

MAY
2017

Southern CROSS

THE NEWS MAGAZINE FOR SYDNEY ANGLICANS

Just one drink...

COMBATING THE DISEASE OF ALCOHOLISM

- + Kingdom contentment
- & *The Case for Christ* on film

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All my stories are hope stories - and my hope is in Jesus, so that's what I paint.

Safina Stewart
Culture



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Food and friendship

A Bankstown church volunteer chats to a local on Anglicare's community pantry day.

AN ANGLICARE MOBILE COMMUNITY PANTRY OPERATING IN BANKSTOWN IS AIMING TO PROVIDE a source of low-cost food as well as a sense of community, particularly for the growing number of refugees arriving from Syria and Iraq.

The pantry, also run in other locations such as Ropes Crossing, Riverwood, Dundas and Granville, is a van stocked with food provided to low-income people with pension, health care or immigration cards. The Bankstown pantry is based at St Paul's Anglican Church, and the majority of clients are people from Syria. "The pantry is a great way to connect with refugees in the area, many of whom struggle to connect with services or even just meet people," says the rector of Bankstown, the Rev John Bartik. "We also have an opportunity here to show them love on a personal level, and hopefully engage with them about Christianity and Jesus as well."

Houssun Zakhary is Anglicare's community settlement worker, and also a Syrian. She says while the pantry is serving the basic need for food, it is also trying to create a community for people who are new to Australian society and hopefully also create long-term connections with Anglican churches.

"The pantry is very much a partnership between the staff at Anglicare and volunteers with the church," she says.

"Any clients who come are able to meet people at the church and connect up with that. The church itself can provide directly for people who need help or refer them to us if they need assistance they can't provide, such as immigration assistance. The idea is really to support churches as they connect with the refugees who are moving in next door."

The Bankstown pantry typically sees 30 to 40 people each time, and most of the clients are families. Alongside the pantry, various personal hygiene and laundry products are available at a nominal cost, with the stall operated by church volunteers. Other church staff and members also regularly attend the MCP to chat with clients and help the work of the pantry run smoothly.

"Many refugees from Syria tend to blend in more, and it's not always clear when Syrian people might need help or need more community," Ms Zakhary says. "Many people who left Syria left behind good jobs, educations and homes – lives that are not too different from what many Australians would know – and they left because of their safety."

"Cost of living is high in Sydney, and trying to juggle all that while learning the system, a language and the worry of family who are back home can be difficult. We can help by supporting basic needs, but also by inviting Syrian people to be a part of our communities in our churches."

SRE review welcomed

ARCHBISHOP GLENN DAVIES HAS WELCOMED A report presented to the State Government on Special Religious Education (SRE) and Special Education in Ethics (SEE).

The report of the 2015 review, released during Easter week, makes 56 recommendations about the implementation of SRE and SEE, complaints procedures, teacher training and curriculum development.

Conducted by ARTD Consultants the report – along with the NSW Department of Education's response to recommendations – has been released on the department's website.

The department says the policy and legal framework supporting freedom of religion and conscience in NSW public schools since 1848 will be maintained.

State Education Minister Rob Stokes (right) said the Department of Education had accepted a number of recommendations to improve transparency and accountability, but added that there was no widespread or systemic evidence of problems in the present system of SRE or SEE.

The recommendations supported by the department include ensuring that schools place clear information about approved SRE and SEE providers – and links to their curriculums – online as well as regularly monitoring providers to ensure they are complying with departmental guidelines.

Archbishop Davies commended the minister and the Department of Education for the thorough nature of the review and the commitment which, according to the report, "recognises the diversity of Australian society and supports parental choice in educating children about their faith".

"I am pleased that the report confirms Special Religious Education has overwhelming support, is working well and is an integral part of the holistic education offered by NSW public schools," Dr Davies said.

"The statistics show that Special Religious Education is operating in 92 per cent of primary schools and 81 per cent of secondary schools, which underlines our commitment to providing the highest quality educational outcomes."

Dr Davies said the Diocese would continue to work with the department in response to the recommendations, adding that a number of areas identified – including the provision of curriculum information – had already been addressed by internal reviews of SRE procedures.

"The Department of Education's own Wellbeing Framework recognises the importance of the spiritual wellbeing of children in developing a sense of meaning and purpose as well as connecting growing students to culture, religion and community," the Archbishop said.

"This holistic approach to education and community involvement is the hallmark of a strong and diverse society of which Special Religious Education is a vibrant and vital part."



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Regional councils to stay



A REVAMP OF THE WORK OF REGIONAL COUNCILS in the Sydney Diocese is imminent after a review found they are still effective despite significant financial constraints.

The work of regional councils was hit hard by the funding downturn after the Global Financial Crisis. In 2015, Synod asked for a review of the purpose and effectiveness of the system.

The subsequent report, which includes the responses from a survey of councils, has just been received by Standing Committee, and found that although a complete funding cut has limited the effectiveness of regional councils in the area of ministry strategy, they are still an effective support for local bishops.

Before the GFC, councils had grant funding for local ministry initiatives. There is now no central funding available. Despite the suggestion that regional councils might simply be replaced by the Mission Area Leaders for each region, the responses given to the survey "highlighted the broader range of professional skills brought by the lay members and the contribution these bring to the effectiveness of the council".

The review added, "The responses also proposed that having members elected by Synod [as opposed to simply being the rectors appointed as Mission Area Leaders in a region] resulted in a wider set of perspectives and skill areas, which are important to the functions of the council."

It was agreed there should be an overhaul of the Regions Ordinance 1995, which decentralised the governance of the Diocese by establishing the five current regions as well as the regional councils. It noted there had been a number of significant changes in the years since the ordinance was passed, including the establishment of Mission Areas in 2009 and the decommissioning of area deaneries.

Standing Committee agreed the 1995 ordinance should be changed by inserting a clause that sets out the purpose of regional councils and requiring that they meet at least annually instead of the existing minimum of four meetings a year.

Regional bishops are in favour of retaining the councils. Bishop of the Western Region, Ivan Lee (above), believes they play a key role. "It's been a great advantage for me to express my plans for the region, get feedback and bounce ideas around with my regional council," he says.

"For me, while I have been sick too, it [the council] has been a great support. Strategically, we look at the region as a whole but the council is in a position to help individual churches when needed. There is also administration to be done – often delegated tasks from Standing Committee.

"As well, for historical reasons, three out of the five councils still have income. So distributing those funds remains a vital task. The fact that the councils bring together lay representatives from each mission area informs and enriches gospel work at a regional level."



ADM unveils city "garden"

Anglican Deaconess Ministries recently unveiled its new renovated office space – a "garden in the city". Designed for the flourishing of women, the all-in-one office and study space is available for use by ADM and Mary Andrews College staff as well as community members. The official unveiling, held on March 30, was attended by Archbishop Glenn Davies, the Archdeacon for Women, the Rev Kara Hartley and many MAC staff and ADM supporters. The "opening" ribbon was cut by CEO Dr Kate Harrison Brennan (left), ADM's director of operations Ken Breakspear and chairwoman of the ADM board Gillian Davidson.

Small grants, big impacts

A SERIES OF SMALL GRANTS FROM ANGLICAN DEACONESS MINISTRIES (ADM) WILL HELP CHURCHES caring for people arriving under the special Syrian and Iraqi Refugee Intake.

The eight grants, totalling just over \$50,000, will support ministries such as ESL classes, early learning schemes and emergency support and accommodation.

"We are thrilled to provide funding to these churches, enabling them to help meet the needs of refugees in their communities," says ADM's director of Mercy and Justice Ministries, Margo Leach. "Through these grants we hope these churches will lead the way in welcoming, supporting and demonstrating the love of Christ to refugees who have fled Syria, Iraq and other nations in conflict."

One of the parish recipients is St Andrew's, Lakemba. Its \$16,000 grant will go towards supporting its suite of existing initiatives such as ESL classes, community lunches and dinners and a food pantry.

"The plan is to resource what we already do so that we can extend our invitation to as many refugees as we can," says the Rev Dr Margaret Powell, cross-cultural worker for the Georges River region with a special emphasis on Lakemba. "That includes our picnics, but also things like our playgroups and English classes.

"At the moment we lack the resources to accommodate large numbers of people with our ministries, but this will allow us do that – to take the things we already do and do them better."

The other parishes that received grants are Ashbury, Bankstown, Gymea, Greenacre, Hoxton Park, Ingleburn and Wollongong.

Word ministry in Arabic



Spread the Word: Sami Youkhana and David Clarke with one of the Arabic bibles.

FREE ARABIC BIBLES ARE HELPING TO FACILITATE MINISTRY TO ARABIC-SPEAKING MIGRANTS, particularly recent refugee arrivals to Australia.

More than 2000 bibles – the result of several donations – have been provided by the Bible Society, and a large proportion have been distributed by Anglicare. All contain both English and Arabic text, allowing for shared use between Arabic and English speakers as well as proving useful as a teaching aid.

One beneficiary of the bibles is Hoxton Park Anglican Church, which has an active Arabic-speaking ministry, with its Arabic services led by the church's Iraqi lay worker, Pastor Sami Youkhana.

"This has a very great impact," Mr Youkhana says of the bibles. "Many of these people have lived all their lives in places where no English is spoken, and then they come here and suddenly have to speak and read English all the time. Almost everyone that I have given one of these bibles to has no English.

"It's a part of creating connections with people and the gospel, to be able to understand in your own language."

Anglicare's refugee and migrant outreach worker, Cheryl Webster, says, "It's been great to hear from churches and individuals about the impact these [bibles] have had.

"One story I heard was of a Syrian woman whose face lit up at being given this Bible as a gift – and it was something she was being given in her own language. There have been a lot of positives through this already and we've been glad to help connect parishes with these resources."

