

APRIL
2019

Southern CROSS

THE NEWS MAGAZINE FOR SYDNEY ANGLICANS

How did we get here?

CULTURAL MARXISM AND MODERN SOCIETY

PLUS

The challenges of cyberkids

Taking on reality TV, in faith

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**“It’s true. God really
does give you
the words to say.”**

Assumpta Venkatachalam
Culture

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God's love in a healing place

Care at the coalface: Emily Carpenter outside the Northern Beaches Hospital in Frenchs Forest.

JUDY ADAMSON

THE REV EMILY CARPENTER MEETS ME AT THE ENTRANCE TO THE NORTHERN BEACHES HOSPITAL with her guitar slung over her shoulder. It's not your average tool for an Anglicare chaplain, but it's a new hospital with different rules, so she's using all the skills she has to care for patients.

"I visit the paediatric ward and offer to play guitar for them," she says. "I bring some shakers and stickers and stamps in the hope that I can play some songs for them – and then maybe also play some Colin Buchanan songs as well."

"It's a tricky situation because you can't just walk in [and] the kids might be asleep. Also, I've only been confident with my under-5s songs so far. I need to learn some songs for older kids!"

The reason Mrs Carpenter says "so far" is that she only began in her role at the beginning of February. Not to mention that this brand-new hospital is also private.

"Chaplains generally get a list of patients to visit [from their denomination], but in this hospital I'm not allowed to walk around the wards and knock on doors," she says. "Visits are basically by referral, and there aren't a lot of referrals yet because we're new, so staff tend to forget that we're around."

"One of my main aims since I started has been to meet as many people as possible and get to know them. I've been making muffins for staff on all the different wards, and security... and have found this has opened up opportunities for us to talk. They're always really busy, so if I was to just go along and introduce myself it wouldn't be as effective. But when I bring a box of muffins it opens up their friendliness."

"When I was in the ICU, I had a doctor say to me, 'Why are you doing this?' I told him, 'I'm a hospital chaplain and I'm here to care for you guys and the patients' – to let them know we're here for them as well. Because a lot of the time staff just assume you're only there for the patients."

While visits generally require a referral, Mrs Carpenter has been given an open invitation from staff in the mental health ward to come in and spend time with their patients. She goes in regularly for conversation, prayer and music sessions, and while only a handful of patients link up with her, feedback has already included that her presence has "uplifted me for the day".

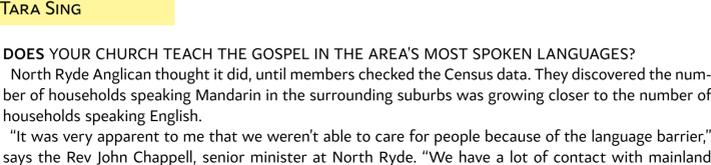
"Things like that are wonderful to hear," she says.

The manager of health and justice chaplains at Anglicare, the Rev Stephen Gibson, says Mrs Carpenter's position "is our first foray into having a full-time chaplain in a private hospital... we pray it might be the first of many. It's a wonderful example of what is now possible through Anglicare in partnership with local parishes."

Mrs Carpenter has sought to contact all the local Anglican clergy to let them know she is available to visit congregation members in the NBH, and to ask them to support her financially or through prayer.

"I'd love people to pray for me as I meet staff – that I can get to know them and they will remember to refer me to their patients," she says. "Pray for the chaplaincy and pastoral care team we're trying to build here, that we'll be able to have volunteers join the team as soon as it's appropriate and that there will be open doors to share the love and joy found in Christ."

"There are a lot of people who are hurting and wanting to chat. People go through hard things in hospital, have many worries and anxieties, and to be able to bring Jesus and hope and just a listening ear is very valuable."



Does your church speak the local language?

North Ryde reaches out to Mandarin speakers during Lunar New Year celebrations.

TARA SING

DOES YOUR CHURCH TEACH THE GOSPEL IN THE AREA'S MOST SPOKEN LANGUAGES?

North Ryde Anglican thought it did, until members checked the Census data. They discovered the number of households speaking Mandarin in the surrounding suburbs was growing closer to the number of households speaking English.

"It was very apparent to me that we weren't able to care for people because of the language barrier," says the Rev John Chappell, senior minister at North Ryde. "We have a lot of contact with mainland Chinese people through our preschool, our local schools and our English as a Second Language ministry. As we reflected on these contacts, we wanted to encourage people to meet Jesus and know him."

North Ryde recruited two Mandarin-speaking pastors and launched its first Mandarin service at the start of this year.

Pastors Simon Pei and Michael Yip have previously worked in Mandarin-speaking congregations, and believe helping people understand the gospel in their own language is vital. They emphasise the importance of letting people know that they don't have to be a believer in order to come along.

"We want to let them know about Jesus, but at the same time we are showing this church is open and keen to serve the community," Mr Pei says.

"People can see they are all welcome to join us, so they come because they can meet new friends. Many [local Mandarin speakers] are elderly people or retired and would like to take the chance to make friends."

Mr Yip agrees, noting that many people who come from mainland China to North Ryde are here to care for grandchildren while parents work. "This is an opportunity to spread the gospel to those who have no opportunity to know it," he says.

The men believe in doing what helps people learn best and serve together. While Bible teaching is divided by language, Sunday school and morning tea are combined.

"We have the Mandarin and English service at the same time so that the children can join together," Mr Yip says. "This is a multicultural church. We understand there will be a language barrier for the first generation, which is why we must have a Mandarin service. But we want to integrate the second generation regardless of race."

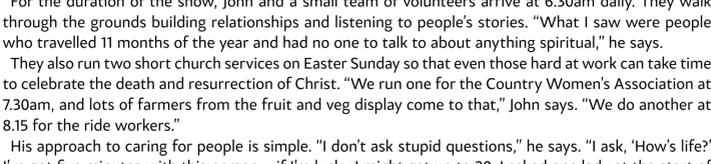
Adds Mr Chappell: "We don't want the Mandarin service to be a cultural gathering, in the same way we don't want our English service to be a cultural Anglo gathering. We want to be culturally Christian. We want to move from being an Anglo-centric church to a multicultural church that reflects the area."

Since launching its new service the parish has held a Lunar New Year celebration, with all services joining in dumpling making and feasting with Mandarin-speaking families from the area.

The team is praying God will use its efforts to serve many Mandarin speakers.

"We want to see them come to Christ," Mr Chappell says. "We are meeting people who are coming off a plane and coming to ESL class the next day! My prayer is that they'll come on the next Sunday to church."

Mr Yip adds: "Pray for our faithfulness in service, and that God will bless us so that his word will reach every corner of the North Ryde parish."



Hope beyond this world at Easter Show

WHEN YOU'RE ENJOYING THE RIDES, THE ANIMALS AND THE FESTIVITIES OF THE EASTER SHOW, do you give much thought to the people behind the scenes?

John, the missions pastor at Church@thePeak in Peakhurst, has been caring for those who make up the backbone of the Sydney Royal Easter Show since 2015, running church services, praying and chatting. He says it is a privilege to get to know the sacrificial men and women who make it possible for us to enjoy the annual fairy floss and farmyard fun.

"One of the big things you notice is that these are hardworking people who give their lives so other people can have enjoyment," he says. "It's really unique. They choose to travel around Australia, have hassles, struggle to pay debt, so they can be at the Easter Show for two weeks so families can come and enjoy themselves."

"A common theme among showmen and women is their deep compassion for those with disabilities. They handle them with care; they are so gentle. I'm constantly struck by the self-sacrifice of this community, share that with them, and try to relate Christ to them because he was the same."

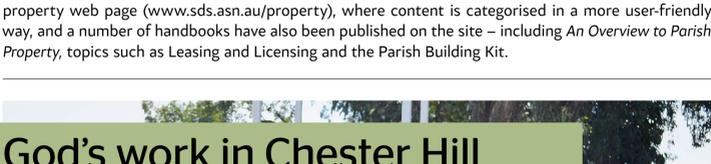
For the duration of the show, John and a small team of volunteers arrive at 6.30am daily. They walk through the grounds building relationships and listening to people's stories. "What I saw were people who travelled 11 months of the year and had no one to talk to about anything spiritual," he says.

They also run two short church services on Easter Sunday so that even those hard at work can take time to celebrate the death and resurrection of Christ. "We run one for the Country Women's Association at 7.30am, and lots of farmers from the fruit and veg display come to that," John says. "We do another at 8.15 for the ride workers."

His approach to caring for people is simple. "I don't ask stupid questions," he says. "I ask, 'How's life? I've got five minutes with this person – if I'm lucky I might get up to 20. I asked one lady at the start of last year, 'How was your month off?' and she said, 'I couldn't wait to get back on the road'. Her life is hard and her month off is a nightmare. What kind of hope is that for her life?"

"There is joy in sharing that there is hope beyond this world and Christ is a king who loves her and knows her suffering. There are lots of these conversations. These are now friends I care about, so for the rest of the year I pray regularly for them."

"Please pray that the showmen and women would see through the chaplaincy and Easter services that God loves them so much he sent his one and only Son to die for them so they might have eternal life."



Slightly Different Style with name

A ROSE BY ANY OTHER NAME MIGHT SMELL AS sweet, Shakespeare wrote, but names can also cause confusion. So, as the board of the Sydney Diocesan Secretariat (SDS) sat down to review the organisation, which provides administrative and property services to the Diocese, it decided a new name was needed to better reflect its mission.

