

# Southern CROSS

THE NEWS MAGAZINE FOR SYDNEY ANGLICANS

JULY  
2017

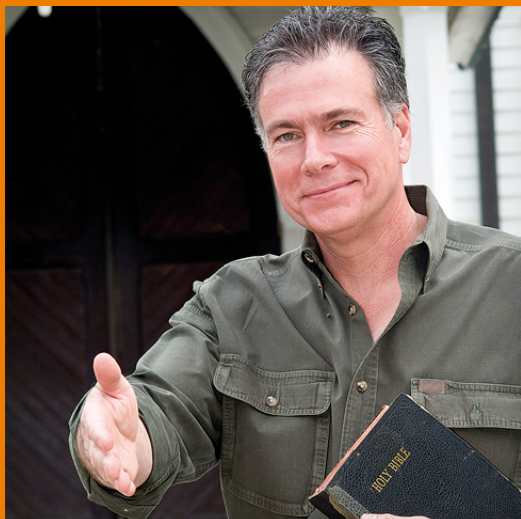
## A welcome site

CHURCH WEBSITES AND FIRST IMPRESSIONS

- + Psalm 2 and living like a refugee
- & Scotland's missionary bishop



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It is not loving to allow people to believe that any lifestyle that runs contrary to the Bible is acceptable to God.

Andy Lines  
World News

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# Taiwanese minister Minted

From right, front row: the Rev Chris Hanger, the Rev Tallis Tien, and Bishop the Rt Rev Peter Hayward at the ordination, along with Minto members, friends and family.

THE FIRST PERSON OF A CHINESE BACKGROUND TO BE ORDAINED A PRESBYTER IN THE ILLAWARRA region, Mr Hung-En "Tallis" Tien, says he hopes this show of support by the Diocese will help his local ministry to Chinese-background people.

"Among Chinese people, particularly those away from mainland China in places like Hong Kong, they often have different ideas of deacons and presbyters than people in Sydney," says Mr Tien, who leads the Chinese congregation at Minto Anglican Church.

"Sometimes, being a deacon, you are not seen as a 'full' minister – especially by the older generation. They don't have a concept of a full diaconate. So it helps in ministry because it shows I have been accepted by the Diocese and the bishop, and that opens up relationships and ministry more clearly."

Mr Tien, who was born in Taiwan but has lived in Sydney for many years, previously served as an assistant minister at St Paul's, Chatswood. Before taking up a part-time role at Minto in 2013, he also lectured at the Chinese Theological College Australia in Burwood, a position he still juggles with current ministry commitments.

"When I joined the college, my heart for ministry didn't really change," Mr Tien says. "One of the main reasons I joined the college was to train local ministers, so I was looking for part-time ministry to be involved in at the same time."

"Chris [Hanger, rector of Minto] got in touch with me and said they only had a part-time position for me but I thought that was perfect. I could teach and be in ministry at the same time! I hadn't ever considered Minto before Chris talked to me but the Lord, it seems, has led me here, and I enjoy the work that is being done."

While there aren't many Chinese ministries in the area, the Minto Chinese congregation has met in various forms since 1994.

Mr Tien is a native Mandarin speaker and preaches in Mandarin, but services often end up being partly in Cantonese thanks to the involvement of lay people running the services, many of whom are from countries with Cantonese-speaking communities. Roughly 40 to 50 people attend these Chinese services, with increasing lay involvement.

"My philosophy in ministry is to train the people in the congregation to serve," Mr Tien says. "I have been with these people for about three years now, and the fruit we see is not because people are moving into the area and filling the church that way. It's because the people are being equipped, and because they are motivated and blessed by God to serve and reach out to newcomers. We are actively reaching out."

# FIS fosters resilience

THIS YEAR'S FAITHFULNESS IN SERVICE CONFERENCES FOR CLERGY AND STIPENDIARY LAY WORKERS has focused on equipping people to work sustainably in ministry – for their own sake as well as for those they serve.

Afternoon sessions looked specifically at domestic violence and how ministry workers should respond to such issues in their churches, but the earlier session considered the "core strength" needed to help tackle issues such as burnout and moral failure.

"Managing stress and being able to steadily be involved in ministry over the long haul seems perhaps a little tangential to Safe Ministry, but it's actually a really vital piece of the puzzle," says one of the key speakers at FIS and chairman of the Safe Ministry Board the Rev Dr Keith Condie.

"There is a recognition that when people are under stress they are more prone to temptation and moral failure. There are a lot of people in ministry who are under stress and don't have the tools to get through that. While doing less is often part of the solution, dealing with the damage of stress afterwards also involves developing resilience."

Dr Condie (left), along with his wife Sarah, serves as co-director of Anglican Deaconess Ministries' Mental Health and Pastoral Care Institute, and says one of the key things anyone in ministry should do is develop a habit of honest self-reflection in order to help themselves before problems emerge, but also give themselves the best shot at continuing ministry into the long term.

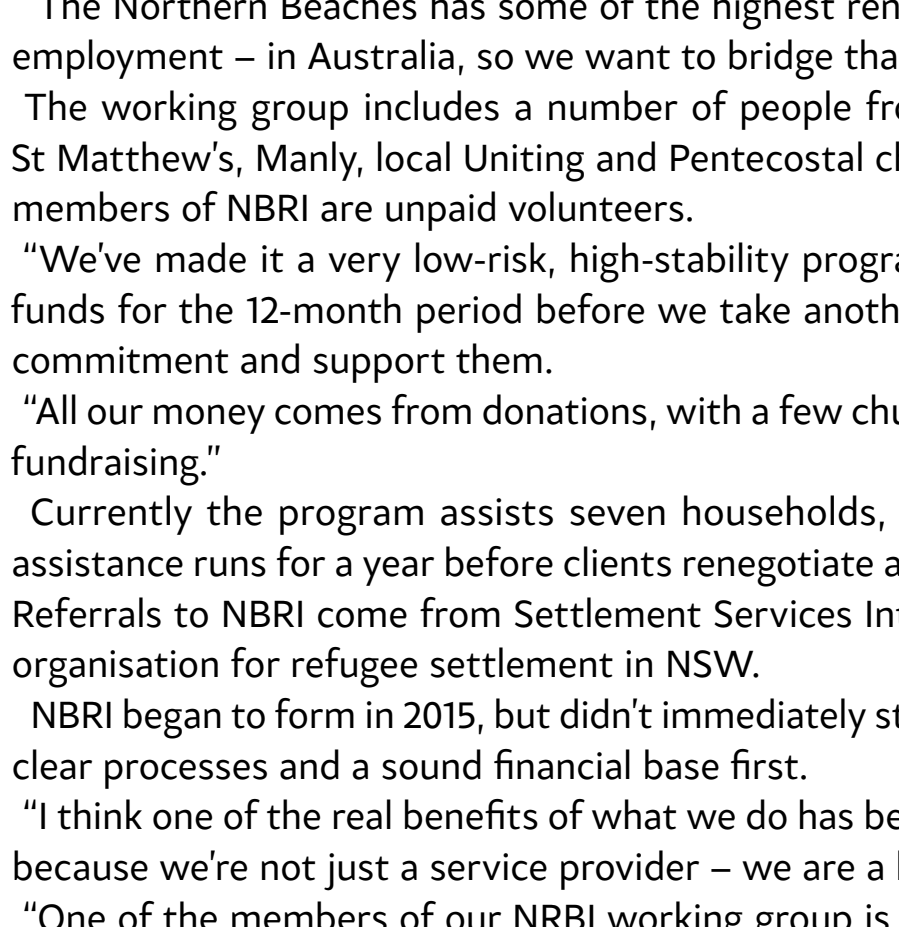
"There's only so much we can do in a day conference, so what we want to do with this sort of thing is enable people to be self-reflective, to be able to look at where they're at honestly, and to go home with a clear sense of areas in which they need to do something," Dr Condie says. "That may involve changing how they have down time, changing how they debrief after stressful weeks in ministry, or whether they need to look at other help. While we can help people see the

patterns and where to go for help, resilience also involves developing that self-reflection themselves."

The Condie's also focused on the unique tools Christians have in developing workplace resilience thanks to the fruits of the gospel.

"Secular research acknowledges the place of what they would call a 'spiritual element' to life – things like a feeling of gratitude, having a sense of meaning in life and a network of relationships that are themselves resilient," Dr Condie says.

"When you combine that with a Christian perspective and with the gospel, with strength that God himself lends us, we have a great many resources at our disposal to draw upon when ministry gets hard. Our sense of worth is not built on our performance, after all, but on God's grace."