For Hoxton Park, the provision of the bibles is a wonderful addition to its ongoing ministry to Arabic speakers, particularly the many refugees in the area.

"We're basically trying to minister in a language they understand, through a culture that is appropriate, and with a gospel focus," says rector the Rev David Clarke.

"It's been a great joy to see how God's opening doors, and some of these people are just the most delightful and lovely people I've had the pleasure of meeting."

Kangaroo Valley kicks a goal



Say, "10 per cent!" Locals smile for rector Andrew Paterson at Kangaroo Valley's 10am service.

THE DIOCESAN MISSION OF 2002 MIGHT HAVE BEEN SUCCEEDED BY MISSION 2020, BUT THE original goal of seeing 10 per cent of the population in church is well within the grasp of Kangaroo Valley Anglican Church.

Kangaroo Valley, between the Southern Highlands and the Shoalhaven regions, has a total population of approximately 1000, making it the smallest of the 270 parishes in the Diocese.

However, when the Bishop of Wollongong, Peter Hayward, visited recently he was so encouraged by the turnout on an average Sunday that he posted a photo of the congregation on social media.

"I had the pleasure of attending and preaching at the 10am service – just a normal Sunday gathering," he says. "There was an earlier 8.30am service that had 15 attending.

"Some parts of the Diocese of Sydney are a long way from the city. But under the leadership of Andrew Paterson you can see the extraordinary outcome."

The photo, snapped by Mr Paterson up the roof of the historic church, was posted by Bishop Hayward on Facebook – and his pastoral visit to the parish "went viral".

"A leader like Andrew will never – given our preference to highlight size and influence as the noteworthy criteria – get the acknowledgement that he should have," Bishop Hayward says. "But I for one want to give thanks to God for Andrew, his family and the saints at Kangaroo Valley. And yes, they are getting very close to the 10 per cent goal that was thought to be unattainable!"

City to country ministry



The vicarage facelift team (from left): Gordon Hunter, Trevor Loveday, Bundarra ministry leader Pat Kennedy, Rhonda Drayton, Paul Drayton, Rob Rupenevic, Engadine-Heathcote rector James Warren and Steve Middleton.

BUNDARRA ANGLICAN CHURCH IN THE DIOCESE OF ARMIDALE HAS BEEN REJUVENATING ITS ministry to the local community, supported by a leadership couple from Sydney.

Pat and Jenny Kennedy, originally from Engadine-Heathcote Anglican Churches, made the move up to Bundarra in July last year after a conversation with the Bishop of Armidale, the Rt Rev Rick Lewers – who is also the previous rector of their home church.

“He suggested to us to come up and look after one of their churches that didn’t have a minister,” Mr Kennedy says. “We liked the lifestyle, we loved the church [at Bundarra] and the work people there were already putting in. We saw the need and decided to take up the role. We absolutely love it.”

In addition to preaching and running services, the Kennedys have helped begin other ministries. Last year’s Christmas carols event at the local club attracted about 90 people, while Scripture classes at the public school have been so well received that the church has been asked to expand them.

Mr Kennedy says he and Jenny have also been made very welcome by townspeople, even those who are not interested in attending church themselves.

“We’re very well known in the area, because even non-Christians want to know there are things happening at the local church,” he says. “They want people to do funerals and weddings, and they value there being a church presence. Us having that role is important, and I think there are others like us sitting back in Sydney who’ve got a few skills they could easily transfer to regional NSW.”

The Kennedys have also received support from back home, with a team from Engadine-Heathcote recently travelling to Bundarra to give the vicarage a facelift.

“We get all sorts of support – from prayer to donation of items – and the icing on the cake was the eight men and women who came up from Engadine to help do things around the vicarage,” Mr Kennedy says. “We’ve also had huge amounts of support from Rick and from the diocese as well, which has really made it so much easier for us to do our work here.”

Central West vision



Down on the farm, with a combine harvester: James and Brittany Daymond in Narromine.

A MINISTRY COUPLE FROM ST CLEMENT'S, MOSMAN HAVE MOVED TO NSW'S CENTRAL WEST TO dedicate themselves to evangelism.

James and Brittany Daymond, the former evangelism minister and contemporary music director respectively at St Clement's, made the move because they felt called to contribute to regional ministries, and give people who had not had much exposure to the gospel a chance to engage with it.

"We did a huge amount of evangelism in Mosman and I learned a lot from Stuart [Smith, the rector], doing doorknocking and things like that, and that has carried over to this," Mr Daymond says.

"Of course, it is very different in many respects, so you have to be mindful and culturally appropriate, but we've already had some great conversations about Jesus and people are very willing to have a chat even if they're busy – while people in the city are perhaps a little less inclined to stop and talk."

The Daymonds are working under the banner of the Bush Church Aid society and in partnership with Narromine and Trangie Anglican churches in the Diocese of Bathurst.

Much of the work will involve remote visits to properties, taking part in key township ministries such as SRE, as well as training local Christians in evangelism.

The current plan is for the couple to remain in Narromine for about two years before potentially moving on to further training and evangelism work in other areas.

"It's a vision for the Central West that God has given us," Mr Daymond says. "The role we have with BCA and with the diocese is seen very much as having two objectives; us doing evangelism, but also training others to do evangelism as well. Both are equally important."

While the Daymonds have only been in Narromine since February, Mr Daymond says he's already getting to know some of the local people and has been struck by their friendliness.

"In some ways people here are much more happy to have a good chat with you," he says. "But in a lot of ways it's not all that different, particularly in the sense that many people who already profess some Christian affiliation have a kind of works-based salvation mentality. So it's been a privilege to point out that it is by grace we are saved, and not through any act of ours."

"There are also a lot of people who just haven't heard much about Jesus, so it's been great to share with those people, too. By and large the welcome has been very warm."

Tackling Debbie's damage

THE ARCHBISHOP OF SYDNEY'S Anglican Aid has raised more than \$25,000 for victims of Cyclone Debbie in North Queensland.

One of the most powerful cyclones ever to hit the state devastated a large swathe of the coastline in March and caused further damage as it moved inland.

Local residents, churches, community groups as well as the Army, the Police and SES are slowly cleaning up in centres such as Airlie Beach, Shute Harbour and Proserpine, as well as hard-hit islands such as Hamilton, Hayman and Daydream.

"Cyclone Debbie was large in size, vicious in its intensity and has caused immense havoc," says the Anglican Bishop of North Queensland, the Rt Rev Bill Ray. "While the cyclone has passed, the next major concern for many is flooding."

Anglican Aid's director, the Rev David Mansfield, says the funds raised by the appeal will be sent to Bishop Ray and the Diocese of North Queensland to help churches in the region assist those in the community most in need.

"We are asking Christians in Sydney to stand in fellowship with our brothers and sisters in northern Queensland who have been affected by the cyclone," Mr Mansfield says. "Many will have lost their livelihoods – particularly those working in the agricultural sector."

As the associated weather system moved south and brought widespread flooding to Lismore and other parts of northern NSW, Bush Church Aid also opened an appeal, which ran till the end of April. Donations went to the Kirkby Trust, a tax deductible fund run by BCA.

The aid is being distributed through Anglican dioceses and churches in the affected areas of North Queensland and northern NSW.

Bishop Ray is resilient in face of adversity.

"There will be no short-term 'fix' – we have to hang in there for the long haul, knowing God is with us," he says. "We give thanks to God for the way people have rallied to help."

"As damaging as Cyclone Debbie has been, the people of North Queensland will be stronger."



Storm damage in Bowen. PHOTO: ABC Reporter Josh Bavas, via Twitter

Egypt's sorrow

Father Danial and his wife stand in the room of their son, Bishoy, who died during the suicide bombing at St George's Church in Tanta last month. PHOTO: Roger Anis/GroundTruth

EGYPT REMAINS UNDER A STATE OF EMERGENCY AFTER BOMBINGS AT TWO COPTIC CHURCHES on Palm Sunday, in which at least 45 Christians died.

The suicide bombings in Alexandria and Tanta, claimed by Islamic State, have heightened fears within a Coptic Christian community that is increasingly targeted by extremists. The bombing at St Mark's Coptic Orthodox Cathedral in Alexandria narrowly missed Coptic leader Tawadros II, who had just finished celebrating Palm Sunday.

The Anglican Primate of the Middle East, Bishop Mouner Anis, called for prayer for Egypt. "Although the security was very tight, the evildoers have their own ways and it is extremely difficult to achieve 100 per cent security," he said.

Egypt's president has declared emergency law for three months and the formation of a national council to fight terrorism.

"They aim to destabilise the country," Bishop Mouner said. "More than 60 churches were burnt in August 2013 as a reaction to the ousting of the former Muslim Brotherhood president."

A priest in Tanta, Father Danial, was presiding over the Palm Sunday service while his two sons sang in the choir. He told the Ground Truth newsagency about the bombing's aftermath and how he found his son Bishoy dying from a head wound.

"I picked up him up, threw him over my shoulder like Jesus carried the cross and I carried his still-breathing body outside," he said.

"I am the father of this church but I am also the father of Bishoy. I lost too many children last week. I have faith, but I don't know how we move on from here."

Christian defence

A FORMER QUEEN'S CHAPLAIN WHO QUIT THE CHURCH OF England in a row over Islam and the Scottish Episcopal Church has spoken out again.

The Rev Dr Gavin Ashenden (right) resigned from his post so that he could openly criticise a decision to allow verses of the Koran to be read in St Mary's Cathedral in Glasgow, calling on the church to apologise to Christians "suffering dreadful persecution at the hands of Muslims". The cathedral is part of the Scottish Episcopal Church, within the Anglican Communion.