The board decided on Sydney Diocesan Services, which had been suggested as early as 2011 by the Archbishop's Strategic Commission.

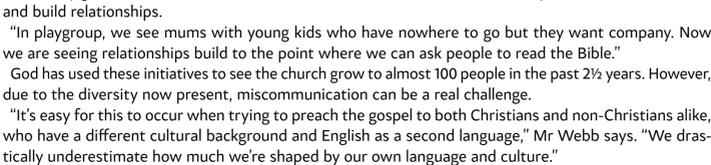
"There are a number of reasons for making this change," says SDS CEO Robert Wicks (right). "The principal reason is that the word 'Secretariat' is no longer in common use, and therefore ceased some time ago to be a meaningful description of SDS as a service organisation. So, while the change to our name is small, I believe it is significant – particularly for those unfamiliar with SDS and what we do."

The name change is underpinned by the new SDS vision statement, Enhancing Capacity for Mission.

"Although SDS is not at the frontline of mission, we are well placed to support those in the Diocese who are through the delivery of professional services," Mr Wicks said. "Enhancing the capacity for mission of those we serve will be the focus and guiding principle for all that we do and, particularly, for the way we relate to parishes."

"A side benefit of choosing this name rather than other alternatives is that we can keep the acronym 'SDS' and associated branding!"

The SDS website – sds.asn.au – has also been overhauled with simplified navigation. There is a parish property web page (www.sds.asn.au/property), where content is categorised in a more user-friendly way, and a number of handbooks have also been published on the site – including An Overview to Parish Property, topics such as Leasing and Licensing and the Parish Building Kit.



God's work in Chester Hill

Sharing Jesus in community: members of the church at Chester Hill.

VERITY STEAD

GOD HAS BEEN BUSY AT CHESTER HILL. SINCE 2016, THE CONGREGATION HAS GROWN AND the gospel message is bearing fruit. Rector the Rev Paul Webb believes this is God's kindness and the "heart for multicultural ministry" of church members, which fuels their evangelism.

"We always had the vision of growing something here and then, under God, trying to figure out how to reach different cultures," Mr Webb says.

Chester Hill is meeting community needs, creating strong ties between church and neighbours through initiatives such as homework club, playgroup, and helping new migrants and refugees learn to drive.

"Family is a real felt need," Mr Webb says. "There are lots of broken families and social problems. People are not sure how to help kids at school and how to entertain their kids. Homework club has been really great for that. Parents send their kids to homework club and we help them, have a Bible time and build relationships."

"In playgroup, we see mums with young kids who have nowhere to go but they want company. Now we are seeing relationships build to the point where we can ask people to read the Bible."

God has used these initiatives to see the church grow to almost 100 people in the past 2½ years. However, due to the diversity now present, miscommunication can be a real challenge.

"It's easy for this to occur when trying to preach the gospel to both Christians and non-Christians alike, who have a different cultural background and English as a second language," Mr Webb says. "We drastically underestimate how much we're shaped by our own language and culture."

To help overcome this hurdle, the church hopes to create "monocultural disciple-making communities" within its multicultural gathering.

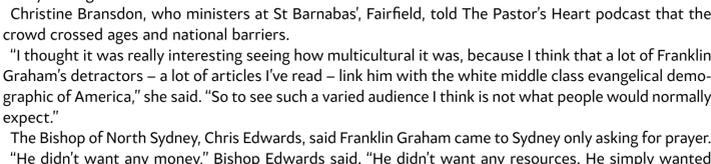
While operating as one church made up of many nations is crucial, Mr Webb recognises that learning in their native language can really help deepen a person's understanding of the gospel.

He says the Arab-speaking community will comprehend the gospel more clearly from someone who can "understand [and communicate] the word of God best in their language, and be equipped to take it to their community."

Despite challenges, Mr Webb is constantly encouraged by the dedication and sacrifice of his church members.

"One family bought a house just to minister here, people are willing to come to a church and hang out with people they don't understand, and a couple of people have given up work to spend time serving here – taking massive pay cuts to do it," he says.

"These are just examples of how much people want to see the gospel go out into the suburb. They love Jesus, see the need and are willing to count the cost in ways I've never seen before."



Not your father's crusade - texting for Jesus on the Graham Tour

Ready to hear: the crowd at the ICC in Sydney listen as Franklin Graham shares the gospel.

AUSTRALIAN CHURCHES HAVE BEGUN FOLLOWING UP MORE THAN 4000 PEOPLE WHO WENT forward at the Franklin Graham tour around the country in February, including hundreds who confirmed their decision via text message.

The visit of Franklin Graham came on the 60th anniversary of his father Billy's famous 1959 Crusade, which changed the landscape of Christianity in Australia.

The 2019 tour took in Perth, Darwin, Melbourne, Brisbane, Adelaide and Sydney in just over two weeks, with a total of almost 60,000 people attending.

Although the numbers were well short of 1959, Graham Jr came to a vastly different Australia with, at times, a different approach. The central message of sin, repentance and hope through Jesus was the same but this event was live-streamed on the internet, where another 30,000 people watched in 114 countries.

More than 1600 of those joining in cyberspace indicated decisions for Christ either online or via text. And, at the events themselves, more than 4000 people made decisions for Christ.

The 15,000-strong crowd in Sydney heard Graham warn, "We all have a soul. We all have a spirit that lives inside of us; some of you here tonight are in danger of losing your soul".

He preached on the story of King Belshazzar of Babylon, who was warned by the prophet Daniel that he needed to humble himself before God.

"We're guilty of everything that Belshazzar did," Graham said. "We're all guilty. All of us are sinners."

A team of more than 12,000 people were trained to disciple others through the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association's Christian Life and Witness class.

One prayer volunteer, John Fitzpatrick from Kiama on the South Coast, attended Billy Graham's crusade in 1979 as a new Christian. He described the latest tour as a "big blessing", which had been a "great catalyst for growth".

Christine Branson, who ministers at St Barnabas, Fairfield, told The Pastor's Heart podcast that the crowd crossed ages and national barriers.

"I thought it was really interesting seeing how multicultural it was, because I think that a lot of Franklin Graham's detractors – a lot of articles I've read – link him with the white middle class evangelical demographic of America," she said. "So to see such a varied audience I think is not what people would normally expect."

The Bishop of North Sydney, Chris Edwards, said Franklin Graham came to Sydney only asking for prayer. "He didn't want any money," Bishop Edwards said. "He didn't want any resources. He simply wanted the friends he made in the past to pray for a celebration that would mark the 60th anniversary of his father's remarkable 1959 evangelistic campaign... that saw a revival break out across Australia. And he wanted to celebrate the anniversary of all that by proclaiming the same gospel to a new generation."

Bishop Edwards noted that the program was shorter than 60 years ago. "The music was louder than in 1959 – and that's an understatement! – but the gospel was proclaimed just as clearly," he said. "I had the privilege of meeting with Franklin in person. He is a warm and humble man who genuinely wants people to know Christ."

"I know I could never get 60,000 people to listen to me! He did. Praise God for his capacity and generosity."



Love and aid in “worst” drought

Lifeline: Darryl and his dog supervise the unloading of hay, purchased with Anglican Aid funds, on his property near Mullaley in the Armidale Diocese.

ANGLICAN AID HAS BEEN PUMPING OUT DESPERATELY NEEDED FUNDS TO STRUGGLING FAMILIES and communities, with more than \$475,000 raised so far through its drought appeal from organisations and individuals across the country.

“It’s fascinating where the money has come from – churches, schools, organisations and generous individuals,” says Anglican Aid’s operations manager, Eddie Ozols.

“We’ve had lots of donations come in from churches we don’t know – a little church in Patchewollock sent a couple of hundred dollars from their own congregation, then a group in the town ran a music event and sent us \$800.

“We’ve also received money from Reformed Churches of Australia in Western Australia, Tasmania and Queensland – they wrote to all their churches saying, ‘We’re encouraging you that if you want to donate to the drought, donate to the Archbishop of Sydney’s Anglican Aid’.

“I asked why they had chosen to do that, and they said people could give money to secular organisations but with Anglican Aid, ‘you know the gospel will go with the dollars.’”

The money has been used to pay for a vast array of practical needs: groceries, hay, water, fuel, medical expenses, rent, farming equipment, school uniforms and more.

And the stories behind these needs are heart-wrenching. The Ven Grahame Yager has been co-ordinating the distribution of aid for the Diocese of Bathurst. He describes what he has seen on properties over the past 12 months as “the worst situation I have experienced” in 25 years of living in western NSW.

“In some situations I have been told, ‘There are people worse off than me’ only to find, after accepting the offer of a cuppa, that the fridge is all but empty and, in some cases, the hot water has been turned off to save money,” Archdeacon Yager says.

“Once a breakthrough is made there are always tears... It is impossible to express the difference organisations such as Anglican Aid are making in the lives of people, families and communities at this most challenging time.”

Anglican Aid was also able to fund an urgent trip to Sydney for surgery for a Gilgandra farmer, and Mr Ozols alerted a chaplain at the hospital to his arrival so he could be visited.

“It was nice to complete the circle by asking the gentleman if he would like a chaplain visit and be able to organise that through Anglicare,” he says.

David and Tanya Willoughby, whose farm is outside Manilla in the Armidale Diocese, wrote of their thanks that others had recognised the relentless “physical, mental, relational and financial” hardships faced by those in drought-affected communities:

“We would like to thank the family or families that granted this generous gift,” they wrote.