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# Real refugee assistance

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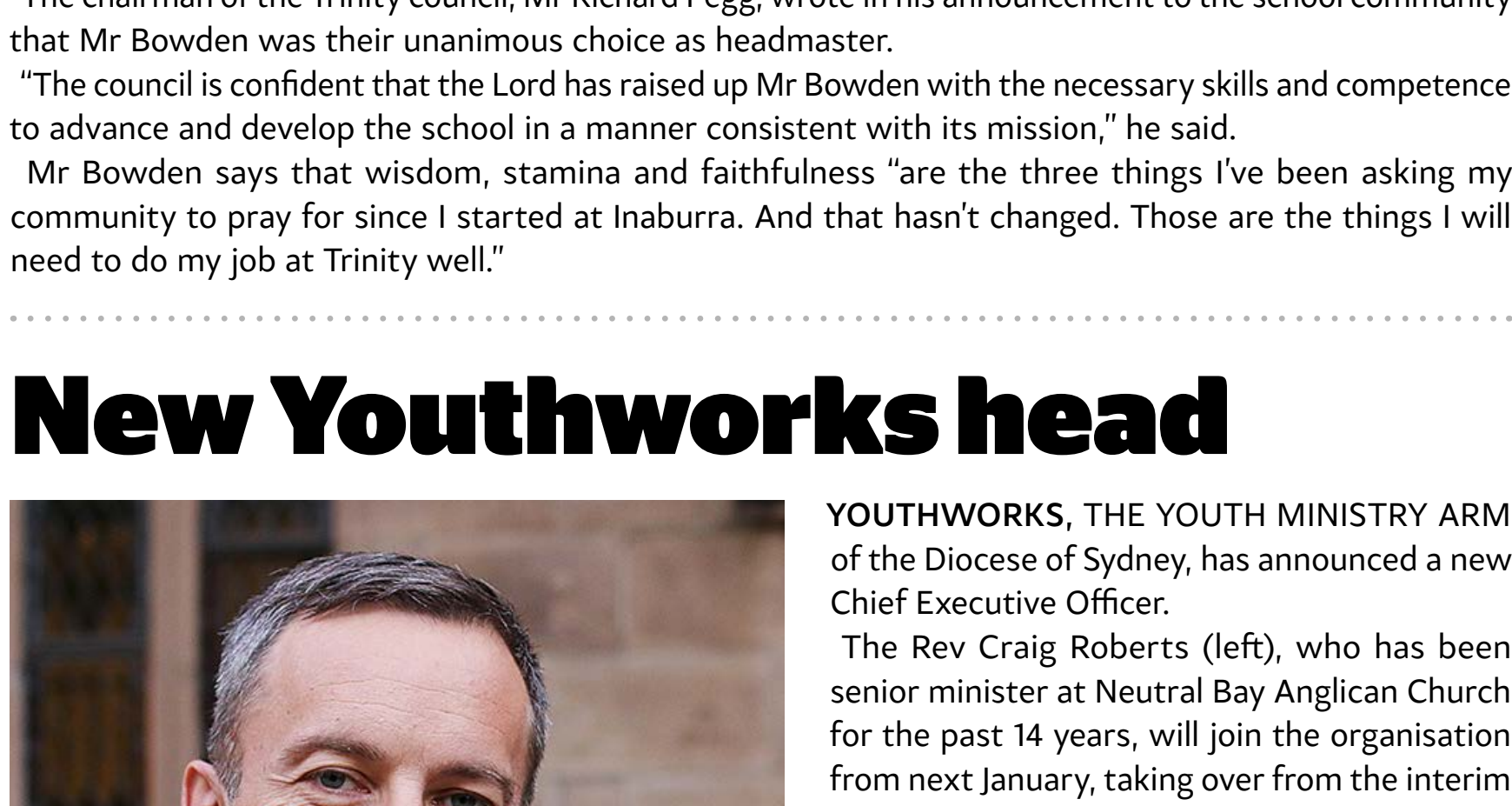
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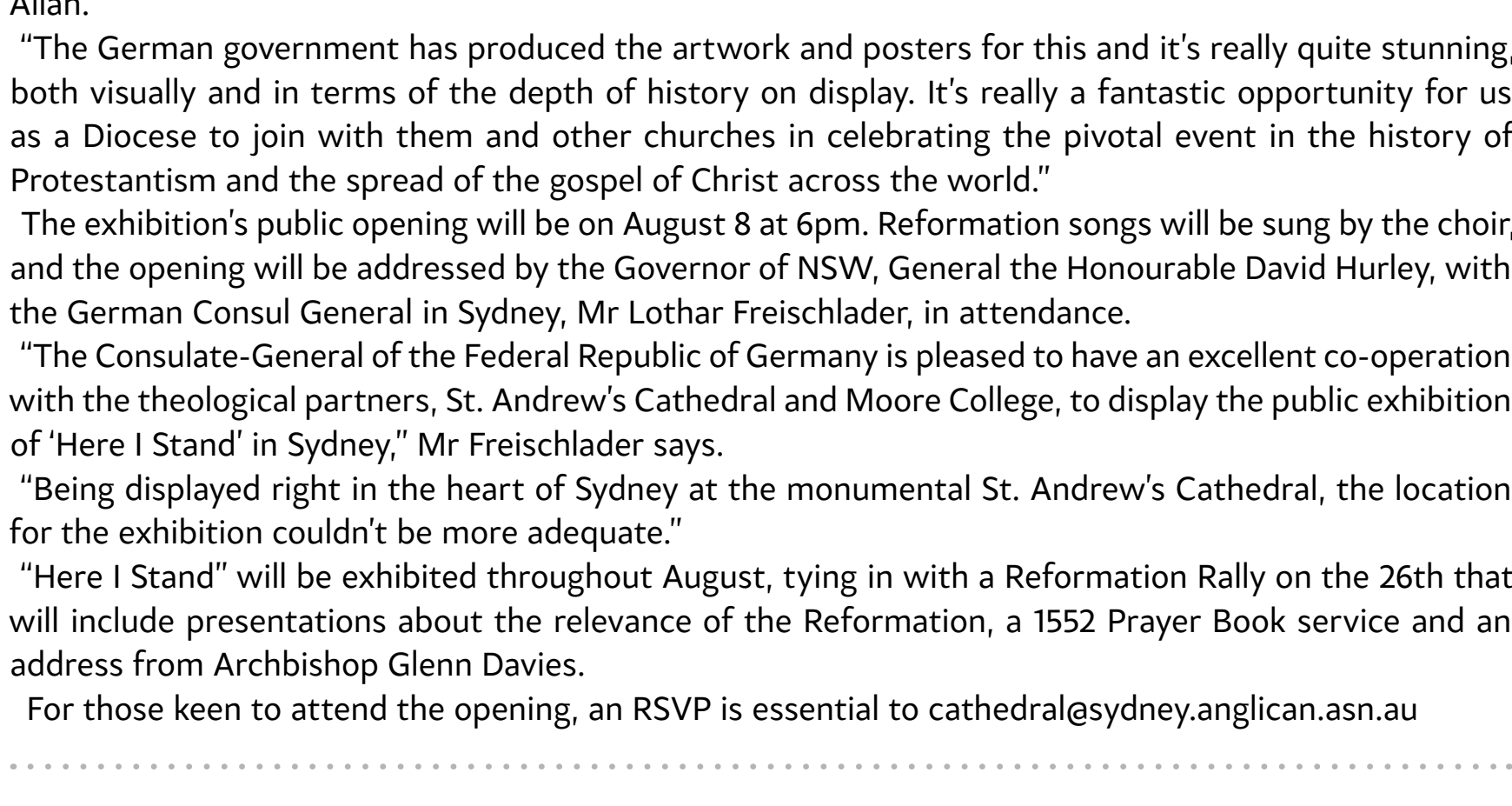
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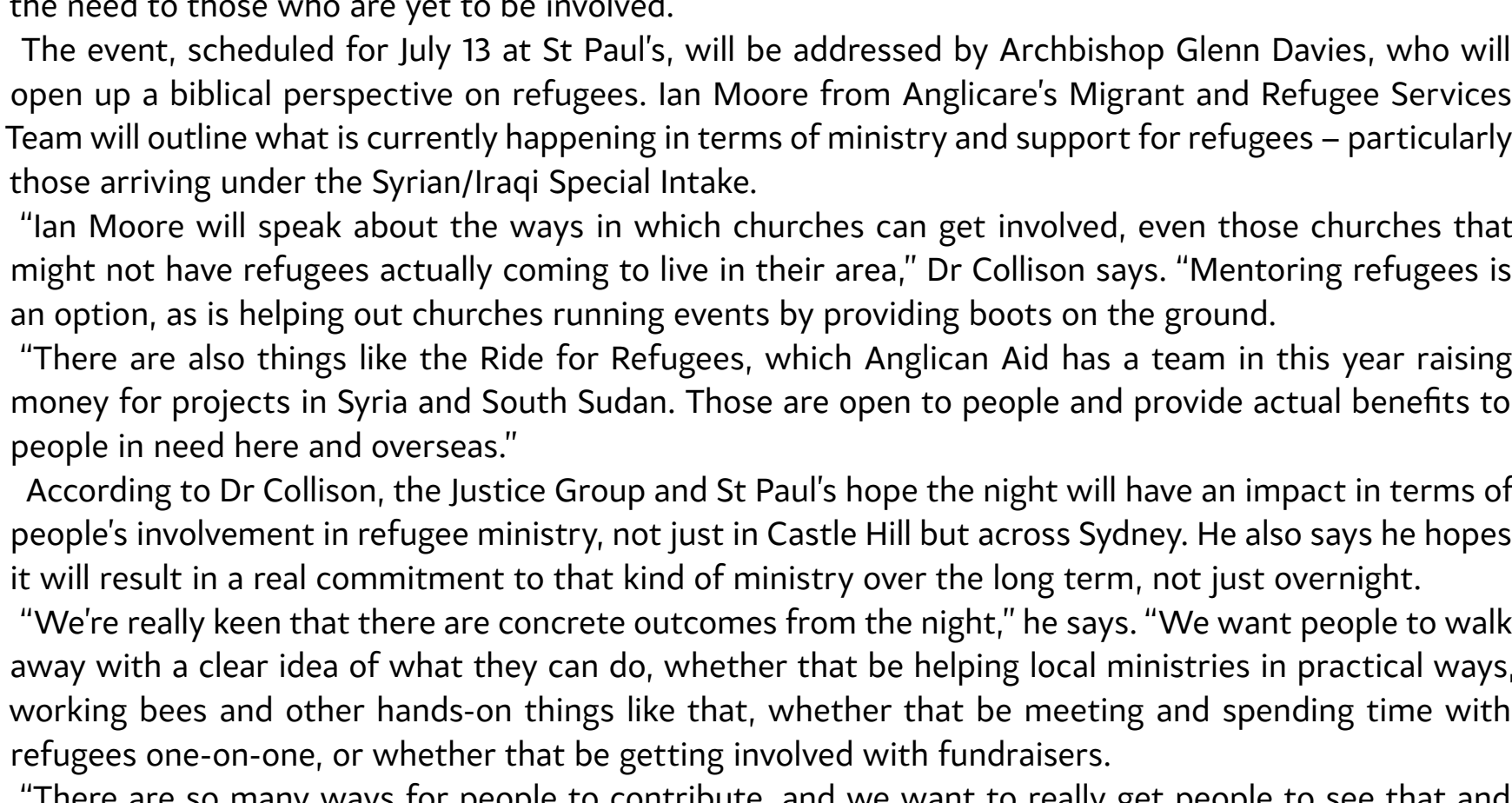
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"All our money comes from donations, with a few churches in the area also supplementing that through fundraising."

