

JUNE
2019

Southern CROSS

THE NEWS MAGAZINE FOR SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

The Big C

(THAT'S CHRIST, NOT CANCER)

PLUS

Game of Thrones... and Jesus

The value of congregational lament

CONTENTS



COVER

Bishop Ivan Lee
talks about cancer,
and Christ.

Sydney News 3

Mission News 4

Australian News 5

Letters 6

Changes 7

Archbishop Writes 8

Cover Feature 9

Opinion 10

Moore is More 11

Culture 12

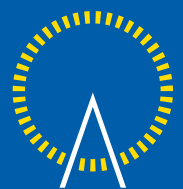


**“We... walk alongside
our Aboriginal brothers
and sisters... we are one
family in Christ.”**

Luke Woodhouse
Sydney News

Southern CROSS JUNE 2019

volume 25 number 5



PUBLISHER: Anglican Media Sydney

PO Box W185
Parramatta Westfield 2150

PHONE: 02 8860 8860

FAX: 02 8860 8899

EMAIL: info@anglicanmedia.com.au

MANAGING EDITOR: Russell Powell

EDITOR: Judy Adamson

ART DIRECTOR: Stephen Mason

ADVERTISING MANAGER: Kylie Schleicher

PHONE: 02 8860 8850

EMAIL: ads@anglicanmedia.com.au

Acceptance of advertising does not imply
endorsement. Inclusion of advertising
material is at the discretion of the publisher.

SUBSCRIPTIONS: Garry Joy

PHONE: 02 8860 8861

EMAIL: subs@anglicanmedia.com.au

\$44.00 per annum (Australia)

A high-tech graveyard rises from the flood



Phone at the ready: the Rev Ben Boardman in the Picton graveyard tests the QR code at James Crispe's grave.

WHAT MOST SYDNEYSIDERS REMEMBER ABOUT A CATASTROPHIC RAIN EVENT IN JUNE 2016 ARE television news reports of an eight-metre wave that crashed into luxury homes on the northern beaches and swept away an in-ground swimming pool.

For the residents of Picton, more than 100 kilometres to the southwest, the effect of the wild weather was far more devastating.

"The thing that took the greatest news coverage was the poor person who lost a swimming pool into the ocean. Which was a great tragedy for them, I'm sure," says the rector of Picton and Wilton parish, the Rev Ben Boardman. "But down here in Picton, 60 per cent of local businesses lost all their premises and all their stock – and many dozens of people lost their homes. That appeared as a little afterthought on the news."

It wasn't until Mr Boardman appeared on ABC radio in subsequent days and explained the extent of the damage that many outside the area started to wake up to what had happened. To illustrate, he points to Stonequarry Creek – less than 100 metres from St Mark's church and adjacent graveyard – and then to the mark on the church wall showing where the floodwaters reached two metres as they swept through towards the town centre.

"There was mud everywhere, it was an absolute disaster," he says. "Two metres of water had destroyed everything."

That was three years ago. On the day *Southern Cross* visited, the final part of the refurbishment, the carpet, was about to be laid.

"Being part of the Diocese is a wonderful, wonderful thing," Mr Boardman says. "While many of the businesses had a lot of battles with their insurers about whether this was a storm or a flood, we were well looked after by our insurance through the Diocese."

The only thing not covered by insurance was the historic graveyard, which is part of the church grounds and an attraction for many visitors.

"We discovered that each grave plot is legally the responsibility of the relatives of the deceased to maintain. So, because they're not our responsibility, then the insurance doesn't cover us."

The force of the water had pushed historic gravestones over and caused significant damage. "It's a much-loved place and we just felt a responsibility to our community to do what we could to refurbish the cemetery, even though we didn't have any insurance cover," Mr Boardman says. "Some of the congregation members really rallied behind that project and did a great job helping to raise more than \$45,000 in funding."

The church team got in touch with families of those buried in what is known as the Pioneer Cemetery of Picton and, with the help of local historian Betty Villey, they not only repaired the graves but added a little 21st-century technology.

"We came up with this idea of an audio tour of the cemetery, collecting the most interesting stories and marking those grave sites with a QR code, so that people can tap into that on a mobile phone and listen to the story of the person buried there while strolling around the graveyard," Mr Boardman says.

Perhaps the most interesting character in repose is James Crispe. He ran the Myrtle Creek (now Tahmoor) Inn and made headlines in 1843 when two locals came in saying they'd been robbed on the road by two armed men.

Two constables and Crispe mounted horses to follow the bushrangers. Crispe rode ahead, was soon confronted by the armed men and told to dismount. He asked one to hold his horse's bridle and, as he dismounted, grabbed the man around the neck, holding him and taking his gun, which he then pointed at the other bushranger. The constables then rushed out of the bush and arrested the men.

"We now notice just how many people come to stroll through the cemetery and listen to the stories like that," Mr Boardman says. The histories link back to the church's website.

As well as the graveyard work, the church's interior – including the original pews and organ – have been refurbished and put back in place.

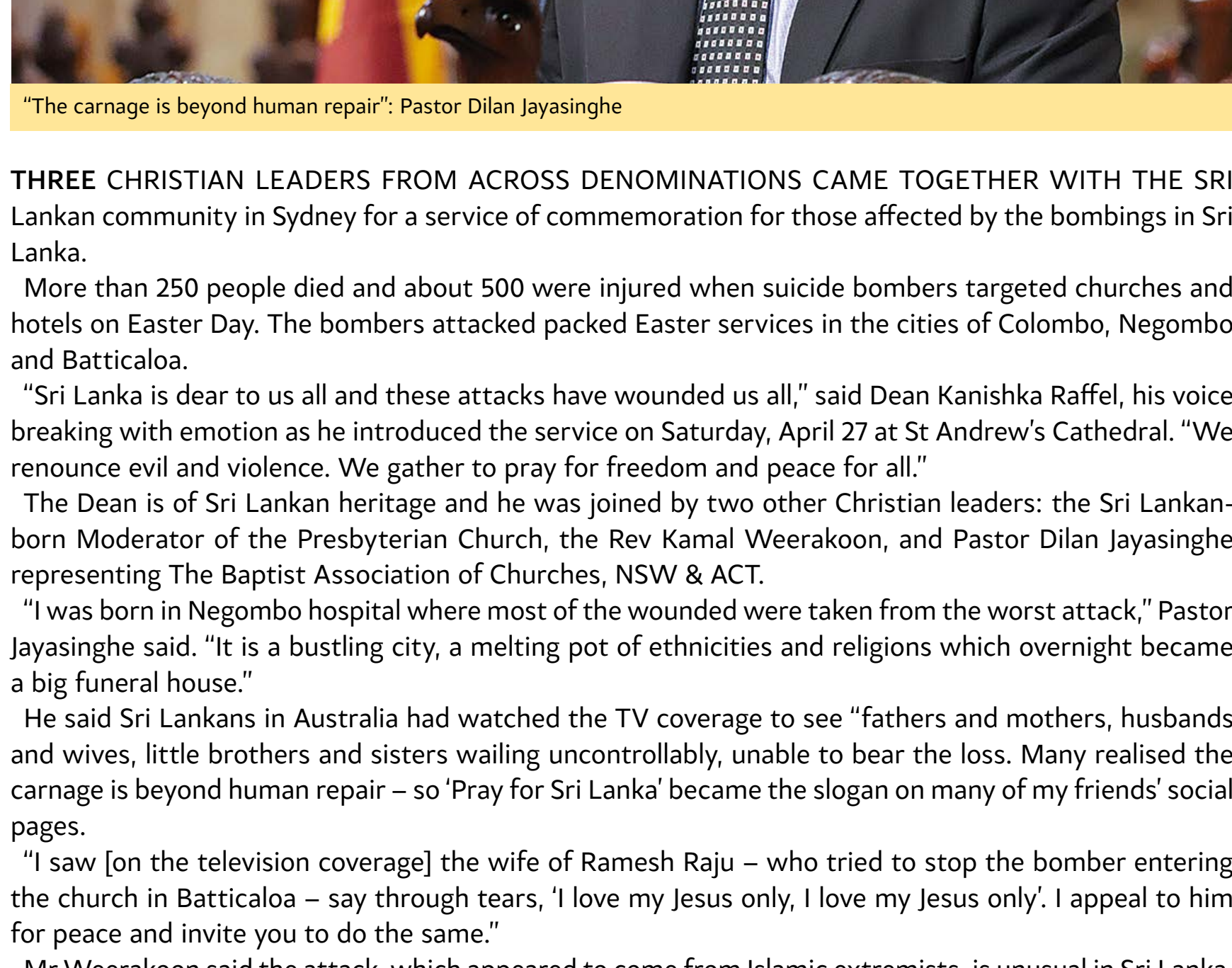
"I don't regret anything of that, to be honest, because I've come to appreciate the warmth and the charm of a little English church," Mr Boardman says. "We need to communicate the gospel in a way that engages our community today. We need to move with the times in some sense, but we need to preserve the truths of the gospel and some of the heritage that is valued by our communities here in this place and in this building. There's a real warmth and beauty to that."

He adds that the relationships and the name the church now has in the community are vastly different to what they were pre-flood.

"That's because of the opportunity we had to show Christ's love in that time of crisis, and because of the time we had to work shoulder to shoulder with our community in putting the town back together. That was a beautiful process, painful though it was."

<http://pwc.org.au/cemetery>

"These attacks have wounded us all"



"The carnage is beyond human repair", Pastor Dilan Jayasinghe

THREE CHRISTIAN LEADERS FROM ACROSS DENOMINATIONS CAME TOGETHER WITH THE SRI Lankan community in Sydney for a service of commemoration for those affected by the bombings in Sri Lanka.

More than 250 people died and about 500 were injured when suicide bombers targeted churches and hotels on Easter Day. The bombers attacked packed Easter services in the cities of Colombo, Negombo and Batticaloa.

"Sri Lanka is dear to us all and these attacks have wounded us all," said Dean Kanishka Raffel, his voice breaking with emotion as he introduced the service on Saturday, April 27 at St Andrew's Cathedral. "We renounce evil and violence. We gather to pray for freedom and peace for all."

The Dean is of Sri Lankan heritage and he was joined by two other Christian leaders: the Anglican-born Moderator of the Presbyterian Church, the Rev Kamal Weerakoon, and Pastor Dilan Jayasinghe representing The Baptist Association of Churches, NSW & ACT.

"I was born in Negombo hospital where most of the wounded were taken from the worst attack," Pastor Jayasinghe said. "It is a bustling city, a melting pot of ethnicities and religions which overnight became a big funeral house."

He said Sri Lankans in Australia had watched the TV coverage to see "fathers and mothers, husbands and wives, little brothers and sisters wandering uncontrollably, unable to bear the loss. Many realised the carnage is beyond human repair – so 'Pray for Sri Lanka' became the slogan on many of my friends' social pages."

"I saw [on the television coverage] the wife of Ramesh Raju – who tried to stop the bomber entering the church in Batticaloa – say through tears, 'I love my Jesus only, I love my Jesus only'. I appeal to him for peace and invite you to do the same."

Mr Weerakoon said the attack, which appeared to come from Islamic extremists, is unusual in Sri Lanka. He also appealed for peace and said those behind the attack could find forgiveness, despite the atrocity. "You can bomb and slaughter Christians while we celebrate the resurrection of Jesus – it will not take Jesus off the throne," he said.

Members of the Sri Lankan community led in prayer for the families of those killed, those wounded, and the nation. The congregation included Mr Lal Wickrematunga, the Consul-General of Sri Lanka, and Ms Linda Daetwyler, the acting Consul-General of the United States of America, one of eight countries which lost citizens in the attack.

Mr Scott Farlow MLC, representing the Minister for Multiculturalism and members of the Multicultural Advisory Board, as well as Mr Khaled Sukkarieh of the Islamic Council of NSW, were official guests.

Dean Raffel based his sermon on the account of the raising of Lazarus from the Gospel of John. "Resurrection Day, Easter Sunday, is the most precious of days for Christians," he said. "Many of those who were murdered last Sunday were celebrating Easter. That so many should die at a celebration – that so many should die in the act of worship – is unbearably wretched and cruel, deeply sad, and virtually impossible to comprehend. The Scriptures are neither sentimental nor naive about the wickedness of which the human heart is capable. But neither are they without hope for a broken and hurting world. Our hope is in Jesus."

"Easter is the celebration of Jesus' victory over death. If we cannot trust Jesus in this moment, there is no point celebrating him at all. So in the midst of tears, in the shadow of heinous crimes and incalculable suffering, we find our firm ground to stand on today in the truth that was proclaimed by our sisters and brothers perhaps only minutes before their death. We proclaim, 'Christ is risen! He is risen indeed!'"



Down Under GAFCON: leaders gather for a photo as part of their first meeting in Australia.

THE LEADERS OF THE MAJORITY OF THE ANGLICAN COMMUNION HAVE MET FOR THE FIRST TIME in Sydney, with affairs in the South Pacific prominent on the agenda.

The Global Anglican Future Conference, or GAFCON, is led by a council of Primates who are committed to biblical witness and mission and represent 50 million of the 70 million active Anglicans of the Communion. In their first meeting since last year's GAFCON gathering in Jerusalem, the baton of leadership passed from the former Archbishop of Sydney, Dr Peter Jensen, who served as secretary, and the Primate of Nigeria, Archbishop Nicholas Okoh, who had been chairman for almost 10 years.

"We installed Archbishop Foley Beach of North America as the new chairman of the Primates' Council and gathered around him for a time of prayer and commissioning... This was the first council meeting for Archbishop Ben Kwashi of Nigeria, the general secretary, who took up his post in January," said the official communique from the meeting, held in Manly in late April.

As well as hearing reports from various ministry networks and branches including Ireland, Brazil and Australia, representatives from New Zealand spoke of the turmoil and sadness that followed the decision of the General Synod of the Anglican Church of Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia to permit the blessing of same-sex marriages and civil unions.

As reported in SC in October last year, several churches withdrew from the oversight of the province as a result of the decision.