“We work day to day with confronting conditions, which become overwhelming. At the same time we were overwhelmed to receive financial support – we did not know how to accept such a gift. We do acknowledge this gift as a provision from our gracious Lord.”

Regional partners are assessing the needs and distributing the aid. To date about half of the money raised has been distributed throughout the Armidale and Bathurst dioceses, although support is sent where it’s needed and asked for – which has seen funds sent as far afield as Victoria and Queensland.

“Anglican Aid has been overwhelmed by the generosity of God’s people across Australia,” Mr Ozols says. “There has been no meaningful rainfall in the drought-stricken areas since the appeal commenced in September 2018, so ongoing support will be needed.

“It has been great to get to know regional Anglican churches, some struggling themselves, displaying generosity and bringing hope – not just with money but pastoral hearts of care and love.

“This is the church fulfilling Jesus’ words in Matthew 25: supporting those in need.”

To donate, see <https://anglicanaid.org.au/nsw-drought-relief-appeal> or phone 02 9284 1406.

MULTICULTURAL MINISTRY 3

Why should we care about multicultural ministry?

BISHOP PETER LIN BELIEVES THAT MULTICULTURAL ministry should be on the mind of every church.

“What it looks like out there is not what it looks like in our churches on the whole,” he says. “Our churches do not reflect our community profile ethnically. How many of us can say that our churches genuinely reflect the community we live in? How many of our churches are predominantly one culture, with maybe a handful of people from others?”

With competing priorities in church and life, and many good ways to serve, why should we care about multicultural ministry? Because God cares.

Bishop Lin (right) says the theme of all nations coming to worship God is woven throughout Scripture, from creation to revelation. Here are some of his key passages demonstrating God’s heart for all lands and languages.



Genesis 11-12

“Here we see when the nations were formed. Part of the punishment for trying to build the tower of Babel and reach God was to ‘confuse’ their language and disperse them over the face of the earth. But it was always God’s intention to bring them back together. The promises to Abraham end with him being a blessing to all nations. God’s view from the start is in the very fabric of his promises.”

Isaiah 2

“The vision that God gives Isaiah here is ultimately about the nations streaming to the mountain of the Lord. It’s an eschatological view of all the nations coming to God. This idea is never absent from the Old Testament, and it ultimately points to the gospel.”

Matthew 28

“Jesus says to make disciples of all nations. We come into the New Covenant territory in Matthew, and again the idea that the gospel is for all nations is reiterated by Jesus. This command is not just for the disciples, because the disciples could never reach all nations on their own. The command is for God’s church and God’s people to recognise and reach all the nations.”

Revelation 7

“This is a picture of the future. All the nations are gathered around the throne, before the Lamb, and they remain culturally distinct – all tribes, peoples and languages. But they all wear the same thing, the white robes, and they all say the same thing, ‘Salvation belongs to our God and to the Lamb’. That shows all people from all nations are saved in the same way, by God and through the Lord Jesus.”

God’s view shapes our views

“God’s view of his people is not monocultural – it’s all nations, tribes and languages,” Bishop Lin says.

“Therefore we care about multicultural ministry because God cares. God wants all the nations to come to him. In Australia, we don’t even necessarily have to go overseas to reach people from all nations, God has already brought them here. We are without excuse or reason for not reaching the nations.”



Islands and inland seas in southern Africa floods

The aftermath of Cyclone Idai in Mozambique. PHOTO: WFP

“AN ENTIRE COMMUNITY WAS SUBMERGED WHEN PEOPLE WOKE UP ON SATURDAY MORNING. Many have been left homeless and numerous others have either been confirmed dead or are still missing.” This was the urgent call to Anglican Aid from Tawanda Masango, newly returned to Zimbabwe from Sydney.

Mr Masango and his wife Shupi endeared themselves to many in Sydney while studying at Moore College, and have only been home in Zimbabwe a matter of months.

Their country, as well as neighbouring Mozambique and Malawi, were hit by Cyclone Idai last month. The cyclone swept over the city of Beira on Mozambique’s coast, placing about 90 per cent of that area underwater and turning formerly dry and desolate areas into islands in the midst of inland seas.

In eastern Zimbabwe, only a few hundred kilometres away, areas such as the beautiful Rusitu Valley are severely damaged and isolated.

Mr Masango and his colleagues Antony Dandato and Robinson Gezimati are working in university ministry and the Honeyworld beekeeping enterprise in Zimbabwe. They have links with, and support from, Anglican Aid, AFES, CMS and Sydney parishes such as Maroubra, Wild Street, Church by the Bridge, St Ives and Norwest. Their families live in the Rusitu Valley.

“Rusitu is well known for its juicy fruits but many of the crops, trees [and] vast fields of maize have been destroyed, leaving many without food and the situation will only get worse with time,” they wrote in an emergency bulletin. “Some have claimed that Idai might be Southern Hemisphere’s worst disaster... and that may not be far from the truth.

“Faced with this, our stomachs churn as we struggle to come to terms with such devastating loss of lives and destruction of property. The rains which we normally pray for have come to us in monster form, leaving us mourning and struggling to see any hope for the future.”

Anglican Aid has committed an immediate \$10,000 in funding for flood victims in Eastern Zimbabwe.

The Rev Shadreck Kwagwanji from the Diocese of Niassa in Mozambique said, “Words can hardly be found to express the degree with which heavy rains have affected communities in Mozambique, Malawi and Zimbabwe, with current reports indicating at least 600,000 people affected and more than 1000 [dead].

“There has been loss of lives and severe damage done to schools, hospitals, health facilities, churches, farms and other key infrastructure.”

One news report spoke of mothers clinging to trees, throwing their babies onto rescue boats. Elsewhere people have been plucked from head-deep water, only to be stranded on islands of land that are partly submerged.

To donate to Anglican Aid’s appeal see <https://anglicanaid.org.au/cyclone-idai-appeal>

SRE ENCOURAGEMENT

Your inspirational story "The unsung heroes of SRE" (SC, March) was brilliant. I know Joan Hawkins (56 years SRE) – she is an inspiration to me.

Scripture is a frontline ministry. A lot of children who attend Scripture do not or cannot go to a church. To these children Scripture is their church. The need for more Scripture teachers is so important.

This is my 31st year of SRE and I love it.

Dave Vincent
Bidwill



Letters should be less than 200 words.

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ESSAY

The ministry of morning tea

MARGARET KAY

I'VE BEEN THINKING ABOUT THE GENTLE SUGGESTIONS PUT FORWARD IN YOUR STORY, "WHAT your morning tea says about your multicultural ministry" (SC, December). I agree with all of them, but with regard to the amount of morning tea churches provide – and its multicultural appeal – I would like to add the following points for people to consider.

1 If your morning tea table looks a little empty, it may well be the object of depredation by a horde of (human) locusts. It would be excellent if biscuits could be placed on a table for all to share without fear that every one of them will be eaten by some of the Sunday school children before the adults get a chance to have one.

Some of the children appear to know that eating everything without sharing it is not right. Others don't. Perhaps some have known tremendous need in the past, where you learn to grab first or miss out, and their parents don't seem to realise that this behaviour is no longer appropriate.

2 Your morning tea may have been provided by an elderly parishioner of Anglo-Saxon background. The plates are generously piled high with biscuits, and the biscuits are "fancy" ones – saved for best occasions. To older people who struggled to get any biscuits at all during the hard times and rationing of war and depression, chocolate and iced biscuits are the height of luxury. Their abundance probably cost the pensioners concerned their morning tea allowance for at least a week.

3 Is it possible your church has not considered this area as an invaluable means of service and evangelism? The tea table is a means of service – both immediately, in feeding those you may not know are in need, and for the future, in helping identify an area of need for future service. The tea table is an area of service because it should allow meaningful conversations to develop, where physical, emotional and spiritual needs can be identified, as well as avenues of service and evangelism.

4 Perhaps those providing morning tea have been doing so for the past 40 or 50 years, and no one else has considered it an area of service. This may mean you have a very static church population in an area of low population growth – so the table truly represents your community situation – or it may mean that no one else has ever thought to see this as an area of ministry.

If it's the former, then pray! Pray a parishioner, your pastor or your bishop can see the great need of this remnant of God's people and do something about it.

Becoming a sister church to one growing in numbers, in income, and younger in congregational age might help. Exchange visits could allow the larger, younger church to serve the smaller, older one – to help it maintain its property and identity as a beacon of hope in its own community. A week-long "holiday" visit from 20-40 lively teen- to middle-aged church members would have a huge evangelical and economic impact.

This could be vital in a place where declining attendance may reflect a range of issues – atheism, indifference or a growing population of other faiths. Strengthening the hands that remain is vital for the ministry of the whole church: as St Paul says, "if one part suffers, the whole body suffers".

If no one has considered this a ministry, then pray and act! Ask the Spirit to show you what your community is like, what it values, what it needs. Church members might be able to provide services: childminding or a kindergarten could be hosted on church premises; ESL classes could be sponsored, or an employment counsellor encouraged to establish an office. If needs are for the aged, then a daily meeting for craft, woodwork or entertainment organised around a nutritious meal might appeal, or organised trips to the library for those without transport.

For anyone and everyone you could have speakers on various topics, an occasional concert or a regular film.

