with others, often conversation can get messy. To understand each other, everyone requires patience. Sometimes I feel exhausted at the end of Sunday because to have intentional listening and conversation consumes all my energy and brain space.

We need to get used to ambiguous conversation and communication. Understanding each other takes much time. I talked to one person from a Chinese background and enjoyed listening to what he said, but at the end I found out I totally misunderstood him.

There are different styles of jokes. I have observed Australians use more irony or dry humour with a serious face, whereas Japanese people often use more obvious expression and not so dry. Sometimes I was confused whether or not this person was telling me the truth or just kidding. Understanding the joke requires a high level of cross-cultural communication skills, not only language fluency. Even in the service, the Australian preacher uses more Australian-style jokes so, often, I cannot understand why people laugh. Sometimes I pretend to laugh because I don't want to feel embarrassed and be left out.

I have observed Asian-background members tend to talk more about their family and friends, and when they face the word of God they tend to be more quiet or have meditation. Western background members tend to talk about things people do and their plans ahead and discuss what they think logically when they face the word of God.

Because church members come from Asian and Western backgrounds, and they have different styles of expressing their faith, we can learn from each other. This is so relevant in a community group setting.

## DIVERSITY

Takeshi Shibuya, a fourth-year student at Sydney Missionary and Bible College, believes it's crucial to have a variety of cultures represented in a church ministry team.

"Our senior minister often says that a person who comes from a different cultural background reminds the church about the reality of God's salvation work in this world!" he says. "Having a variety of cultures represented in a ministry team helps the reality of God's word and inspires a more missional heart."

Grimmond says the increasing diversity of student body at Moore is blessing the college community. "Our job description is to help students step outside their culture and develop wisdom, so part of good ministry training and development gives people training to help them be culturally aware," he says.

"Students keep encountering people from different traditions of theology and Christian practice, and that forces you to think deeply about what you think and why, and it makes you clearer in what you will teach. That's another example of God's kindness."

Andrew Beddoe has also been encouraged by the variety of students at the different Vocational Bible College campuses around Sydney.

"At the Fairfield campus we have Melanesian, Filipino, Vietnamese, Anglo-Saxon, East Timorese and Sri Lankan students," says Beddoe, who founded the college. "It's encouraging to see our campuses reflect the Christian communities in their areas."

"Many have landed with us because they have English as a second language and know that the reading and writing requirements aren't as high [as at other training institutions]."

Some of the challenges for those at the college have been in the classroom, "where students have had difficulty understanding others due to accents".

He notes that there is also practical need for extra support with assessments – but for students whose cultures have a heavy emphasis on shame and honour, admitting they need help can also be a hurdle.

"The way one of our students has been educated was to just regurgitate what the teacher says. We had to help them learn that we don't want them to write what they've read elsewhere, but to think and write for themselves."

However, despite the challenges, diversity has been a blessing to everyone's learning. "Our cultural blinkers are removed somewhat to how we read the Bible and share it with others," Beddoe says.

Not only do the experiences students share in discussion help them understand the complexity of issues, "some students have been prejudiced towards other nationalities, so studying together has helped them to gain greater appreciation for other people groups".

When it comes to training people from different cultures for ministry, academic challenges are only one of the hurdles.

Says Lin: "Some parents have come to Australia so their family will have a better life, so they push their kids into education and getting a better-paying job. That's the whole trajectory of their life, so even Christians can be very discouraging towards their children going into ministry. For others, culturally, ministers are supposed to be poor."

Kazogolo agrees. "In some cultures ministry training is not valued as highly as other things. Some would rather see their son go into medicine than ministry. Having said that, we have got to start somewhere. We need to encourage people to test what ministry is all about; they need to experience the joys of ministry."

"You have to be realistic as well. There will be setbacks. The main thing is that this ministry is God's ministry and he will move it."

## WHAT IS IT LIKE TO PASTOR CROSS CULTURALLY?

THE REV DENIS OLIVER

Rector of Christ Church, Mortdale

I was born in Montevideo, Uruguay. When we moved to Australia we hung out with our Uruguayan enclave. The weekend was filled with Uruguayan barbecues – six-hour events where it all revolved around meals and talking.

Hospitality is important. The church is my home, and my home is open. I'm in the car park every Sunday welcoming people by name. You've got to welcome people, feed them lots and send them home with the leftovers. In hospitality, you want to err on the side of more.