Dr Ashenden also spoke out at Easter in response to a British survey, which found that one in four self-proclaimed Christians do not believe in the resurrection of Jesus. He said the BBC, which commissioned the survey, had "made the mistake of confusing British culture with Christianity".

He wrote to *The Times* newspaper that, "Those people who neither believe in the resurrection nor go anywhere near a church cannot be 'Christians'. As with so many things, the key is in the definition of terms. Discovering the evidence for the resurrection having taken place to be wholly compelling is one of the things that makes you a Christian; ergo, if you haven't, you are not."



Time for dementia patients

One of the things that disturbs me regarding euthanasia is that both Dr Barry Wilkins (SC, April), and Dr Megan Best (SC, December 2016) to a lesser degree, are looking at it from a medical perspective.

I think we should take in the relational side as well. That is to say that God made us relational beings and this should be our starting point. For example, in Barry's article he gives us an example of a person who can only blink. Well, I have such a person in church with me on Sundays. They tell me what they thought of the service through the blinks, and I ask and share about things that matter to them.

I also know a person who is confined to a bed chair and wants to kill themselves, *but* when the doctors get their meds right there is no such talk. This is such an important factor in their lives. It means a lot of trial and error on behalf of the doctor and therefore time – time they may not necessarily have at their disposal.

With dementia there are so many books to help families improve their communication/listening skills with the person who has dementia – Professor John Swinton's books are a must read in my view.

Relationships are hard work at the best of times, and it is even harder when it involves a person who is outside the norm because of illness. We as Christians don't write people off, we don't call them vegetables, and we can give them the best gift of all by giving them our time.

Ernie Burgess
Kingsgrove

Make it public

The liftout concerning educational "choice" in April *Southern Cross* needs comment.

There is another excellent choice available for Christian parents. This choice truly reflects Christ's inclusive attitude to all in society. It celebrates cultural diversity, has no prerequisite about socio-economic background, caters for children with a disability, welcomes children from refugee backgrounds and caters for all academic abilities. By selecting this choice you would have your child educated in a real-world situation.

More nominal, and practising, Christian parents embrace this choice. There may not be heated swimming pools, gymnasiums or manicured gardens at these schools, yet they are still successfully educating students to pursue any career they desire.

Public primary and secondary schools are a choice well worth giving consideration when deciding where to send your child.

John Cotterill
Kingsford

Called?

Following the cover feature in the March edition of *SC* about people not being "called" to ordained ministry, I'd be interested to know which order of service was used at the Ordination of Deacons on February 18 in St Andrew's Cathedral.

If it was the service in the 1978 AAPB (the Green book) then the 34 smiling candidates pictured in the same edition as the "called" story would have been asked by our Archbishop: "Do you think that you are truly called according to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ and the order of the Church of England in Australia to the ministry of the church?"

How did they answer? "No, Archbishop. I don't feel called. I just thought that it seemed a good thing to do at the time."

David Mulready
Gerringong

Reformed, reforming, obedient

Adding my thoughts to the discussion about what is at the core of the Reformation on its 500th anniversary, sometimes Protestants are so caught up with the doctrine of salvation by grace through faith alone in Ephesians 2:8 that they forget the passage goes on to say, "For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do" (2:10).

We forget the parable of the sheep and the goats. And we forget that Jesus said, "In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven" (Matt 5:16). We forget the numerous other Bible passages exhorting us to do good.

Too often we pass by on the other side and leave it to someone else to help those in need.

Why? Is it because we are saved by grace alone so we forget? Is it because we are time poor? Are we so enslaved to money that we don't have time? Did Jesus and the early Christians have more time because they lived in mud huts?

There is a ditty:

I will not work my soul to save
For that my Lord has done
But I will work like any slave
For love of his dear Son.

Some say we are children of God and not slaves, but when Paul called himself a servant of Christ, the Greek says he was calling himself a slave (*doulos*) of Christ. The New Testament teaches that Jesus is Lord and we are willing slaves who understand that obedience is the necessary response.

Rewa Bate
Coombs ACT

I am somewhat intrigued by John Bunyan's use of contrasting terms "between Christians and our Lord's own people" (Letters, SC, March). I had always thought from New Testament references such as "for there is no difference..." etc that the two were synonymous – that is, genuine Christians *are* our Lord's own people.

John Boutagy
Mosman

Preaching passion

On the subject of preaching I think David Hewetson makes some worthy observations but Michael Molkentin seems to miss the main purpose of sermons (Letters, SC, March).

A good sermon will surely include a good dose of biblical teaching, even though some hearers may already know more about a passage than the preacher. What makes a sermon good for everyone is the element of godly passion, involving exhortation and encouragement. How that is done depends largely on the preacher's personality. Church members can learn the Bible in more ways than from sermons – and should do so – but a good preacher will bring Scripture to life.

Three names from the fairly recent past come to mind as examples. Alan Cole, John Chapman and Marcus Loane differed considerably from one another in their preaching styles, but each in his own way imparted knowledge with fire. That fire could vary from warmly glowing embers to crackling logs or bright flares, but in each case the heat was there and it moved the hearers towards repentance and godly living.

David Morrison
Springwood



MOVING

**TASSIE CALLS**

The **Rev Dane Courtney** has moved to Tasmania, where he was inducted as the new rector of Holy Trinity, Launceston on May 4.

He says he and his wife Bronwen “clocked up 10 years” in the parish of Strathfield and Homebush before their departure and had been very happy there.

“We loved it, in fact, but I turned 59 a few weeks ago so over the past few years we’ve been conscious that there’s that pressure to either do something different or stay where you are until retirement,” he says.

“Ross [Nicholson, former Tasmanian assistant bishop and now rector at Epping] was the one who initially approached us about a move. It was the best part of a year ago and I really didn’t think anything would come of it, but then Richard Condie [the Bishop of Tasmania] emailed me in October to ask if I would be willing to go... and it kind of grew from there.”

Mr Courtney says that while they “could have continued on happily” at Strathfield and Homebush – where Bronwen also had a job she loved as assistant chaplain and Christian Studies teacher at Meriden – his membership of General Synod over some years had made him aware of needs and opportunities in the national church. Both had agreed they would certainly be open to a move anywhere if the parish fit their skills and gifts.

And while saying that moving interstate is a “real change” given they’ve never lived outside Sydney, Mr Courtney adds: “But we’ve been asked to move to one of the nicest parts of Australia!”

The job of rector at Holy Trinity has come with the title of Archdeacon, and will include about one day a week beyond the bounds of the parish as Mission Support Officer – encouraging clergy, maintaining contacts and being a “first port of call” when there’s a problem.

Mr Courtney says the parish is relatively small in terms of congregation size, “but of course there are opportunities for a significant role in the life of Launceston. Being a city church it’s got civic opportunities and it’s a very big and prominent historic building with architectural significance, so they try to keep it open each day for tourists, at least in the morning. So you get opportunities from things like that.

“It’s also a church with a choral and musical tradition, and the services are more liturgical than is common in Sydney. But at St Anne’s [Strathfield] we had two robed communion services on a Sunday morning... so that formality in liturgy is something I’m very familiar with.

“In the end, the goal is for people to encounter Jesus, put their faith in him and grow in their faith. The way you do it is not really the most critical part – you fit in with the style of the place and what works for them.”

STILL STANDING

One of the longest-serving members of Standing Committee, **Dr Neil Cameron**, has resigned after a tenure of almost 47 years.

Standing Committee meets monthly and has responsibility for diocesan business between synods. Dr Cameron attended his first meeting in May 1970, but the committee is only a small part of his lengthy record of service.

Leading the tributes to Dr Cameron at Standing Committee’s March meeting, Dr Robert Tong outlined a long history of lay ministry – including serving as Diocesan Advocate, secretary of the Inner-City Committee, on the Property Trust and as a member of the Moore College council.

Dr Cameron was a partner in the leading law firm of Allen Allen & Hemsley and used his expertise on Standing Committee’s legal panel and the General Synod Canon Law Commission.

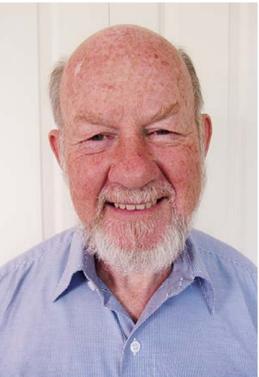
He was elected to Sydney’s Synod in 1969, first as a parochial representative for Broadway, then Pymble and, more recently, as a nominated representative under what is known as “Part 8” of the Synod ordinance.

“Intellectual rigour, clarity of thought and generosity of time characterise Neil’s contributions,” Dr Tong said. “He has not sought the limelight but instead the extension of the gospel of his Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.”

As the Archbishop added his own tribute Standing Committee broke into applause, recording “profound thanks” to Dr Cameron for his “long and unselfish service”.

**CHAPLAINCY SERVICE**

Three Anglicare chaplains with decades of service in diocesan hospitals – and decades more service in the Diocese generally – have retired.



The **Rev Paul Weaver** has spent 40 years in ordained ministry. He worked in parishes at Epping, Botany, Woollahra and St Andrew’s Cathedral over 27 years before becoming the chaplain to Concord Hospital in 2003.

“It’s a public hospital but a distinctive difference is its history as a repatriation hospital, so its connection with the military history of Australia – it was founded as an army hospital,” he says.

“As chaplain I was very much involved in commemorating Anzac Day and Remembrance Day and had ministry to veterans and war widows.

“You’ve got to be prepared to listen rather than think you’re going to be doing all the talking. It’s often what some people call the ministry of ‘presence’ – being with people where they’re at.”

After 14 years’ service Mr Weaver left Concord Hospital at the end of 2016 and is now part-time assistant minister in the parish of Epping.