5 Finally,

- Look at your morning tea table, think about it and pray about it.
- Look at what service it provides, and what it doesn't provide but should. For example, would a simple midday meal be more appropriate? Is an Anglo-centric menu going to be attractive to your wider community, to older and less mobile people or parents with young children?
- Thank God for what you have, but ask if you could or should have more, or have something different. Gathering together around a shared table must be very important – after all, it is the last thing Jesus did with his disciples, apart from
- Pray.

I hope every member of every congregation thinks about this issue, prays about it and acts on it. For Jesus' sake.



MANSFIELD HANGS UP HIS SPURS

He's criss-crossed the country – and the globe – during his ministry, but in August the **Rev David Mansfield** will retire as CEO of the Archbishop of Sydney's Anglican Aid.

He has grown the job to include opportunities for fundraising and growing the organisation's profile, with challenges as varied as throwing himself into surfing 100 beaches in 10 days (right), and reading the whole Bible in one month in parishes across the Diocese.

"I have been to some memorable places," he adds. "I've been among South Sudanese refugees in the south west of Ethiopia living in the most trying conditions, among very special friends in the red light district of Johannesburg, and enjoying the hospitality of very generous subsistence farmers in the eastern highlands of Zimbabwe, staying in a farm hut with the pit toilet 30 metres from the hut... just three of a lifetime of memories."

Not surprisingly, his immediate thought for what retirement might look like is "Slow mornings, slow coffee, slow quiet times. The rest of the day will look after itself".

Mr Mansfield was ordained in 1978, serving for two years as a curate in West Pilbara before moving to Miranda for another curacy, then on to two rectorships at Fairy Meadow and Kiama.

He spent 1993-2004 as director of the then Department of Evangelism, and the next five as rector of Church Hill in the CBD. In mid-2009 he moved to head up the then Archbishop's Appeals Unit – the name updated to Anglican Aid a year later.

When asked, standout memories, both wonderful and sad, from the past 41 years come tumbling out.

"In my first parish as an assistant in a mining town in North West Australia I nearly set the community hall on fire when I lit the candles on the advent wreath," he says. "Till that morning I had never heard of advent candles and wreaths!

"At Kiama I held a man while he identified seven family members, laid out in the cool room of the fish co-op at the harbour, who had all drowned when swept off the rocks near the blowhole. No amount of training prepares one for that.

"[And my wife] Helen and I counted it an incredible privilege to live in the St Philip's, York Street flat and serve up to five homeless people who slept outside our door each night."

The awareness of Anglican Aid's work has grown tremendously under Mr Mansfield's leadership. In the five years alone from 2013 to 2018 the number of its projects grew from 42 to 122. He regards this entirely as God's grace, but the increased national profile has been intentional – as well as recognising supporters are "key stakeholders who have passions and interests of their own... so asking them what to partner with rather than just telling them what they should support".

Mr Mansfield's greatest pleasure has been to support Bible and leadership training, work with the organisation's "wonderful team" and "remind people that gospel defence and proclamation is primary and doing good is the expected fruit of that prime and prior work". Finally, he says, it has been a tremendous joy "meeting brothers and sisters in Christ in our partner countries who are serving their communities in remarkable ways in the name of the Lord Jesus".



TERREY HILLS TAKES NEXT STEP

The **Rev Scott Tarrant** became rector of the new provisional parish of St Paul's, Terrey Hills on January 1.

This didn't involve a move, as Mr Tarrant had been senior assistant minister at St Ives with full-time responsibility for Terrey Hills since the beginning of last year.

However, he says, "Six months in, the local leadership said, 'Look, this is what we want to do', and that began a conversation with Andrew Graham [the rector of St Ives] and Bishop Chris Edwards. And we came to the common mind that it was the right time for St Paul's to become its own parish... it's a really positive momentum that has led us to this."

Terrey Hills ministry began in 1940, when Miss Charis Young started a Sunday school in a local park. In 1954, Canon D.J. Knox preached at the first open-air Sunday service. The growing community was linked to St Ives in 1964, with the church completed the following year.

"Obviously the people here are really excited to now be an independent parish," Mr Tarrant says. "Very little has changed in terms of what our mission is... the importance of small groups, children, youth and seniors... but the provisional parish status has just raised the responsibility that it's on us. It always has been, but now even more so.

"So, we're getting on with it! Seeking to serve the Lord and serve our community and praying for God's ongoing blessing on our church.

"Members are very optimistic about the future and for good reason – it's a very healthy, functioning church, it's well taught, it's united in the gospel, it's very warm and caring of each other, but welcoming and outward looking as well. It's a really lovely church to be minister of."



WEBB TO ANGLICARE

After 11 years as rector of the parish of Denham Court, the **Rev Nigel Webb** moved to Anglicare aged care on February 4.

"Two of the guys in my retreat group have come out of parish work and gone into Anglicare chaplaincy," he says. "As they talked about what they were doing in Anglicare, that opened up a world I had previously been ignorant of – and it sounded interesting. It also sounded like it would suit the gifts and experience God has given me."

Mr Webb is chaplain of residential aged care at Woodberry Village in Winston Hills and says Denham Court prepared him well.

"Some encouraging older Christian at Denham Court really blessed our family and myself," he says. "You look at them and think, 'Gee, I can't wait to be like them'. Society sees wrinkles and wheelchairs and walkers and so on, but you spend time with them as a Christian and you see these people have been changed to be more like Christ. They're terrific."

It was hard to leave such people behind but Mr Webb is enthusiastic about his new ministry. "It's just great to be able to talk with people about the Bible and pray with those who have come to a stage where the things that distract us in life, they realise aren't that important.

"Many of them are concentrated on the significant things in life – death, mortality, God and their own relationship with him. So, they're not worried about, 'Will I get through the traffic?', 'Do I need a bigger mortgage?' – all the things that distract us for decades."

Mr Webb adds his wife Janene is "still keeping up with people" in the parish but is also "rethinking how I serve God now" in their changed ministry situation.

Celebrate the God of miracles



DR GLENN DAVIES

DO YOU BELIEVE IN MIRACLES? WELL, YOUR ANSWER MIGHT DEPEND UPON your definition of a miracle, or it might depend upon whether you think I am asking if miracles occur today or only in the past. However, it is a good question to ask your friend or neighbour: "Do you believe in miracles?"

By miracle, most people mean an extraordinary event, verified by observation but unable to be explained by modern science. The eighteenth century Scottish philosopher, David Hume, famously stated:

A miracle is a violation of the law of nature; and as a firm and unalterable experience has established these laws, the proof against a miracle, from the very nature of the fact, is as entire as any argument from experience can be imagined.

Like the lecturer in Philosophy that I once debated at the University of New England many years ago – who merely parroted Hume's thesis – the same misguided thinking is alive and well in our universities today. Such thinking, of course, is a classic example of human autonomy and, frankly, arrogance.

Firstly, Hume's definition of miracles and hence his argument against their existence is circular. His "law of nature", for example, is grounded in the experience of what we observe, which he claims to be "firm and unalterable".

In other words, since experience has established these laws, ruling out miracles by definition, that is therefore the "proof" against their existence – as secure as our experience of never having witnessed a miracle!

Human experience, therefore, is the arbiter of truth and forms the "cogent" argument that miracles do not exist. Indeed, as Hume says in the same essay:

No testimony is sufficient to establish a miracle unless the testimony be of such a kind that its falsehood would be more miraculous than the fact that it endeavours to establish.

How different this is from the testimony of Holy Scripture. The Bible clearly portrays the revelatory nature of miraculous events during the three great epochs of God's extraordinary events: in the days of Moses, Elijah/Elisha and Jesus and his Apostles. Moreover, as we read about these miracles, we see not just wonder and surprise in the unexpected but a revelation of God's glory, power and redemption. They are not just "wonder works" for the purpose of effect, but aspects of God's revelation.

For this reason, the Apostle John describes Jesus' miracles as signs – pointing to the reality of who Jesus is and what he came to achieve, a revelation of his glory (John 2:11). John recounts seven miracle signs in his Gospel, culminating in the resurrection.

Moreover, the resurrected Jesus was not seen by merely a few individuals, but by more than 500 people (1 Corinthians 15:6).

God's authority over all creation is the solid ground upon which miracles rest. Just as his creative power made the sun, so his powerful hand can stop it in its tracks (Joshua 10:12-14; Isaiah 38:7-8). Indeed, in the new heavens and the new earth there shall be no need of sun or moon, for the glory of the Lord will be its light (Revelation 21:23).

This month we shall again celebrate God's greatest miracle, the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. Our faith rests upon this fact. For if Christ is not risen from the dead, we are still in our sins. But Christ has been raised from the dead. We believe this not based merely on account of the testimony of so many, but on the veracity of God's word. God himself has spoken. His word is true.

We may not understand how a dead body can return to life, other than by resuscitation. Yet Jesus' resurrection was no resuscitation; it was the reversal of the cycle of death in his body, the defeat of death itself and victory over the grave. On our behalf, he conquered the Evil One and so secured our heavenly destiny by removing the offence that separated us from the Father, and by granting us the righteousness which we lacked to enter his presence.

Do you believe in miracles? Yes, we believe in God and we believe that Jesus rose again. We shall proclaim it from the rooftops and declare it in the streets. Let not this Easter allow us to be distracted by the trappings of hot cross buns and chocolate eggs.