I think foreigners will readily open their doors but Anglos won't, and that can affect integration at church. The classic line is "We're a friendly church". Everyone is friendly on Sunday, but there's no integration that moves people into a belonging situation. I'm surprised when people thank me for opening my home to our Bible study, because I don't think it's a big deal, it's a normal thing to do.

To build a bridge between any two cultures, you've got to build at both ends at the same time. You've got to exegete your own culture as well as the culture of the other person you're trying to serve. In getting to know a person, you've just got to be sensitive to that person. If anyone has to change their culture, the person in leadership has to be flexible. To meet people where they're at, you have to know where that is and where you are. Paul says it in Corinthians: he knows who he is and so do Greeks he was Greek and to Jews he was Jewish.

When our cultures meet, we form a new Christian culture, and then when someone new comes along we start the process again. So for me, my background is loud and passionate, and on a personal level I'll always pull back because

I want to adjust my culture to understand how best to talk to your culture.

We are all missionaries, and the key to being a missionary is understanding the culture you're going to and the culture you're coming from. Our responsibility is bringing the gospel into that.

THE REV GEORGE KAZOGOLO

Rector of St Barnabas, Westmead

I grew up in rural Tanzania, which is like a country town where everybody knows everybody. People tend to do their own things in the city, but with Asians and Europeans the family is the hub. When I lived in Melbourne, I became quick friends with the Italians and Greeks because I could fit in with what they were doing and it didn't cause me to blink.

When I arrived in Westmead in 1998, [the majority] of people were of Anglo descent. There were a few who were Indian, and we were the ethnic people. The congregation reflected the community at that time.

My colour has never made me feel bad, it's my identity and I'm comfortable. On my first day working as a minister at Albion Park, my wife was nervous about how the Scripture students would respond when this fellow from Africa walked in to teach. But the West Indies had just finished their tour in '93, and there was a famous batsman called Brian Lara, so when I walked in there was dead silence and one of the boys whispered, "That's Brian Lara!" I told him we were distant cousins.

Being of Brian Lara's origin has never distracted my mind. The focus is the gospel. I was taught if you're in a different environment to improvise, adapt and survive. It's an army type of thinking that applies to ministry. You're just going to have to see what works in a different situation, rather than what can't work.

## A MULTITUDE OF MINISTRY LEADERS

Lin believes that at the same time as encouraging multicultural people into ministry, our churches need to shift their thinking.

"We need to be priming churches to genuinely believe that someone from a non-English speaking background can lead them and teach them as well as an Anglo person can," he says.

"We're happy to have anyone from a non-English speaking background fix our teeth and do our accounts and give us vaccinations, but would we be happy to have them as our senior ministers, feeding our souls?"

He hopes the answer would be a resounding "Yes", but recognises many churches don't reflect this yet.

"Humanly speaking, having a diverse cultural ministry team would better reflect the demographics of Sydney. I think there's a visual there. When people see us, they realise we're not just a church for Anglo-Saxons. But you also get the expertise of people from different cultures, helping in the church and helping the church reach out.

"We're in a city that will be increasingly less Anglo, so I encourage ministers to actively identify and send people into ministry – people of all ethnicities."



# The great Australian virtue ~~virtue~~ vice

In the land of the tall poppy, how do we deal with the scourge of envy, asks **CHASE R. KUHN**.

**THE GREAT PRIDE OF AUSTRALIAN CULTURE IS ITS GREATEST CURSE: EGALITARIANISM.**

As an American living here for eight years, time and again I have marvelled at the wonderful blessing and curse of “cutting down the tall poppies”. In today’s society, the great Australian virtue of “equality” actually serves as a mask for the vice of envy. Seeing others have what we want is unbearable.

Of course, we justify our hostility towards those at the top with virtuous claims of attacking avarice. But could it be that our discontentment with our own status is driven by the very want we hate in others? Are we deeply unsatisfied with others achieving or having more, simply because we actually desire more for ourselves?

In the mid-20th century, English writer Dorothy Sayers shrewdly reflected:

“Envy... hates to see other men happy... Envy is the great leveller. If it cannot level things up, it will level them down; and the words constantly in its mouth are ‘my rights’ and ‘my wrongs’. At its best, envy is a climber and a snob; at its worst, it is a destroyer; rather than have anybody happier than itself, it will see us all miserable together.”