Currently the program assists seven households, ranging from families to single individuals. Rent assistance runs for a year before clients renegotiate agreements or enter the mainstream rental market. Referrals to NBRI come from Settlement Services International, which is the primary non-government organisation for refugee settlement in NSW.

NBRI began to form in 2015, but didn't immediately start providing support services in order to establish clear processes and a sound financial base first.

"I think one of the real benefits of what we do has been the way this assistance becomes very personal, because we're not just a service provider – we are a link to this community," Mr Aitken says.

"One of the members of our NBRI working group is also providing one of his granny flats to a refugee



# Super Sunday turnout



Concentrate: Waterworks spoon racing at Oatley's Super Sunday. PHOTO: Kristy Sayer-Jones

**OATLEY ANGLICAN CHURCH'S NEW TAKE ON ITS SUPER SUNDAYS HAS PACKED OUT THE CHURCH building with visitors, thanks to a twist on an old formula.**

The church has previously run fair days on a Saturday, where each ministry at the church runs a stall or activity – all open to the community. This year the decision was made to connect it with their Super Sundays, where they host kids from the local preschool at the service, followed by a barbeque.

"The fair days had been fairly successful the last couple of years, but I'd felt like the flow-through from that into the rest of what we do as a church wasn't there," says the rector of Oatley, the Rev Craig Olliffe. "So this year we experimented with running it on a Sunday and mixing it in with church.

"It was an easy invite for people because it was an event and not just a service, but also because you had people listening to David Mansfield talk about the work of Anglican Aid and how that tied into giving living water to a thirsty world. I think it worked really well."

Mr Olliffe says the church was standing room only on the day, with many visitors sticking around to enjoy the activities and conversations with church members afterwards. Some visitors have become involved in other church activities as a result.

"It went better than we ever could have expected," he says. "People actually came to an event, heard the gospel and also were able to hang around after and get to meet our people properly. I think these events have also helped to lift our profile in the community... I've had people come up to me in the street because they recognise me as the local minister, even though they don't come to the church. That has opened up connections and conversation."

The day included kids activities like a jumping castle, outdoor games and big screen video games, while the adults were treated to a café experience complete with wine and cheese tasting. Preschoolers performed musical items during the service, while barbecues were fired up for an after-church lunch.

"There were a lot of little details to organise and be on top of, but having done this for a few years now we have a bit of a groove going," Mr Olliffe says. "Of course, moving to Sunday was new – it meant more work in one go – but all the members of the church really responded well by putting in the effort. There were a lot of positives that came out of it and we're planning to try and do a couple more of these days before the end of the year."



# Missionary for Scotland



Episcopal oversight: Archbishop Foley Beach of ACNA (left), with the Rev David McCarthy from the Scottish Anglican Network.

A MISSIONARY BISHOP HAS BEEN CHOSEN TO OVERSEE CONGREGATIONS ISOLATED BY A VOTE of the Synod of the Scottish Episcopal Church (SEC) to allow same-sex marriages in churches. The vote, which goes against the official position of the Anglican Communion, came after a report to the Synod claiming there were no theological objections to ministers performing same-sex weddings or blessings. But the report also called for safeguards for those who did not agree.

Liberal proponents of the change spoke of moving beyond the Bible's guidance on marriage and sexuality, saying the cultural context of Scripture was no longer applicable. This drew a strong rebuke from members of the Scottish Anglican Network.

"Jesus clearly taught that marriage is a good gift from God and is a faithful, lifelong union between one man and one woman," the network said in a statement. "Though all of us fall short of his standards, not least in the area of sexual morality, we believe that following this teaching is essential to the flourishing of his forgiven people.

"The Scottish Episcopal Church is today rejecting this. In doing so, it is failing to support those in our churches who are same-sex attracted but who choose to live their lives in obedience to Jesus' teaching. [It is] misleading the church and the world, and acting in a schismatic way towards the worldwide Anglican Communion and the one, holy, catholic and apostolic church of which it claims to be a part."

Network member, the Rev David McCarthy, said the group was still working on how to express fellowship with the rest of the Church when this fellowship had been impaired by the vote. The Global Anglican Future Conference, GAFCON, immediately moved to arrange episcopal oversight for the disenfranchised congregations. The GAFCON primates asked the Anglican Church in North America (ACNA) to provide a missionary bishop for Scotland.

"Our province was formed at the direction of GAFCON 2008, after many of the provinces of GAFCON had provided the same kind of oversight for clergy and congregations in North America," ACNA's Primate, Archbishop Foley Beach, told a news conference. "They have asked us to consecrate Canon Andy Lines."

Canon Lines, who was also at the news conference, is a former British Army tank commander. "The issue at stake today is whether we trust in what God has said or not," he said. "We are not at liberty to tamper with his word; nor even to say that it is okay for some to believe what the Bible says as long as we allow others the freedom to deny what the Bible says."

He also responded to the language of the SEC report which spoke of "constrained difference", where theological disagreement doesn't lead to division.

"It is not loving to allow people to believe that any lifestyle that runs contrary to the Bible is acceptable to God," he said. "There are many issues that Christians can and do agree to disagree on, but not one which puts in peril the eternal destiny of the people Jesus died to save. That is what is at stake today; that is why GAFCON leaders have decided to act. It is for the good of everyone in Scotland, so that all may hear and respond to the authentic and wonderful good news of Jesus Christ."

The Scottish Episcopal Church is dwarfed by the Presbyterian Church, and its seven dioceses cover less than 1 per cent of Scotland's population. Only one of these dioceses – Aberdeen and Orkney – voted against the move to remove gender from the marriage canon.

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, has not rebuked the Scottish church for its contravention of official Anglican Communion policy but did rebuke GAFCON, saying the new bishop would not be recognised in England.

Canon Lines is undaunted, telling a news conference, "For my part, it is a privilege to be able to offer appropriate help and support to those in Scotland who wish to maintain the authority of the Bible. You are not alone."



## Social change, ageing and sex

I was intrigued to read the cover feature “Sex, intimacy and ageing” in your June issue.

Does a magazine representing Anglican Christian values need a front cover and a further six full pages filled with intimate and detailed sexual commentary and advice? I don't think so. Is sexual intimacy the most pressing ageing problem? I don't think so. What about health, aged care, loss of self esteem, loneliness, lack of mobility, financial issues, death, etc? Maybe these are issues you might find more important.

You recommend you discuss these sexual issues with your minister – are they trained to handle this? And if so, is it a wise area for ministers to become involved in, following the recent experience of institutional abuse and sexual misconduct? This kind of advice should be provided by trained professionals.

Your article concentrated on married couples – what about unmarried couples and same-sex couples? The Church is committed to support the marginalised in our community.

I don't think even the most ardent evangelist would believe that Abraham and Sarah's experience of having a child in their 90s and 100s was a good model to encourage intimate relationships. Maybe the relative measure of time between then and the present needs attention.

**John Landels**  
St Ives

The article “Sex, intimacy and ageing” addresses the social change that today's technology is causing. How sexual mores are reacting to this change is important. The sexual mores that have evolved are healthy and should not be guilt-laden.

The impressive biblical research of the authors should help to assuage feelings of guilt. A welcome change from the research that supports dogmatically held views. Christianity's core values must address the present and not be confined to the past.

Such articles are needed to address the change that is rapidly altering society. Change that is causing society to lose the moral prerogative. A moral prerogative that has an embracing love, not a proscribed love, at its centre.

**Reg Wilding**  
Wollongong

## The alcohol trap

I've just finished reading the very good article “The demon drink” in May *Southern Cross*.

I've been waiting for long time for an article like this and will be passing it on to various friends as it does have an excellent biblical perspective, common sense and great resources.

I work as a specialist in sports and exercise medicine, have travelled extensively with sports teams and have been involved in men's ministry in various ways.

The use of alcohol is quite insidious and is normalised in our culture. On a personal note I have found that it is very easy to fall into the trap of drinking alcohol on a more frequent basis, particularly once your children are older or have left home. There is more disposable income, more socialising that may involve alcohol, and so on. The other reasons are well documented in your article.

As Christians we should be very careful not to fall into this trap. Relationships may become affected as well as health and poor stewardship of our resources. Ultimately it's an issue of personal godliness.

It can be difficult to have a frank conversation about this with Christian friends without sounding like a “wet blanket”. I have found that the basic guidelines of trying to avoid alcohol through the week, ensuring that you can always drive a vehicle and at the same time allowing people to have discussions about this, is very important.

For those who are younger with drinking habits around “shots” and multiple cocktails, I encourage you to stop this ASAP. It's bingeing and a lack of self-control. Ask God to change your desires. Ask a friend to help you. Be wise with this.

I want to thank Penny Wilkinson for her tremendous ministry and encourage her in pursuing the vision of Overcomers Outreach. Its work is very difficult and it is indeed a courageous ministry honouring to our Lord.

Remember Proverbs 20, verse 1: “Wine is a mockery and beer a brawler. Whoever is led astray by them is not wise”.

**Dr John Best**  
Bellevue Hill

## Reasons – and THANKS

I enjoy *Southern Cross* every month, but rarely say thank you. Every issue has articles that interest me. Thanks to Russell Powell, Judy Adamson and other writers for challenging us to think about living for Christ today.

I appreciated the article for older Christians, now that I can't sing “When I'm 64” any more.

But the article on *13 Reasons Why* is what prompted me to put fingers to iPad. Thanks for your research and thoughts. When I was younger, our minister watched *The Mavis Bramston Show* and told us not to watch it. I am guessing he wasn't intending to watch it regularly but I couldn't help thinking that if he could watch it, so could we!