While the world might think us mad – for they believe only death and decay await us – we have a confidence, grounded in God's Word, that we too shall share in Christ's resurrection at the last Day, at the archangel's call and the sound of the trumpet of God (1 Thessalonians 4:16). This, too, will be miraculous.

May your Easter celebrations remind you of our miracle-working God. Hallelujah!

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

Imaginary conspiracy or revolutionary reality?

It can seem that societal changes have exploded upon us from nowhere. But there's a history to trace, writes **Rob Smith**.

IT WAS A CRY THAT RESONATED WITH PEOPLE AROUND THE WORLD: "HOW DID I GET here?" David Byrne, front man of the band Talking Heads, asked this question in their 1980 hit, "Once in a Lifetime", and so many of his listeners felt just the same.

It's also a question many Christians are asking today – although often in the plural ("How did we get here?") and usually with reference to Western culture. What has happened to our world? How are to make sense of it?

One answer, at least according to some, is that we are witnessing the outworking of a particular ideology: Cultural Marxism. For others, however, the very mention of this term produces a reaction of scorn. What, then, is the truth? What is Cultural Marxism and how well does it help explain how we got here?

SO, WHAT IS IT?

Cultural Marxism is a well-established concept in academia. Numerous scholarly books and articles treat it dispassionately, or even favourably. That great generalist encyclopedia, Wikipedia, rightly defines it as "a school or offshoot of Marxism that conceives of culture as central to the legitimization of oppression".

So, Cultural Marxism is nothing more than the application of Marxist theory to culture. Yet over recent years the term has become so explosive that Wikipedia has taken the extraordinary step of archiving its rather tame entry on the subject.

Why all the commotion? The answer is that, because of its use by people like Jordan Peterson, many have come to see it as a "snarl" term that paints anyone who gets tagged with it as being beyond the pale. Consequently, many on Left side of the culture war describe it (variously) as "a conspiracy theory with an anti-Semitic twist", "a uniting theory for right-wingers who love to play the victim", or "the ultimate post-factual dog-whistle". Others still suggest that even *calling* it Marxism is historically inaccurate.

What are we to make of all this? Is Cultural Marxism a myth? Is it a misnomer? Is it a conspiracy theory? Or is it an accurate way of describing a real ideology that is making a serious impact on our world? And, if the latter, how should we respond?

BACK TO THE BEGINNING

If we were to ask Karl Marx (born 1818) what he saw as the fundamental human problem, his answer could be summed up in two words: oppression and alienation.

Oppression, he believed, was a consequence of living in a society of stratified classes, which is exacerbated by the exploitation inherent in capitalism. The capitalist class, who own the means of production, exploit the working class to make profits for themselves. This leads to multiple forms of alienation. Social progress is only ever made through class struggle and class conflict.

Was there a way out of this struggle? Marx was convinced that the capitalist system contained within it the seeds of its own destruction. Continued exploitation would lead to mounting resentment, boiling over into a working-class revolution in which capitalists would be violently overthrown and out of which the working class would come to rule. He therefore called for "the forcible overthrow of all existing social conditions".

Despite being voted "thinker of the millennium" in 1999, Marx's legacy is appalling. Everywhere his ideas have been implemented – whether in Russia, China, Cambodia, North Korea or anywhere else – the results have been catastrophic. With a body count of about 100 million people, the Marxist experiment has led to more deaths than any other ideology our world has ever known.

Marx was also wrong about virtually everything he predicted. For example, he predicted socialist revolutions would first take place in the most advanced capitalist nations (such as Britain, America and France). Instead they took place in some of the least developed regions of the world (like Russia, Latin America and parts of Asia). Something was very clearly wrong with Marx's thinking.

NEO-MARXISM AND THE BREAKING OF CHRISTIAN DOMINANCE

When Italian Communist Antonio Gramsci was imprisoned by Mussolini's regime in 1926, he spent much of his eight years behind bars musing on the questions that haunted classical Marxism: Why hadn't Marx's predictions worked out in practice? Why hadn't the Russian revolution of 1917 replicated itself in other Western European nations? The answer, he believed, was that the "culture" of Western society was blocking the proletarian uprising.

He wrote that "the state was only an outer ditch, behind which there stood a powerful system of fortresses". These fortresses were inseparable from the West's Christian heritage and, despite the secularising impact of the Enlightenment, remained undergirded by a latent Christian worldview. Consequently, until Christianity's dominance over Western culture was broken no communist revolution could take place and no communist utopia would arrive.

So, if you want to change society and its economic and political structures, you must change the cultural institutions that socialise people into believing and behaving according to the dictates of the capitalist system.

The only way to really do this is by cutting off the roots of Western civilisation – especially its Judeo-Christian roots; for unless Western culture is de-Christianised, Western society will never be de-capitalised.

How did Gramsci believe such "de-Christianisation" could be accomplished? By an army of Marxist intellectuals infiltrating and slowly taking over all the important civil institutions (police, law courts, civil service, local councils) and the key cultural institutions (churches, charities, schools, universities, the arts, the news media).

This would necessarily involve the destruction of all hierarchies. The goal, however, is not merely a *flattening* of the system, but a *flipping* of the system: insiders must be turned into outsiders and underdogs into overlords. Likewise, oppressors must now be oppressed and those who were formerly privileged must have their privileges taken away.

Above all, Christianity must be replaced by a new, secular order and the church by an all-powerful state.

It's important to recognise that Gramsci's thinking has influenced a range of philosophers, historians, sociologists, educationalists and, especially, cultural theorists.

Historian Andrew Roberts says: "Gramsci was the most important communist thinker in the West since Marx... and nowhere were his ideas followed more effectively than in academia".

Neo-Marxism might differ from classical Marxism in that it doesn't advocate violent political revolution. But its goal is no less revolutionary: the destruction of Western culture and the replacement of the Christian church with the communist state.

And as superficially comforting as it is to think that this could somehow be accomplished quietly and bloodlessly, it is arguably all the more insidious for that reason. This is a revolution by stealth; an exercise in systematic subversion by sustained cultural white-anting.

But Gramsci wasn't alone in his thinking. While he was in prison, a group of Marxist intellectuals in Germany, quite unaware of his writings, were concocting a similar revolutionary recipe with some unique features all of their own.

THE FRANKFURT SCHOOL AND THE SEXUAL REVOLUTION

In 1923, Hungarian Marxist, György Lukács, chaired a week-long symposium in Frankfurt that gave birth to a Marxist think tank: the Institute for Social Research, colloquially known as the Frankfurt School.

Lukács had already developed quite a track record as a social revolutionary. In 1919, as the People's Commissar for Education and Culture in Hungary, he launched a program – which he called Cultural Terrorism – seeking to get rid of traditional sexual morality and weaken the family.

This in-school program encouraged free love, discouraged monogamy and organised religion, and called on women to rebel against their husbands and flaunt traditional sexual mores. Yet it deeply offended and alienated the very people who were meant to take up the revolutionary cause: the working class. But none of this modified Lukács' determination to destroy capitalism in any way possible!

While the early work of the Frankfurt School was classically Marxist, this all changed in 1930, when new director, Max Horkheimer, took the school in a neo-Marxist direction. He recruited a range of up-and-coming intellectuals who could help blend classical Marxist doctrines with Darwinian sociology and Freudian psychology. The aim was to produce a new, synthesised form of Marxism that would do the job classical Marxism failed to do: radically transform Western culture and help plant the seeds (if not pave the way) for a communist utopia.

In 1933, when the Nazis came to power in Germany, most members of the Frankfurt School were forced to flee the country. The exiles eventually settled in the US where they began to publish in English and share their teachings in a number of universities across the country – where they really began to take root.

MAKE LOVE, NOT WAR

The most influential member of the Frankfurt School was Herbert Marcuse. He was convinced that for cultural liberation to be complete sexual liberation was critical.

His 1955 publication, *Eros and Civilisation: A Philosophical Inquiry into Freud*, became a founding document of the sexual revolution. It also helped bring the Frankfurt School to the attention of student activist groups, and their writings into colleges and universities around the world.

It was Herbert Marcuse who did most to provide intellectual justification for the sexual rebellion of the 1960s, and *Eros and Civilisation* was the textbook. He was also the author of the famous slogan, "Make Love, Not War".

The thesis of *Eros and Civilisation* is that the only way for human beings to escape the one-dimensionality of advanced industrial society is to reinstate "the primacy of pleasure and the liberation of Eros". This meant casting

"It was Herbert Marcuse who did most to provide... justification for the sexual rebellion of the 1960s."

off all sexual inhibitions. Behind this thought was the idea that advanced capitalist societies had effectively de-eroticised the human body – with the exception of the genitals. Emancipation, therefore, must involve the resexualisation of the entire body.

The political dimension to the kind of sexual revolution Marcuse was advocating is clear in the Political Preface to the 1966 edition of *Eros and Civilisation*. Here he insists that if we are to maintain mental health and "our capacity to function as unmutated human" our instincts must be expressed, not repressed.

He called upon Western youth to "live and fight for Eros against Death" and concluded by saying: "Today the fight for life, the fight for Eros, is the *political* fight". It is little wonder that Marcuse is credited with having had a major influence not just on the sexual revolution in general, but on the gay liberation movement in particular.

TOLERANCE... OR NOT

Marcuse's other lasting contribution is his radical redefinition of tolerance. "Repressive tolerance" was how he referred to the tolerance championed in classically liberal societies and expressed in the famous saying: "I disapprove of what you say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it".