A surprising insight into this particularly (though not exclusively) Australian problem is the woeful politics of late: six prime ministers in eight years. Recent elections have now ensured that there is no ruling majority. Here is the lesson: we all want the top, but no one can stay there. No one can grow tall, not even the leaders we have voted for at the polls.

Australians (and I gladly include myself) need light shone on this blind spot. What has long been seen as the way of the land may actually be a cultural vice restricting both progress and happiness.

## OUR CULTURE PROBLEM

Let’s imagine for a moment that we Australians were open to a cultural corrective and we began to appreciate authority and authenticity, both of which I think could be summarised in the word “diversity”. By authority, I do not mean simple hierarchical structures, but rather the fact that someone may have a unique skill set that may position them to lead in an area. By authenticity I mean a genuine expression of uniqueness through personality and skills. So, categorically, by diversity I mean appreciating people for their unique contribution to society without requiring them to be like me or me like them.

Australia certainly prides itself in being “diverse” and “inclusive”, but I wonder how this really plays out. Democracy is a beautiful thing, giving voice to a range of opinions. One might look at the politics of Australia and simply retort that the turnover of prime ministers is a good demonstration of democracy in action! But what if this is actually an example of our culture’s deep dissatisfaction with anyone holding a place of leadership and influence? From day one Scott Morrison has had nothing but attacks brought against him.

But the moral of the story isn’t that we have a political problem – true as that may be. We have a cultural problem; in fact, a sin problem. We can baulk at the mess of our political system, but we must take care not to overlook the same problem in ourselves. We tear down people all around us who have what we want: our boss, our neighbour, our friends.

Christians specifically need to address this cultural trait head-on because while it may be deeply Australian, it is certainly un-Christian.

I remember when a reputable Christian preacher came to give an address at a church I was attending. Afterwards, when people were asked about how the sermons were, the first response was, “It was pretty good”. The next day the responses changed to be “It was okay, but...” A week after the event the responses became, “It was awful. He gets \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ all wrong.”

I find this pattern over and over again in Christian circles. In fact, too often the responses *begin* with “It was all wrong”.

Why do we look for faults and weaknesses in everyone? Why do we size people up and cut them down? (notice I am using “we” here, as I have participated in this culture in the past eight years!)

## REVERSE CORINTHIANS

I fear we cut people (and their work or ministries) down, because in doing so we show that we are equal or superior to them, their gifts, and their intellect. This is a terribly pessimistic attitude that looks for fault and weakness, rather than an optimistic attitude looking for truth and strength.

Here are two things at the heart of my concern for Christians in Australia who embrace the “cut-the-tall-poppies” culture:

- 1 It leads to **destruction rather than edification**. The culture is oriented towards deconstruction rather than construction. But this is antithetical to gospel fellowship. One of the primary purposes for church fellowship in the word is building one another up. Remember Paul’s charge to the Thessalonians: “encourage one another and build one another up” (1 Thess 5:11).
- 2 It leads to **joylessness rather than thankfulness and rejoicing**. When we always look for what is wrong, it is hard for us to appreciate what is right. If our orientation is towards discovering all that is bad, will we actually appreciate what is good? Remember Paul’s exhortation to the Romans: “Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good. Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honour” (12:9-10).

My fear is that we have a reverse problem to that of the Corinthians in the first century. They were infatuated with leaders, picking anyone impressive to place on a pedestal. They wanted to join the cult following of key leaders (1 Cor 1:12f). In doing this, they embraced a worldly flattery that identified superficial qualities to praise. They overlooked the “insignificant” members of the community.

So, Paul reminded them that Christian community is a sum of parts – a body – and that all members must be appreciated (1 Cor 12:21-31). “If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honoured, all rejoice together” (1 Cor 12:26).

But our problem is not the Corinthian problem. We don’t honour people too much (even the wrong people) – we simply don’t know how to honour anyone at all. We don’t know how to appreciate those that deserve respect, who hold authority, who lead and who possess different skills or qualities (or perhaps just better versions of these things) than us.