"We give thanks for the individuals and churches that have remained faithful and courageous in these islands," the communique said. "We support those who, in good conscience, feel unable to remain within a Church that has made such a decision."

"We affirmed their creating a new diocese and recognised them as authentically Anglican. This new diocese we will keep them within the Anglican Communion and they will relate directly to GAFCON. We also affirmed the consecration of a new bishop to oversee and support the new diocese."

Another of the major decisions of the meeting concerned the Lambeth Conference called by the Archbishop of Canterbury, which will include bishops in homosexual relationships. The election of the bishops was in direct contravention of Resolution I.10 of the 1998 Lambeth Conference.

"Last year in Jerusalem our delegates urged us not to attend Lambeth 2020 if godly order in the Communion had not been restored," the Primates said. "They respectfully called upon the Archbishop of Canterbury to effect the necessary changes that fell within his power and responsibility. We have not yet received a response from the Archbishop of Canterbury."

"We note that, as it currently stands, the conference is to include provinces who continue to violate Lambeth Resolution I.10, thereby putting the conference itself in violation of its own resolution: failing to uphold faithfulness in marriage and legitimising practices incompatible with Scripture. This incoherence further tears the fabric of the Anglican Communion and undermines the foundations for reconciliation."

GAFCON has called a bishops' conference for June next year, to be held in Kigali, Rwanda. After meeting in Sydney, several of the leaders spoke at local churches and Archbishops Beach and Kwashi toured Australian capitals for GAFCON meetings. Archbishop Davies has since confirmed that he and the Sydney bishops had declined invitations to the Lambeth Conference (see Archbishop Writes, page 16).

What now for religious freedom?

CHRISTIANS SHOULD CONTINUE TO PRESS FOR religious freedom after an election in which the issue appeared to play a significant part, according to the Bishop of South Sydney, Dr Michael Stead.

Dr Stead chairs the Religious Freedom Reference Committee and was a frequent commentator in the media during the campaign. He believes that, notwithstanding the result of the election, there will be very significant questions around religious freedom in the next 12 months.

"Faith-based schools are going to face significant challenges in the next year to ensure that they retain the freedom to operate according to their beliefs," he says.

"The Ruddock Review has raised issues which will be resolved one way or the other in the next year by the work of the Australian Law Reform Commission."

The Government commissioned the ALRC to undertake a comprehensive review of the framework of religious exemptions in anti-discrimination legislation across Australia.

"The ALRC has been asked to work out the appropriate way to balance the right to thought, conscience and belief with the right to non-discrimination," Dr Stead says. "That is the right way to frame the question, because it recognises that there are two sets of human rights that are both enshrined in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, in Article 18 and Article 26 respectively. We need to have legislation that guides us when these rights rub up against each other."

Dr Stead says a national, bipartisan approach would be helpful given the political nature of the debates in the lead-up to the election.

"It has been observed that this was a significant issue across the country. There were noticeable swings against the ALP in electorates in Western Sydney, which correlated closely with the proportion of people of faith in that electorate. When the parties were questioned on the issues of religious freedom, the response from the Liberal Party provided a much more fulsome protection for religious freedom than that of the Labor Party."

He adds that many people became aware of the issue during the campaign but it was poorly understood by the public and politicians alike.

"I encourage Christians to continue to make your concerns known to local MPs," he says. "There may well be an increased awareness on both sides of the house as to the real and deep significance of this issue for people of faith."

The issue was thrust into the spotlight during the campaign, in part because of the treatment of rugby star Israel Folau – who was sacked for posting a Christian message on Instagram. At the time, Bishop Stead told *The Australian*: "If a rugby player can be sacked by doing nothing more than posting on his social media page what is essentially a summary of the Bible then it's a signal to the rest of us that we'd better keep our mouths shut."

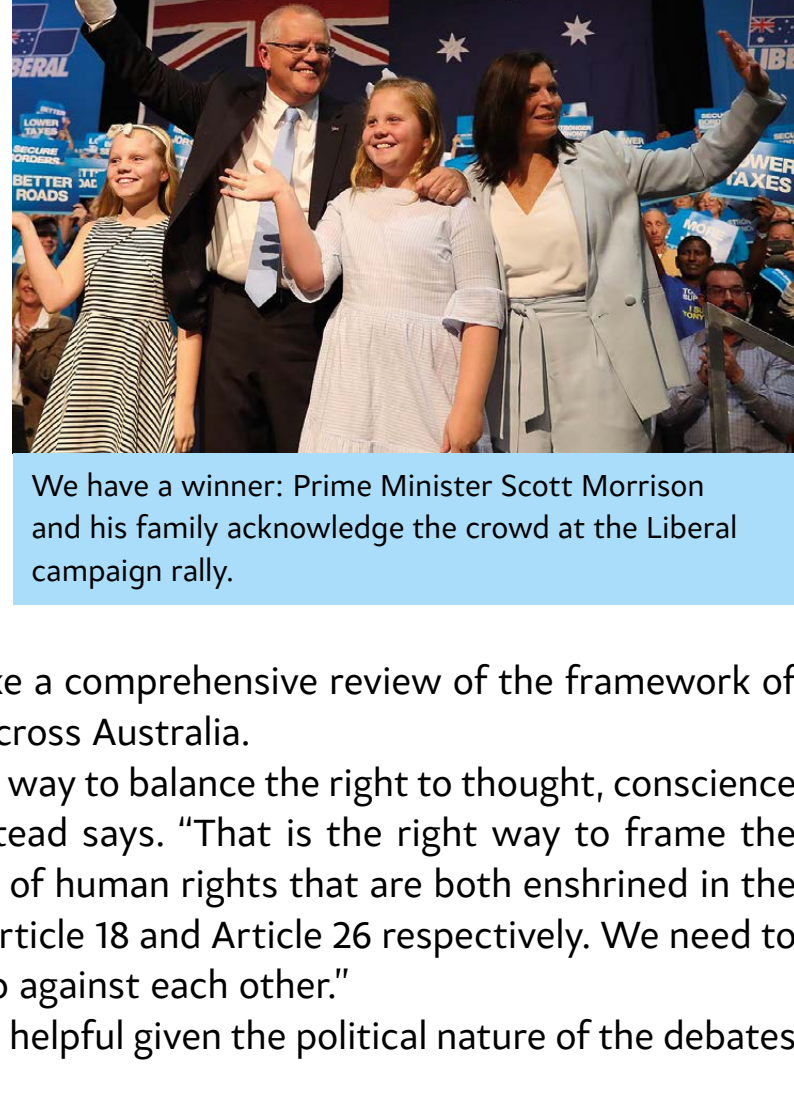
Since Rugby Australia ruled that Folau had committed "a high-level breach" of its code of conduct, Archbishop Davies, from overseas, sent a message of support on Twitter: "I stand with Israel Folau".

The Archbishop, Bishop Stead and other church leaders pressed both the Prime Minister and Opposition Leader for a commitment to religious freedom. Bishop Stead told SBS he was frustrated that they characterised the dispute between Folau and Rugby Australia during a leaders' debate as a contractual matter, rather than one of freedom of speech, conscience and belief.

"The problem with that is that there does need to be a positive protection for free speech, so people can genuinely say what they believe without being gagged by oppressive codes of conduct – because employers will then have licence to restrict religious speech in a workplace context for fear of offence," Dr Stead says. "In effect, people will be told to leave your religious self at home when you come to work."

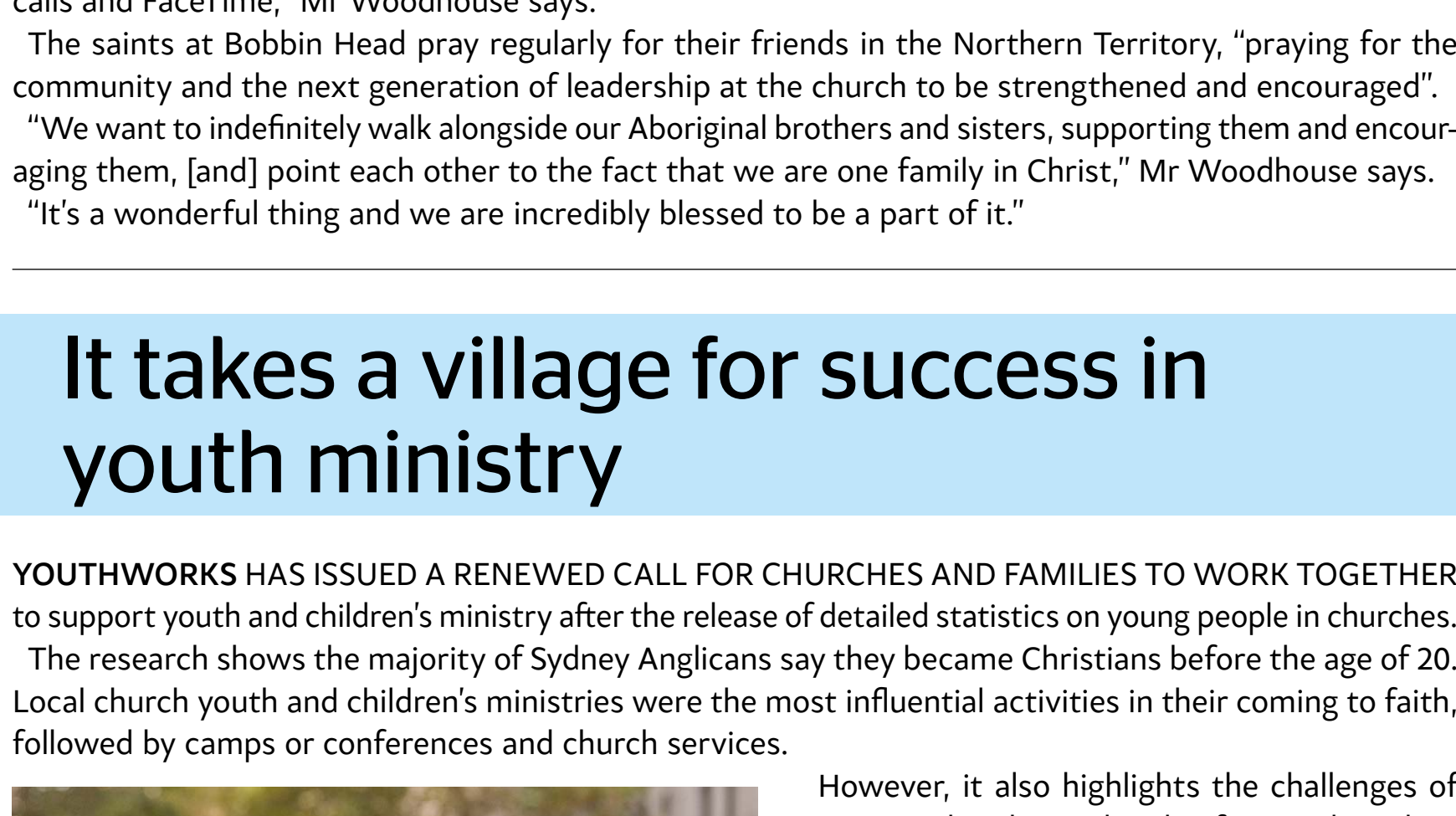
He says Christians should continue to press for appropriate protection. "A number of proposals announced by the Government were not able to be progressed in the lead-up to the election. In particular, the proposal for a Religious Discrimination Commissioner and a Religious Discrimination Act. Now is the time for the Morrison government to move ahead on these promises."

See Michael Stead's column on [page 10](#).



We have a winner: Prime Minister Scott Morrison and his family acknowledge the crowd at the Liberal campaign rally.

Faith family to the Territory



Friendship in faith: Bobbin Head and Minyerri locals take a walk together.

IN AN EXPRESSION OF FRIENDSHIP, MUTUAL LEARNING AND PARTNERSHIP, TWICE A MEMBERS of Bobbin Head Anglican Church travel to Arnhem Land to be with their friends at the local church in Minyerri. For two weeks each year they call the 600-person town their home – spending time with their Aboriginal brothers and sisters in prayer and fellowship.

"We go up there to be with them," says the Rev Luke Woodhouse, who has been visiting since starting at Bobbin Head in 2015. "To know there are brothers and sisters in Sydney who are praying for them and sharing in the common task of making disciples, and to be there physically and sit alongside them, is of great benefit to the church of Minyerri. But we would learn more on our trip from them than they would learn from us!"

Mr Woodhouse says each visit provides helpful insights into the ways following Jesus is expressed in different cultures. "You can really see what cultural baggage we bring," he says, reflecting on his own context. "It's a mirror to the way we think about things."

"For example, we have naturally tend towards finding our identity in what we do with our time, or what we have or have not achieved, whereas in Minyerri identity seems to be found more in someone's unique set of (largely predefined) relationships. These cultural differences play themselves out in a number of ways, particularly in how time is spent and prioritised."

There has been great delight in coming together under the word of God, and with music as well. "The normally have fellowship on most nights of the week, which is an outdoor gathering," Mr Woodhouse says. "People come up for prayer and there'll be a message, Bible reading, some songs and dance. We participate and encourage. Music has been a big connecting point. We write and sing songs together."

They also simply enjoy each other's company, with locals taking the Bobbin Head sing crowd fishing and to see beautiful parts of their area.

The introduction of the internet and mobile phone reception to Minyerri a year ago has helped the partnership extend beyond the biannual visit. "It means the relationships can really continue, with phone calls and FaceTime," Mr Woodhouse says.

The saints at Bobbin Head pray regularly for their friends in the Northern Territory, "praying for the community and the next generation of leadership at the church to be strengthened and encouraged".