Such a view of tolerance, Marcuse believed, fostered inequality and served the cause of oppression. How? Because "the stupid opinion is treated with the same respect as the intelligent one, the misinformed may talk as long as the informed, and propaganda rides along with education, truth with falsehood". Consequently, the only solution was "censorship, even pre-censorship". This is the way (apparently) of "liberating tolerance".

Such liberation would not only mean "the withdrawal of toleration of speech and assembly from groups and movements which promote aggressive policies, armament, chauvinism, discrimination on the grounds of race and religion" but also the oppression of those who "oppose the extension of public services, social security, medical care, etc." In other words, liberating tolerance – and Marcuse was completely candid about this – meant "intolerance against movements from the Right and toleration of movements from the Left".

By the end of the '60s it was clear that Marcuse was a full-scale political revolutionary who was totally committed to a root-and-branch disintegration of Western culture. "What we must undertake," he wrote, "is a type of diffuse and dispersed disintegration of the system."

THE CULTURAL MARXISTS

While members of the Frankfurt School held differing views, and even became increasingly critical of each other over time, their primary project was unwavering: to identify the economic and social structures that had been created by industrial capitalism and critique the ideas that defended the disparities of class and race. For this reason, the label Cultural Marxism is an entirely apt description of their philosophy.

This is not to deny that some of the members' writings contain valuable insights and valid criticisms of Western culture. But these pale beside their overblown charge that Western civilisation was effectively responsible for all the manifestations of aggression, oppression, racism, slavery, classism and sexism that marked post-industrial society. Marcuse even went so far as to call liberal democracy "the most efficient system of domination".

So, what was the School's impact? Some members eventually found the increasing violence and radicalism of their students alarming. Others, like Marcuse, were proud of the fact they had helped to inspire a generation of young revolutionaries who, in time, as German journalist Robert Grözinger puts it, became "teachers, media employees, civil servants and of course politicians".

Crucially, Grözinger adds, "They and their later progeny are endowed with a sense of mission and the crucial of being on the side of moral righteousness. In thousands of more or less important, but always influential, positions of authority, they succeed in injecting entire generations with a disgust for their own culture and history, and a selective inability to think.

"With their allegedly 'liberating' tolerance, they have torn down natural or culturally nurtured inhibitions and replaced them with state-enforced prohibitions on thinking and acting.

These in turn have almost completely destroyed the natural workings and defence mechanisms of a healthy society."

It would be simplistic to lay the entire blame for the contemporary crisis in the West at the

"Marxism... is a corruption of the gospel - replete with its own false prophet, false Bible... and false hope."

feet of either the Frankfurt School or Antonio Gramsci. Many others have made contributions, and numerous streams have fed the river of our current culture wars – not least of which is the advent of the internet and the rise of social media. Nevertheless, the Frankfurt School in general (and Marcuse in particular) played a significant role, and political correctness is part of their legacy. Gramsci's ideas have also borne very real fruit – not least in the whole arena of identity politics.

WHERE ARE WE AND WHAT SHOULD WE DO ABOUT IT?

So, is Cultural Marxism a myth? A misnomer? An anti-Semitic conspiracy theory?

The answer to the first two questions is simple: rightly understood, it is neither a myth nor a misnomer. While it may not have been a label won by Gramsci or the members of the Frankfurt School, it accurately describes the form of Marxist ideology they developed, and it is a label many of their disciples have been more than happy to wear.

The answer to the third question is that there is a range of conspiracy theories surrounding the Frankfurt School – some almost plausible, others laughable, some anti-Semitic (due to the fact that most of its members were Jewish) and others just plain scary (like Anders Breivik's *Manifesto*).

The problem with all such theories is that for something to be a conspiracy it needs to be secret. There was nothing secret about the writings of the Frankfurt School – their works are freely available and repay reading. However, wildly conspiratorial explanations of Cultural Marxism mean we need to be careful in how we understand and apply the label.

Nor is there any need to demonise the intentions of those who pioneered this form of neo-Marxism. These men reacted to what they saw, sometimes rightly, as the problems of our world and proposed what they thought, often wrongly, were the solutions.

This highlights the most important issue of all. Philosopher Alasdair MacIntyre once described Marxism as "a secularism formed by the gospel... committed to the problem of power and justice and therefore to themes of redemption and renewal". The problem is that its diagnosis is superficial and its cure fatal.

More than that, Marxism, whether in its classical or cultural form, is a corruption of the gospel – replete with its own false prophet (Marx), false Bible (*Das Kapital*), false doctrine (dialectical materialism), false apostles (Lenin, Stalin, Mao, Marcuse) and false hope (the arrival of a communist utopia). So the fact that Cultural Marxism is a real ideology making a real impact on our world is not good news.

This brings us to our final question: How, then, should Christians respond? The short answer is that, thanks to God's word, we have a truer understanding of the problem – human sin – and the only real solution to the oppression and alienation of human beings: Jesus Christ. We, therefore, have an infinitely better hope to proclaim and truly good news to share. This must be our primary response.

Some of us may also have the opportunity to engage in appropriate public discussion about these issues, or even have input into policy formation – perhaps in schools, business or even government. Here, too, we must seek to show a better way; one that avoids "hate" politics and transcends Left-Right polarisation.

Whatever the particular role God grants us, the charge to us all by English author Os Guinness is timely: "Let us then determine and resolve to be so faithful in all the challenges and ordeals the onrushing future brings that it may be said of us that we in our turn have served God's purpose in our generation".

The Rev Rob Smith lectures in ethics and theology at Sydney Missionary and Bible College (this is an adapted form of his recent Hot Topic talk on the issue). He is also the assistant director of Ministry, Training & Development.



Saving our cyberkids

SIMONE BOSWELL

SOME YEARS AGO ONE OF MY KIDS HAD HIS PHONE REMOVED TEMPORARILY – I can't even remember what the issue was – and he said to me, "You have ruined my life". With all the sincerity of a teenager!

His life wasn't ruined but it indicates the depth of feeling children can have for technology that they want to have it in their hands and have control over it.

You might feel a bit overwhelmed by social media, cyber bullying, gambling and cyber porn, and you don't know how to look after kids in your care – whether they're your own children or your grandchildren, nieces, nephews, neighbours or the kids you teach.

Yet Jason Illian says in *My Space, My Kids* that the "fundamental biblical principles for raising a child aren't circumstantial – they are eternal. They don't change with new technologies, or theories or new families. Scripture clearly calls us to love, discipline, teach, guide, protect, nurture and develop our children".

It doesn't matter that there are new things happening around us. We still have a job to do and Scripture teaches us how to do that. So, we love our kids. We discipline them and we provide them with boundaries because their little sinful natures will always run off course if left unchecked.

We teach them about the love of God and the ways of godly living. We guide them in holiness and righteous living to protect them from the lures of the evil one. We nurture them and provide them with a safe, secure environment in which to grow and develop. And then we help mature them into the young people and adults God wants them to be. That's our job.

Technology is not evil. The possibilities are endless for good – but so are the temptations for evil, and the pitfalls. It's the human application that determines the outcome.

So, how do we find this balance between jumping in and allowing our children to soak up every technological experience (20 per cent of 1-year-olds have their own iPad!) or withdrawing completely?

BALANCE AND BOUNDARIES

1 Corinthians 10 says, "I have the right to do anything'... but not everything is beneficial. 'I have the right to do anything', but not everything is constructive".

There has to be some balance. As parents we need to provide boundaries for our children with food, sleep, play and conversation to help them self-regulate. It's the same with technology: we need to provide boundaries now so they can learn to self-regulate as adults.

Here are some questions I often ask myself:

Do I regularly consider the impact that technology is having on my family? Because it changes. Do I have boundaries on the technology in my family – the use of it? Am I able to say "No" to my children and bear the consequences?

Is there a balance in my home between technological use and real, live, in-person communication?

Am I thinking about managing technology in the context of a whole parenting philosophy, or am I just stumbling along hoping it'll all work out in the end?

Here are three ways we can consider balance and boundaries with technology:

CONTENT: If we're thinking about tech use in our family, the content is important to evaluate. If a new movie's out and you're not sure if it's suitable, look it up. Does the content of the app, the device, the movie, the game, whatever it is, honour God? Does it reflect our family's values? Is it too scary, violent, overtly immoral? Are we consuming too much content that is opposed to our own values?

If we ignore the ratings of these things completely, we communicate to our kids that we don't care about it. Debriefing with them about movies, TV shows, advertising and the news are great conversations to have.

Then there's created content. When you put something on Facebook, that's created content. When you like somebody's post, that's created content. When you liked that funny video, that communicates to people that you align yourself with that. And that might be fine. But one of the things we need to teach our children is how to interact online in a way that reflects our own values. And getting to that point is hard work.

RELATIONSHIPS: How is technology use in the family affecting our relationships? Are they being strengthened or weakened? Is our own technology use impacting the relationships of the people around us? Are we too addicted to our own phones to talk to the people in the room with us? We have to keep self-reflecting because it's too easy to get sucked into it.

We often hear of people being quite okay with young children connecting with strangers through games or social media, and the relationships that come out of that. Are we okay with that? Are they ready for that? Have they already found navigating online relationships a source of anxiety? What parts of the internet are appropriate for different ages and stages?

Part of our job is to know the answers to these questions. To think them through and make decisions that are appropriate for our family so our kids will be prepared to be people of integrity in an anonymous online world.