Why? We can claim culture, but I fear it is far deeper seated than that. We’re afraid of what appreciating someone else will mean for *me*. We praise equality in all things, but in that claim that we’re all equal we’re afraid of someone being better or higher than ourselves. In fact, I am not sure we really want equality; we want equality at the very least, but really, superiority. I actually want to be better than you. So, I find your faults and I cut you down.

The cutting down of the tallest members of our society is not that hard. To conquer “inequality” all we must do is expose faults and weaknesses. But deconstruction is much easier than construction, and cutting comments come easier than compliments. How will we move forward together, if the moment someone succeeds or gets ahead we cut them down to size?

## A TRUE FAIR GO

Egalitarianism is certainly virtuous when it fights for the appropriate rights of human beings (something I think we must get clearer on!). But egalitarianism, as a blanket “virtue”, can serve as nothing more than justification for our own envy.

What would Australia be like if we grew to appreciate people that are more skilled than we might be? What if we learned to better respect the voice, skills and place of others? What if we didn’t have a go, but instead we really tried to offer all a “fair go”?

Sayers, again, was wise to remark:

“It is well that the hypocrisies that breed like mushrooms in the shadow of great virtues should be discovered and removed, but envy is not the right instrument for that purpose, for it tears down the whole fabric to get at the parasitic growths. Its enemy, in fact, is the virtues themselves. Envy cannot bear to admire or respect; it cannot bear to be grateful. But it is very plausible; it always announces that it works in the name of truth and equity. Sometimes it may be a good thing to debunk envy a little.”

I fear that in the fight for “equality” today in so many sectors of our society – but especially in our churches(!) – we are cutting down (read: silencing, shunning, undermining) those of whom we are envious. The irony is that we want to be at the top, but in Australia once you get there you’ll only get cut down to size.

How distinctive would our churches be if we embraced the counter-cultural attitude of the gospel? Paul warns us, “For the whole law is fulfilled in one word: ‘You shall love your neighbour as yourself’. But if you bite and devour one another, watch out that you are not consumed by one another” (Gal 5:14-15).

The definitive example of servant-hearted love, of course, comes in Jesus Christ. Paul commands us to, “Do nothing from rivalry or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves” (Phil 2:3).

This command is given the example of Jesus “who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Phil 2:6-11).

It is because of Christ’s humility that we can truly appreciate one another. And it is because of his Spirit that we can resist the desires of the flesh that lead us to the sins of envy and conceit (Gal 5:16-26).



## Happy in the service

All smiles: the newly ordained ministers emerge from the Cathedral led by the Rev Peter Blair and the Rev Gerard O'Brien.

**THERE WERE TOO MANY SMILES TO COUNT AS THE ORDINANDS OF 2019 FILED INTO AN OVER-**flowing St Andrew's Cathedral to be made deacons by the Archbishop of Sydney. Extra chairs were put out for the crowd of family, friends and congregation members who came to the service on Saturday, February 16.

Archbishop Davies and all the Sydney bishops were in attendance as well as Dean Kanishka Raffel, Archdeacon Kara Hartley and Air Commodore Chaplain Kevin Russell. The 28 ordinands will go out to roles ranging from parish ministry to chaplaincy with Anglicare, Mission to Seafarers and the Defence Force.



Aged care chaplain the Rev Pip Russell (left) works with older people in the eastern suburbs and inner west who receive support from Anglicare At Home. She admitted she was initially daunted by the large ordination service.

"There are so many people involved in the process and the day," she said. "But as I reflect on it, that is as it should be – the work of ministry is a church-wide thing and there are many people who have influenced and shaped me as a Christian."

"It is humbling to stand before them and encouraging to be supported by them."

Tim Thambyrajah, who works as an assistant minister at St John's, Asquith, said his parish community had been supportive throughout the ordination journey.

"I'm so grateful to God and the community of his people that he has blessed me with," he said.

"It's exciting to be at a point of being ordained

and to reflect on the servant-hearted nature of so many others who have taught and led me over the years, and be able to continue in their work.

"Growing up in the Sydney Diocese, I am indebted to a rich history of biblically driven ministry, and it is a true privilege to be able to labour to that end."



The Rev Tim Thambyrajah with his wife Hollie and church members.



Photos everywhere: the Rev Un Hui Tay with relatives and friends, including his daughter, Phyllis (second from right).

For the Rev Un Hui Tay, ordination was "humbling and honouring", and he said after the service that it was "a sigh of relief on one hand and a new beginning on the other".