But having read Trevin Wax's Gospel Coalition review, and yours, I would never want to watch *13 Reasons Why* and hope others don't react as I did 50 years ago.

You gave three excellent reasons not to watch. Pornography originally meant stories about prostitutes. I think glorifying sleaze and romanticising suicide may be another kind.

**David McKay**  
Blaxland

## In memory of Rex

After hearing about the death of Rex Harris (see obituary, page 17), I write regarding his profound impact on my life.

I met Rex in 1967 as a 10-year-old boy when he began teaching Scripture to my 5th class at Ashcroft Primary School.

From the outset, Rex was a wonderful and gifted communicator and captured us with his stories and his enthusiasm for God. We soon found ourselves attending a vacation camp at Gerroa and, as a group of us enjoyed singing in the car on the way back, Rex suggested we form a choir and the genesis of the Green Valley Children's Choir was made.

So we began attending St Mark's, Sadleir as part of the choir and, the following year, came to youth group where Rex shared the gospel with us.

I credit Rex for three pivotal influences on my life. First, finding Jesus as my Lord and Saviour as a young teenager. Second, my profound love of music, which evolved into music ministry in the church for the next 30 years; and lastly with a desire and ability as a communicator of the Scriptures, which has been a central part of my life for 40 years. I know the joy of communicating the gospel was something Rex planted by his example all those years ago.

As I stood with many of my friends and family as one of the choir “originals” singing a final farewell to Rex at his memorial service, I thought, “Well done, good and faithful servant”. But more than that, with a very great sense of gratitude I uttered a final “Thank you” to Rex for the profound influence he had on my early years that resulted in ministry in Australia and Asia, always with music and youth at the centre.

**Steve Whiddon**  
Lambton







## BACK TO BLAKEHURST

The Rev Ross Ryan has continued a ministry association with the parish of Blakehurst by becoming its rector on June 25.

Mr Ryan has already spent four years at the church – first as a lay worker, then as assistant minister – before moving to Youthworks College in 2015 as its director of distance learning. Now he’s back at Blakehurst and he couldn’t be happier.

“My desire has always been for parish ministry,” he says. “Any ministry over the past 15 years has always involved kids and youth so the opportunity to work at Youthworks College was great, but I think ultimately where our gifts lie is in parish ministry.

“We love the people at Blakehurst and they’ve just put on a full-time youth and children’s worker from Youthworks College! The opportunity to work with Yoki is really exciting because the church already has an amazing kids ministry.”

Mr Ryan spent 16 years working in a secular, corporate environment, which he believes has given him good pastoral and leadership skills – skills now “honed by the gospel” – which he’s ready to put to good use at Blakehurst.

“We’ve spent most of our lives in this region, so we’ve got a good understanding of the area – and it’s not without its challenges,” he says. “Blakehurst is a peninsula, and the church is at the end of the peninsula. There’s no shopping centre out here. We’ve got a good relationship with the local school where we do SRE and we’ve got a great connection through an after-schools kids’ program, but we’re quite isolated, really.”

Seeing kids ministry grow into youth ministry is one of the challenges for the parish – as is connecting with and serving the community as a whole.

“With God taking charge we need to think about it one lost person at a time,” Mr Ryan says. “We believe that God saves and he’s calling people back to himself. Our role is how do we share the truth of Jesus with our community? That’s really our challenge – as I think it is with everyone... but we’re really excited about the opportunity to serve!”

## CREMORNE CALL

After seven years as assistant minister at Willoughby, the Rev Tim St Quintin became rector of St Peter’s, Cremorne on April 17.

During his time at Willoughby Mr St Quintin had a specific focus on families ministry, saying that, “It’s an area – like all the lower north shore – that’s bursting at the seams with young families, but when we started at Willoughby the demographic of the church hadn’t caught up with the changing demographic of the area.

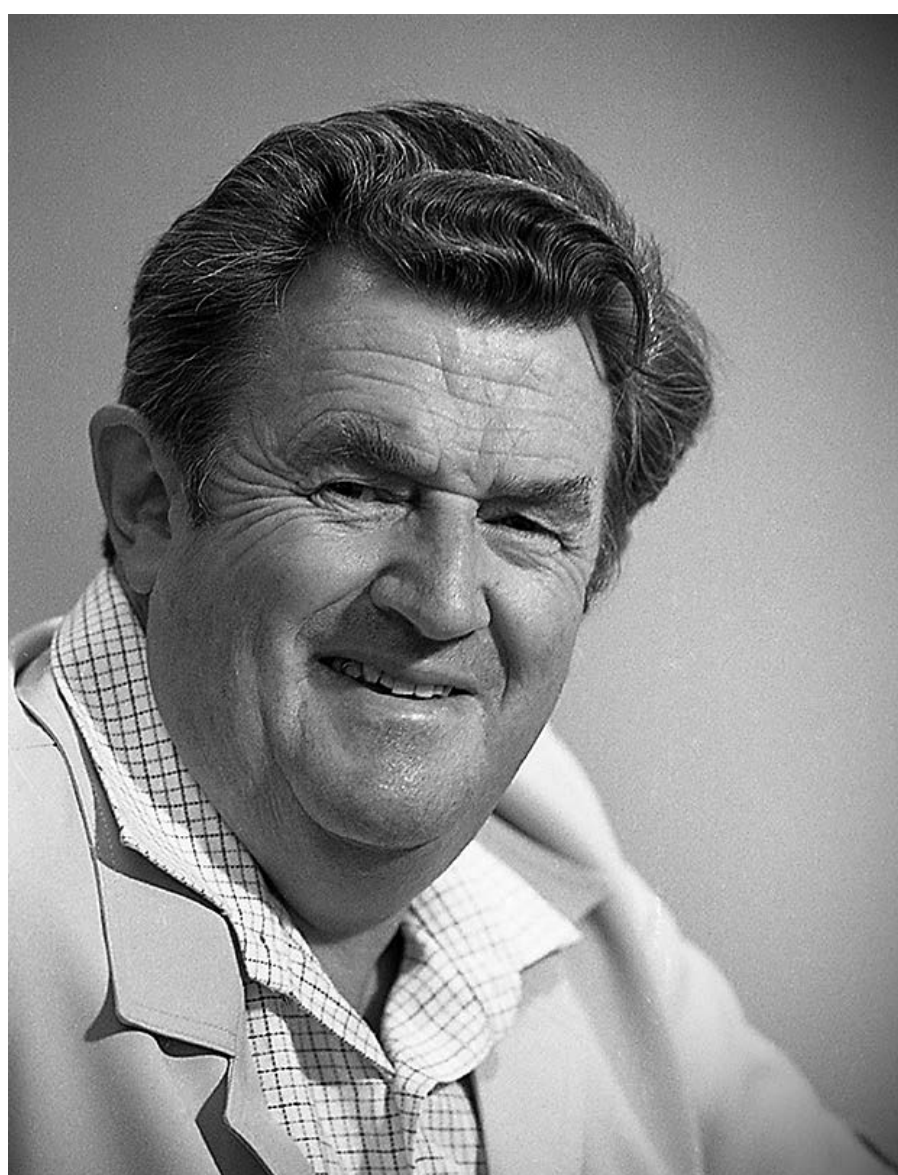
“There was a real unity of purpose within the church to make that change, however, so it was a great environment for it to happen.”

In the same way, Cremorne appointed a part-time minister in 2015 to help make more connections with young families.

“They started a new, all-ages family service, which is of a different style from the other morning services,” Mr St Quintin says. “The church is keen to retain the more traditional style of service they’re used to, but alongside that they’re willing to do something different, putting practical resources into new things to serve God in this area.”

He says people at Cremorne have been “overwhelmingly supportive” since they arrived. “The church is excited there’s a young family here. The prayerfulness they had for the minister their nominators might choose was deeply encouraging and it’s been matched by the warmth of their welcome.

“There’s a great willingness to work together for the gospel.”



Rex Harris died on May 18 at the age of 80.

Rex John Harris was born on December 12, 1936 – and he was a 10-talent man. Although he had limited formal education, the Lord qualified him to work as a gifted evangelist in children’s and youth ministry. He trained with, and became a Captain in, the Church Army. He touched the lives of thousands of young people at Camp Howard, with the Youth Department, as an inner city youth worker, as youth director of Green Valley based at St Mark’s, Sadleir, in management of the Port Hacking properties and at Macarthur Anglican School.

He was awarded the British Empire Medal in 1981 for his services to youth.

Former Archbishop of Sydney, Harry Goodhew writes: “Rex was a remarkable servant of Christ. He had a God-given capacity to turn lively theological thinking into sustained and fruitful action in his Saviour’s name. He never appeared to be daunted by difficulties and challenges that others might find overwhelming.

“There will be many who will thank God for Rex’s ministry and many voices in heaven’s choirs whose hearts were renewed by God’s Spirit through Rex’s work.”

Deaconess Pattie Mutton writes: “I was involved with Rex in the 1960s-1980s in the ministry of the Youth Department (now Youthworks). Rex’s aim in life was to tell people about Jesus. He worked very hard and many children and young people became Christians through his life – he was an enthusiastic witness for Jesus.

“He accepted people as they were, without judgment. He was larger than life and his humour was infectious. His legacy lives on through those who came to Christ.”

Rex’s final ministry was at Macarthur Anglican School. Former principal of the school, Riley Warren, writes: “There was a profound sense of sadness across the Macarthur Anglican School community as they heard of the death of Rex Harris. Rex was on the Macarthur staff for 17 years, during which time he established what has now grown into the Macarthur Outdoor Education Program. Rex was also instrumental in establishing both the North Queensland Christian Outreach trip and the Dads and Daughters camp, which have operated successfully for many years.

“Rex taught Biblical Studies and initiated or was involved in a wide array of Christian ministry initiatives within the school. His gifted musical ability saw him conduct the school choir and other choral groups for many years. Without doubt his ministry in the school had a profound impact on the lives of countless students and staff as he encouraged them to be committed followers of Jesus.