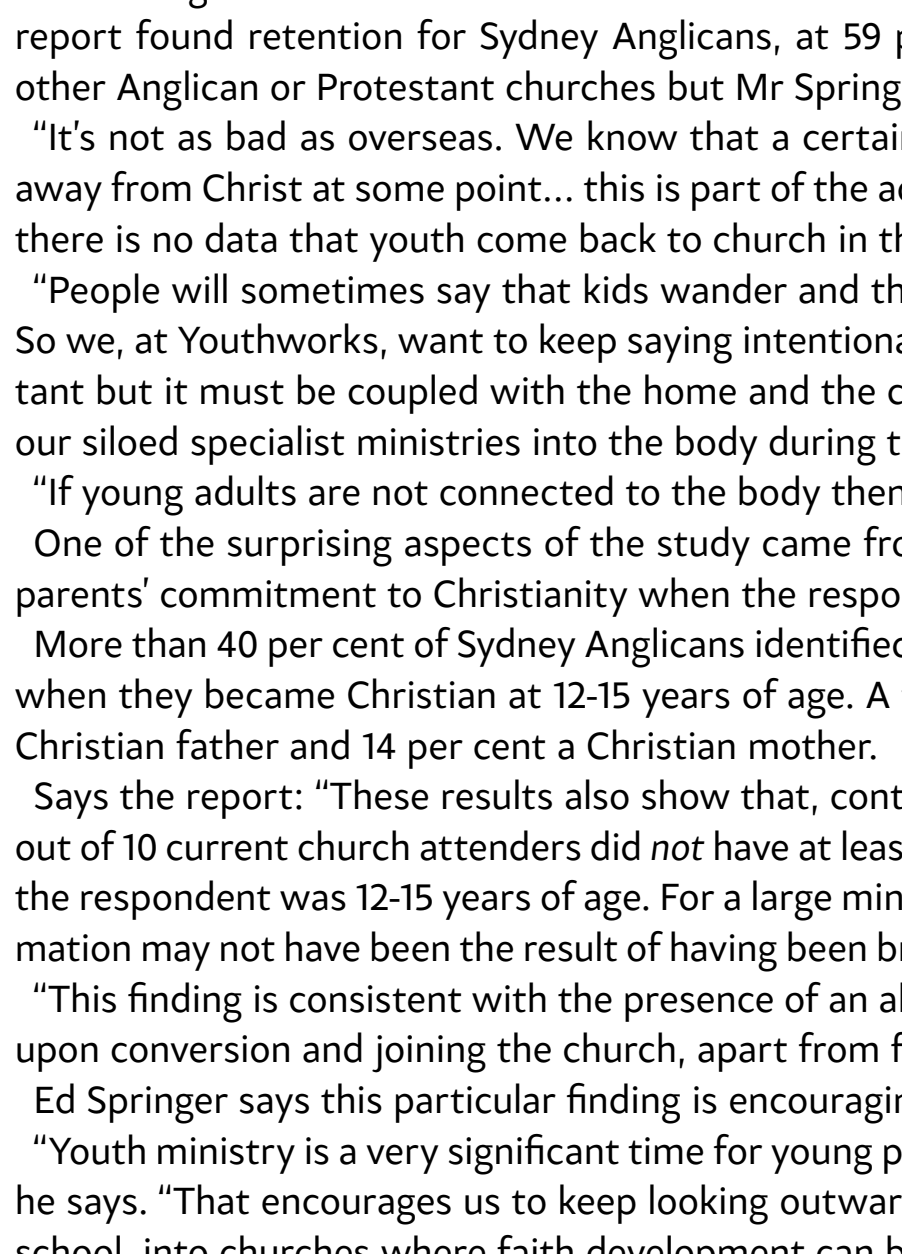
"We want to indefinitely walk alongside our Aboriginal brothers and sisters, supporting them and encouraging them, [and] point each other to the fact that we are one family in Christ," Mr Woodhouse says.

"It's a wonderful thing and we are incredibly blessed to be a part of it."

It takes a village for success in youth ministry

YOUTHWORKS HAS ISSUED A RENEWED CALL FOR CHURCHES AND FAMILIES TO WORK TOGETHER to support youth and children's ministry after the release of detailed statistics on young people in churches.

The research shows the majority of Sydney Anglicans say they became Christians before the age of 20. Local church youth and children's ministries were the most influential activities in their coming to faith, followed by camps or conferences and church services.



However, it also highlights the challenges of retaining church membership for people in their 20s.

"Seventy-eight per cent of people turn to faith in the years up to age 19, and 46 per cent in the teenage years," says the Rev Ed Springer, (Left) Youthwork's Head of Ministry Support. "That just encourages us to keep young people's ministry a key priority in our churches."

The report covers questions commissioned by Youthworks in the 2016 National Church Life Survey and was written by Anglicare researcher Dr John Bellamy.

"Another finding that struck us was that there is room to grow in how we do our intentional youth ministry."

However, it also highlights the challenges of retaining church membership for people in their 20s.

"Seventy-eight per cent of people turn to faith in the years up to age 19, and 46 per cent in the teenage years," says the Rev Ed Springer, (Left) Youthwork's Head of Ministry Support. "That just encourages us to keep young people's ministry a key priority in our churches."

The report covers questions commissioned by Youthworks in the 2016 National Church Life Survey and was written by Anglicare researcher Dr John Bellamy.

"Another finding that struck us was that there is room to grow in how we do our intentional youth ministry."

However, it also highlights the challenges of retaining church membership for people in their 20s.

"Seventy-eight per cent of people turn to faith in the years up to age 19, and 46 per cent in the teenage years," says the Rev Ed Springer, (Left) Youthwork's Head of Ministry Support. "That just encourages us to keep young people's ministry a key priority in our churches."

The report covers questions commissioned by Youthworks in the 2016 National Church Life Survey and was written by Anglicare researcher Dr John Bellamy.

"Another finding that struck us was that there is room to grow in how we do our intentional youth ministry."

However, it also highlights the challenges of retaining church membership for people in their 20s.

"Seventy-eight per cent of people turn to faith in the years up to age 19, and 46 per cent in the teenage years," says the Rev Ed Springer, (Left) Youthwork's Head of Ministry Support. "That just encourages us to keep young people's ministry a key priority in our churches."

The report covers questions commissioned by Youthworks in the 2016 National Church Life Survey and was written by Anglicare researcher Dr John Bellamy.

"Another finding that struck us was that there is room to grow in how we do our intentional youth ministry."

However, it also highlights the challenges of retaining church membership for people in their 20s.

"Seventy-eight per cent of people turn to faith in the years up to age 19, and 46 per cent in the teenage years," says the Rev Ed Springer, (Left) Youthwork's Head of Ministry Support. "That just encourages us to keep young people's ministry a key priority in our churches."

The report covers questions commissioned by Youthworks in the 2016 National Church Life Survey and was written by Anglicare researcher Dr John Bellamy.

"Another finding that struck us was that there is room to grow in how we do our intentional youth ministry."

However, it also highlights the challenges of retaining church membership for people in their 20s.

"Seventy-eight per cent of people turn to faith in the years up to age 19, and 46 per cent in the teenage years," says the Rev Ed Springer, (Left) Youthwork's Head of Ministry Support. "That just encourages us to keep young people's ministry a key priority in our churches."

The report covers questions commissioned by Youthworks in the 2016 National Church Life Survey and was written by Anglicare researcher Dr John Bellamy.

"Another finding that struck us was that there is room to grow in how we do our intentional youth ministry."

However, it also highlights the challenges of retaining church membership for people in their 20s.

"Seventy-eight per cent of people turn to faith in the years up to age 19, and 46 per cent in the teenage years," says the Rev Ed Springer, (Left) Youthwork's Head of Ministry Support. "That just encourages us to keep young people's ministry a key priority in our churches."

The report covers questions commissioned by Youthworks in the 2016 National Church Life Survey and was written by Anglicare researcher Dr John Bellamy.

"Another finding that struck us was that there is room to grow in how we do our intentional youth ministry."

However, it also highlights the challenges of retaining church membership for people in their 20s.

"Seventy-eight per cent of people turn to faith in the years up to age 19, and 46 per cent in the teenage years," says the Rev Ed Springer, (Left) Youthwork's Head of Ministry Support. "That just encourages us to keep young people's ministry a key priority in our churches."

The report covers questions commissioned by Youthworks in the 2016 National Church Life Survey and was written by Anglicare researcher Dr John Bellamy.

"Another finding that struck us was that there is room to grow in how we do our intentional youth ministry."

However, it also highlights the challenges of retaining church membership for people in their 20s.

"Seventy-eight per cent of people turn to faith in the years up to age 19, and 46 per cent in the teenage years," says the Rev Ed Springer, (Left) Youthwork's Head of Ministry Support. "That just encourages us to keep young people's ministry a key priority in our churches."

The report covers questions commissioned by Youthworks in the 2016 National Church Life Survey and was written by Anglicare researcher Dr John Bellamy.

"Another finding that struck us was that there is room to grow in how we do our intentional youth ministry."

However, it also highlights the challenges of retaining church membership for people in their 20s.

"Seventy-eight per cent of people turn to faith in the years up to age 19, and 46 per cent in the teenage years," says the Rev Ed Springer, (Left) Youthwork's Head of Ministry Support. "That just encourages us to keep young people's ministry a key priority in our churches."

The report covers questions commissioned by Youthworks in the 2016 National Church Life Survey and was written by Anglicare researcher Dr John Bellamy.

"Another finding that struck us was that there is room to grow in how we do our intentional youth ministry."

However, it also highlights the challenges of retaining church membership for people in their 20s.

"Seventy-eight per cent of people turn to faith in the years up to age 19, and 46 per cent in the teenage years," says the Rev Ed Springer, (Left) Youthwork's Head of Ministry Support. "That just encourages us to keep young people's ministry a key priority in our churches."

The report covers questions commissioned by Youthworks in the 2016 National Church Life Survey and was written by Anglicare researcher Dr John Bellamy.

"Another finding that struck us was that there is room to grow in how we do our intentional youth ministry."

However, it also highlights the challenges of retaining church membership for people in their 20s.

"Seventy-eight per cent of people turn to faith in the years up to age 19, and 46 per cent in the teenage years," says the Rev Ed Springer, (Left) Youthwork's Head of Ministry Support. "That just encourages us to keep young people's ministry a key priority in our churches."

The report covers questions commissioned by Youthworks in the 2016 National Church Life Survey and was written by Anglicare researcher Dr John Bellamy.

"Another finding that struck us was that there is room to grow in how we do our intentional youth ministry."

However, it also highlights the challenges of retaining church membership for people in their 20s.

"Seventy-eight per cent of people turn to faith in the years up to age 19, and 46 per cent in the teenage years," says the Rev Ed Springer, (Left) Youthwork's Head of Ministry Support. "That just encourages us to keep young people's ministry a key priority in our churches."

The report covers questions commissioned by Youthworks in the 2016 National Church Life Survey and was written by Anglicare researcher Dr John Bellamy.

"Another finding that struck us was that there is room to grow in how we do our intentional youth ministry."

However, it also highlights the challenges of retaining church membership for people in their 20s.

"Seventy-eight per cent of people turn to faith in the years up to age 19, and 46 per cent in the teenage years," says the Rev Ed Springer, (Left) Youthwork's Head of Ministry Support. "That just encourages us to keep young people's ministry a key priority in our churches."

The report covers questions commissioned by Youthworks in the 2016 National Church Life Survey and was written by Anglicare researcher Dr John Bellamy.

"Another finding that struck us was that there is room to grow in how we do our intentional youth ministry."

However, it also highlights the challenges of retaining church membership for people in their 20s.

"Seventy-eight per cent of people turn to faith in the years up to age 19, and 46 per cent in the teenage years," says the Rev Ed Springer, (Left) Youthwork's Head of Ministry Support. "That just encourages us to keep young people's ministry a key priority in our churches."

The report covers questions commissioned by Youthworks in the 2016 National Church Life Survey and was written by Anglicare researcher Dr John Bellamy.

"Another finding that struck us was that there is room to grow in how we do our intentional youth ministry."

However, it also highlights the challenges of retaining church membership for people in their 20s.

"Seventy-eight per cent of people turn to faith in the years up to age 19, and 46 per cent in the teenage years," says the Rev Ed Springer, (Left) Youthwork's Head of Ministry Support. "That just encourages us to keep young people's ministry a key priority in our churches."

The report covers questions commissioned by Youthworks in the 2016 National Church Life Survey and was written by Anglicare researcher Dr John Bellamy.

"Another finding that struck us was that there is room to grow in how we do our intentional youth ministry."

However, it also highlights the challenges of retaining church membership for people in their 20s.

"Seventy-eight per cent of people turn to faith in the years up to age 19, and 46 per cent in the teenage years," says the Rev Ed Springer, (Left) Youthwork's Head of Ministry Support. "That just encourages us to keep young people's ministry a key priority in our churches."

The report covers questions commissioned by Youthworks in the 2016 National Church Life Survey and was written by Anglicare researcher Dr John Bellamy.

"Another finding that struck us was that there is room to grow in how we do our intentional

Christian teachers in a public school

TARA SING

THERE ARE MANY WAYS FOR CHRISTIAN TEACHERS TO BE SALT AND LIGHT WHEREVER THEY work, but Priyanka believes it is vital for those in the public education system.

In an environment that is open to so many ideas and beliefs, and where Christians can be few and far between, it's important to be aware of the opportunities for sharing and showing the love of Christ.

"I want to help new or existing teachers find their feet in how to be visible Chrisitans in what can sometimes be a hostile environment," she says. "Whether it's a formal program put in place, joining up with another organisation, or whether it's something informal like a prayer meeting or a Bible study. It's nothing prescriptive, it's about being salt and light in a public setting."

Priyanka says it's important for Christians to remember that how they live speaks volumes.

"I'm so aware of people looking at me and saying, 'How can you be a Christian and say this or that?' We know the grace we have, so it's about trying to find that balance of representing Christ in the most Christlike way, but also being a real person. There's nothing worse to a non-believer than this fake, artificial, unreal representation of Christianity."

However, sharing Christ is more than what we do, it's also what we say. "Too often out of fear, Christians don't speak up," Priyanka says. "I get that. But we're also called to be salt and light. We can speak into situations lovingly.

"I'm from a Sri Lankan background, and it's been really good for people to see and hear a different version of Christianity that they wouldn't see. Dominant Christian voices in the media are people who are of a particular generation and demographic, so to have a younger female from an ethnic minority representing ideas that they might have otherwise thought were very rigid and specific has been refreshing.