Mr Tay is involved in the Mandarin-speaking congregation at St Anne's Ryde, and has worked as chaplain with the Sydney Mission to Seafarers for the past 11 years.

"I will continue serving the Lord there, reaching out to seafarers from around the world with the love of Jesus and the gospel and caring for them with compassion," he said.

In his sermon, the Bishop of North Sydney, Chris Edwards, referred to Mark 10 and 2 Corinthians 12 in urging the candidates to serve in humility. "Jesus died for us on the cross – that's humility," he said. "That's the model for ministry."

The ordinands were then presented to the Archbishop and, after the making of vows, the Archbishop and bishops laid hands on each in turn.

Being presented to the congregation in a group, they were greeted with sustained applause and then, as their families and supporters were asked to stand, there was prayer for their future ministries.

Emerging into the bright sunshine of Sydney Square, hundreds milled around and jostled with mobile phones and cameras for photos.

The new Rev Tim Thambyrajah said, "It's been a joy. Throughout all the interviews, evaluations and reports, the process has been both encouraging and challenging, as God has worked to push me as his servant and equip me for his work."

That same joy overflowed throughout those at the Cathedral.



Ordinands and the Archbishop pose for the official photo on the steps of the Cathedral.



## 60 up for college ordinands

Diamond anniversary: (front row, from left) the Rev Hugh Scott, the Ven Alan Donohoo, the Rev Peter Ball, the Rev Reg Barker, the Rev Dr Ward Powers; (back row) the Rev Gordon Robinson, the Ven Dr Vic Roberts and the Rev Dr Ted Newing.

**TWO MONTHS BEFORE BILLY GRAHAM HELD THE FIRST OF HIS FAMOUS CRUSADES IN SYDNEY,** 19 fresh-faced fellows were ordained in St Andrew's Cathedral on February 22, 1959 by Bishop William Hilliard.

Last month eight of these men, along with their wives, were able to return to Moore College to celebrate their 60th anniversary with a special reunion. They lunched, toured the campus and celebrated communion together, with plenty of time to reminisce and hear about each other's work for the Lord.

"It was great fun! Absolutely great fun," said reunion organiser, the Ven Dr Vic Roberts. "Almost none of them had been back to the college to see the new complex – it was totally new to them, so it was a revelation."

"The college of 2019 is a very different college to 1959. The student body is larger, and the faculty is just so much larger – in number and also, frankly, in academic qualification. We were in the Cash Memorial Chapel for Holy Communion, but that's hardly ever used now, because it only holds about 70 people!"

Of the men ordained in 1959 three are now with the Lord, while a number of others were prevented from attending for health reasons. Not too surprising, given that the youngest of them is 84 years old.

Among their ordination group was the college's senior student for 1958, future bishop Donald Cameron; academic and prolific writer the Rev Dr Ward Powers; two archdeacons (Vic Roberts and Alan Donohoo), and numerous missionaries, chaplains, lecturers and servants in whatever place God put them.

Four others from their college year were ordained in the Armidale Diocese (including future bishops Peter Chiswell and Ray Smith); three were ordained in New Zealand and another two in Tanzania.

In their final year at college there were also four students from India, Japan and Tanzania: the Rev M.M. Thomas, the Rev Abraham Thomas, the Rev Timothy Yamamoto and the Rev Gresford Chitemo. These men, ordained in their home countries, were given bursaries by the college to study for one or two years, with expenses provided by the Church Missionary Society.

Of those able to attend on the reunion day, Dr Roberts said all shared about their ongoing ministries: "It was quite exciting, actually. The wives also shared, and they're all active in ministry and supporting their husbands. It was very encouraging, and the college was absolutely superb in its help for us."

He said he had also organised the group's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary get-together at Bishops Court, but after last month's effort told his fellows that he drew the line at attempting the 70<sup>th</sup>. By then, he joked, they'd all be in retirement homes – "or all together in glory!"



The 1959 ordination group outside the Cathedral with Bishop Hilliard.



# Family quirks

JUDY ADAMSON

**Sometimes Always Never**  
PG

WHEN THE ISSUE AT THE CORE OF A FILM IS LOSS, PAIN AND UNCERTAINTY, the viewer is often brought into that world through overwhelming sorrow or gripping tension. Yet *Sometimes Always Never* cleverly uses gentle humour and quirkiness, and it's completely able to draw you in.