“Macarthur Anglican School was blessed to have had such a gracious Christian man as part of its community.”

All glory be to God.

Obituary prepared by Shirley Andrews

The Rev Brian Telfer died on April 2, aged 79.

Robert Brian Telfer was born in Baulkham Hills on November 1, 1937. He went to school in Parramatta and afterwards to teachers’ college, although – according to his daughter Kath Hiron – he was so shy one of his lecturers said he would “never be able to stand up in front of a class and teach because he was rubbish at public speaking”.

Mr Telfer had always worried about his sinfulness, even as a small child. He wrote in reflections on his earlier life that, while washing he clothes at teachers’ college, “I was so burdened by my sin I would quietly cry because I could make my clothes clean, but I didn’t know how to be clean inside”.

However, while still at college he and a friend heard an evangelistic talk by Alan Walker on the lost sheep. Mr Telfer understood that he was the lost one and welcomed by God, and it changed his life.

In her eulogy at his funeral, Mrs Hiron said: “Even if you knew Dad a little, you would know that from this time on he had one passion that ruled his heart: his desire was to find the lost, those who were like him. He searched for them and in God’s grace he found so many and pointed them to Jesus”.

After three years as a teacher, Mr Telfer went to Moore College in the early 1960s. He was curate at Mittagong in 1964-65, vicar at Woolgoolga in the Grafton Diocese from 1966-68, then assistant minister at Gunnedah in the Armidale Diocese before joining John Chapman in the (now) Department of Evangelism in 1971. He served as chaplain to The King’s School from 1972-76 before becoming rector of Christ Church, Gladesville – a position he would hold for 27 years, until his retirement in 2003.

A long-term member of the Christ Church congregation, Ken Ferreira, was 16 when Mr Telfer arrived at Gladesville and was soon trained by him in evangelism. At the funeral Mr Ferreira recalled many conversations with Mr Telfer about Jesus’ atoning death and his taking of our punishment upon himself.

“As time went on, a friendship developed beyond minister and young parishioner,” Mr Ferreira recalled. “I was welcomed into the family. We would have dinners and sit around after dinner and read the Bible and pray.

“I grew up in a non-Christian home so I thought I was in heaven. I had not experienced anything like it. I couldn’t get enough of it, hearing about Jesus and what he had done for us, and is doing... Brian and Judy became my Christian parents.

“Brian’s desire for the lost was evident and he was always wrestling with the idea about making Gladesville’s church service as accessible, comfortable and inviting as possible for the outsider – although his preaching never made us comfortable!”

Mr Ferreira recalled a storm of letters and phone calls to the Archbishop in protest when Mr Telfer decided to stop wearing clerical dress at church services. But Mr Telfer was determined to care for those outside the church rather than traditions within the church.

“He was revolutionary, all for the sake of the gospel,” he said. “He was not proud or arrogant or boastful about what he was doing, but his deep desire to make church inviting to the outsider, and the insider, so Jesus could be known, was always behind it.

“Under Brian’s leadership, God’s church at Gladesville was being built. We were faithfully and truthfully taught. People were trained for ministry; people were sent to other parts of Sydney, NSW, the rest of Australia and overseas for gospel mission.

“He had a unique God-given ability, he was a visionary – a man before his time who loved Jesus and wanted as many people as he met to know Jesus and repent and be baptised by the Holy Spirit.”





# From *Chariots* to *Hacksaw*

DAVID MANSFIELD

I SAW THE MOVIE *CHARIOTS OF FIRE* IN 1981. I haven't seen a movie since that sent my spirit soaring with praise to God for the way that the silver screen so beautifully depicted a man whose trust in, and obedience, to the word of God took precedence over everything else in his life. Not, that is, until I saw *Hacksaw Ridge* late last year.

Sure, I played sport on Sunday while the main character in *Chariots of Fire*, Eric Liddell, refused to do so. And sure, I touched a rifle and shot off plenty of rounds on the practice range in my short-lived career in the Army as a reluctant conscript, while the main character in *Hacksaw Ridge*, Desmond Doss, refused to take up arms.

And yes, there have been plenty of movies in the 35 years between 1981 and 2016 that have touched me deeply – movies such as *The Mission* (1986), *Awakenings* (1990) and *Cry, The Beloved Country* (1995) – but, I must confess, nothing like the way that *Chariots of Fire* and *Hacksaw Ridge* were able to dismantle my emotional façade.

In *Chariots* and *Hacksaw*, the heroics of two Christian men are brought to the screen. Undoubtedly, there is a degree of cinematic licence by the respective writers and directors. But the story of these ordinary men, one with the gift of speed and the other with the gift of – I don't know how to describe it – sheer guts, I guess, is extraordinary.

Both men are driven by the courage of their convictions and these convictions are shaped by their understanding of the Bible.

It was the Bible in *Chariots of Fire* that took centre stage. And it was the Bible in *Hacksaw Ridge* that won the Oscar.

I can remember heaving with emotion and struggling (failing) to hold back tears in a packed theatre when Isaiah 40 was read by Eric Liddell as he attended church rather than run the 100 metres on a Sunday at the 1924 Paris Olympics.

Images of athletes suffering from exhaustion and collapsing mid-race were set alongside Liddell reading: Even youths shall faint and be weary, and young men shall fall exhausted, but they who wait for the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles. They will run and not grow weary. They will walk and not be faint (Isaiah 40:30-31).

And the tears were flowing freely as the utterly exhausted Desmond Doss in *Hacksaw Ridge* prayed through the carnage:

“Please Lord, help me get one more. Help me get one more. Help me get one more... one more... help me get one more... one more, Lord... help me get one more.”

The historically true footage at the end of the movie reveals that this Seventh Day Adventist pacifist rescued 75 wounded men and was the first conscientious objector to win the US Medal of Honour – the highest award for courage under fire.

And here was, to me anyway, a faint but distinct echo of the words of the Lord Jesus, who told the story of the shepherd who left 99 sheep in safety to search for the one lost sheep in danger of death.

Am I using legitimate licence to suggest a conversation in heaven between the Father and the Son along these lines:

“I will go. I will do what it takes to rescue and bring home those who are lost, harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.”

In a hillside garden we know he prays:

“Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done.”

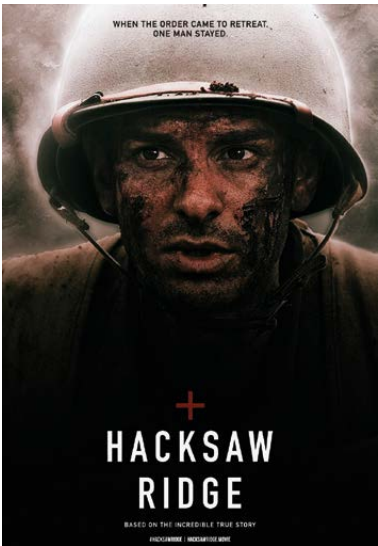
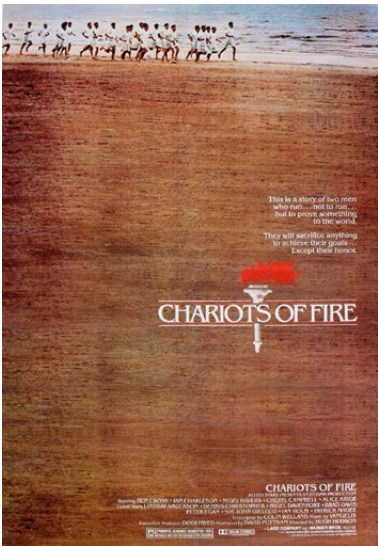
I am the first to admit I am a soft touch when it comes to the big screen. I think I cried in *Kindergarten Cop* when the little boy was finally rescued by the heroics of big Arnie!

But cut me some slack – 1981 to 2016 is a long time between drinks. I was only kicking off in ordained ministry at the beginning of the '80s and turned 65 in 2016. Both movies have helped me stay the course in a world that has sacrificed truth for trivia and titillation.

If ever Australian Christians needed courage under fire, they need it now. If ever our precious Bible – and the (ever-eroding) legacy it has given us to shape our understanding of our triune God, life, marriage, family, society, culture, justice, mercy, free speech and eternity – was under vicious and unreasonable attack, it is now.

*Chariots of Fire* and *Hacksaw Ridge* have strengthened my ever-struggling, white-knuckle stranglehold on the Bible. For Hollywood, that's saying something.

*The Rev David Mansfield is the director of the Archbishop of Sydney's Anglican Aid.*







# Bountiful history

DR GLENN DAVIES

IT WAS MY HONOUR LAST MONTH TO VISIT A REMARKABLE PLACE. NORFOLK ISLAND LIES 1600 kilometres off the eastern coast of Australia, comprises 35 square kilometres and is rich in Christian history.

Captain James Cook discovered the uninhabited island in 1774 and claimed it for the Crown, noting its tall pines and abundant flax would be useful for boat building and the making of sails. Thus, within weeks of the settlement of Sydney Cove, Lieutenant Philip Gidley King was despatched to Norfolk Island as its commandant along with 22 settlers (including 15 convicts), arriving on March 6, 1788. According to King's journal, divine service was conducted the following Sunday, March 9, at 11am in his tent.

The settlement was established with convict labour on the eastern side of the island, which became known as Kingston. This township would provide food and materials for the fledgling colony in Sydney Cove. James Bain and Henry Fulton served as chaplains there and both Richard Johnson (1791) and Samuel Marsden (1795) visited the island during its early days. The colony was closed in 1814 but reopened in 1824 and, in its second phase – this time solely as a penal settlement – gained a reputation for harsh treatment of its convicts. Several chaplains served the colony during this period, and St Mark's Church was erected for Church of England services.

In 1855 the British Government abandoned the penal colony when consideration was being given to relocating the inhabitants of Pitcairn Island, who comprised the descendants of sailors who were mutineers on The Bounty, together with their Tahitian wives.