The **Rev Jan Donohoo** trained at Deaconess House in the early 1980s and was a parish sister at Seaforth and Marrickville before being among the first group of female deacons in 1989.

A part-time assistant at Lalor Park in the first half of the 1990s, Mrs Donohoo then spent the next several years as a parishioner at Berala – but one who preached, took funerals and led services. She also provided organisational support for the Sydney Women in Ministry group.

In 1997 Mrs Donohoo worked for Hope Health Care as a chaplain at a number of its hospitals before becoming an Anglicare relief chaplain at Westmead Children’s Hospital in 1998. She also spent six months of that year as chaplain to Royal North Shore Hospital.

In 1999 she began a permanent part-time role at Westmead, which she held until 2015 when she officially retired.

Mrs Donohoo was chaplain to Mothers’ Union Sydney from 2001-04, and has taken up the role again since leaving Westmead. She is also on the board of Anglican Deaconess Ministries.

“I’ve loved my work and I regarded it as an honour,” she says of her chaplaincy roles. “It opened up a ministry that was quite substantial. It was profound and it was distressing... being drawn into families at their worst time of helplessness. I saw it as having an opportunity to speak the truth of hope in that helplessness.

“But it’s not like in parish where they come to you – it’s going out and meeting them on the wards or in the emergency department. I learnt a lot, and I’m so grateful.”



The **Rev Mamie Long** has a background in publishing, and went to Moore College in 1989 to study for a BTh “not thinking I would ever be a chaplain”. She expected to use her skills in publishing, which she did – as editor and then publisher for Aquila Press.

In about 2000 she became manager of Moore Books, but while in this role she also got involved in Kairos prison ministry.

“I thought I’d do this as a voluntary ministry but God had other ideas!” she says. “I ended up doing a locum chaplaincy at Juniperina [juvenile detention centre] and that’s when it all started.”

Mrs Long did pastoral training to gain further chaplaincy skills and, in 2007, took on the role of chaplain to St Vincent’s Hospital in Darlinghurst. She was made a deacon in that role two years later, and officially retired at the end of April after 10 years’ service.

“It got to the end of last year and I suddenly knew that my time was up,” she says. “I’d done what God wanted me to do and it was time to leave. So now I’m just waiting to see what God’s got in mind next!

“I don’t think when you’re in ministry that you ever retire, really. You just move to different roles.”

IN BRIEF

The **Rev Brian Telfer** died on April 2. More in the next edition.

The **Rev Roger Green** has moved from the parish of North Epping to Anglicare.

The **Rev Timothy St Quintin** is the new rector of Cremorne.

Honouring Wayne



DR GLENN DAVIES

THE ROYAL COMMISSION INTO INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSES TO CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE will complete its report to the Government at the end of this year. The Commission was announced by Prime Minister Julia Gillard in 2012, originally with a three-year term, but this was later extended for a further two years, allowing the commissioners to submit their final report by December 15, 2017.

It has been a long and arduous inquiry into the darker side of the institutional care of children in our nation and the commissioners have dealt with both public and private hearings. The evidence before the commission has revealed the shameful way in which adults have abused those under their care across all kinds of institutions – government, corporate and community groups, both religious and non-religious.

Regrettably, the Anglican Church has also been guilty of child sexual abuse where certain leaders, both ordained and lay, have betrayed the trust of those committed to their care. As well as those betrayals of trust, in many cases past responses from senior clergy to allegations of child sexual abuse have been woefully inadequate and, at times, even deceitful.

In March the Royal Commission's wrap-up hearing for the Anglican Church was held in Sydney where I, along with other diocesan representatives including Mr Lachlan Bryant (director of the Professional Standards Unit), the Rev Dr Andrew Ford (Anglicare) and the Rev Archie Poulos (Moore College), were among the panellists providing testimony as to how the Anglican Church in Sydney is now addressing the critically important task of protecting children from abuse.

While it is true to say that the Wood Royal Commission in the 1990s was a wake-up call for Sydney Anglicans, after which Archbishop Harry Goodhew established the PSU, it is also true that the current Royal Commission has provided the impetus to refine and improve our procedures and protocols for child protection.

A comprehensive review of all our case files of child abuse dating back over several decades has been undertaken. Where past responses were inadequate, contact has been made with survivors to offer counselling, redress and an apology for past abuse as well as past failures in the Church's response.

Just before the Royal Commission's hearing into the Church of England Boys' Society (CEBS) in January 2016, Mr Wayne Guthrie (right), who was due to give testimony about his own abuse by a CEBS leader in one of our Sydney parishes, died prematurely. This was a tragedy at a number of levels. Not only was his life severely shortened by the ongoing consequences – physical, emotional, psychological and spiritual – of the abuse he suffered as a child, but he was also deprived of the opportunity of publicly telling his story to the Royal Commission.



The chaplain and director of the PSU had been in regular contact with the family and were able to attend Wayne's funeral. Ongoing support has also been provided to Wayne's family.

The PSU has developed a new protocol for dealing with the families of those who have been abused as children and whose lives have ended prematurely. With the encouragement and support of Mrs Marion Fortescue, Wayne's mother, we have decided to name the document *The Wayne Guthrie Protocol*.

The Royal Commission was made aware of the development of this protocol at its recent hearing in March, where it was observed that no other protocol existed in this field specifically dealing with the loss and bereavement that follows the premature death of a child abuse victim.

The Wayne Guthrie Protocol begins with a short history of Wayne and his brave efforts to confront the CEBS leader, Simon Jacobs, who abused him from 1979 to 1981. Wayne informed the police in 2009, an action which brought the perpetrator to justice and he was imprisoned in 2011 for the abuse of six young boys.

We do well to remember and honour Wayne's courage and the courage of many others who have overcome threats, fear and the shame of exposing child sexual abuse. As Anglicans in Sydney, may we remain ever vigilant in our pursuit of safe ministry environments in all our churches, so that the awful deeds of the past might not be repeated, and so that the community's trust in our care for children might be restored.

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At the end of March *The Australian* published an article I wrote about the way the debate surrounding same-sex marriage has been stifled by media, corporations and lobbyists in favour of redefining marriage. The opinion piece received significant coverage across media networks and my office has been deluged by emails and letters of appreciation (with only a small percentage of angry missives). I therefore want to thank all those who wrote to me – Anglicans, Protestants, Catholics and not a few non-religious people – for their support and encouragement, as time prevents me from responding to each and every one. Thank you.

A PRAYER FOR MISSION 2020

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

Amen

THE DEMON DRINK

Southern CROSS MAY 2017

10

It might be harmless for some, but it destroys life and relationships for others. And being a Christian only adds to the pain of those struggling with alcohol addiction, writes ANNE LIM.

GONE ARE THE DAYS WHEN IT WAS UNUSUAL FOR CHRISTIANS TO DRINK.

Today's Christians are more likely to be wine connoisseurs than teetotalers. For many nowadays it's rare to meet for dinner without someone bringing a bottle of wine or offering a beer from the fridge.

Alcohol is so embedded in our culture that last year a parish in a wealthy Sydney suburb held a "carols and beer event" as part of its Christmas carol service, and an inner-west church held an *Introducing God* course in a pub.

Is this anything to worry about? After all, Jesus went out of his way to eat with tax collectors and make friends with prostitutes and he certainly didn't abstain from alcohol. So why not make non-churchy people comfortable by offering alcohol at outreach events?

"For me it's a real tension," says TAFE teacher and CMS missionary Norm Gorrie, quoting 1 Corinthians 9 where Paul says: "I have become all things to all people so that by all possible means I might save some".

Says Gorrie: "Christ went where people are at because he came to seek and save the lost. So in a sense Christians need to be in pubs and where people are at but at the same time we have to be aware of our weaker brother, who may be very susceptible.

"I don't want to do anything to cause another brother or sister to stumble and, as ambassadors for Christ, we have to walk a fine line."

As a recovered alcoholic Gorrie understands the turmoil felt by someone trying to stay off the grog when everyone around them is enjoying a drink – and how dangerous it can be for someone like him who doesn't trust himself to have even one drink for fear of setting off his addiction again.

He believes any church considering putting on an event with alcohol needs to see it through the eyes of "someone for whom alcohol can cause their destruction", and ask their opinion before including it.

However, the Rev Dr Michael Jensen, rector of the eastern suburbs parish of St Mark's, Darling Point, staunchly defends his church's experiment of offering imported beers at a carols night last year.

"While I'm very sensitive to those who do have a problem – we do have an Alcoholics Anonymous meeting in our hall – Christians have a funny way of being puritanical about this particular area and not about others," he says. "So I don't think having a beer and carols event is causing someone to stumble. I think it's an over-scrupulous application of the Bible."

Jensen believes including beer at the outreach event made it a "very easy invite" for his congregation to friends and colleagues, and created a celebratory atmosphere that put guests at ease.

"We did it because we thought modelling careful and appropriate consumption is a powerful witness, but also we had a great response – we doubled our numbers for that night," he says. "Our ordinary congregation of about 42 became a congregation of 86 on that night and a couple of people have come again."

"We felt in our area it was an experiment worth having. We don't regularly serve alcohol at church events; we do on occasion. We have champagne available after the Christmas lessons and carols and, again, there's no pressure on people to drink. I think, yes, it is difficult if you're not a drinker but I think it's a judgment call... It's a matter of knowing your flock."

Jensen believes that while there are many good reasons to give up alcohol, as he himself has done, "it's not something you can demand of people, just like Paul says singleness is great but not everyone can do what he does".

"Would he hold another event with alcohol?" "Yes, it was very successful. We might do it outdoors. Again, it's about quality and hospitality, not about bacchanalia. One of the things is we've got more reasons for joy and so I think Christians need to throw better parties."