From the outset a word and its dictionary definition pop up onscreen, so it's clear that language is important to the story. We don't know why, but as Alan Mellor (Bill Nighy) and his son Peter (Sam Riley) head off in a car for an unknown destination we gradually discover that Scrabble has always loomed large in their family. Words, and how they are used, are crucial – particularly to Alan.

We also don't know where they're going. Our attention is focused on discovering a little about them, and their relationship, through familiar bickering. Peter is clearly irritable, with a lifetime of memories to grumble about in addition to whatever lies ahead of them, while Alan seems calm and unperturbed.

As it happens, their trip is to identify whether a dead body is "our Michael" – Alan's eldest son, and Peter's brother – who walked out on them during a Scrabble game years before. They never saw him again. Father and son spend the night in a roadside hotel, where Alan discovers a married couple (Jenny Agutter and Tim McInnerny) are staying for precisely the same reason: a missing son. Does the dead man belong to him, or them, or neither?

After such a description, how could the action onscreen not be tragic? Thanks to the cleverness of the script and deft performances by the cast – particularly Nighy – it isn't in the least.

There are naturally some sharp moments of sorrow, but *Sometimes Always Never* is about life rather than death: everyday life with all its idiosyncrasies and mistakes, and how individuals cope with loss and change – whether it's externalised or kept hidden.

We see this played out after Alan turns up at Peter's door unexpectedly for an overnight stay that quickly becomes indefinite. What are they to do with him?

While on one hand we see the awkwardness of him sharing a bedroom with his gaming-obsessed grandson Jack, and taking over his computer to play online Scrabble, Alan also teaches Jack some life lessons, such as dressing to impress a girl he likes. But at the same time, cool and detached Alan is himself obsessing about a Scrabble player he's discovered online. He's certain it's Michael.

Love is at the core of the Mellor family, even if it's expressed in a way that can seem careless or exasperating. More than anything else, it's immediately recognisable: we've all had family members, if not whole families, like this. And everything is done with such a light touch that even when there's friction, it's frequently funny.

On a serious note, how would we respond if someone we love disappeared? Would our family fracture, as well as our own life? Would we trust in God to care for the missing and uphold us? Would we become bitter and withdrawn, and apportion blame? Or resentful of the one who has gone, as though we can't live up to the memory of who they were?

*Sometimes Always Never* shows that you can never be sure how you will respond to a crisis until it's happened. On the surface it's a very simple film, but it gently asks some pointed questions about love and family that are well worth considering.

Life can pull you apart, but love (particularly, as we know, God's love) can put us back together again. And in this tale of life and love, you can have a few good laughs as you go.

SC

## The problem with public virginity

KARA HARTLEY

REALITY TV ISN'T SOMETHING I PARTICULARLY ENJOY. THE ODD COOKING show, sure, but overall I find the programs are superficial, contrived and just, well, boring. Yet my attention's been caught recently by the online chatter about the current season of *Married at First Sight* (MAFS).

According to various blogs, articles and social media posts, scandals are rife and opinions are polarised on a number of the couples.

One contestant in particular that caught my attention was Matthew the virgin (right).

Let's be clear. MAFS – promoted as a family show in a family time slot – is an experiment, packaged in reality, for the sake of ratings, money and fame. Each couple, and each contestant/participant, has a "hook" or trait: something that will intrigue or appeal to (or appal) the viewer.

Matthew's hook is that he's a 29-year-old bloke who's still a virgin. The way he's portrayed early on in the show, as he prepares to "marry", is as someone who's vulnerable, shy and almost childlike.

Ultimately Matthew's hook is that he's missing the so-called normal adult experience of sex – as if by missing out he's not a fully developed adult man. Losing his virginity, in the minds of the viewer and other participants, will be the hallmark of whether his relationship with his "wife" is on track.

The Bible says the place for sex is within a marriage, between a man and a woman. This is best for us, and anything else is sin. The Bible is also clear that for those who don't marry, the chaste single life is the appropriate way for them to live (Genesis 2:24; Matthew 19; 1 Corinthians 7).