TIME: We all know how much time we can spend playing with technology – the biggest users of the game *Candy Crush* are middle-aged women! But children aged eight to 18 years consume 7 hours and 38 minutes of media a day. That's a conservative figure. If your kids aren't consuming that much, you know someone else's kids are consuming an awful lot more.

When there is the prospect of introducing another piece of technology, consider whether this new device, game, movie, app is going to take more time away from face-to-face relationships and other responsibilities in the house. Can we say "No" to our children because of the time factor? Can we put a boundary on it? A bit of time on this device, then household jobs, homework, spending time with the rest of the family... we have to create a balance.

CHARACTER

As Christian parents we want to teach our kids about character, online and offline. To put others before themselves. To show respect, compassion, kindness and patience. To have self-control and humility. To be wise with making good choices. To use their time well. To be content and not to conform to the materialism and restlessness of the world around them. And to be sure of their identity – their personal identity, family identity and spiritual identity.

How do we do this in the context of technology?

BE WISE: Be aware of the public and permanent nature of the online world – that is a lesson that even grown-ups don't get. We need to teach our kids about the consequences of online mistakes. And they'll make them, but hopefully only little ones with little consequences.

How to stay safe online. How to manage strangers. Using kind speech, not getting caught up in an online argument. How to manage their own tech time so they can make wise decisions and balance their online and offline worlds. We want them to leave home as wise young adults, so we need to step them through that process.

MODEL: This is where we have to be the good parent and set a good example. It's so hard to do! The first thing we model is the culture of the home. There's no point trying to tell our kids to put their phones away at the table if we're on our phone! We have to model a culture – a home culture. That might look a little bit different to you from the person next to you, but that's your online culture and you have to cultivate that.

AUTHENTIC AND ETHICAL: We want to cultivate in our kids an authentic online person that's the same as their offline person. We need to teach our children to be empathetic online, particularly as they get older and they're using social media. And being a digital Christian online. A peacemaker. A blessing to others. Ethical in our media use – not downloading uncopyrighted movies. Affirming people – publicly and privately. Someone who stands up for issues of biblical social justice, maybe a user of faith apps, like a Bible download or prayer points.

PROTECTION

We protect our children from running onto the road, from falling into the swimming pool and from the online accidents they can stumble into. We don't want them to click on that flashing light that says, "Click here for a great prize", because we know that's not a great prize!

Other people want to be malicious and we need to intentionally intervene to protect our kids, because they can't protect themselves. We need ground rules: bedtime curfews, no going to bed with your iPad, public docking, password protection.

Your child should not be able to grab your phone and start playing on it. It should be protected with a passlock. And when they're old enough to have devices, they should be protected so their friends can't grab their phone and post on a social media site and ruin their lives. It is just so important and so simple to do.

Set all your children's social media sites to private so they won't receive messages from strangers. Stick to the basics: boundaries, regular conversations, checking texts occasionally – and tell them you're going to do that ahead of time. Don't spring it on them!

Respect age restrictions on social media apps. A lot of children on social media apps are too young to be there, have lied about their age – and their parents know they've lied about their age! That's not integrity. Be a different parent. Use content blockers, filters, accountability software. If this is something you don't have in your home yet and you should, get it.

Lastly, give kids reasons why you're making some of the rules that you're making. Explain about screen-free areas of the house if you set up that boundary, for example: bedrooms are for sleeping – devices don't help you sleep, therefore that's why we have that boundary.

TRUST YOUR KIDS, AND TRUST GOD

We need to learn to trust our children and their character as they grow. As we see signs of wisdom and godly character, we need to keep trusting them. There'll be little slip-ups – we've got to deal with those – but we want them to know that we're trusting them in that growth, and we want them to come to us with concerns so we can talk about them.

One day they will grow up and leave home and my filters won't work at their house, so we need to trust that they're going to grow up and prepare them for that – gradually increasing freedoms and boundaries as they go.

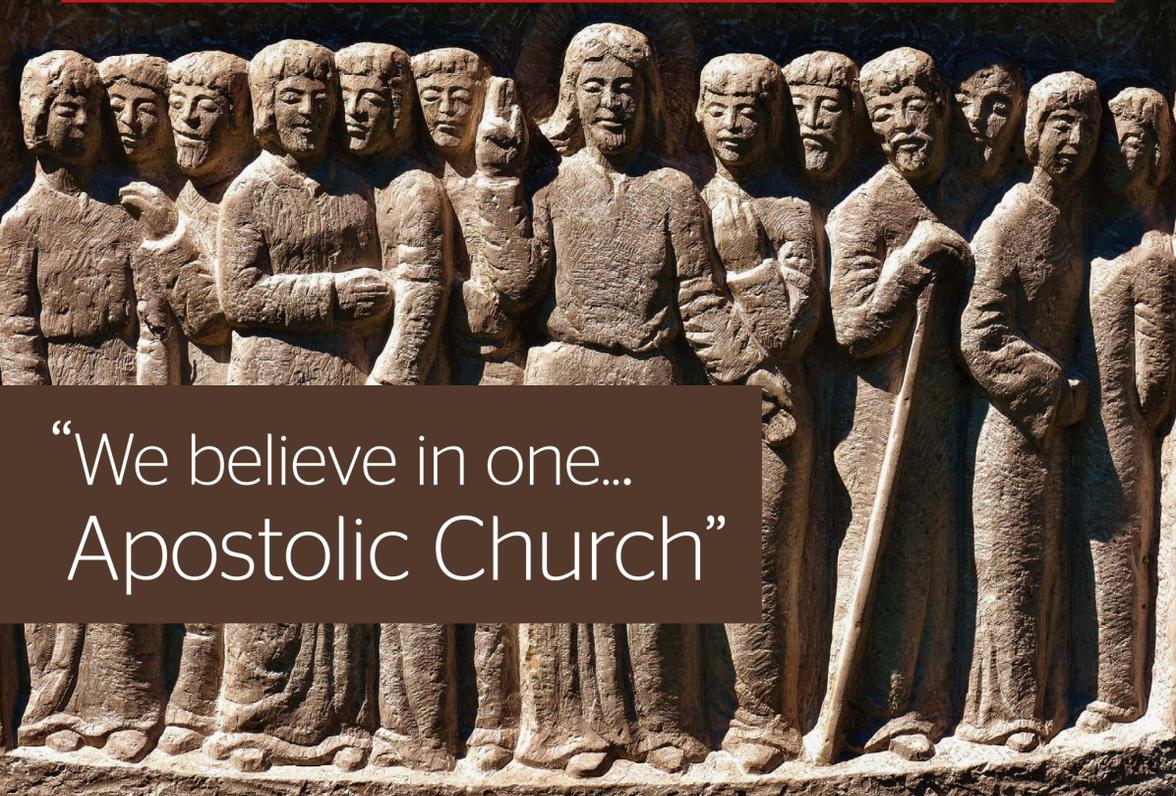
We know God never changes and his word is life and light. It illuminates the world we live in, no matter the century, or the marvellous inventions that currently epitomise man's greatest achievements.

We know that at the heart of our modern-day issues with technology are the same old self-centred issues of the heart the Teacher in Ecclesiastes explored when he declared, "There is nothing new under the sun".

The answer to teach of the problems posed by technology is to build a life with strong foundations by taking God's word and putting it into practice.

James 1:5 says, "If any of you lacks wisdom this you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you". If all this is overwhelming, we have a person to go to who has promised to give us wisdom and help us navigating this world. 50

Simone Boswell is co-author of the book *Cyber Parenting: Raising Your Kids in an Online World*. This is an edited version of a talk she gave at the MU Sydney Conference in February.



“We believe in one...
Apostolic Church”

Modern Australians don't like authority but the Apostles of Jesus are his delegates to us and we need to listen to them, writes **DAVID HÖHNE**.

HELPFUL HINT

Have your Bible open at 1 Corinthians.

FROM VERY EARLY ON IN THE LIFE OF THE JERUSALEM CHURCH (ACTS 2:42), AND throughout its subsequent history, orthodox Christians have confessed that we believe in an apostolic Church. That is, we believe that the Lord Jesus, in the power of the Holy Spirit, mediates his gospel and the Bible through his apostolic servants. The testimony of the Apostles is a foundation for the Christian church until the return of the Lord Jesus.

One implication of this is that apostolic authority, or upholding the authority of the apostolic testimony, is vital to the existence of the Church if it is to be guided and governed by the gospel and the Scriptures. But what constitutes apostolic authority, what does it look like in action and what does it matter for us?

WHAT IS APOSTOLIC AUTHORITY?

The chief characteristic that designates someone with apostolic authority is that they were *personally commissioned* by Jesus of Nazareth to be a mediator of his words and deeds to the world. Jesus prayed all night and, “When morning came, he called his disciples to him and chose twelve of them, whom he also designated as Apostles” (Luke 6:13).

In literal terms, an Apostle is simply someone sent as messenger, agent or delegate. What distinguishes them is the one who sent them. The Apostles of Jesus Christ are commissioned by him to whom God has given “all authority in heaven and on earth” (Matthew 28:18).

As the Scriptures explain, after the death of Judas the 11 remaining Apostles decided that they should choose a replacement by casting lots. They cast lots on the commonly held Jewish assumption that God determines the fall of the lots – hence the replacement would be chosen by the Lord Jesus. Yet it is one thing to be a disciple of Jesus, and another thing entirely to be considered an Apostle.