BE CRITICAL OF FREEDOM

The Rev Gary Eastment, senior minister and chaplain at St Mark's UNEChurch at the University of New England, has walked with many people through the messiness and chaos of alcoholism.

He believes alcohol is a gift from God that it is sometimes wise not to use, and that Christians should regard teetotalism as a normal response to alcohol – not an extraordinary step you might take if you have a problem with it.

"I'm increasingly critical of my own use of freedom in the area of alcohol, and I just think as a church we need to question – we need to critique ourselves more firmly than perhaps we have in the past," he says. "Now, that's not the same thing as teetotalism, although I toy with it more and more frequently."

As chaplain at UNE, Eastment drills into the students that they should treat alcohol consumption as exceptional rather than routine, even if it's not a problem for them.

"I'm crusading a little bit, but the college culture here is very strong," he says. "I think we're at an extraordinary moment in history in terms of how rich we are and just the idea that we keep alcohol on hand in our fridge all the time, I suspect, is extraordinary in a historical sense. And I think for the Christian person it can be a helpful point of wisdom that we don't keep alcohol on hand – we buy it for occasions."

The minister to the healing service at St Andrew's Cathedral, the Rev Canon Chris Allan, rejects the legalistic approach that says for the sake of others no Christian should drink.

"That's unworkable and gets us in more trouble," he says. "We are free to drink, but the overriding concern is how can we be loving to people in our congregations, recognising that alcohol is a very serious problem of life and death for some people?"

Allan says his guide is the biblical message to love others and put their needs before our own.

Through the Cathedral's healing ministry and Overcomers Outreach, he has met people for whom even the smell of wine is enough to trip them up – which is why they don't offer wine as part of communion at the healing service. At all other Cathedral services the wine and juice are clearly marked so that nobody accidentally picks up the wrong cup.

"I think every minister needs to consider there are people for whom this is an issue," Allan says. "I drink alcohol when people come over to my place, but I'm very conscious not to drink in front of people who have a problem with alcohol. I have a friend in that situation... When we go out I'll always drink a Coke, and the other people have no idea why I drink a Coke when I would otherwise have a beer."

"I have another friend who always fills up her wine glass with water so the waiters won't put wine in it. For them that's a necessity because if they accidentally pick up a glass and take a sip – bang, that's done it. That can send them on a path of absolute craziness that night, or a week or a month later. It can be the catalyst for losing sobriety that's sometimes built up over 20 years."

Through witnessing how often alcoholics relapse after a dry spell, Gary Eastment has realised how powerful and addictive a drug alcohol is.

"One of the mistakes I made in situations in the past is to have too high an expectation too soon, so when someone has a good patch and stays dry but then stumbles back into drinking that's highly chaotic and destructive, I have seen that as failure ... but, in fact, that's just a really common story with alcoholics."

"So when they have that sort of crash, it's not the moment to walk away as though some final failure has occurred and any further help is wasted. You need to keep walking with them, persisting in loving them, and gospeling them because the heart of it is spiritual."

“The great thing to realise is that... the God of all the universe understands and he's not there to point the finger at us, condemn us, but he's there in the business of liberating us.”

Norm Gorrie

“I think for the Christian person it can be a helpful point of wisdom that we don't keep alcohol on hand – we buy it for occasions.”

Gary Eastment

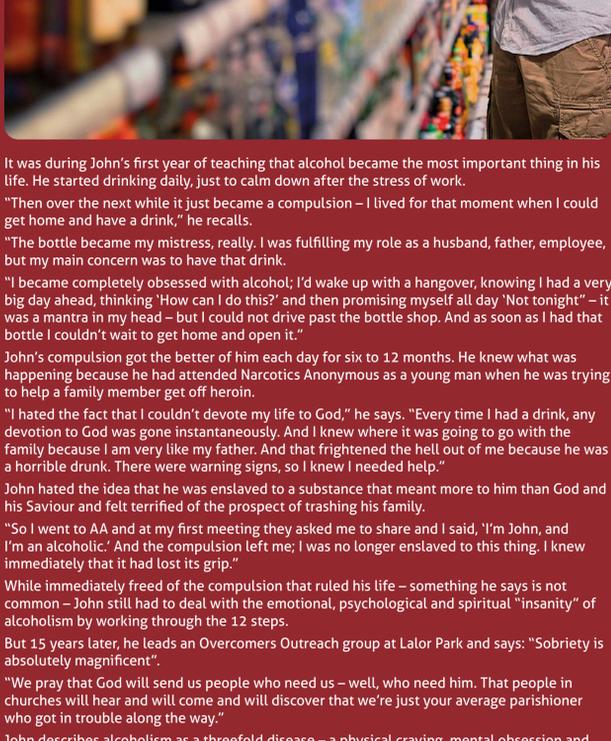
“Often trauma underpins the cycle of addiction and I'm working with clients to treat the trauma triggers that keep many on the cycle of relapse.”

Penny Wilkinson

“There's a lot of shame around Christians having these issues because so often there's a sense that... you shouldn't be struggling with problems of addiction.”

Lindy Hedges

A GOD-SHAPED HOLE



It was during John's first year of teaching that alcohol became the most important thing in his life. He started drinking daily, just to calm down after the stress of work.

"Then over the next while it just became a compulsion – I lived for that moment when I could get home and have a drink," he recalls.

"The bottle became my mistress, really. I was fulfilling my role as a husband, father, employee, but my main concern was to have that drink."

"I became completely obsessed with alcohol; I'd wake up with a hangover, knowing I had a very big day ahead, thinking 'How can I do this?' and then promising myself all day 'Not tonight' – it was a mantra in my head – but I could not drive past the bottle shop. And as soon as I had that bottle I couldn't wait to get home and open it."

John's compulsion got the better of him each day for six to 12 months. He knew what was happening because he had attended Narcotics Anonymous as a young man when he was trying to help a family member get off heroin.

"I hated the fact that I couldn't devote my life to God," he says. "Every time I had a drink, any devotion to God was gone instantaneously. And I knew where it was going to go with the family because I am very like my father. And that frightened the hell out of me because he was a horrible drunk. There were warning signs, so I knew I needed help."

John hated the idea that he was enslaved to a substance that meant more to him than God and his Saviour and felt terrified of the prospect of trashing his family.

"So I went to AA and at my first meeting they asked me to share and I said, 'I'm John, and I'm an alcoholic.' And the compulsion left me; I was no longer enslaved to this thing. I knew immediately that it had lost its grip."

While immediately freed of the compulsion that ruled his life – something he says is not common – John still had to deal with the emotional, psychological and spiritual "insanity" of alcoholism by working through the 12 steps.

But 15 years later, he leads an Overcomers Outreach group at Lalor Park and says: "Sobriety is absolutely magnificent".

"We pray that God will send us people who need us – well, who need him. That people in churches will hear and will come and will discover that we're just your average parishioner who got in trouble along the way."

John describes alcoholism as a threefold disease – a physical craving, mental obsession and spiritual malady.

"What we're trying to do is fill a God-shaped hole, so abstinence through the steps is the way to do it."

"The big book [of AA] says we are powerless over people, places, things and situations. That is the whole lot. And isn't that exactly what God want us to be? He wants us to be completely dependent on him, and then he gets to work. In fact, he wants to wrestle this crap off us."

"In a way, it's the blessing of the brokenness. And it would have been nice if it could have been achieved in a softer, gentler way but the flipside of it is that he has brought me to a point where I need to, on a daily basis, really acknowledge my powerlessness and trust in him."

THE SPIRITUAL ELEMENT

Christian counsellor Penny Wilkinson agrees that there is a spiritual element to alcoholism.

"While there are physical and mental issues to address there is often also a very real spiritual issue that results in... a person's unwillingness to surrender this area in their life to God," she says.

A recovered alcoholic herself, Wilkinson adds that, "A spiritual malady compels an alcoholic to pick up a drink and... neurobiology keeps that behaviour repeating. The medical help available often doesn't share this holistic view that comes to the spiritual side of it."

Wilkinson has set up a practice at Compassion Counselling in Gladesville that provides a two-way bridge between the neurobiology and the spiritual side of addiction.

"Often trauma underpins the cycle of addiction and I'm working with clients to treat the trauma triggers that keep many on the cycle of relapse," she says. "My goal is to support healthy functioning by providing effective tools that were not previously learnt when a substance always provided the solution. This can be torturous for someone who has used a substance for the substantial part of their life – learning new skills is not always easy."

Ten years ago Wilkinson set up a group called Overcomers Outreach. It's a Christian group that acts as a bridge between Alcoholics Anonymous and the church, providing a safe, supportive space where addicts can openly share their particular struggles. The monthly meetings also follow the same 12 steps as AA with a specifically biblical input.

Overcomers welcomes anyone who struggles with substance and behavioural addictions as well as their family supporters – it is not just for alcoholics. There are now 10 groups across Sydney and one in Brisbane.

Wilkinson believes 12-step groups are the key to recovering from addiction because "the sharing of one to another encourages and educates each other to continue living a sober life in a world soaked by alcohol".

Research into 12-step groups undertaken by John Kelly, associate professor of psychiatry in addiction medicine at Harvard Medical School, found that AA and similar groups were "among the most effective and best-studied treatments for helping change addictive behaviour".