Under the leadership of John Adams after Fletcher Christian's death, with only a Bible and a *Book of Common Prayer*, the community developed a noted piety and commitment to Christ that was unparalleled in the South Pacific. After the death of Adams the mantle of pastor and teacher fell to George Nobbs, who had only recently arrived on Pitcairn. Nobbs soon married the granddaughter of Fletcher Christian and was subsequently ordained as chaplain.

However, as the community began to outgrow Pitcairn, they accepted the offer of Queen Victoria to migrate to Norfolk Island. After a journey of 35 days, 194 people arrived on June 8, 1856. "Bounty Day" is commemorated on this date each year with a re-enactment of the arrival of Norfolk's founding families from Pitcairn.

The character of the island was now imbued with the piety and Christian faith of these new arrivals. They built a new church, All Saints', Kingston, and Nobbs continued as their chaplain until his death in 1884.

In 1866 Bishop Selwyn of New Zealand established a Melanesian Mission School on the western side of the island. This was an enterprising development that saw the arrival of Bishop John Patteson, the first Bishop of Melanesia. Patteson was responsible for the education and training of young Melanesians, as well as the preparation of missionaries to return to their islands to bring the gospel to their own people. In 1880 St Barnabas' Chapel was built on Mission land in memory of Bishop Patteson who, on one of his mission trips, had been brutally martyred by hostile Melanesians.

Although the Melanesian Mission closed in 1920, it was not until 1937 that chaplains were appointed to the island by the Archbishop of Sydney, as they are today. At the present time the Rev David Fell is chaplain, who conducts services at All Saints', Kingston and at St Barnabas' each week to faithful Christians who greatly appreciate his ministry. He also has a wide ministry to hundreds of tourists, many of whom visit one of these churches.

It was a privilege to be on the island to celebrate Bounty Day and to be welcomed by the community as well as the church family. There is valuable gospel work to be done building up the saints and reaching out to the inhabitants and tourists that populate the island.

Do pray for this vital ministry, as a full-time chaplain is not viable without the support of the Synod, Bush Church Aid and a number of churches in Sydney. However, David and his wife Crystal have committed themselves to serve the people of Norfolk for five years, as opposed to the usual two to three years that has been the custom since the 1930s.

While the Fells have the support of Jonathan Thomas, another Moore College graduate, who is employed by the local churches as a youth minister, the parish of Norfolk Island is far removed from the accessibility of resources, conferences and Mission Area support enjoyed by most Sydney parishes. For example, the parish could well do with 50 more copies of *Sunday Services* (2001) and the hymn book *The Source* (1998).

Do pray for the people and ministry on Norfolk Island that God's church might grow and that Christ might be honoured as Lord and Saviour in every community.

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JULY 2017

Southern CROSS

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## 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



Taken a good look at your church website lately? Does it welcome new people or is it like reading a foreign language, asks **RUSSELL POWELL.**

**W**HEN THE INTERNET WAS NEW, WEBSITES WERE A "statement". It's reminiscent of the introduction of television, when everyone bought a huge cabinet with a tiny screen and the box took centre stage in the lounge room. As TV developed sets became portable, low-profile and eventually flat-screen and thin. With websites the accent has now shifted from flashy (and flashing) fonts with huge graphics to sites with an emphasis on easy navigation and fast loading.

Sydney Anglicans have gone through several iterations of their own websites. The diocesan website, sydneyanglicans.net, is about to be refreshed and the Sydney Diocesan Secretariat (SDS) site has just been updated. Anglican Media's outreach and evangelism site, christianity.net.au, has been redesigned in the popular "question and answer" format to better suit the needs of people inquiring into Christian faith online.

But here's the big question: how is your church's website looking and how are we doing in presenting our best face online?



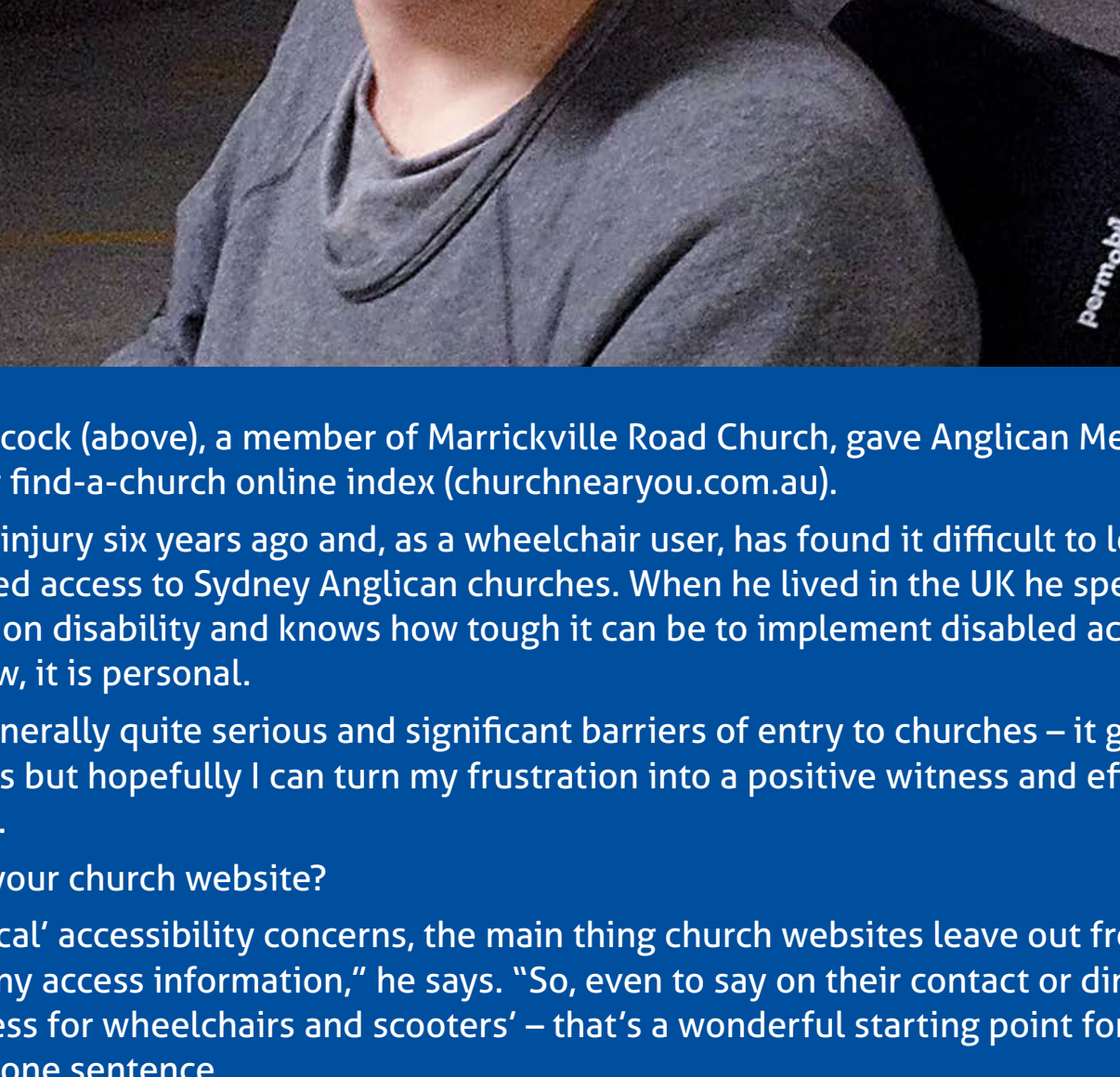
Steve Kryger, who runs the popular Communicate Jesus website (communicatejesus.com), has been around Sydney Anglican churches for many years and regularly blogs about "best practice" communications.

"Most churches have now recognised the importance of having a presence online," he says. "In fact, the proportion of churches with a Facebook presence is similar to the number of churches that had an online presence [website] five years ago."

Kryger says the first basic mistake is about audience. "I continue to argue that church websites exist first and foremost for people who don't attend the church. There are many ways a church member can keep informed, including church bulletins on a Sunday and through social media. For a person who doesn't attend the church the options are more limited. And for these people, a website is where they will often look first."

St Barnabas, Fairfield – which brands itself as "A church for all nations" – has followed this advice.

"Given the number of people saying they came through our website, or at least looked it up first, we decided that the focus of our website should be for visitors," says assistant minister, the Rev Gus Cameron.



As someone who worked on the technical side of software and web development before going into ministry, Cameron helped guide a makeover of the church's web presence at [www.stbarnabaschurch.org.au](http://www.stbarnabaschurch.org.au).

"We put the service times front and centre and made it easy to find our address details," he says. "That's often the most important thing visitors are after, but sometimes it is the hardest thing to find."

Cameron was surprised by how many people were actually helped by their old site, a dated 2000s model, mainly because it had quick access to all the key information.