"I don't think we have enough Christian teachers in the public system, and there are many who are quiet. The world is hostile to Christians, so it's finding the balance and knowing how to navigate it. It's about loving our staff members, our students and putting practical strategies in place that we can use to do good.

"Knowing also that we're not on our own is important – we have organisations like Anglican EdComm who are there to support us."

Priyanka shared her experiences at the Anglican EdComm seminar for new and preservice teachers last month.

FAITH IN PUBLIC

Lana Hirth, class of 2012



I had three Christian teachers in my final years of public high school. It was really cool to know that the teachers I liked and respected and admired were also Christians and had a faith.

My science teacher in particular showed care for us, and especially for me when I was struggling with things at home. He took the time to help me apply for special exemptions for my HSC and he pointed out that my circumstances weren't normal and that I could apply.

When everyone complained about other teachers, my Christian teachers would act respectfully and not ever diss their colleagues. The way they spoke about other teachers was different to the non-Christian staff.

Their impact wasn't about having a "gospel conversation". You don't have to rely on that alone. The way you care for each student and look out for them, even when you're really busy, is huge. On the whole, their level of care and understanding was different. I didn't have to understand the thinking or reasoning behind their actions, I just felt the impact and that's what stood out to me, rather than having a big explanation of theology. I felt they made the time and cared.

Tech tools for Tassie

A PILOT PROGRAM IN TASMANIA, SUPPORTED BY BUSH CHURCH AID, IS SEEKING TO PROVIDE extra teaching and training options for resource-poor churches.

The Rev Ted Brush, BCA's regional officer for NSW & ACT, explains that – as part of the organisation's centenary celebrations this year – “we asked diocesan bishops all over Australia if they were interested to apply for grants for innovative ministries.

“The initiative coming out of Tasmania is to try and find a way of providing good-quality resources for people in remote parishes. If you're in a little parish, and you've maybe got two or three centres as well, it's really hard to pull people together – and it's particularly hard to do that for training.

“Here in Sydney if there was a conference on, I'd take a group of people to it... but locals in Tasmania are not going to travel all the way across the state to an event or fly to Melbourne!

With this resource the rector can bring that kind of training to his local people without them having to go beyond, perhaps, the local town. It could provide input for small group ministry, leadership development – just all the disciple-making stuff that goes on in the church.

“And for guys who are struggling to find someone else to give them a break in the pulpit, there are sermons available so they might be able to find someone to lead and give them a chance to take a Sunday off occasionally.”

Director of ministry development for the Diocese of Tasmania, the Ven Stephen Carnaby, says the project is still in its early stages but videos are already being taken of sermon series in Hobart and Launceston, and 20 people from across the diocese have received training from Ridley College (another project partner) to help prepare further materials.

The diocese is beginning the work with a parish in northeastern Tasmania – about three hours' drive from the nearest city. This parish has a few honorary ministers but no rector, so its members can benefit on a weekly basis from the resources that will be available.

“We're making the most of new technologies for supporting churches in rural or remote communities, particularly where stipended clergy are not available or can't be afforded,” Archdeacon Carnaby says.

“The plan is to make good-quality weekly preaching available, through a central website... plus online training to supplement and support local Christian leaders in churches. We also hope to have small groups in these churches – led online by an external leader – that provide for spiritual transformation, development and multiplication of leaders, with a shared mission to reach the community with the gospel.

“We're excited to see how God can use new technologies and methods to build up churches and make disciples in these more remote communities.”

BENDIGO BROTHER FOR BCA

Bush Church Aid has announced that the Archdeacon of Bendigo, the Ven Greg Harris, has been chosen as its new national director – replacing the Rev Dr Mark Short, who became Bishop of Canberra-Goulburn in April.

Archdeacon Harris has a wealth of ministry experience in rural and regional Australia, having served in the parishes of Collarenebri and Guyra in the Armidale Diocese after graduating from Moore College, as well as spending the past 12 years as rector of South East Bendigo. He has been Archdeacon of Bendigo for the past eight years and is also the diocese's Vicar General, in addition to being a member of General Synod Standing Committee.

The chairman of BCA, Fred Chilton, said that Archdeacon Harris had supported the society in each parish he had worked in.

Mr Chilton added that, while in Bendigo, “Greg has contributed to the leadership of the diocese, including the development and implementation of a number of strategic plans. But most of all Greg is passionate about preaching the good news of Jesus.”

Archdeacon Harris said of his appointment, “How gracious is our Lord? Two strong passions of mine – country ministry and my support of BCA's vision – have now come together in a new way. I only pray that God may grant me the ‘grace, grit and gumption’ to serve like all those who have heeded God's calling and faithfully served BCA.”

Archdeacon Harris and his wife Karen will finish up in Bendigo at the end of this month. He begins his new role in August.

CHOICES?

I am normally a big fan of SC but was pretty disappointed with your May issue. The so-called Choices section was little more than seven pages of full-blown advertising for Anglican schools. For a magazine that is normally so focused on the gospel and so helpful in helping Christians to stand out for the gospel, this article seemed pretty shallow. Instead of encouraging parents to think about sending their kids to a school where they can best serve Jesus, this article seemed to encourage parents to send their kids to Anglican schools because they have good music programs and robotics. These may be well and good, but are fancy facilities really what parents should be basing their choices on about what school they send their kids to?

What about the very humble and mission-centred choice which many ministers and congregation members make to not send their kids to a comfortable, well-resourced Anglican school, but instead to a local public school where they can maximise their impact for the gospel and connect with local families? Next time you decide to run the Choices section, why not interview someone who has chosen to send their kids to a public school, and ask them why they made that choice?

Callum Irving
West Ryde

KARLIE'S FAITH

Your story "Karlie's testimony" (SC, May) was beautiful. Such a sweet and loving young lady, Karlie touched my heart. Her love for her family, her rabbits and Jesus was a joy to read.

Keep praying for Grandpa to be saved, Karlie. Believe that one day he will be. Thanks, Karlie. You are beautiful.

Dave Vincent
Bidwill

GETTING TO GRIPS WITH CULTURAL MARXISM

I am writing to congratulate *Southern Cross* for having the foresight and courage to print the "Cultural Marxism" article by the Rev Rob Smith in April's edition.

I have studied this issue for many years, have been doing my best to inform people of the issues, and have been despairing that seemingly nobody within Reformed Evangelical circles had noticed or cared enough about it to study or mention it. To see this article made my heart sing.

Rob Smith is clearly very informed on the issue and sees it for what it is – a direct antithesis to the word of God. Marxism, in any form, is a direct affront to the living God. Cultural Marxism is a cancer to our society and, most importantly, it is a cancer in the Church.

Step one is always to know the enemy, and this article is a brilliant start to that. It is my prayer that Moore College and clergy all over the Diocese inform themselves of the dangers of Marxist thinking and just how it has permeated our thinking, our society, and our church.

Worldview matters – and may our worldview "be transformed by the renewing of our mind".

Thank you again for printing what I think is one of the best and most important articles I can recall in *Southern Cross*.

Adam Vidilini
Kiama

I was pleased to see the article by Rob Smith in last month's edition. This is an issue that has been steadily building for years now and at times I have wondered how much anyone outside a few think tanks such as the Menzies Institute actually knows about the march of Cultural Marxism.

While, as Rob Smith observes, the aims and thoughts of such as Marcuse and Horkheimer can be distilled from their writings, one does have to read what they wrote to find this out; nowhere will you find a "Statement of what Cultural Marxism stands for". The Institute of Social Research in Frankfurt was, from the beginning, very careful to never openly say what it stood for.

Faced with having to read what are often not easy-to-read books and articles, it is no surprise that many people today do not know where political correctness etc has come from or what it is about.

As to engaging in public discussion, I would be interested in any suggestions on how to actually do this. It is not easy to do this when the reaction of those you attempt to discuss issues with is merely to abuse and insult.

Jeremy Lucas
Turramurra

Rob Smith is not happy with the way the world is going and magnifies Marxism by saying that it is responsible. In fact, it is only one of many factors that have shaped our world.

I am always wary when political correctness is mentioned. Smith says it is part of the legacy of the cultural Marxists, but these days it is often a term of abuse for anti-discrimination laws designed to allow different groups to live together peacefully in a multicultural and multi-religious society.

As for Smith saying that Marxism is a corruption of the gospel, the slogan attributed to Marx "from each according to ability and to each according to need" seems fully in accord with the ethos of the gospels and, unfortunately, equally unattainable in our imperfect human societies.

We can all agree with Smith's call for Christians to show a better way, one that avoids "hate" politics and transcends Left-Right polarisation.

James Moore
Kogarah

I just wanted to write to you to express my appreciation for the cover article in the April edition of *Southern Cross* entitled "Imaginary conspiracy or revolutionary reality" by Rob Smith.

In all the years that *Southern Cross* has been published (and I think that I have read every one of them) I have not seen a better, more timely or necessary article than this piece.

Rob has researched well and written it plainly and succinctly, yet without any emotionalism (for which he would have had good cause) or embellishment of the facts.

It should be required reading for all in the Church of today, whether they are "ordinary" Christians or those who aspire to any form of leadership or teaching office. Thanks Rob. Keep up the good work.

The Rev Neil Flower
Hornsby

LARGE PROBLEM, SMALL PRINT

I am sending this email to draw your attention to the print size in your magazine. I have your April edition, which has a great number of excellent articles, but because of age (I am 79) and associated deterioration of eyesight, I find the print hard to read.

I appreciate the economics of smaller print so more can be fitted in. As your magazine is distributed to many of the elderly as well as to the visually impaired, I am sure that I am not the only one affected by this!

Slightly larger print would certainly help, if this would be at all possible.

Peter Hewitt
Figtree





CMS MOVE FOR KINSTEADS

At the end of this month, the **Rev Robin Kinstead** and his family will leave Christ Church Northern Beaches to go to St Andrew's Hall in Melbourne, with a view to going overseas with the CMS.

"It's time," Mr Kinstead says. "I think the church family is ready to send us and our family is at the point where our children are taking part in this change: we're going for God as a family."

The Kinsteads have been serving CCNB and the community for almost 10 years, including supporting an independent plant, Northern Beaches Church, in their parish.

They have had talks with CMS in the past, at times when Mr Kinstead had a potential international ministry position to go to. This time, "We said to God, 'Here we are, send us', and CMS has said, 'Okay, we'll send you... but we don't yet know where!'" he laughs.

A strong possibility is international church ministry, but they're also open to theological education wherever God might want them. "But at this stage, really, we're just trying to leave and leave well."

Whatever they do in ministry, they will do as a team. Sarah Kinstead has been teaching pastoral evangelism at Mary Andrews College and training in chaplaincy for the new local hospital, in addition to pastoral supervision and serving at CCNB.

She says: "One of the advantages of going with slightly older children is their gifts to serve alongside us are becoming more evident. Our son's technical talents are put to good use in helping with the audio-visual ministry and our daughter's love of performing arts has led her into doing puppet shows."

Adds Mr Kinstead: "We were trained in ministry here in Sydney, and we're now being sent by Sydney into the world... We're entirely confident that the Lord is going to be on the journey with us and going ahead of us. As we transition our encouragement comes from God's words to Joshua to 'be strong and courageous' because we know the Lord is with us, and from 1 Corinthians 10:31, 'so whether you eat or drink (or leave your house or even leave the country!) do it all for the glory of God!'"

GRAHAM'S GO TO THE CORSO

After more than 16 years as rector of Christ Church, St Ives, the **Rev Andrew Graham** became senior assistant minister at St Matthew's, Manly on April 29.

"I've been committed to long-term ministry at St Ives so when Bruce Clarke [the rector of Manly] approached me about the role... I explained to him that I was committed to ministry over the long term," Mr Graham recalls. "He said, 'Well, 16 years is quite long term! Then he described the role... and the more we thought and prayed about it the more excited we got about a new season of ministry – despite the immense wrench it would be to leave St Ives.'"

Mr Graham is now in charge of the care ministries at St Matt's, which include ministries within congregations as well as programs for the wider community.

"St Matthew's is very much in the community and in the village of Manly. It's got great care things already happening, but I've been asked to do what I can to strengthen them so that, more and more, St Matthew's is obeying the call of Jesus to love one another as he's loved us, and to love our neighbour as ourselves."

Mr Graham is also involved with the 8am traditional congregation and is thrilled at the prospect of focusing more on older members of the parish. "It's so critical for churches to see that our older brothers and sisters are pressing on in the faith, and that we're taking on opportunities with our older brothers and sisters in the community to ensure they've got an opportunity to turn to Christianity."

Since their move, Rhonda Graham has continued to work as a registered nurse in an aged care centre, but Mr Graham says she is also looking for ways in which she can be involved in their new church.

"At St Ives, Rhonda was involved in pastoral care ministry to women and evangelistic ministry through *Christianity Explored*... but Bruce has given us both space to understand things before we jump in."

Mr Graham says some have been surprised to hear he has stepped down from leading a large parish and not gone on to lead another. But his answer is simple. "I think most people, when we chat, understand that after 16 years a change is a good idea... and this [job] really fits where we're up to."

"The way I'm built, I don't have to run things. I'm willing to, if that's what's needed. St Matthew's needs a team of excellent staff who understand what it means to work as a team. I respect Bruce as a leader and I'm very happy to sit under his leadership."



VALE

The **Rev Bruce Chapman** died on May 7 after a two-year battle with melanoma. Bruce Graeme Chapman was born on September 1, 1968. He grew up in Sydney's southern suburbs in a Christian family and, during his late teens, came to a deeper understanding of the sacrifices required to live for Jesus.

He led the high school youth group at Jannali for 10 years, in addition to beginning and running youth camps. Mr Chapman obtained degrees in science and engineering and worked as a structural engineer before the challenge to full-time ministry – which he had felt since university – saw him begin study at Moore College in the mid-1990s.