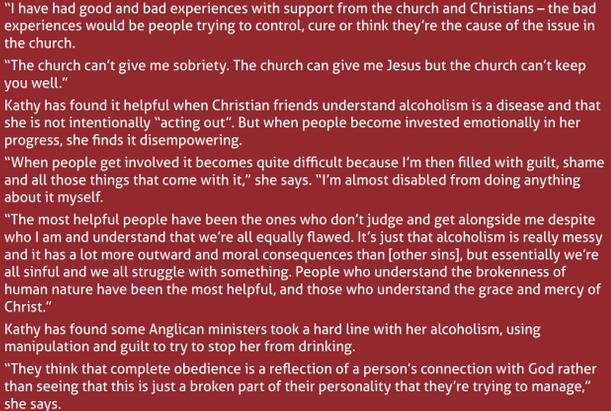
With such knowledge and experience in mind Wilkinson, who finished a Masters of Counselling last year, is working towards setting up a structured, non-residential day program called The Overcomers Place – modelled on a British treatment centre called The Living Room – which will provide group-based trauma and recovery counselling for all addictions.



“Often trauma underpins the cycle of addiction and I'm working with clients to treat the trauma triggers that keep many on the cycle of relapse.”

Penny Wilkinson

MESSY BROKENNESS



Understanding that alcoholism is just another sign of our broken nature is the key to helping compulsive drinkers get well, says Kathy T, whose complicated history with alcohol is linked to domestic violence.

Taking alcoholics to AA meetings, walking alongside them without judging them and getting them the right sort of professional help are the best approaches to helping a Christian brother or sister overcome their addiction, she says.

"I have had good and bad experiences with support from the church and Christians – the bad experiences would be people trying to control, cure or think they're the cause of the issue in the church."

"The church can't give me sobriety. The church can give me Jesus but the church can't keep you well."

Kathy has found it helpful when Christian friends understand alcoholism is a disease and that she is not intentionally "acting out". But when people become invested emotionally in her progress, she finds it disempowering.

"When people get involved it becomes quite difficult because I'm then filled with guilt, shame and all those things that come with it," she says. "I'm almost disabled from doing anything about it myself."

"The most helpful people have been the ones who don't judge and get alongside me despite who I am and understand that we're all equally flawed. It's just that alcoholism is really messy and it has a lot more outward and moral consequences than [other sins], but essentially we're all sinful and we all struggle with something. People who understand the brokenness of human nature have been the most helpful, and those who understand the grace and mercy of Christ."

Kathy has found some Anglican ministers took a hard line with her alcoholism, using manipulation and guilt to try to stop her from drinking.

"They think that complete obedience is a reflection of a person's connection with God rather than seeing that this is just a broken part of their personality that they're trying to manage," she says.

COMING CLEAN

Another Sydney-based Christian counsellor, Lindy Hedges, says Christians who struggle with addictions often lead a secret double life because they're too ashamed to come clean with other Christians, even in a home group.

"I think there's a lot of shame around Christians having these issues because so often there's a sense that as a Christian we should have this all sorted and you shouldn't be struggling with problems of addiction," she says.

"Of course, problems of addiction run much deeper than that, so that creates a barrier to people being open, being able to talk about it and be real and authentic – because of that great fear that you're going to be judged and looked down upon as somehow a 'lesser' Christian."

Hedges readily accepts that someone can be a real Christian, be saved and in God's grace, and still struggle with addiction issues because they are complex and don't easily go away.

While working through the 12 steps of AA is the predominant way alcoholics maintain sobriety, Hedges says it doesn't work for everyone. "Some people find that system very rigid and very overbearing and it doesn't work for them, and some people find it brilliant," she says.

Some of her clients combine AA with psychotherapy.

"I [work] closely with a formality called transactional analysis, which is a type of psychotherapy," she explains. "I combine that with attachment theory and emotionally focused therapy and then, lastly, something called reparative therapy, so I work both historically and in the here and now."

Hedges is confident that in almost all cases any addiction is "an attempt to cover up a much deeper pain that has been pushed down and denied".

"We need to go back to the source of that original pain, name it, speak it out and deal with it and bring a proper adult response to that original pain," she says. "It's a much more long-term approach but I have a very high success rate this way. Generally I would see someone for three to five years, but it is a really inside-out process where they make much more enduring and lifelong changes."

She says the process often involves a biblical framework in that most addicts have had at least one parent who tended to be critical and negative towards them, which leads them to translate that response to the nature of God.

"It's especially dramatic if a father responds this way because we have a heavenly father, and people will tend to take all of that over into their relationship with God," she says. "He doesn't really care if I suffer, God thinks very little of my pain, he's not really concerned for me, he's actually quite detached from me."

"I need to go through the process of clarifying what they really believe about God and how that relates to what they believe about their earthly father, and then begin the process of undoing that."

THE GRACE OF GOD

Hedges believes the best way for a Christian to help a brother or sister who struggles with alcohol is to model the grace of God.

"I would see it as quite a deep thing – that we all have to truly understand the grace of God and what that means, and that we really can offer the grace of God to our brothers and sisters," she says.

"We're not called to sit in judgment on these people. That's God's job. We really need to offer a place of safety and acceptance and okay-ness but also accountability – somewhere where you hold the challenge and not just allow someone standing shoulder to shoulder with us to spiral out of control and say nothing."

"Ease back on judgment but hold the tension on accountability – are they coping? Are they in AA? What are they doing about it? Encouraging them to be assertive and encouraging them to do something about their problem other than sitting in that victim status where they're quite disempowered and feeling like it's hopeless and they can't do anything."

After a decade in charge of the Cathedral's healing service, Chris Allan has come a long way from his initial attitude of "I can't help these people, why can't they just stop drinking?"

He sees a similar attitude in other ministers, who regard addiction as a moral issue and believe it's not their problem.

"They put addiction in a category of sin, which it is, but it's not purely sin; there are so many other factors," he says. "We ought to love the addict as we love the sinner."

Allan adds that the problem for Christian addicts is their sin is so public.

"It's like a scarlet letter [on their clothing] and so we welcome those the addict feel in our churches?" he asks. "Do we practice forgiveness? I always say we're good on repentance but are we good at forgiveness?"

"If Jesus were here today, who would he be hanging out with? He'd be hanging out with the AA people. The AA people who are seriously doing the work on Overcomers Outreach are spiritual giants because their sin is so in front of them. I can cover up my sins. People might think I'm fantastic but they don't know what's going on my heart."

"Alcoholics know what damage they do and the trail of wreckage they leave everywhere. They are so very aware of their sin, so as a minister I want to love them and tell them there's not only forgiveness but a new start through Christ."

Hedges says someone in heavy addiction may just need one other person to hold their hand as they start to get help. "Once they get the help, they just need someone – not to rescue them but to support them, to keep them there, if they really do something about it."

"If we don't offer safety then no one will open up; no one will be real because the fear of judgment and condemnation is too great and that helps to keep it under wraps."

Norm Gorrie adds that people in middle-classes churches appear very neat and tidy on the outside but, as they say the confession together, many of those sitting in the pews feel as if they are in a cage fight with the devil.

"As we wake up each day, whether we like it or not, we are in a cage fight and the flesh is in battle with the things that Christ wants us to do in Spirit," he says. "The devil is in the cage there too and he's stirring the pot, and so each day we have to say 'In Christ's strength I need to honour him and serve him and not serve the desires of my own flesh'."

"The great thing is to realise that Christ is there with us in that cage. He understands our battles and our struggles and our temptations. That's the incredible thing – that the God of all the universe understands that and he's not there to point the finger at us, condemn us, but he's there in the business of liberating us."

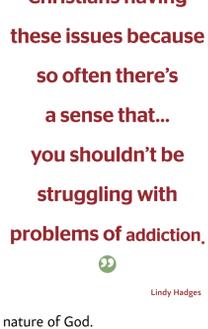
Gorrie says people struggling with addictions feel a deep shame and sense of defilement. But Christ can overcome even that.

"For me it's marvellous to see how Christ came not only to pay the penalty for our sin but he also comes to deal with the shame and the defilement that sin causes," he says. "He clothes us with his very own righteousness and he takes away our defilement. And, for me, has been liberating – to look again and see how he does redress that deep shame we feel."

WHERE TO FIND SUPPORT

Alcoholics Anonymous
www.aa.org.au/fundameeting/
Compassion Counselling, Gladesville
www.christchurch.org.au/compassion-counselling
Penny Wilkinson 0417 663 539
Healing ministry, St Andrew's Cathedral, Sydney
www.sydneymal.com

Lindy Hedges, Christian counsellor
lhedges@optusnet.com.au
0425 286 940
Overcomers Outreach: Christian support for alcoholics and other addictions
www.overcomersoutreach.net
Penny Wilkinson 0417 663 539



“There's a lot of shame around Christians having these issues because so often there's a sense that... you shouldn't be struggling with problems of addiction.”

Lindy Hedges

Kingdom and contentment

The world offers many things but seeking meaning in Christ's coming kingdom gives a peace like no other, writes **DAVID HÖHNE**.

ACCORDING TO ALAIN DE BOTTON, SEEKING AND FINDING MEANINGFUL WORK is pretty straightforward. If we just take our time to find our authentic selves, if we just remember to be our best selves at the checkout and if the large companies for whom we work told their world-saving story better, we'd all be able to find meaningful work. There is some wisdom in these three points. We will act more diligently and be more productive as workers if we can easily commit emotionally to the tasks that are set before us. We'll likely be more creative when faced with challenges and more determined to overcome them. If we participated in the global economy in a more thoughtful and self-controlled way then there might well be less opportunity for exploitative people to lure us into spending what we don't have on things we don't need in order to impress people we either don't actually know or don't really like.

If leadership in the large companies for whom many of us work was better able to tell us stories of the lasting benefit of the products and services we provide to the greater human population (so our small but consistent contributions were caught up in a definite, if gradual, movement towards a brighter future for all), then we might be less anxious about whether what we do from 8am to 6pm, six days out of seven, was worth the proportion of our lives we spend doing it (an exhausting sentence to match what, for most of us, may well feel like an exhausting process).