When the Apostles found a replacement, we as readers discover that there were some other important criteria into which a disciple should fit in order to be considered for apostleship: “it is necessary to choose one of the men who have been with us the whole time the Lord Jesus was living among us, beginning from John’s baptism to the time when Jesus was taken up from us... one of these must become a witness with us of his resurrection” (Acts 1:21-22).

So, on the basis that the Lord Jesus makes the ultimate decision, the 11 original Apostles gathered a suitable eyewitness to his life, death and resurrection.

Of course, Paul, who wrote most of the New Testament, was not one of the original 12 Apostles and yet is frequently referred to in the NT as an Apostle of Jesus Christ. This is since he, too, was confronted by the risen Jesus. As we read in Acts, “Brother Saul... the God of our ancestors has chosen you to know his will and to see the Righteous One and to hear words from his mouth. You will be his witness to all people of what you have seen and heard” (Acts 22:13-15).

Jesus intervenes especially in Paul’s life such that the persecutor of Christians becomes an Apostle of their saviour; that fact was something Paul carried with him for the rest of his life. Even so, the 12 Apostles in Jerusalem agreed that Paul should be a special Apostle of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, for he was commissioned by direct personal engagement with the risen Jesus (Galatians 2:8).

Apostolic authority rests on divine commission, that the risen Lord Jesus chose these men and not others and invested them with the authority to speak his word to all other people – believers and unbelievers alike.

It is an authority that is entirely alien to our modern Western democracy; it is deaf to our egalitarian demands for meritocracy, a world away from what’s trending on Twitter or Facebook and totally oblivious to the Disneyland ethics of setting your heart on a dream. Apostolic authority comes from one source, and one source alone: the risen Lord Jesus.

Of course, that doesn’t stop people from trying to grasp hold of it – by force if necessary. Whether it is by papal claims to infallible apostolic succession or the power ministries of megachurch pastors, down through the centuries Christians have cloaked all kinds of worldly concepts of authority in the guise of “serving the Lord”.

That’s our cue to turn to the text of 1 Corinthians. Here, Paul broaches the subject of his particular relationship with the Corinthians and, as he does, we get an explicit statement of what apostolic authority looks like in action.

WHAT DOES APOSTOLIC AUTHORITY LOOK LIKE?

Apostolic authority looks exactly like the ministry of Jesus, who commissioned it. In 1 Corinthians 4 Paul writes, “regard us as servants of Christ and as those entrusted with the mysteries God has revealed” (4:1). Throughout chapters 1-4 Paul has been dealing with factionalism in the church at Corinth. There are divisions in the community, but the divisions are focused particularly on leader figures who have been present in the church: Paul or Apollos or Peter.

The Corinthians ought to be united in “the message of the cross” but it is a completely counterintuitive lens through which to view the world. It is “foolishness” and “weakness”. Yet in God’s mysterious ways, through the message of the cross, we receive “righteousness, holiness and redemption”. These are the mysteries to which Paul refers in chapter 4 verse 1 and they are essential for judging correctly what apostolic authority looks like.

The “preaching of the cross” has been Paul’s basic mission strategy authenticated by the power of the Spirit (1 Corinthians 2:3-5). That’s why it is so hard for the Corinthians to grasp the truth about apostolic ministry: the outwardly unimpressive nature of Paul’s ministry is exactly what the power of the crucified Jesus looks like.

It isn’t the power of great armies, or great monuments of marble. It isn’t the power of fine rhetoric – philosophy or heartwarming stories. It is the supreme power of a single man publicly executed for insurrection, naked, bloodied and beaten by the hands of those he came to save. It is the power of absolute self-sacrifice to the will of God for the salvation of others. This is the source of apostleship from which Paul has received his commission and therefore his authority.

Paul picks this up in chapter 4 verse 9 and subsequent verses. The Apostles are like prisoners dragged into the circus in a triumphal procession to accentuate their domination: “we have been made a spectacle to the whole universe, to angels as well as to human beings”. In fact, Paul’s apostolic ministry is particularly cruciform: “When we are cursed we bless; when we are persecuted we endure it; when we are slandered we answer kindly. We have become the scum of the earth, the garbage of the world” (v.12-13).

What Paul is trying to explain to the Corinthians is that apostolic authority looks and feels exactly like the ministry of Jesus Christ.

WHY DOES IT MATTER?

Apostolic authority is the strong medicine for treating worldliness in the church. “Do not deceive yourselves,” Paul writes. “If any of you think you are wise by the standards of this age, you should become ‘fools’ so that you may become wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness in God’s sight” (1 Corinthians 3:18-19).

Yet Paul is not seeking to merely shame the church but, rather, to warn it (1 Corinthians 4:14). The Corinthians are a well-off and vibrant city church in one of the cosmopolitan parts of the Empire – it’s cool to be Corinthian.

However, there is a great cost to all this marvellous opportunity. Instead of being trained and formed in the wisdom of the cross, the Corinthians are soaking up all the wisdom of the world about leadership and authority. Like all sinners, the Corinthians want leaders who make them feel good about themselves – they want the kind of populist display seen in the lead-up to a parliamentary or presidential election. Instead they should be listening to the authority that reveals their vulnerability before God and the world.

Populist leaders always tell us what we deserve; apostolic authority reminds us what we desperately need. It comes down to the nature of our relationship with Paul and his actual importance as a servant of Christ – “in Christ Jesus I became your father through the gospel” – which means that we ought “to imitate” Paul’s way of life in service of the Lord Jesus (v.15-16).

At a superficial level, this seems to contradict some of the things that Paul has been saying about leaders as servants and their relative unimportance in the plans of God (see 1 Corinthians 3:5). Nevertheless, Paul is the one who planted the church in Corinth – but more than this he, unlike Apollos, is an Apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ, personally commissioned to preach the gospel of Christ crucified to the Gentiles.

Therefore, throughout the letter, Paul will invoke his authority over the Corinthians to call them to account, to subject their practices and attitudes – their culture and their character – to scrutiny.

Whether it is the way they handle freedom, desire or their relative wealth, all these issues in the rest of the letter are symptoms of the disease of worldliness, and Paul is the one who has been commissioned by the Lord Jesus to give the church her medicine. It will be strong medicine – distasteful and with what may appear to be harmful side effects.

Most of us in Sydney Anglican churches are Gentiles, so Paul is our Apostle. His words to the Corinthians could easily be words to us and we should respond to those words with the expectation that the Lord Jesus will guide and govern us through them.

For people living in the 21st-century culture of Romance, authority of any kind is a bitter pill to swallow. Ours is a culture governed by desire, where truth is measured by the depth of feeling on the one hand, and the power those feelings give us to achieve the kind of authenticity that our dreams dictate on the other.

It is not surprising then, that Christians give in to the temptation to dismiss apostolic authority and the Scriptures that flow from it. We like it when John talks about love but feel rather uncomfortable when Peter talks about wrath. We warm to Matthew’s parables but cool dramatically when Paul scrutinises our attitudes to wealth and sex.

From what we have seen about apostleship, if we distance the Apostles and their authority from us, then we distance ourselves from the Lord Jesus who commissioned them. If we disregard their ministry to us, then we disrespect the ministry of the Lord Jesus for us. Ultimately, we cease to be the Church that God’s Spirit is working to perfect for the coming King.



The Dorotheys speak at ADM

The *Speak, Easy* play reading: (from left) CEO of Anglican Deaconess Ministries, Dr Kate Harrison Brennan, playwright Jo Kadlecek and the cast of the play.

ANGLICAN DEACONESS MINISTRIES CELEBRATED INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY WITH A PROFESSIONAL stage reading of a new play about three female writers who helped change the world for the women who came after them.

The play, *Speak, Easy* – by last year's ADM summer fellow Jo Kadlecek – was part of the organisation's She Writes campaign for International Women's Day (co-sponsored by Joining the Dots Theatre Company).

The characters in *Speak, Easy* include prolific 20th-century writers Dorothy L. Sayers, Dorothy Parker and Dorothy Day, who appear to a young Sydney writer struggling to find her own voice and discuss with her their differing perspectives about God, writing, men and ambition.

"International Women's Day is about honouring the pioneers and the opportunities that we now have because of them – women like the three Dorotheys in the play," Kadlecek said.

"I didn't feel nervous on the day – I was excited! And from the very first scene, when I heard the audience laughing, I was so thrilled. They were getting it and really seemed to engage with it.

"These women's voices have lived in my head for so long, so to hear them in front of an audience and hear that reaction was just wonderful."

Kadlecek said she had been thinking about the play for more than 15 years, reading and researching the work and lives of the three women, who wrote everything from novels to advertising campaigns, poetry to screenplays and essays to short stories.

"They are so prolific, you can keep reading and researching and taking notes for ever," she joked. "But when I got the summer fellowship last year... it meant I was able to work on the play every day for a month, which really jump-started it for me.

"How appropriate it was for us to have had this at ADM, where our whole point is to help Christian women to flourish in God's kingdom. Two of those Dorotheys were women who helped us to do that.

"But that's another thing about International Women's Day... we want to engage in good conversations that might help people understand more where we're coming from, from a Christian perspective. You do that through robust conversations, which is part of the point behind the play."

Kadlecek, who now works as ADM's creative director, said the organisation wants to make She Writes an annual event on International Women's Day, celebrating different works in progress by Christian women.

"If that could happen it would be great," she said.