After graduating in 2000 he was a lay worker, then assistant minister, at St Philip's, Eastwood, where he spent eight years overseeing youth and young adults' ministry, ran Eastwood's evening service and ministry training, and began two youth groups.

Mr Chapman moved with his family to Darwin in 2008, with Bush Church Aid, to work as the diocesan youth minister for the Northern Territory, and at St Peter's, Nightcliff.

"Bruce touched so many lives during his ministry in Sydney and the Northern Territory," said BCA's interim national director, David Crain. "He had many God-given gifts but was a very humble man. Bruce trusted deeply in the promises of Jesus and did not fear death. While he would have loved more time on earth with his family, he was grateful for the time he had been given."



Deaconess Jean Standfield died on April 3. Born Jean Denise Standfield on September 3, 1925, the young Miss Standfield was inspired to study at Deaconess House (now Mary Andrews College) by her confirmation teacher and gained a Deaconess Diploma and a Licentiate in Theology. She was commissioned as a deaconess on March 11, 1951.

Dss Standfield served at Surry Hills for three years and worked from 1955-61 at Panania, where she conducted church services, taught Scripture in seven local primary schools and two high schools, began a Christian Endeavour group and supervised other ministries.

She then worked at Thornleigh for six years, and from 1968 to 1982 was chaplain to Chesalon nursing homes across the Diocese, leading Bible studies and caring for the residents. "She talked to the elderly about God's love for them, giving them comfort knowing that they were still important," her nephew Michael Mullins said at her funeral.

In 1982 Dss Standfield became Head Deaconess for three years and, in retirement in Castle Hill, led Christian groups at her village, and took part in church services and other ministries.

Said Mr Mullins: "Jean, you were greatly loved, and you will be missed, but your future is now brighter than ever".



Deaconess Valda Powell died on April 9. Born Valda Edith Groves on September 9, 1930, she committed her life to Jesus at 16 after attending a crusade at St Saviour's, Punchbowl.

Miss Groves attended Bible college classes at night, then did further theological study at Deaconess House. Made a deaconess in 1953, Dss Groves worked in the parish of West Ryde before being reassigned to St Luke's, Liverpool – where she met her future husband, Ralph Powell. They were married in 1958.

They felt God calling them to raise their family in the country and moved to Coolah in central western NSW with their four children in 1966.

Knowing the importance of God's message of salvation Dss Powell became superintendent of the parish Sunday school, ran Scripture classes, Bible studies, missions and camps as well as serving as a deaconess and pastoral assistant.

Mr Powell died suddenly in 1982 but Dss Powell kept the Sunday school going, ran church services in outlying villages and kept working full-time. After retiring in 1988 she moved to the Blue Mountains to be closer to children and grandchildren.

"She had a deep respect for family – not only her own but as a member of God's family," her son Jonathan said at her funeral. "We were witnesses as she served and loved the Lord Jesus in every location God sent her."



Grounding fellowship in truth

DR GLENN DAVIES



PAUL'S FINAL WORDS TO THE CHURCH OF GOD IN CORINTH ARE WELL KNOWN TO all Christians. They are simply referred to as "The Grace", though not to be confused with giving thanks before meals!

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all (2 Corinthians 13:14).

The apostle's prayer is both simple and profound, trinitarian in character as it reflects the commitment of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit to all believers.

I have often reflected upon the phrase, "the fellowship of the Holy Spirit". This is both personal and corporate, just as Paul's image of the believer's body as a temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:19) sits alongside his image of the church as the temple of God's Spirit (1 Corinthians 3:16). As the Spirit has taken up temple residence in us, our fellowship or communion with him enables us to experience God's gift of union with Christ.

As Anglicans, we recognise our Christian faith is not individualistic, but corporate. Because we belong to Christ, we are part of a local church; because we are Anglicans, our local church belongs to a diocese; similarly, our diocese belongs to a province; and our province is part of the worldwide Anglican Communion.

Many readers will be aware of the term "Anglican Communion" and be equally aware of the turmoil in which it has been engulfed since 2003 when the Episcopal Church in the USA decided to consecrate Gene Robinson, a man in a homosexual relationship. At the time, many described this breach of Anglican faith as "a tear in the fabric of our Communion".

When he called the bishops of the Anglican Communion to the Lambeth Conference in 2008, the then Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams, chose not to invite Bishop Gene Robinson. However, neither was Bishop Martyn Minns invited, as he was then leader of a Nigerian-based church in the United States. The church had been set up for faithful Anglicans who believed that the endorsement of same-sex relationships was contrary to the teaching of Scripture. As it indeed is.

The same view had earlier been expressed by an overwhelming majority of bishops at Lambeth 1998 (expressed in Resolution I.10). In 2008 Archbishop Williams declared: "I have to reserve the right to withhold or withdraw invitations from bishops whose appointment, actions or manner of life have caused exceptionally serious division or scandal within the Communion". Yet the Archbishop invited the American bishops who participated in Gene Robinson's consecration, contrary to the advice of the Primates' Meeting. The tear in the fabric of the Communion widened.

This failure to appreciate the gravity of the situation was to have far-reaching consequences. It prompted the formation of the Global Anglican Future Conference (GAFCON) in Jerusalem in 2008, where more than 1100 delegates – bishops, clergy and lay people – gathered to preserve and promote the truth and power of the gospel of salvation in Jesus Christ as Anglicans have received it.

This became not merely a moment in time but evidenced a movement of the Holy Spirit in its desire to reclaim the truths of God's word, despite the prevailing spirit of the age, where God's word had been abandoned. No Sydney bishops attended Lambeth 2008, whereas they all attended GAFCON 2008 in solidarity with those who still believed in the Reformation formularies of the Church of England.

Now, more than a decade later, Justin Welby, the Archbishop of Canterbury, has called together the bishops of the Anglican Communion. However, unlike his predecessor, he has chosen to invite three bishops who are in same-sex relationships. Moreover, somewhat surprisingly, where the bishops' spouses have been invited, the Archbishop has not invited the spouses of bishops in same-sex marriages because they are in violation of Resolution I.10. The incoherence of this is hard to fathom. He is excluding those who have married a bishop of the same sex but invited the bishops themselves! He seems to ignore the fact they, too, clearly contravene the same resolution. When challenged about the inconsistency, the only answer from the Office of the Archbishop was that Lambeth is for bishops – that is, bishops in the Anglican Communion, regardless of their beliefs and actions.

It is worth remembering the very first Lambeth Conference in 1867, where Archbishop Longley of Canterbury stated the reason for gathering the bishops of "the Reformed Church in visible communion with the United Church of England and Ireland" was for the purpose of

cementing yet more firmly the bonds of Christian communion between Churches acknowledging one Lord, one faith, one baptism, connected, not only by the ties of kindred, but by common formularies... our very presence here is a witness to our resolution to maintain the faith, which we hold in common as our price-less heritage, set forth in our Liturgy and other formularies.

Sadly, not all the bishops who have been invited to Lambeth 2020 adhere to our "common formularies", as neither the Thirty-nine Articles nor the principles of the *Book of Common Prayer* are considered as standards of doctrine for many Churches in the Anglican Communion. This causes us to consider what exactly is the Anglican Communion? Who decides who is part or not a part of this worldwide body? Historically bishops from around the world were invited by Canterbury to join in conference for fellowship and to resolve difficulties. A fundamental agreement on doctrine always undergirded the deliberations.

It is highly regrettable to say this, but I believe the Anglican Communion has lost its moorings and has become, effectively, the "Canterbury Communion". In other words, rather than the Archbishop of Canterbury inviting those bishops who uphold the foundational trio of the Bible, the *Book of Common Prayer* (1662 edition, which includes the Ordinal) and the Thirty-nine Articles, he has erred in two respects. He has failed to invite bishops who uphold Reformational Anglicanism and has invited bishops who have repudiated these fundamental truths.

For this reason, we can be thankful the Constitution of the Anglican Church of Australia defines our communion with other Churches doctrinally, not historically. Section 6 states it in this way:

This Church will remain and be in communion with the Church of England in England and with churches in communion therewith, so long as communion is consistent with the Fundamental Declarations.

Our Constitution does not tie us to Canterbury. It ties us to the Church of England, but only as long as its doctrine is "consistent with the Fundamental Declarations". If England were to depart from the "commands of Christ" or from "His doctrine" the Anglican Church of Australia would no longer be in communion with the Church of England. Our communion with other Churches is similarly grounded in doctrine, not merely "the ties of kindred". The seriousness of departing from the commands of Christ, as evidenced by the recent decision of the Anglican Church of Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia to allow bishops to authorise the blessing of same-sex unions in their dioceses, caused our national General Synod Standing Committee to note that this decision "is contrary to Resolution I.10 of the 1998 Lambeth Conference and is not in accordance with the teaching of Christ (Matt 19:1-12)". Accordingly, it noted that relationships "have been impaired".

For these reasons the Sydney bishops have each, of their own volition, declined the invitation of the Archbishop of Canterbury to attend the 2020 Lambeth Conference. They have communicated graciously with the Archbishop and explained their reasons for not accepting his invitation. They have done so because the Lambeth Conference no longer reflects the Anglican Communion, a communion of Anglican churches that share the same fundamental beliefs, encapsulated in the Anglican trio of Bible, *Book of Common Prayer* and the Articles. Canterbury may wish to invite those who have repudiated the teaching of Christ and the doctrinal declaration of the 1998 Lambeth Conference, but it will merely be a meeting of the Canterbury Communion.

If we return to the apostolic Grace of 2 Corinthians, it is the fellowship of the Holy Spirit that binds us together in Christ, not the historical ties of the British Empire. This was the view of the bishops who gathered at Lambeth in 1920, who issued an Encyclical Letter to "The Faithful in Christ Jesus".

For half a century the Lambeth Conference has more and more served to focus the experience and counsels of our Communion. But it does not claim to exercise any powers of control or command.... The Churches represented in it are indeed independent, but independent with the Christian freedom which recognises the restraints of truth and of love. They are not free to deny the truth.

The constraints of truth and love have persuaded us not to go to Lambeth. While it has been argued that the absence of conservatives will prevent our voice being heard, it is our very absence that sends the loudest message. If Lambeth 2020 were to overturn or modify Resolution I.10, then that would sound the death knell of the Canterbury Communion, but not of the Anglican Communion. For, we shall continue to strengthen the Anglican Communion and gospel proclamation through our association with the Anglican Future movement (GAFCON). After all, the GAFCON Primates represent 50 million of the 70 million Anglicans in the world.

Our fellowship of the Spirit is a communion grounded in the truth, the truth of God's word and his gospel. When the structures that were put in place to guard this communion fail, it is incumbent upon us to renew, reclaim and refresh those structures for God's mission in the world and for the greater glory of God.

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

Cancer and faith

It's one thing to talk about trusting God in all things – it's another to do it. Bishop Ivan Lee has been walking the walk since a cancer diagnosis the best part of four years ago; he talks to JUDY ADAMSON.

BISHOP IVAN LEE COMES INTO HIS OFFICE, CHATTING NON-STOP, A MUG OF TEA in one hand and a cream biscuit in the other. He's cheery, engaged and looks as healthy as a horse – which seems ironic given the conversation we're about to have will focus on the cancer he knows is shortening his life.

He's been working three to four days a week, taking Tuesdays off to sit in a hospital ward while medical staff "pump in fancy drugs that help your immune system".

It's an immunotherapy trial, Lee explains, so although "it's unpleasant to have needles stuck in your arm and the drugs going in and out, no one in the ward is crying out in pain. It's not like chemotherapy, where you have poison running around in your system and the feeling sucks. Immunotherapy is much more pleasant for most people."

Of course, it doesn't sound pleasant. Any of it. But Lee spends at least half his time on the ward talking phone calls and answering emails – although he acknowledges he's the only one in the trial group who does so.

"I don't feel that sick, whereas other people in the ward are obviously sick, they're lying there looking terrible," he says. "Apart from my cancer my health is quite good. It's weird isn't it? So, the cancer's in my liver – pancreatic cancer that's spread to my liver. But apart from that I feel fine."

He chuckles a little as he says this: the irony of feeling fine when he has secondary cancer is not lost on him. And while he might look well, there's a lot less of Ivan Lee than there used to be.

Diagnosed with early stage pancreatic cancer in October 2015 (jaundice in his eyes sent him off to the doctor), he has since had two lengthy operations and two rounds of chemotherapy.

Lee doesn't know how big the original tumour was, but he's clear about the pieces of him that are missing as a result. The first operation, known as the Whipple procedure, took out sections of his pancreas, stomach, small bowel and bile duct, as well as removing his gall bladder. Then some "replumbing" was done to enable ongoing digestion.

After the chemotherapy finished he was in remission, until July last year saw the first signs of cancer returning.

"That's a pretty good run," he says, adding that people diagnosed with pancreatic cancer "typically last months, not years... so it's quite a blessing to still be alive".

Another operation saw the removal of the remainder of Lee's pancreas, as well as his spleen. He began a second round of chemotherapy, which was halted last November after doctors found the cancer had spread to his liver. Then he was linked up with the "cutting edge" immunotherapy trial.

GRIEF, NOT FEAR

Lee talks about all this in a matter-of-fact way, saying he has felt grief rather than fear about what lies before him and his family.

"My very first response was shock, I guess, but the next thing was... this is my personal test of faith," he says. "I didn't have any doubts that I was going to trust God, but it's one thing to preach and teach to trust God in all things... now it's actually a personal test."

"The next thought was, 'I'm gonna die soon'. Because it's pancreatic cancer, I know that means you're not going to last long."

"I wasn't afraid. There wasn't any fear and I still don't have any fear. It was the sadness of not seeing my kids have their first kids, and that I'm not going to retire and enjoy some down time with my wife, which she so much deserves after 40 years of ministry to others and moving around."

As it turns out, he's had three years and eight months since his original diagnosis, and early this year he and his wife Virginia became grandparents twice in the space of six weeks. Says Virginia: "After his diagnosis there was the question, 'Would he even come out of hospital?' Since then we've had three more years that we imagined we might never have had".