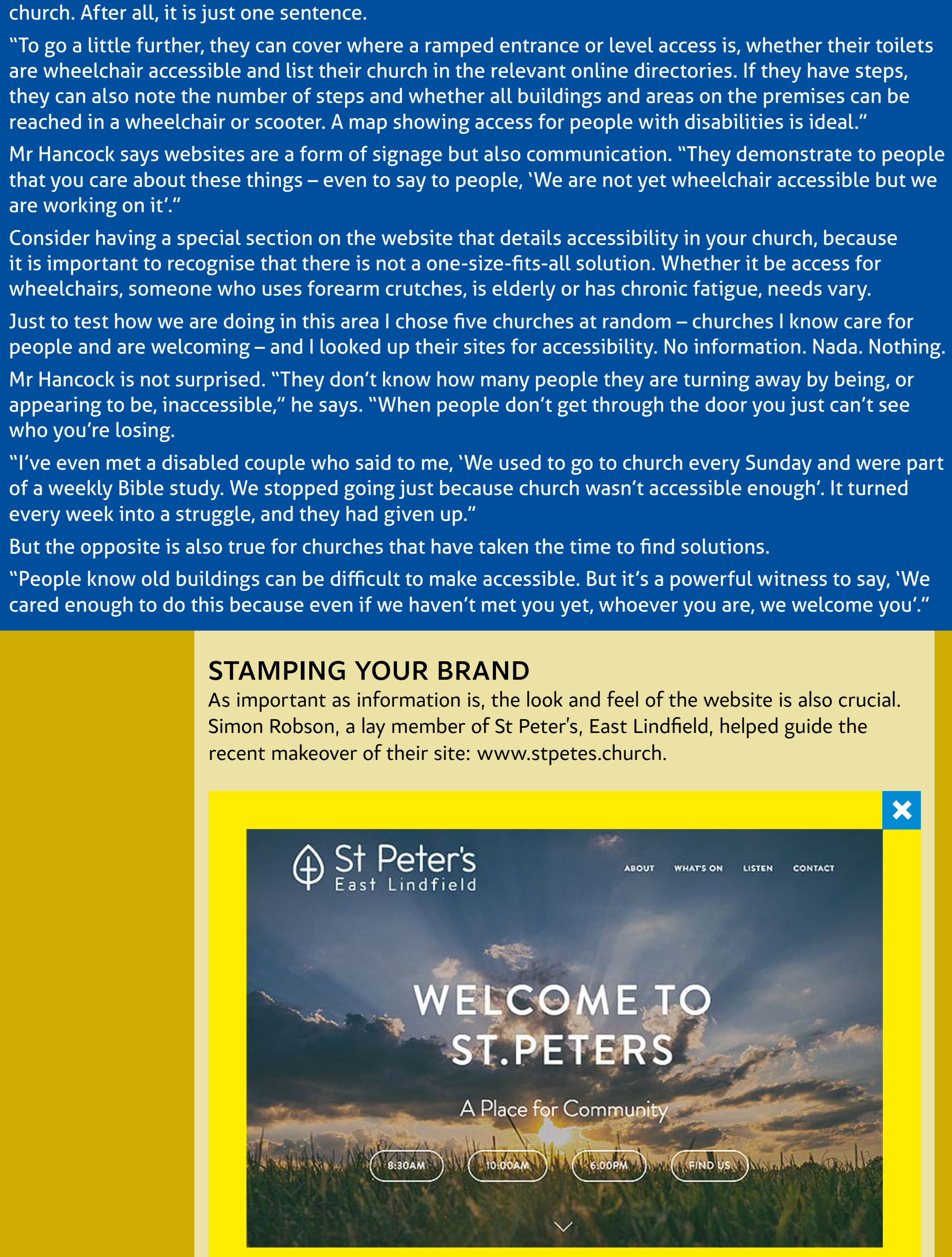
Kryger says that deciding on how to meet the needs of visitors should be a key part of website planning. "Invite people from the community who don't attend church to do some user testing," he says. "I would invite them to complete some tasks that people like them would want to carry out on the website. For example: Can you find what time church meets on a Sunday? Can you find out what our church offers for preschoolers? Can you find out what Christians believe?"

A quick survey of church websites reveals that most have Google map references, social media links, service times and a contact form. But many do not meet the needs of disabled visitors (see box, below) and often have out-of-date information – such as featuring Christmas service times in February.

Still, that may be better than no service times at all. Steve Kryger conducted a survey in 2014 and found that most churches didn't provide this information. "I was staggered to find that 58 per cent of websites had no information about Christmas services and of the 42 per cent that did, often the information wasn't easy to find," he says.

"In many cases, Christmas service times were displayed somewhere in a rotating banner or took some careful looking to discover. Failing to provide this important information is failing to love these people – the people who are the number one audience for your church website."

## ARE YOU ACCESSIBLE?



Earlier this year John Hancock (above), a member of Marrickville Road Church, gave Anglican Media some feedback about our find-a-church online index ([churchnearyou.com.au](http://churchnearyou.com.au)).

He suffered a spinal cord injury six years ago and, as a wheelchair user, has found it difficult to locate information about disabled access to Sydney Anglican churches. When he lived in the UK he spent time consulting with churches on disability and knows how tough it can be to implement disabled access in ancient buildings. But now, it is personal.

"I found that there are generally quite serious and significant barriers of entry to churches – it gets a little frustrating at times but hopefully I can turn my frustration into a positive witness and effect positive change," he says.

So, what's his advice for your church website?

"Aside from more 'technical' accessibility concerns, the main thing church websites leave out from a practical perspective is any access information," he says. "So, even to say their contact or directions page, 'We have ramp access for wheelchairs and scooters' – that's a wonderful starting point for any church. After all, it is just one sentence."

"To go a little further, they can cover where a ramped entrance or level access is, whether their toilets are wheelchair accessible and list their church in the relevant online directories. If they have steps, they can also note the number of steps and whether all buildings and areas on the premises can be reached in a wheelchair or scooter. A map showing access for people with disabilities is ideal."

Mr Hancock says websites are a form of signage but also communication. "They demonstrate to people that you care about these things – even to say to people, 'We are not yet wheelchair accessible but we are working on it'."

Consider having a special section on the website that details accessibility in your church, because it is important to recognise that there is not a one-size-fits-all solution. Whether it be access for wheelchairs, someone who uses forearm crutches, is elderly or has chronic fatigue, needs vary. Just to test how we are doing in this area I chose five churches at random – churches I know care for people and are welcoming – and I looked up their sites for accessibility. No information. Nada. Nothing.

Mr Hancock is not surprised. "They don't know how many people they are turning away by being, or appearing to be, inaccessible," he says. "When people don't get through the door you just can't see who you're losing."

"I've even met a disabled couple who said to me, 'We used to go to church every Sunday and were part of a weekly Bible study. We stopped going just because church wasn't accessible enough'. It turned every week into a struggle, and they had given up."

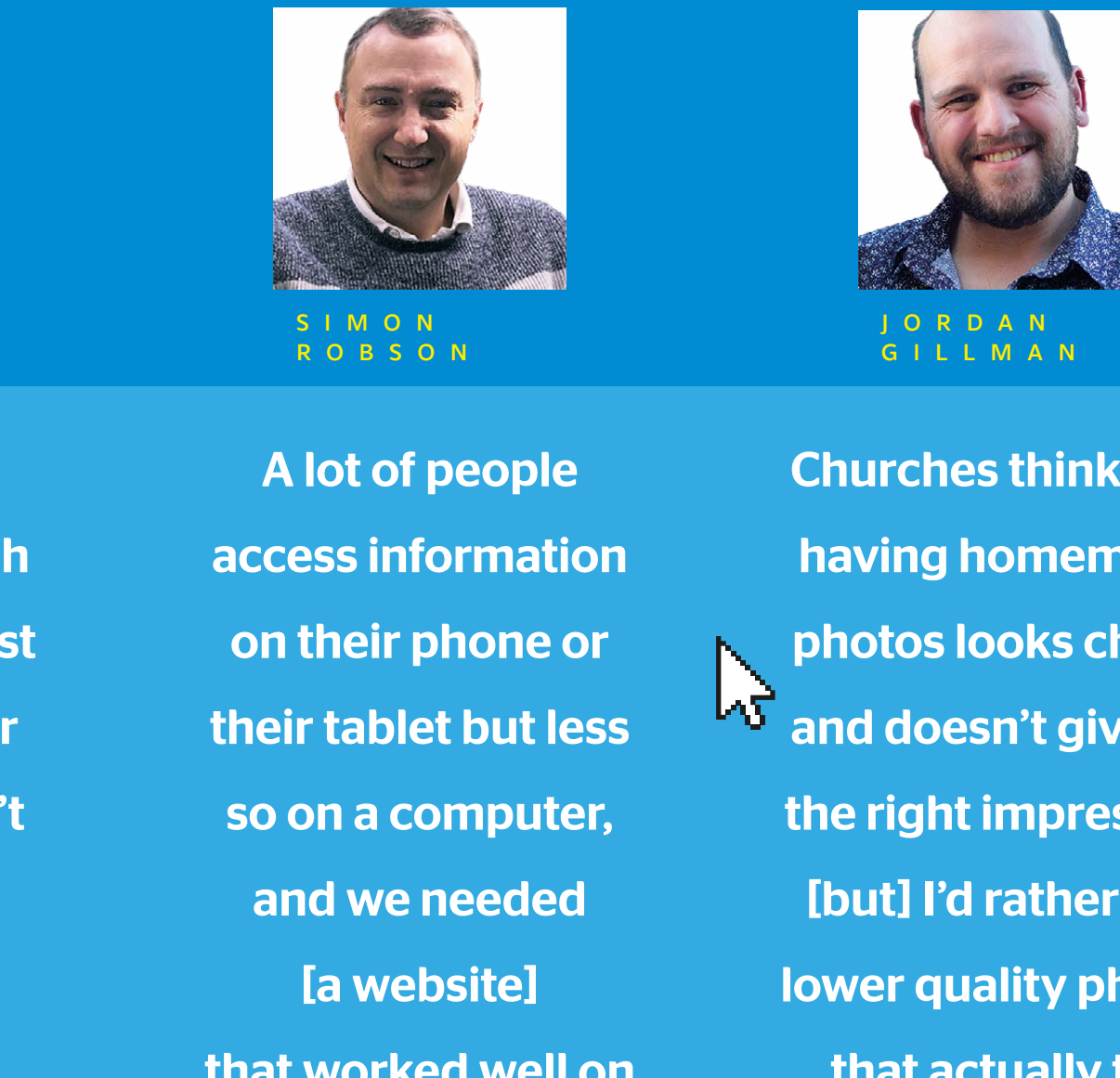
But the opposite is also true for churches that have taken the time to find solutions.

"People know old buildings can be difficult to make accessible. But it's a powerful witness to say, 'We cared enough to do this because even if we haven't met you yet, whoever you are, we welcome you'."

## STAMPING YOUR BRAND

As important as information is, the look and feel of the website is also crucial.

Simon Robson, a lay member of St Peter's, East Lindfield, helped guide the recent makeover of their site: [www.stpetes.church](http://www.stpetes.church).