All of these things might be possible – but only if we, as Christians, take a very different approach to what we are seeking and, more importantly, what we expect to find for the duration of our paid working lives. Over and against what, at times, might feel like tremendous pressure to do otherwise, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ deserves that we seek his kingdom, and promises that we will find contentment in doing so.

Space doesn't allow for us to consider all of De Botton's interesting ideas, so for now let's just concentrate on the first.

In his book *The Pleasures and Sorrows of Work*, De Botton has put before us the challenge of finding work that allows us to discover and realise our "deepest or most authentic self". He suggests that we need help discovering our authentic working identities before we even start. By way of contrast I'm going to suggest that it is only when we seek our authentic selves in the coming kingdom of Jesus the Christ that we will find the contentment we need for any and every paid or unpaid work situation. In fact, it is only when we trust the gospel promises about our deepest self that we will ever find contentment at all.

God's will for our lives

Let's begin with Paul's letter to the Ephesians, which has that marvellous summary of God's saving actions through Jesus for the Church. In the first chapter of Ephesians we read Paul's insight into the history of the universe as the span "from before the foundations of the earth" in 1:4 to the exaltation of Christ Jesus as Lord in 1:9-10. The promise is that God's saving actions in Jesus are rooted in his eternal purposes – that is, they stem from the inner life of the triune God. This is immensely important for us when it comes to understanding how God's will works out in the history of the universe and our lives in particular.

Just in the first 11 verses Paul draws our attention to (at least) three things concerning the Father's will for creation. His intention, as American biblical scholar Raymond E. Brown puts it, is discerned in "the choice of the divine will [good pleasure, v.5], the mystery of divine will [v.9]... [and] the plan of divine will [v.11]."

Thus to understand the divine will and the manner in which this might be perfected on the earth as it is in heaven we need to understand God's plan for creation, the nature of his choice within that plan and the extent to which the divine choice reveals the mysterious character of God's heavenly will for the earth.

The contribution of Ephesians 1 to this is the fact that all three aspects of divine will come together in the person of the Lord Jesus (v.10). The great mystery of the ages is that Messiah Jesus is the choice of God for the perfection of his plans and hence, the perfection of his will on earth as it is in heaven.

Trying to work out God's will for our lives, on the basis of a general idea of God, gets us into all manner of problems. However, the conclusion we may draw from Ephesians 1 is that God's will for the universe and every living thing in it – and every human being in particular – is summed up in the Lord Jesus.

If you have ever wondered what God's will for your life might be, or have said to yourself in a moment of uncertainty, "I'm sure God has a plan..." then look closely at what the Bible says. Your life is part of God's plan to sum up the whole universe in the glorification of Jesus the Christ. To consider the purpose of your life to be encapsulated by some highly paid and dramatically influential professional career, for example, is not to seek far enough and to be content with too little.

The self as a gift of salvation

The next thing to notice about Ephesians 1 is the blessings God intends to give us through the Lord Jesus as the fulfilment of his will for the universe. In Jesus we have been chosen to be "holy and blameless in his sight" (v.4); through Jesus, God has adopted us as his children (v.5); through the sacrifice of Jesus' blood on our behalf we have been granted forgiveness for our sins (v.7). In short, and through Jesus Christ, God has favoured us with his grace such that we are to him what his Son is – beloved (v.6).

The conclusion we may draw from this is that the gospel of the Lord Jesus contains a portrait for us of our deepest selves from the perspective of our Creator. The God who intends to sum up all of human history in the glorified Jesus Christ wants us to be his children; children who, from his perspective, are "holy and blameless" – immeasurably precious considering they have been purchased through the blood sacrifice of the Lord Jesus and totally absolved of any and every failing, any and every shortcoming... and any and every deliberate act of selfishness, greed, pride or idolatry.

Here in the gospel is the offer, a gift, of a working identity that is so far above anything we might ever seek by way of professional advancement, academic achievement or entrepreneurial dream as to render our aspirations as insulting to Jesus the Christ. There is simply nothing that compares to the riches of God's grace towards us in Jesus. In fact, Jesus himself spoke of how we should approach such an offer in the simplest of terms:

"The kingdom of heaven is like treasure, buried in a field, that a man found and reburied. Then in his joy he goes and sells everything he has and buys that field. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls. When he found one priceless pearl, he went and sold everything he had, and bought it" (Matt 13:44-46).

The gift of our deepest selves that God offers us in the kingdom of the Lord Jesus is worth more than any professional accolade, any academic prize and certainly any corporate incentive – be it partnerships, share options or fellowships.

More importantly perhaps, the gift of our identity in Jesus Christ cannot be relativised by a performance review. Our worth to God as his children cannot be captured in a dissertation or viva and it refuses to be confined by any workplace contract. In fact, it is a suit of armour against the barbs and banter of workplace bullies, it is the testimony to our personhood when we are regarded merely as a human resource and – most of all – it is our ultimate source of freedom and vindication in the face of harassment, exploitation or retrenchment.

The gift of our most authentic selves that comes in the gospel of Jesus Christ has been, for our workplace, summarised in Martin Luther's famous phrase: "We are freed to work in Christ by faith and for our neighbour in love". If we seek the meaning for our lives in relation to the coming kingdom of the Lord Jesus we will find a contentment like no other, filled with the glorious riches of our Heavenly Father's love for us in Jesus.

The Rev Dr David Höhne lectures in theology, philosophy and church history.

LIGHTS come on at Marsden Park



The new Marsden Park plant of Life Anglican Church has been formally launched at a celebratory service. The new gathering, led by the Rev Mark Collins, has been meeting since February in the lead-up to its big launch on April 2.

"We're in a new building and in a new context, so we wanted to make sure everything worked, that we gelled as a team before we formally unveiled the church to the local area," Mr Collins says.

"It was a bit weird, actually, because we were already starting to get new people from the area along that we hadn't met before – mostly Christians moving in who were actively looking for a church – so in some respects we'd already started.

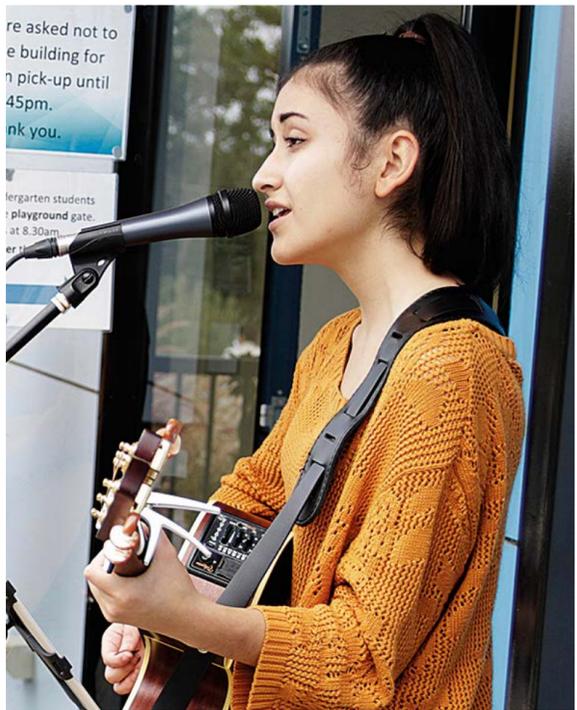
"The formal launch, though, was really an opportunity to say thanks to our supporters as well as to properly greet our neighbours and the community."

The launch was preceded by a big outreach push, with members doorknocking, leafleting and engaging on social media with the local community, inviting them to come along. The launch service saw roughly 140 people attend and was run with the intention of reflecting a typical Sunday service. It was followed by a multicultural morning tea with a jumping castle for the kids.

The church meets at the Marsden Park campus of Richard Johnson Anglican School. The main meeting area is connected up to several classrooms, allowing the church to run a creche and other programs at the same time as their main service.

"Basically, a fair percentage of the people who come to Marsden Park are young families," Mr Collins says.

"We have about 30 kids who come to our programs each week and then maybe 40 adults, which is a reflection of the area and the kinds of people who live around us."



From top: People listen to the sermon at Life Marsden Park's launch day in April; visitors are welcomed with song; church leader the Rev Mark Collins.

150 years at Jamberoo



Heel and toe at the church's anniversary community festival.

Jamberoo Anglican Church recently celebrated 150 years of ministry to its local area.

The church began life as part of the parish of Kiama until it was proclaimed a parish in its own right in 1857, but it has been a provisional parish since 1962 when the parish of Shellharbour was formed.

The current ministry leader at Jamberoo is acting rector the Rev Jodie McNeill, also the rector of Oak Flats, who says the anniversary was a time to celebrate an increase in ministry in the area and greater connections with new people in the community.

"It's been exciting to see some of the things happening here," he says. "We had around 200 people come across our two weekend services, which is more than what we'd see on a typical weekend, and it was a great way to mark the occasion and also just for people to get to know us better."

The Saturday evening service was preceded by a community festival including kids activities, a sausage sizzle and a bush dance, while the Sunday morning traditional service was followed by a community lunch. Bishop Peter Hayward spoke at both services, and the local mayor, State and Federal MPs also attended.

Mr McNeill says he hopes the church will be able to continue its 150-year legacy with further growth, continuing to share the gospel in the village of Jamberoo – which itself is expected to grow in size over the next few years.

"My prayer under God is that we'll have the privilege of being able to stand up in a Synod and be able to progress from a provisional parish to a full parish with its own identity, sustaining its own full-time ministry," he says.



Art in God's world

Heaven Came Down by Safina Stewart.