They're both grateful for this blessing, but Virginia Lee is aware of living with two things in tension. First, tremendous sadness about her husband's "terrible disease" and the loss of things they had expected to share – such as growing old together. And second, despite recognition that "this is deeply sad and deeply wrong [there is] the underlying knowledge that it'll be okay because God's in this, he's going to work out his purpose. It could be tough, it'll be heartbreaking, but in the end we'll be okay".

One issue they've had to grapple with from the outset is that Lee's illness has happened so much in the public eye.

"We were in the hospital with the diagnosis, it had just happened, and then we're ringing the Archbishop, we're having to let everybody know and Ivan is emailing Kirsty, his PA, organising backup bishops for all his appointments from his hospital bed," Virginia Lee recalls. "There was a sense where you wish you had a minute to deal with it on your own."

"The flipside has been the enormous amount of support we've received, and to know that many people have been praying. At times, when you can't do it for yourselves, there are other people there holding you up by their prayers... people we don't even know who have taken time to write us a note or send us an email or contact us. You feel totally unworthy in that sense, but it's been a lovely blessing to have that sort of support and care."

Lee is grateful that Virginia and his three daughters – Rachel, Sandy and Jess – all trust in Jesus. He says that since his initial diagnosis there have been "lots of tears but not anger, not questioning why. None of the kids have said 'Why you, Dad?', and I haven't either. I know it's common for other people, but it was already an understanding in my head that anyone can get sick and Christians don't get any special privileges in a fallen world."

"I've taken a lot of funerals and at every funeral I've said to myself, 'I'm going to be in that box one day'. It's a sermon back to me, and that has been good for my soul in the sense of saying, 'Hey, I'm not going to live forever, I'm going to be in that coffin one day so don't waste time: serve Christ to the very end'."

Over the years of operations, recovery and therapy, the many people who work with Lee at St Andrew's House and the people in churches have noticed his positive attitude and smile. He says, "It's not an act. People ask, 'How do you get through this?' and I tell them there are a lot of things, but right at the top is a trust in God's sovereignty. If God says you're to live, I'll live, and if he says it's time, then it's time. And I believe God knows what he's doing, in my life and in the world."



Tiring treatment: Ivan Lee prepares for more chemotherapy.

HARD REALITIES, GREAT SAVIOUR

However, it's important that no one labour under the mistaken belief that, with his faith, Lee finds his situation easy. He says he cries "about once every fortnight", and always because of overwhelming sadness.

"It just hits me again afresh. I might meet someone and I think, 'This is the last time I'm going to see whoever it is'... and so, it's tears and some depression and grief. It's a mix, but it never goes past one day – so the next day I'm back like this again." He grins cheerfully. "I bounce back at work and people wouldn't know that I was sick. And also, when I'm tired I don't come in, so you're not going to see me in my pyjamas looking horrible! Although, as I get sicker, I won't be as bouncy."

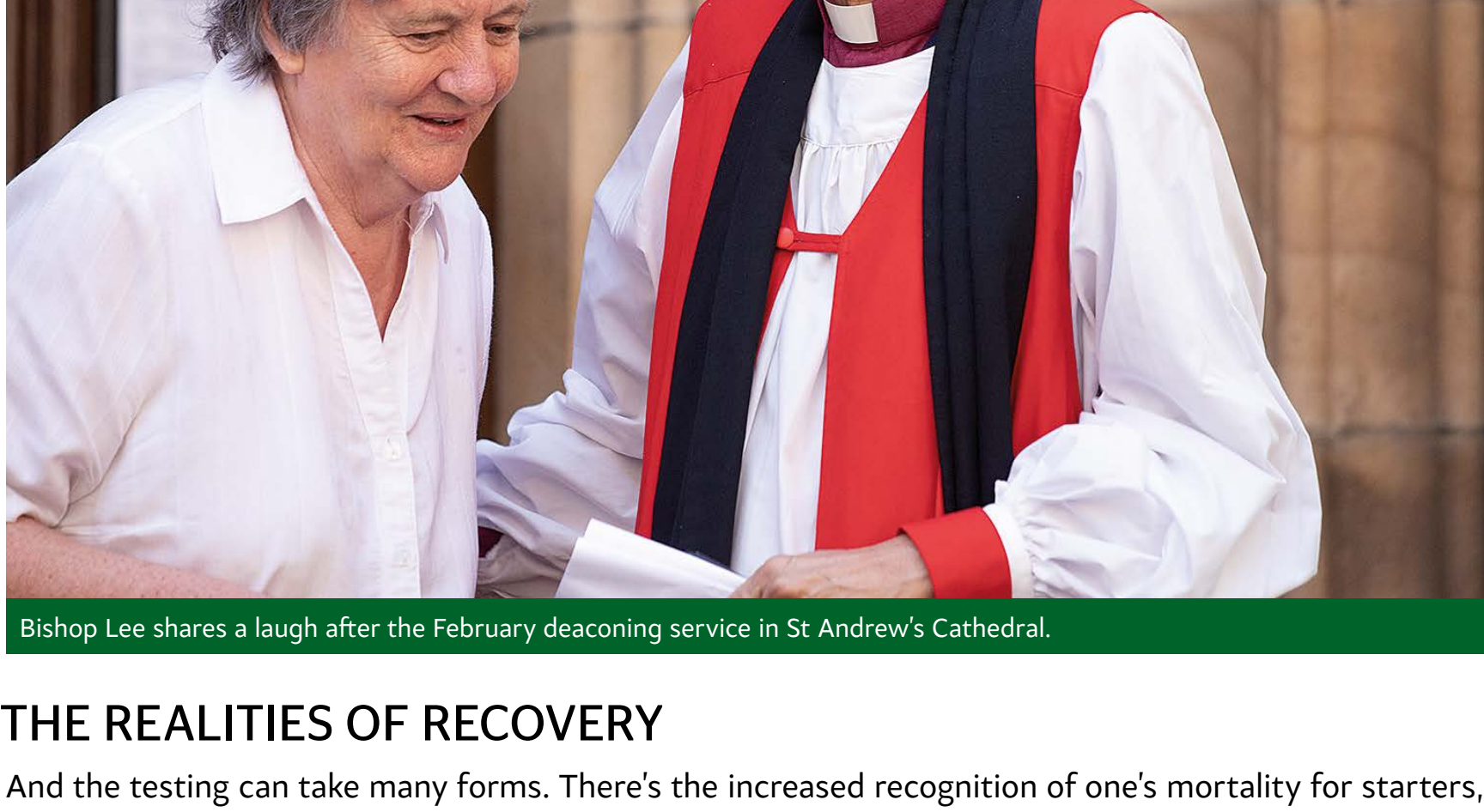
He believes one of the most valuable things he can do during this time is to encourage those who are going through the valley of cancer themselves or with a loved one. He has been sending out regular email updates across the Diocese and, as Bishop of the Western Region, tends to be in a different church pretty much every week. When there, instead of being interviewed about his role or what is happening in the Diocese, he is asked about his cancer.

"One of the phrases I use is that I know a lot of us are afraid of death – even as a Christian it's not something we look forward to – but let me encourage you that I really believe that if I can get through this, you can too," he says. "And it's not because I'm such a strong Christian, it's that I put my trust in a strong God and we can all do that."

"It's a hard time. Very challenging. And what I have said to people is the time to get to know God and really learn is when you're well, 'cause when you're sick you can almost be unable to pray. For months after the operation there was so much pain."

"My scar goes completely across my whole body" – he gestures from one side of his abdomen to the other – "and after the [first] operation I couldn't read the Bible, and my prayers were a lot shorter and more to the point, I guess, because I just didn't have the words. I was too tired."

"Yet I had the spiritual maturity and the trust that had been developed over many years and that prepared me for that moment. Knowing God, faith in Jesus and his resurrection were already in place, [so] grow your faith now. You want to have that before the testing comes."



Bishop Lee shares a laugh after the February deaconing service in St Andrew's Cathedral.

THE REALITIES OF RECOVERY

And the testing can take many forms. There's the increased recognition of one's mortality for starters, but there's also the struggle to recover from major operations, chemotherapy and dealing with one's reduced capacities.

After his epic first operation in 2015, Lee was at home, exhausted and incapacitated, and found himself depressed for the first time in his life.

"That was huge," he recalls. "Not only can you not do much because you're in so much pain, but I found that there were moments of depression, this terrible sinking feeling – 'What's the point of doing anything?'"

"I'm a very outgoing, extrovert person but I've learned that when I'm suffering and I'm sick and in pain I don't like people around, whereas the rest of the time I have people around all the time. I didn't want visitors... but I wanted my family."

"Yet me being by myself in the house were my most dangerous moments. I started to get very down, and that's when I started to pull myself out into the garden."

This might sound like the perfect balm for any soul, except that Lee has always hated gardening – particularly weeding. He jokes that God's sense of humour was well in action here, as he had virtually no energy and couldn't work, but he had to do a small amount of physical exercise. So, weeding it was.

"I thought, 'I hate gardening and here I am: Virginia's gone to work, I'm home by myself and I'm on my knees pulling out weeds!' he laughs. "But strangely there was some level of satisfaction. I'm outside, the wind's on my back and I've got out in the fresh air instead of lying on my bed. And now, I still do it. I've learned to appreciate it."

After Lee's second operation he not only became diabetic but, with no spleen, also had to take tremendous care to avoid sickness because of a compromised immune system. He's supposed to stay out of shopping centres – "Too many germs" – and getting a temperature over 38C means going straight to the emergency department.

He has learned not to ignore the latter after a sudden temperature spike saw him in hospital for four days, but he's relaxed the ban on shopping centres. "It was a good boy for about three or four months, but now I'm back in the Westfields," he says with a laugh. "I thought, 'Too bad!'"



New blessings: Ivan and Virginia Lee in January with Zoë, their first grandchild.

THE HURTING AND THE LOST

Having experienced the gamut of health, emotional and spiritual challenges associated with his cancer, Lee believes his ability to care for others has increased.

"I hope I was compassionate towards the suffering previously," he says. "I believe I was. But you are changed by getting cancer."

He takes a deep breath and thinks for a moment. "I would say I have more empathy for people who are suffering. When you're regularly in a room with 20-40 cancer patients, you meet a lot of people who are suffering... the thing that happens, you look across the beds at each other, your eyes meet, and you think, 'Yeh, I know'. There is this fellowship, this empathy and understanding that's very powerful."

"When you go through it, it takes your understanding to another level."

Yet that doesn't mean Lee was "preaching" to those in the beds near him.

"It's often not the place for it," he says. "People are really down. It is obviously not the place for being preachy and what might be perceived as 'Bible bashing'. It's just not appropriate... yet I feel a greater urgency to tell people about Jesus. So I do it by personal testimony, telling people why I have peace, why I'm not afraid of death, although I did say to one person, 'Jesus died and rose for you, so put your trust in him'. It just felt right."

"Of course, everyone's got limited time – but I've got less time to tell them! I've renewed my efforts with unbelievers that I meet. I catch cabs to all my treatments, so I talk about Jesus with pretty much every cab driver!"

The first issue he had to hand over to God once he became ill was worrying about who would look after his immediate family once he was gone. But, even more than that, he says, is the concern he has for family and friends who aren't Christian.

"That was my worst worry," he says. "So, there's a grief of missing my own family, and worry about those that don't know Christ. Honestly, that was what was depressing me rather than 'Poor me, I'm sick'."

He looks out his office window thoughtfully. "I've communicated that to them as well. Non-Christian brothers and sisters, the biggest thing I'm worried about is that I'm not going to be around to talk to you about God! That's the biggest thing in my head, I think. And for me that's not a sign that I'm religious or a strong Christian or anything, to me that is proof that God's at work in my life – that's the Holy Spirit."

CANCER SUPPORT

Virginia Lee has these suggestions for those supporting someone with cancer, or one of their loved ones.

- A person is not defined by their cancer. They are still the same person.
- Don't presume a person can do nothing just because they have cancer.
- Allow the patient you're caring for to have whatever feelings they have, otherwise they're going to try and be positive for your sake: "they have to be allowed to have days when they feel lousy, days when they feel sad, days when they want to talk and days when they don't want to talk".
- Meals for a patient's support person and immediate family can be tremendously helpful, as they can then get on with focusing on their spouse, parent, child etc.
- Don't stop being someone's friend because they have cancer and you don't know what to say. Work it out.
- If you are a cancer patient's main support person, find someone who can support *you* – a particular friend, or a counsellor. Ensure you have moments to refresh yourself with a walk or something you love to do, so you have renewed energy to look after the one who is ill.
- You won't feel fine every day. Some days the sadness of the situation will hit you all over again, and that's okay.
- Remember to have an eternal perspective. "This isn't how it's supposed to be: this is a fallen world and there's something better to look forward to."

NOW... AND THE FUTURE

Some weeks after our chat, Lee is back on chemo. The immunotherapy trial hasn't worked and the cancer is spreading, so his oncologist is having another crack with a different, much stronger type of chemotherapy, which unfortunately is resulting in painful side effects.

He's had a port put into his chest so the drugs can be pumped straight into a major blood vessel near his heart, rather than through a cannula inserted each time into his hand ("which can be very painful – it's the bit I really hate").

Lee doesn't know how long the chemo will run. It depends on whether it works. If it doesn't – there may be further options or there may not. The family will cross that bridge when they come to it. For now, there's still time to be together, and time to laugh.

Says Virginia: "The other day he was nauseous, eating a dry cracker and saying, 'I must be pregnant!'" And I thought, 'Yeh, that's how you do it'. Whenever you're in a conversation with him there are always laughs and genuineness – there's no pretence. And there are a lot of people who relate to that."

Some days are difficult, as she watches her "Energisier Bunny" husband struggle with a fatigue he's never had before – as well as the knowledge of what will eventually come.

But, she says, "We're not the only ones going through this. There are people every day who are getting these diagnoses."

"We all pretend we're not going to die... but it's a reality that's not only sobering, it makes you want to make the most of life, to look around every day, see the good things and, as the psalmist does, give thanks to God for everything. His love continues to hold you up. That undergirding truth, which just warms my soul, is that God is good and this will be okay."