There is no sense in any of this – not even a hint – that the unmarried, chaste person is any less in their humanity than the married person. They are no less an adult. They are not naïve, inexperienced, or unable to have a full and contented life. Yet in the world according to MAFS, it seems you're defined as a complete person by whether or not you've had sex.

Let's not deny the double standard going on here. This isn't just about what it means to be human, but what it means to be a man! Real men are supposed to have sex.

I can't imagine the producers reversing the situation and making the woman the virgin. After all, a woman mustn't ever be forced to give up her virginity (and rightly so), yet it seems it's okay for a man to be forced (the pressure from contestants and audience alike makes it feel like this) into giving up his virginity. Although, going on the show Matthew must have realised this was the expectation.

It now turns out that Matthew and his "wife" Lauren have made the decision to leave the show, and each other, and the focus has shifted to the behaviour of other contestants cheating on their partners. Perhaps that time-worn ratings drawcard was more successful than the virgin storyline?

Overall, the emphasis on virginity – and the obsession with this couple – shows yet again the gulf between God's purposes for sex and marriage and what we see being played out in society. God's gift of sex, given for our good and for the good of one another, should not be what defines us.

In reality, it's not the 29-year-old virgin who needs to grow up. It's the rest of us.

SC

Kara Hartley is Archdeacon for Women's Ministry and normally watches Masterchef.



## Faith kick-off updated

LEE CARTER

**Just Starting Out: Seven letters to a new Christian**

by Al Stewart and Edward Vaughan  
Matthias Media

just  
starting  
out



SEVEN LETTERS TO  
A NEW CHRISTIAN  
Al Stewart • Edward Vaughan

SOME OLD THINGS ARE SO GOOD THEY'RE WORTH REVAMPING FOR A NEW GENERATION. And that's exactly the case with Matthias Media's 2019 publication, *Just Starting Out: Seven letters to a new Christian* – it's an "oldie but a goodie" that's been given a makeover to appeal to today's readers.

Essentially, *Just Starting Out* is a reissue and rebrand of original material written in 1992 under the title *Kicking Off*. It was one of several resources published by Matthias Media for use alongside its well-known *Just For Starters* Bible study course for new believers. It works equally well, however, as a stand-alone publication.

Besides having a new title, this 72-page book has an up-to-date design and the text has been decluttered, with some elements removed and suggested further reading added at the end of most chapters. Nonetheless, the aim remains the same – to communicate to new believers the basic things they need to know as they begin to follow Jesus.

So, how well does it translate into the 21<sup>st</sup> century? The seven numbered chapters are written as personal letters from a fictional mature believer, Michael, to an equally fictional new believer, Dave.

Each letter addresses a foundational part of the Christian life and helps the reader understand what being a Christian really means: what it means to be saved, to trust God, to live his way, listen to him, talk to him, meet with his people and share the good news of Jesus (the title of each letter corresponds to the seven Bible studies in *Just For Starters*).

As you might expect with a personal letter, Michael's style of writing is warm, with a conversational tone. And yet, this doesn't detract from the importance of the subject matter.

Here are two examples:

• *Sin is saying, "I want to be the boss of my life; God can stay out". Some people who try to be independent of God (i.e. sinners) appear like nice, charming, happy people. Some are anti-social thugs. But from God's point of view they are all telling him to get lost – and it's still sin either way* (p22).

• *The Bible is written to people like us. For example, the Roman culture that Paul lived in was just as sex-obsessed as ours. When Paul writes about immorality, he writes to people like us – same hormones, same desires* (p35).

There's no mistaking what Michael means, but his directness is tempered by the everyday images and language he uses. They're easy to relate to.

The layout for *Just Starting Out* is simple and neat, which suits its compact dimensions. It has clear chapter titles, bullet points and text boxes, and a good amount of white space. The cover design is contemporary, but through the clever use of colour it still plays nicely with the covers of previous editions in the *Just For Starters* stable of resources. All of these features make it easy to navigate and easy on the eye.

Thankfully, all references to 1990s technology in the original text have been updated (apparently, we were we still using cassettes back then!).

My only quibble is that Michael and Dave's names could have been "updated" too, to reflect the real changes in the popularity of names and the ethnic diversity of Western countries like Australia. It would have been a nice touch.

However, minor quibbles aside, *Just Starting Out* is an excellent resource to give to today's new believers and I heartily recommend it.

SC