© SAFINA STEWART 2011

NICK GILBERT

ARTISTS ACROSS THE CENTURIES HAVE CREATED PAINTINGS, SCULPTURES AND OTHER WORKS TO GIVE GLORY TO GOD – AND SHOW HOW THEY SAW THE STORIES AND PEOPLE OF THE BIBLE THROUGH THEIR MIND'S EYE.

Now Aboriginal artists have taken the words of the Bible and rendered them in a series of paintings in Indigenous styles, in a book published by the Bible Society.

Called *Our Mob, God's Story*, the publication is made up of words and images from the hands of many Indigenous artists exploring the Bible through the lens of art. Stories from Noah and the flood to the Last Supper are shown in colourful splendour and fine detail, putting a distinctively Australian spin on otherwise familiar biblical passages.

Additional biographical and research material, collated by South Australian author Christobel Mattingley and the Bible Society's Louise Sherman, includes information about each artist's country and language, as well as their own reflections on their faith.

Melbourne-based Indigenous artist Safina Stewart, who is featured in the book, says, "I've now been painting professionally for 10 years and I use that as a mode for education and communication, but also very deliberately as a way to point to Jesus."

"Painting in this style means I can help people who are curious to learn more about my people and culture, and at the same time help them to learn more about life, faith and Jesus. All my stories are hope stories – and my hope is in Jesus, so that's what I paint."

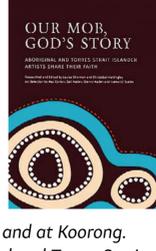
There are close to 120 paintings by 65 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists from around the nation, and while there are a range of styles all share a common theme in placing the narrative of the Bible in the context of Indigenous culture and community. One painting of the Nativity, for instance, created by the late Yvonne Tjintjiwara Edwards, depicts Joseph, Mary and Jesus as an Indigenous family surrounded by rainbow serpents and goannas, sitting down by the fire at camp with some bush tucker.

"I think the book, and the art in it, is a way of extending an invitation for friendship between the Indigenous and non-Indigenous church," Stewart says.

"But it needs to be a friendship built on engagement and commitment, where non-Indigenous Christians choose to engage with us, to pray for us, and to support us."

"Indigenous people don't have a choice – we need to try engage with other people around us to survive. We need others in the wider church to choose to join with us and engage with us, and hopefully engaging with things like this book is a way to start that."

Our Mob, God's Story is available through the Bible Society online at bibleshop.org.au and at Koorong. All proceeds go towards the publication of Scripture in the heart languages of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.



Open mic in the House

JUDY ADAMSON

WHEN STEPHEN O'DOHERTY sits back, thinks for a moment, and then likens the Open House radio program on Hope 103.2 to *Dr Who*, don't worry:

you're aren't about to be whisked off to a different planet each Sunday night.

The seasoned journalist and former State parliamentary is seeking to inform the Christian station's listeners about issues in a way they wouldn't hear elsewhere – but when he mentions the iconic BBC TV show he's thinking about the way each actor who plays the Doctor makes the character their own.

"Every presenter [of Open House] brings their own style to it in that same way," he explains. "It's going to reflect who they are, to some extent. So in this iteration my ambition is for it to be a place on radio...

where we can have those conversations that Christians want and need to have about the issues of the day in a way that reflects kingdom values."

While O'Doherty has been chairman of the Hope board since 2005, up until a few months ago he was working as the founding CEO of Christian Schools Australia. And although he loved the job, which he held for 15 years, he says he found himself "increasingly drawn to Christian media". He could see its potential as akin to that of Christian schools – which attract non-believers by the quality of what they teach, and build up communities by living out faith in an uncompromising way.

"I wanted to dedicate the next period of my vocation back in the media where I started," he says. "Not only to restart using the skills I had all those years ago but to use the 25 years of experience in other fields since... to bring that into the Christian media space. I think this is the show I've been dying to do for 15 years!"

Open House began in 2006 with Sheridan Voysey. Leigh Hatcher picked up the baton in mid-2011 before passing it to Dwayne Jeffries – who called it "the best gig in radio" – at the beginning of 2014. The show ran for another year after that but, O'Doherty says, "we had to put it into abeyance because we didn't have the people or resources to do it the way we wanted".

Now Jeffries is general manager of Hope's sister station in Brisbane, which has been broadcasting the new Open House since it relaunched on March 26. And, from this month, the show will be available to other stations for rebroadcast nationally.

So what's in the new program? O'Doherty was known as a feisty interviewer during his years as a radio and TV journalist, and certainly brought that style to his time as a member of the NSW Parliament. Yet there's more to him than these public roles might suggest.

Yes, he'll grab an issue and question the life out of it – and he loves news, current affairs and social issues, drilling down for answers. But to think of the show solely in policy or news terms is to underestimate O'Doherty's interests (he's a musician, for example, and has been a conductor since he was 15), and his desire to cover... well, everything, with his interviews and the talkback discussion that follows.

"Christians are interested in every issue, not just same-sex marriage or whatever is the moral issue of the day," he says. "They're interested in home affordability, interest rates, the war in Syria, the degree of truth – or otherwise – that underlies the Trump administration, the impact of a new airport in western Sydney... And we feel that because God is interested in human flourishing, we ought to be encouraging Christians in all walks of life to likewise be interested in every endeavour: the arts, culture, science..."

"But when it comes to those issues like same-sex marriage, we're not to be shouted down. These days you'll get a lot of 'shoutiness' [in the media] and denunciation, and then characterisation of people according to their position. Regularly on *The Drum* or Q&A someone identifies as Christian the first thing that happens on Twitter is *Drum* saying 'Oh, you're a Christian, you don't have a valid opinion'. We have lost the art in a civil society of having a proper discussion."

He believes the best way Hope can serve its Christian community is to have the debate and ask questions: "Be honest about things we don't know, seek the views of people who have thought it through in a number of dimensions – including the spiritual and biblical dimension – because you won't get that elsewhere."

"We want to reflect the validity of the experience of Christians living every day in this world who look to Christ for how they should act – knowing that one day Christ will return and bring into being the kingdom of God in a new heaven and a new earth."

Open House airs on Hope 103.2 each Sunday from 7pm-10pm.



For and against

JUDY ADAMSON

The Case For Christ

Rated PG (opens May 4)

THERE IS NEVER ANY SHORTAGE OF PEOPLE WANTING TO DISPROVE THE CHRISTIAN FAITH – PROBABLY EVEN MORE SO NOW THAN IN FIRST-CENTURY PALESTINE. BUT WHAT DO YOU DO WHEN SOMEONE CLOSE TO YOU BELIEVES AND YOU THINK THEY'RE MISTAKEN?

In 1980, atheist Lee Strobel thought he had the answer. Using his research skills as a journalist for the *Chicago Tribune*, he was certain he could disprove the core of Christianity – namely, Jesus' death and resurrection. Once that was done, he reasoned, he would be able to "rescue" his wife Leslie (Erika Christensen) from her new faith in Christ.

The movie's title, based on the 1998 book of the same name, makes it clear Strobel's research had an unexpected result: he became a Christian.

The movie tells that story, although the timeline is compressed from two years into a few months. Strobel (Mike Vogel) is painted as brash, skilled and outwardly confident, but intolerant – not just of faith itself, but of everyone who has it. He is also relationally damaged from growing up with an emotionally distant father, and this becomes more important as the story unfolds.

Strobel's search for answers is sparked by a seemingly unrelated incident. While having dinner at a restaurant Lee and Leslie's young daughter Alison chokes on a sweet. It's only the quick thinking of nurse Alfie Davis (L. Scott Caldwell) that saves her life.

When Alfie tells the couple she was only dining there because Jesus had told her to, Lee is dismissive but Leslie is intrigued. She seeks Alfie out, starts attending church with her (Willow Creek Community Church, with a young Bill Hybels as pastor), and before long she becomes a Christian.

Strobel is horrified. His work mentor tells him that when his own daughter was heading down the same route he "kept picking away at the delusion until she finally came around". He advises Lee to use facts and reason for the *Tribune*.

A Christian work colleague – who Lee often makes fun of – tells him everything hinges on the resurrection and he should concentrate on that. So Lee begins his search, confident that it won't be long before he's able to dismantle Leslie's house of cards.

The story has three main threads: Lee's research; his impatience with Leslie's faith and the resultant strain on their marriage (he even accuses her of "cheating" on him with Jesus); and the aftermath of a police shooting he covers for the *Tribune*.

Obviously a two-hour film could never include everything in the book. In addition, the approach that Strobel took – the pursuit of historical, medical and psychological evidence – was one that worked for him. It isn't everyone's cup of tea.

Happily, though, *The Case For Christ* isn't like so many Christian films, which can suffer from clumsy scripts and production values, as well as (regularly) lame acting. The ensemble cast, led by Vogel and Christensen, put in strong performances and the script benefits from the fact that Strobel sets out as an unbeliever. As he seeks to prove himself right he is often presented – at home and at work – in ways that are not at all flattering, and it's helpful to have that balance.

Having said that, I would have preferred it if the Alfie Davis character wasn't so quick to have all the answers. It's an easy script solution, but not entirely helpful. It seems unlikely, for example, when Leslie fears her marriage is falling apart, that the real Alfie would have been so foolish as to comfort her by saying (in essence) that it's only a matter of time before her husband comes to faith. Really? Given there are so many spouses out there with unbelieving other halves it's a little insensitive to run with that logic.

All things considered, then, is it worth taking a non-believing friend to see *The Case for Christ*?

There are certainly critics of the film, just as there are of the book. Did Strobel do the right research with the right people? Did he miss something important? Does it matter in the end, given that all the historical detail in the world can't create belief? The final matter of faith is always between each person and God.

All this is true but if you know a seeker, someone who has a young faith or who would welcome more reasons to be confident in the faith they have, it's worth your time.