"I'll be a total mess – but I'll be a total mess with God right in there with me, strengthening me and growing me and continuing to learn how deep his love is. And that it's enough to cover everything."

Ivan Lee is aware that, as the Apostle Paul says in Philipians, "to live is Christ and to die is gain". If he dies, he knows he will go to be with Christ, "so that's gain... but if I live, I have more time to do fruitful ministry for Christ and I must admit, I love the ministry of the gospel that I do. I love what I do. So, that's gain as well."

"My passion is for local churches and helping local churches grow and I'd love to keep doing that, but that's up to God. My times are in his hands, and that's the psalm says."

"You see each day as a bonus. And I do, but I've also said to people, 'Although you're really well and you don't have cancer, every day's a bonus for you as well. Every day God gives you. Each day's a gift.'"

Volunteer or servant?

KARA HARTLEY

AT MY CHURCH, PROBABLY LIKE MANY OTHERS, WE HAVE A VISION/MISSION STATEMENT: Connect, Grow, Serve. That's what we're on about. People to connect with Christ and his people, to grow in their love of Christ, and to serve Christ. Yet over the past few years I've been struck by the use of "volunteer" as an alternative word to "serve", to the point where the mission statement could read Connect, Grow, Volunteer.

Now that doesn't sound quite right, does it? But am I just being pedantic, or is there a problem with the growing reference to church members as volunteers?

I suspect volunteer is being used with good intentions, as ministers are keen to find helpful terms to describe those in their church community who contribute to ministry and the general running of the church. Yet even with the best of intentions I fear using "volunteer" has some unintended, unhelpful consequences.

It's true that when we belong to a church we volunteer for things involved in running church. People volunteer to be on the welcoming team, to help with morning tea or church dinners and be on the cleaning roster. When I began at a new church a few years ago it was exciting to consider how I might use my gifts and time to serve and contribute to the work of the gospel in my local community. I joined the welcoming roster and helped with kids' church during the holidays. I've enjoyed leading *Christianity Explained* and attending working bees.

It's also true that in the life of a church community some people serve in lots of ways, others in one or two, while some simply come on Sundays and perhaps to a mid-week group. Then there are some who lead Bible study groups, meet with others to read the Bible, visit and care for the sick. Non-rostered work, but still serving. This is life in church. People considering their circumstances and seeking to serve God and one another in ways that are sacrificial and yet sustainable.

However, not only do we now speak of people volunteering for various activities around church, more recently the term volunteer move from a verb to a noun. People no longer simply volunteer for this or that, but are themselves given the title "volunteer". That's the description I hear ministers using: "I'm keen to encourage my volunteers", or "I want to train our volunteers". Yet, as I said, does this really matter? I believe it does, because it changes the way I think of church, and the way I think of myself.

Without getting into an extensive discussion on the theology of church, in the New Testament we see several descriptions and metaphors: the people of God (1 Peter 2:9), a gathering (Acts 8:1), the body of Christ (Romans 12:5f) and family or household (Ephesians 2:19; 1 Timothy 3:15), among others.

Romans and 1 Corinthians describe how those who belong to the body of Christ are to serve the body using the various gifts that God gives them (Rom. 12:5f; 1 Cor. 12:12f). So as I belong to a local gathering I serve as a member of that expression of Christ's body, for the good of that body.

There is a reason I am on the welcoming roster and not the music team! As I serve in various ministries I do so as a servant of Christ, a member of the body of Christ, for his glory. As Romans 12:1-2 says, in view of God's mercies I offer myself as a living sacrifice to him.

Finally, 1 Peter 2:4-5 gives us a vision of the priesthood of all believers. That is, in the economy of salvation I am no more or no less than the "priest", but through Christ have the same access to God.

The danger of describing people in church as volunteers is that we begin to obscure or even deny these realities. By adding the category of volunteer into community, the church is now an organisation and brothers and sisters aren't family or fellow servants but volunteers. The paid staff are the professionals, leading and running an organisation that I help out with in my spare time – not unlike friends who volunteer to manage their kid's soccer team, or volunteer to be the class mum.

Of course, volunteers can be highly committed and highly invested in the organisation with which they're involved. But, unlike the soccer club, when I come to church I am not coming to this "thing" – this event put on by a bunch of paid professionals.

When I give money in the plate or via direct debit I am not paying my dues to belong to the club. When I turn up on Sunday morning I am not attending an event, called church, put on by the paid professional. When I sign up for welcoming I am not volunteering in his organisation. I commit to the welcoming first and foremost because of my relationship with God and my commitment to offer myself as a living sacrifice to him.

"Volunteers" might be a neat, shorthand way of referring to the unpaid non-staff in our churches but I find it unsatisfactory. I am a servant, a member of Christ's body, part of God's family, his household. So: Connect, Grow, Volunteer? I hope it doesn't catch on.

SC

The Ven Kara Hartley is the Archdeacon for Women's Ministry.

Stand firm and stand out

MICHAEL STEAD



IN THE PAST DECADE IN AUSTRALIA THERE HAS BEEN A PROFOUND SHIFT IN PUBLIC ATTITUDES towards Christians. We have always been viewed as a bit strange and out of step with the world – wowsers or oddballs or dorks, depending on your vintage – but until recently opposition to Christians has been relatively benign. Yet, suddenly, Christians have become suspicious, bigoted, hurtful and perhaps even dangerous.

In this emerging context, it is tempting for us to dive for cover and stay under the radar – to keep our Christian faith as a private matter that is just between us and God. Or if we dare to express it in public, then to do so only when it is safe, behind the closed doors of our churches.

We have recently seen what happened to Israel Folau when he quoted from the Bible on his personal social media page. If that can happen to him, what will happen to the rest of us?

In our new context, it is important for Christians to remember that the experience of opposition and hardship is nothing new – in fact, if anything, it has been the norm for most Christians across time. It was certainly the case for the church based at Thessalonica.

The church at Thessalonica got off to a rocky start. The Apostle Paul preached about Jesus, and this had two immediate effects – conversion and opposition. Some people heard the message and believed it and became followers of Jesus. But others were offended by what Paul preached, and became hostile in their opposition to Jesus and his followers. Acts 19 tells us what happened next:

they rounded up some bad characters from the marketplace, formed a mob and started a riot in the city... They dragged Jason and some other brothers before the city officials, shouting: "These men [Paul and Silas] who have caused trouble all over the world have now come here, and Jason has welcomed them into his house. They are all defying Caesar's decrees, saying that there is another king, one called Jesus"

(Acts 19:5-7).

That situation is not unlike ours today. People opposed to the message of Jesus stir up trouble; they misrepresent and distort what we believe, take us to court, and then they accuse us of being the troublemakers!

Paul had to leave the city of Thessalonica after only three weeks, and soon after wrote the letter we know as 1 Thessalonians, to encourage the church to stand firm and stand out for Jesus.

Paul wanted them to keep standing firm in the Lord. When the Thessalonians first heard the gospel, they welcomed the message with joy, in spite of severe suffering. But Paul was worried that their faith might have wilted under the pressure of opposition. Paul reassures them – and us – that being persecuted for faith in Jesus is normal – even "destined" (3:3). Because of this, no-one should not be "unsettled by these trials".

When I cop flak for being a Christian, I am often unsettled... which suggests that I haven't really taken to heart what Paul says here, or what the Apostle Peter says elsewhere – that we should "not be surprised at painful trials, as though something strange were happening" (1 Peter 4:12).

When I am surprised by opposition I wonder what went wrong, and I start second guessing myself. "If only I waited for a better moment... If only I had said it differently... If only I had been more gentle and respectful". But the reality is that even if my timing was perfect, my words crystal clear and my tone faultless, this would not prevent others from being offended by the gospel. What to us is the sweetest fragrance of life is perceived by others as the stench of death. The gospel message about

"Jesus, who rescues us from the coming wrath" (1 Thess 1:10) is offensive to those who don't want to accept that all people are sinners who need Jesus to rescue us. There is no way to avoid the "offence of the cross" (Gal 5:11), unless we duck for cover and only preach half a gospel.

If we stand firm in the Lord, then we will also stand out for him. Paul commends the Thessalonians because "the Lord's message rang out from you not only in Macedonia and Achaia – your faith in God has become known everywhere" (1:8). Evidently, the Christians at Thessalonica did not hide their faith; they did not stay "under the radar". They were not ashamed to confess with their lips and express in their lives that they were followers of Jesus, even though they suffered for it.

In this new era, we must be prepared to do likewise – to stand firm and stand out for Jesus. Are you willing for your "faith in God to be known everywhere"? Or, to turn the question around, is your faith in God known anywhere?

Let us be unafraid to stand with the faithful saints through the ages, who stand firm in the Lord and are not shaken by suffering and persecution, and who stand out for Jesus, so that the message of the gospel might ring out everywhere.

SC

The Rt Rev Dr Michael Stead is the Bishop of South Sydney.

FIVE BENEFITS OF

congregational
lament

We rejoice and mourn in the Christian life but sometimes we don't see the importance of the latter, writes **WILL TIMMINS**.

“HERE IS A TIME TO WEEP, AND A TIME TO LAUGH; A TIME TO MOURN, AND A TIME to dance” (Eccl 3:4). Fasting and mourning were characteristic of John the Baptist's disciples, consistent with his message of coming judgment (Mk 2:18; Lk 5:29-34; 7:33). Jesus' disciples did not fast, but joyfully ate and drank in celebration of the arrival of the kingdom of God (Mk 2:15-18; Lk 5:29-34; 7:34). The Pharisees frowned upon their merrymaking.

It would be wrong to conclude that the disciples of Jesus, therefore, are not to weep, mourn, or fast, since Jesus clarifies that there would be a time when the bridegroom would be gone and, in his absence, his disciples would indeed fast (Mk 2:19-20; Lk 5:35).

In John's Gospel, Jesus puts it like this: “Truly I tell you, you will weep and mourn, but the world will rejoice. You will become sorrowful, but your sorrow will turn to joy” (John 16:20). When the disciples see Jesus again, sorrow will turn to joy. Initially this happened when they saw the risen Jesus. It will happen finally and completely when Jesus returns and he wipes away every tear (Rev 21:4), and sorrow and sighing give way to “unending joy” (Isa 35:10; 51:11). What a day that will be!

Now, in this age, we both mourn *and* rejoice, knowing the joy of his presence by the Spirit, but also mourning his absence in a world where the powers of evil still hold sway, and suffering in mind and body often overwhelm both righteous and unrighteous alike.

It is right, therefore, when we gather together now, that our fellowship is marked by both joy and mourning, praise and lament. What this looks like will differ from church to church, depending on types of liturgy, forms of prayer, and styles of music. But it is to our great loss if the psalms of lament – which make up about a third of the Psalter and which model for us what the lament of the godly looks like – do not get a look-in somewhere. I suggest there are five benefits (at least!) to singing and praying these psalms together.

LAMENTING TOGETHER EXPRESSES OUR TRUST IN GOD

In many psalms the sufferer brings a sorrowful complaint to God with the question “Why?” (e.g. Ps 10:1; 22:1; 42:9; 43:2; 44:23-24; 74:1) or “How long?” (e.g. Ps 6:3; 13:1; 74:10; 79:5; 90:13). The former typically assumes something about God's character that the lamenter presently cannot see, and the latter something about God's promises that he is presently not experiencing. The promised messianic kingdom (Ps 2:4-9) is not in evidence. But the very act of addressing God in this way takes its stand on the truth of God's word, whatever the evidence to the contrary. We live by faith, not by sight.

Mark Vroegop, in his recent book *Dark Clouds, Deep Mercy*, suggests that there are nine different petitions in the lament psalms that we hear voiced alongside the complaint of God's apparent absence: “Arise, O Lord”; “Grant us help”; “Remember your covenant”; “Let justice be done”; “Don't remember our sins”; “Restore us”; “Don't be silent”; “Teach me”; “Vindicate me”.

One of the reasons that lament has been relatively absent from Western evangelicalism for so long is because of the modern conceit that life is manageable apart from divine intervention. This is, of course, only exacerbated by what Neil Postman famously called our present “technopoly” – a society marked by an excessive trust in technology. But what all the above petitions assume is that God, and God alone, is able to help us. As Ps 121:1-2 puts it, “I lift my eyes toward the mountains. Where will my help come from? My help comes from the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth”. When we lament together we are lifting our eyes, in trust, to our only real source of help.

LAMENTING TOGETHER FOSTERS OPPOSITION TO SIN, SUFFERING, AND DEATH

The deceitfulness and power of the enemy or enemies – so prevalent in the lament psalms, and especially in the psalms of David – is a reminder to us of how vehemently the kingdom of evil opposes the kingdom of Christ. Sin, the world and the devil are fierce in their opposition to God's people. When we lament their work, we refuse to make a truce with the kingdom of darkness.

Sin, suffering and death are normal. But they are not normal like gravity is. They are devastating intruders into God's good creation. Their familiarity in our lives and the world around us so easily breeds apathy.

But if we merely become passive observers or sufferers of these enemies of Christ's kingdom then we fail to reflect Christ, whose life and death was lived in implacable opposition to the kingdom of darkness. When we lament, we refuse to make a truce with sin and suffering, either in our lives or the lives of those around us. We take our stand with Christ against the forces of evil, refusing to acquiesce to their presence in the world.

LAMENTING TOGETHER PROMOTES UNITY IN THE BODY OF CHRIST

In 1 Corinthians 12, Paul challenges a worldly church that is closely mimicking society's preferential honouring of the wise and strong. But within the mutual interdependence of the body of Christ, God wants the less presentable, weaker members of the body to receive the greater care and honour (1 Cor 12:22-24).

The impressive members of the body will always attract attention. To offset that tendency, we need to deliberately and actively care for the weaker members to ensure that there is unity in the body. Paul's desire is that “if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it” (1 Cor 12:26). As Lionel Thornton puts it, there are “no private sufferings” in the body of Christ. As such, we are to “rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep” (Rom 12:15), an exhortation that also comes in a context where Paul is talking about the unity of the many-membered body.

In recent years there has been a steady flow of books from evangelical publishers that deal with the themes of suffering and lament. In most of these, in one way or another, the author recounts his or her personal discovery of the value of lament in the context of debilitating illness, tragic loss, or unforeseen disaster. But in almost every case, the author relates that the discovery has been a personal and private one in the context of a church that was more versed in rejoicing with those who rejoice, rather than mourning with those who mourn.

If we are honest, we are not particularly good at either. A church that frequently laments together cares for weak, suffering members in two ways. First, we are providing the biblical language in which those who are often lost for words can continue to draw near to God in their distress. Second, we are forming the whole body into a community that is more naturally sensitive to sufferers. Our emotional and verbal register expands to be able to more comfortably minister to the suffering in our midst.

LAMENTING TOGETHER STRENGTHENS HOPE IN JESUS' RETURN

We are members of one another in the body only because we are members of Christ, in whom the whole body is joined together. Christians are those who have been united to Christ in his death and resurrection (Col 2:8-3:4; Rom 6:1-11), and, as such, we suffer with him now that we might one day also share in his risen glory (Rom 8:17).

One great reason for praying and singing the psalms of lament is that by doing so we join our voices to the Lord Jesus, the ultimate lamenting Christ of the psalms. Jesus embodied a life of lament as one who was “despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief” (Isa 53:3). He lived and died as the lamenter *par excellence*, with the words of Ps 22:1 on his lips. All the laments of the Psalms find their fulfilment in him.

The significance of this is that as we join our voices together in lament, expressing our solidarity with the suffering, lamenting Christ, we are also thereby anticipating the future glory that we will one day share with him.

God doesn't leave the psalmist in his distress. He answers him in his day of trouble, bringing him – although sometimes only after a long period of patient, perplexed waiting – the hoped-for deliverance: “You turned my lament into dancing; you removed my sackcloth and clothed me with gladness” (Ps 30:11); “I waited patiently for the LORD, and he turned to me and heard my cry for help” (Ps 40:1).

As we join together in saying and singing these words, and others like them, our hope is strengthened that one day we, too, will rise in unending joy with Christ.

LAMENTING TOGETHER ENGAGES UNBELIEVERS IN A COMMON LANGUAGE

So far, I have assumed a particular biblical context of lament that finds its OT apex in the psalms of David, and its NT fulfilment in the Son of David, Jesus Christ. But lament can also be considered more broadly as the universal human experience of sorrowful complaint in the face of the same realities of sin, suffering and death. This explains why some definitions people give of lament are fairly narrow, and others relatively broad. Both have their place, since Jesus laments as both the Son of David and the Second Adam.

It hardly needs saying that someone who is reeling from a cancer diagnosis or the loss of a child, or is racked with chronic pain, or bears the deep scars of abuse, will be receptive to the language of lament, whether they are believers in Christ or not.

The presence or absence of congregational lament will have both pastoral and evangelistic ramifications. By lamenting together, we not only serve one another in love but we engage a fragmented, divided world with a universally comprehensible language. So, I've suggested five benefits of practising congregational lament, especially by embracing the language of the psalms of lament, whether in prayer or song.

Living as we do between the inauguration and the consummation of the kingdom of God, joy and sorrow will always be mingled together in our experience. May praise and lament be similarly joined together when we meet in the name of the crucified, risen Christ.

Dr Will Timmins lectures in New Testament at Moore Theological College.

High-flying nailbiter

JUDY ADAMSON

Balloon
Rated M

WHAT PRICE FREEDOM? IT'S A QUESTION THAT NEVER LOSES ITS EDGE IN A world where being free to live, learn and grow can be just as dependent on the family you were born into as the country in which you live. Oppression can take many forms – social, racial, financial, religious – and even in modern, democratic Australia you don't have to look far to find it.

Even so, it's hard to imagine a life where you're constantly under surveillance, separated from members of your family and terrified of making any slip that would see you and those you love imprisoned, or worse.

Balloon gives us a glimpse into just such an existence, that of the Strelzyk and Wetzel families living in late 1970s East Germany. The Berlin Wall still separates the communist East from the capitalist West, each young teen publicly dedicates themselves to the country's Socialist ideals and telling the wrong sort of joke to someone can bring the Stasi (secret police) to your door.

These families are real, and so is their story – and it's one of those extraordinary tales that, if you didn't know it to be true, you simply wouldn't believe. Because, as the title suggests, the film focuses on their efforts to escape to the West in a homemade hot air balloon.

The strain on the two couples must have been enormous, particularly with their knowledge of the Stasi's past mistreatment of others. They were determined to achieve freedom for their children's sake and, in some cases, be reunited with family members on the other side of the wall.

Director and producer Michael Bully Herbig, with the support of the families involved, has created a taut, nailbiting drama where you're never quite able to relax. At each turn it's uncertain whether a question by a neighbour, a teacher, or even a look over a newspaper is innocent or loaded. Can they trust anyone?



The idea to escape by balloon was the brainchild of maths whiz Günter Wetzel (David Kross). When the first balloon he makes can only take one family, and his wife is too afraid to make the attempt, the Strelzyks try on their own to make it across the border.

The balloon crashes a few hundred metres short and the risk of discovery is ever-present as they return to their small town, trying to cover their tracks and resume a normal life while they decide what to do next.

Eventually, with suspicion building and Günter facing a call-up into the army, they race against time to sew together a second balloon that's big enough to carry all of them.

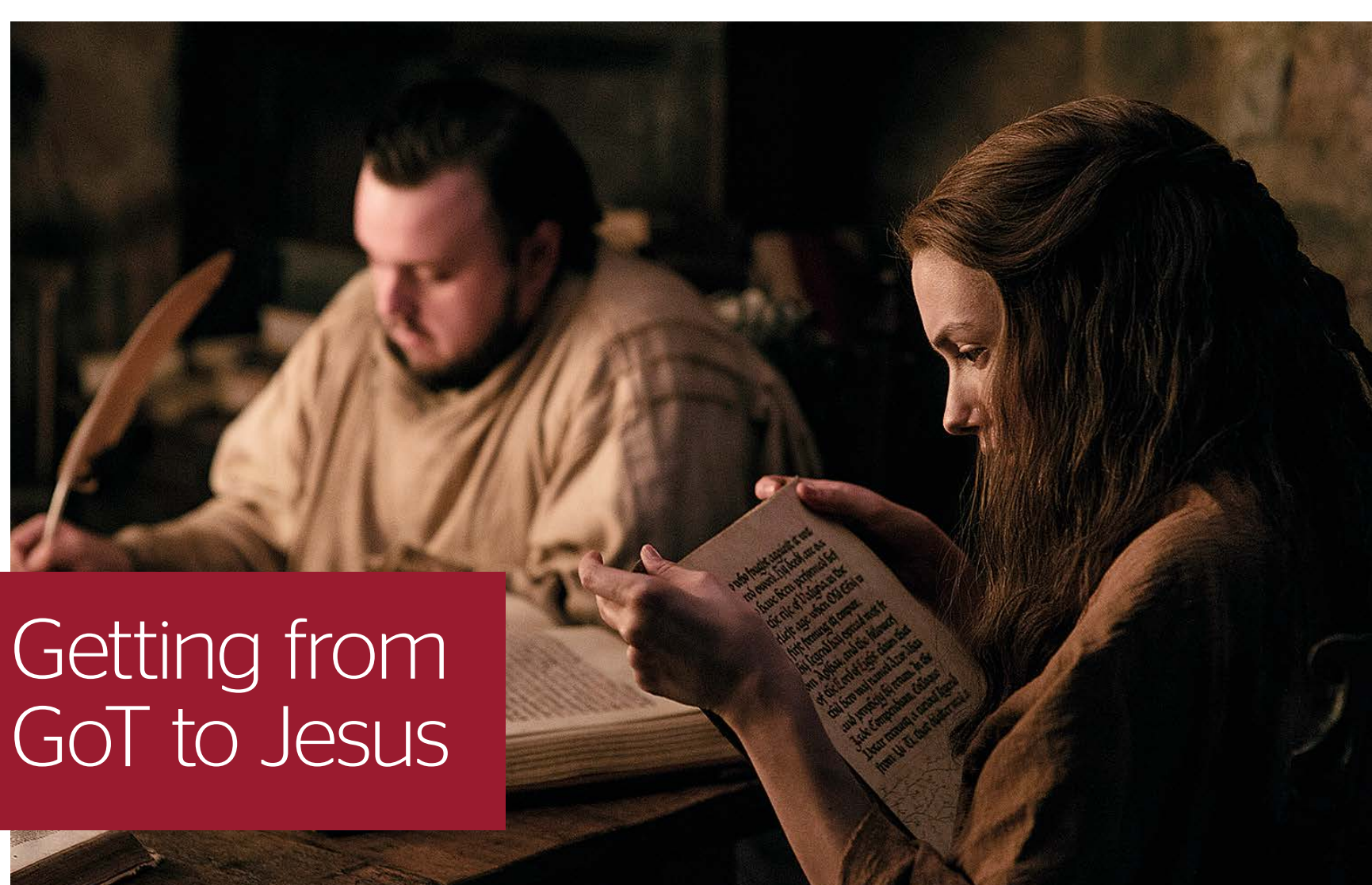
The action see-saws between the families' experiences and those of the men hunting them. The Stasi investigation is led by Lieutenant Colonel Seidel (Thomas Kretschmann), whose attitude flips from philosophical musings to ruthless officialdom with chilling speed. It's a great portrayal.

Germany was reunified in 1989, 10 years after the families made their daring escape, and to say that everything has been wonderful since then would be a lie. Freedom and democracy are still hot-button issues in Germany, just without the Stasi hanging over people's shoulders.

And freedom is no less an issue here in Australia. At the opening night of the German Film Festival last month, Herbig, in a video greeting screened at *Balloon's* premiere, said the film "makes clear that freedom is something that you should never take for granted".

So, how should we use our freedom? Are we willing to share it with others or fight to retain it? And do we recognise and give thanks for the freedoms we already have, in life and in faith? It's worth thinking about – and seeing *Balloon* will give you a white-knuckle ride in addition to food for thought. **SC**

Balloon is showing at the German Film Festival until June 8. The film releases nationally in August.



Getting from GoT to Jesus

HANNAH THIEM

SO, *GAME OF THRONES* IS OVER. AFTER EIGHT SEASONS OF VIOLENCE AND DEATH, millions tuned in to see who finally rules the seven kingdoms.

While there are strong articles around about watching the show – John Piper said that Christians watching the type of sex and nudity common on *GoT* should ask whether they are “recrucifying Christ” – there are some Christians who have watched it.

It is true that *Game of Thrones* is notorious for its graphic representation of violence and sex, but our own Bible reading shows us the world has always grappled with these issues. We can't ignore human nature. The brutality depicted in *GoT* mirrors the brutality in our hearts, and there is value in confronting truths about ourselves and the full extent of our sin.

It is not just in a *Game of Thrones* universe that such violence exists! The families in the Bible were heavily involved with destruction and sexual deviance. Just look to Jacob's family. Judah gets his own daughter-in-law pregnant. Dinah, Jacob's daughter, is abducted and raped. In revenge, her brothers trick an entire town into being circumcised, then massacre them all. Even King David takes a married woman as his lover and arranges for her husband to be killed.

The Bible is filled with broken families. This is the true state of humanity, and it's only when we recognise this reality that we are able to grapple with it. So, what has *Game of Thrones* shown us about our world and how can we use it to point others to Jesus? Rather than pretend we haven't watched it, here are some key themes to use as conversation starters.

EVERY HUMAN IS FLAWED

The characters depicted in the series are morally ambiguous. Even those the audience are positioned to identify with and cheer for make decisions that we cannot be comfortable with. Ned Stark values honour and purity, and is beheaded. Danaerys Targaryen fights for good, but murders thousands in her search for justice.

How many times have you heard someone say, “I'm a good person. I've made some mistakes, but on the whole I'm okay”. This attitude is common, but it's not actually true.

Game of Thrones is confronting in that you see your favourite characters descend into moral ambiguity, but it is helpful to remember that human nature is fundamentally flawed. We are all broken before God.

“Within the hearts of men come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, wickedness, deceit, debauchery, envy, slander, arrogance, and foolishness. All these evils come from within, and these are what defile a man” (Mark 7:21-23).

DEATH IS A REALITY FOR US ALL

Game of Thrones was notorious for killing off key characters. We have said goodbye to many characters who – at the time – seemed like the protagonists. A constant in the show was that your favourite characters would end up dead.

It is easy when not confronted with death every day to forget the reality of it. If you are a *Game of Thrones* fan, you will be fully aware of the frailty of the human body. As Christians, we have reason to be aware of death, but also a hope that speaks into that vulnerability.

“God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son” (1 John 5:11).

THE CYCLICAL NATURE OF LIFE

A central theme in *Game of Thrones* is the cyclical nature of the fight for power. Dany's speech describing the houses as “spokes on a wheel” that continually crush each other is a powerful reminder that things don't change. Despite the promise of Danaerys to “break the wheel”, she becomes a ruler just like her father.

The Bible is realistic about this cyclical nature of humanity. We read in Ecclesiastes that there is “nothing new under the sun”. And we see throughout the Old Testament, and in the world around us, the pattern of rebellion against God repeated over and over.

Kingdoms rise and fall; politicians make promises and fail to keep them. For anyone dispirited about the recent election, the Bible gives confidence in a king who we know will bring peace and justice. Jesus breaks the repetitive cycle of political power struggles.

“The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ; and He will reign forever and ever” (Revelation 11:15).

Whatever your opinion of Season 8, it is not a satisfying ending. Too many people are dead. Too many people have been hurt. It is easy, in modern-day Sydney, where elections are peaceful, to stop longing for heaven. If the bloodshed and destruction depicted by *Game of Thrones* helps us long for true peace, and can help us point others to the one who brings this – in the real world – then perhaps it was worth watching, after all.