"It was part of a broader rebranding of the church, and St Pete's actually engaged a branding or marketing agency to do a small piece of work around what the church was and what brand we wanted to project to the community," he says. "That included things like having a logo and a tagline... but went further... all the way from what does the website look like to what does an order of service look like."

This is familiar territory for many Sydney Anglican churches, which are now working on streamlining their websites to fit with their overall "brand". At Fairfield, Gus Cameron says, "We describe ourselves as 'A church for all nations' so we've tried to reflect that in the website text, making it clear that we have people from lots of backgrounds and so we really want to welcome more people from different backgrounds."

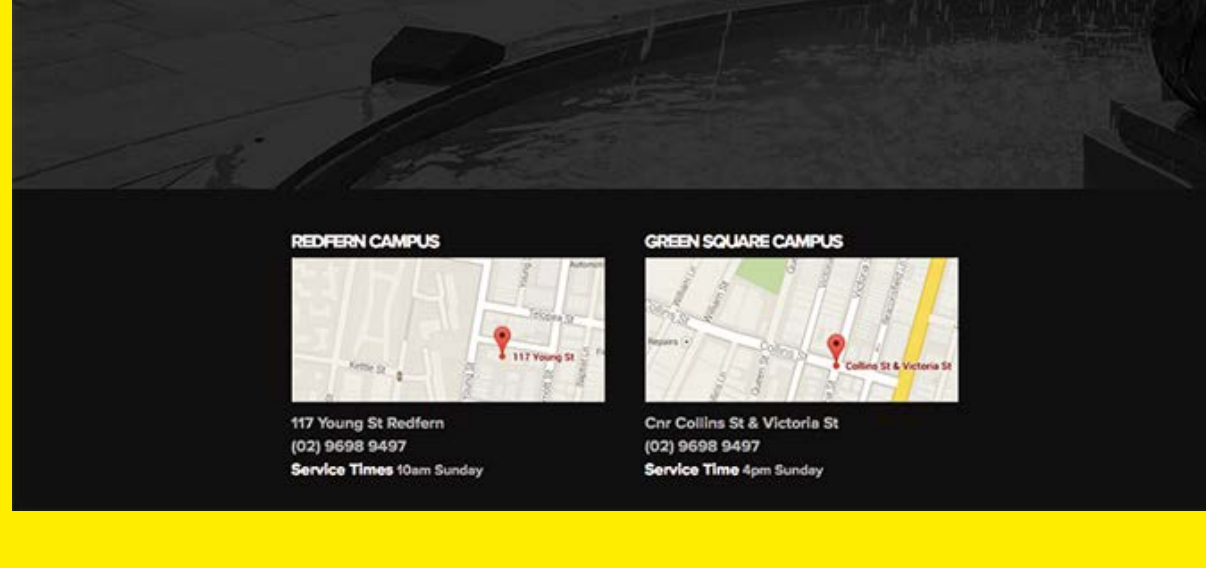
"As a lot of people around here have low English, so I also wanted to make it easy to read for them as possible. We also chose pictures of people from different backgrounds to reinforce what we were saying about being a church for all nations. There's also a big link to 'I'm New', which takes them to a page that hopefully answers all their pressing questions."

Kevin DeYoung, senior pastor of University Reformed Church in East Lansing, Michigan and an influential voice for evangelicals, says a church site must be 'authentic'.

"Give some thought to how well the feel of your website matches the feel of your church," he wrote for the Gospel Coalition. "If your church is stately and traditional, don't design your site in all black, with hipster lettering, and a link to *Relevant* magazine. Make the site feel fresh, but not inauthentic. People should be able to look up your church online and then visit in person without wondering if they showed up at the wrong building."

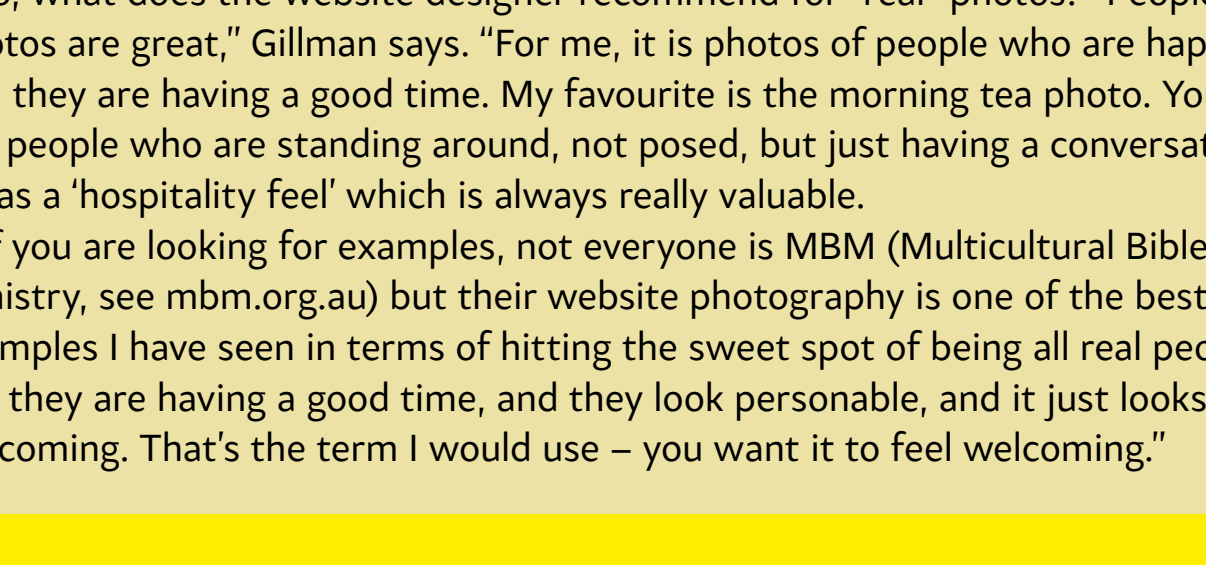
Welcome videos can also be powerful.

Says Kryger: "The welcome video on the website for All Souls, Leichhardt is one of the best I've seen in Sydney or elsewhere – and I recently looked at 50 for my website!"



The video features the senior minister, David O'Mara, walking through the suburb and describing the church, as well as scenes from parishioners in Bible studies and kids' ministries.

Kryger also commended St Luke's, Clovelly for a series of video testimonies. The testimonies are from ordinary church members explaining the concept of grace. One member, Ahon, speaks about growing up in what he called "a Buddhist atheist family".



The senior minister at St Luke's, the Rev Dave Rogers, says there were multiple purposes behind the videos.

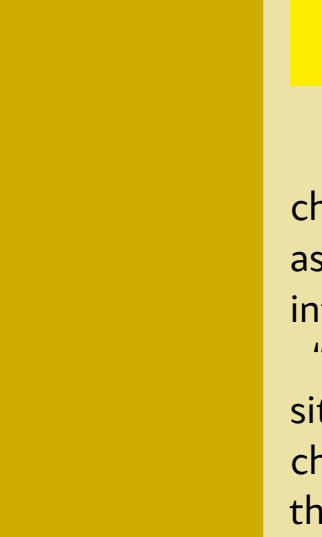
"Video content is king in today's world and stories of people meeting Jesus are great on video," he says. "I wanted us to have some video content on our website and to share on social media but, to leverage the cost of having them made, we showed one each week as part of our Vision Series. We chose three people with different stories and from different demographics to help us celebrate God's grace in their lives and provide another way to share those stories with others."

If this all feels like it is geared towards the visitor, it is – although Steve Kryger believes we also need to remember those who are not quite ready to meet us. "It's surprising how few churches provide information on their websites for people who want to learn more about Jesus but aren't yet ready to come to church," he says.

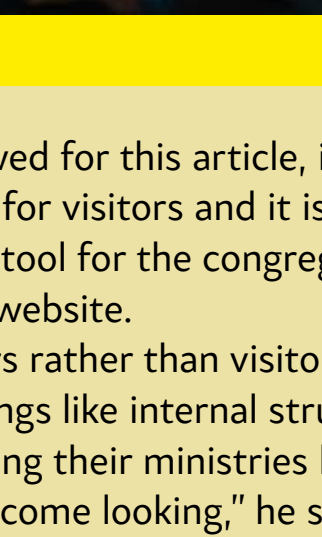
Online gospel outlines such as *Two Ways to Live* ([www.matthiasmedia.com.au/2wrt/](http://www.matthiasmedia.com.au/2wrt/)) or "inquirer" sites such as [christianity.net.au](http://christianity.net.au) are popular links for church websites.



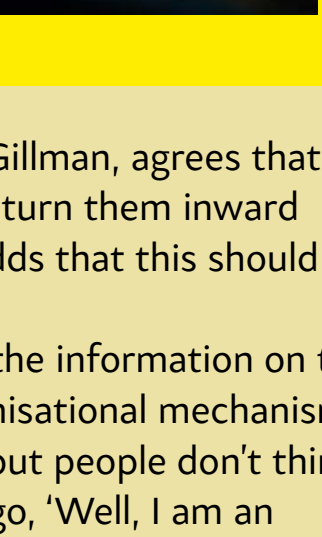
In 2016 [christianity.net.au](http://christianity.net.au) attracted a staggering 197 million visitors, making it the largest evangelical outreach in the Diocese, ever.



STEVE KRYGER



SIMON ROBSON



JORDAN GILLMAN

I continue to argue that church websites exist first and foremost for people who don't attend church.

A lot of people access information on their phone or their tablet but less so on a computer, and we needed [a website] that worked well on all those devices.

Churches think that having homemade photos looks cheap and doesn't give off the right impression [but] I'd rather see lower quality photos that actually tell me a bit about the church.

## CALL AND RESPONSE

One of the key reasons churches are making over their sites, if they haven't done so by now, is to make them "responsive". That means the site changes depending on the device being used to view it – mostly for smart phones and tablets. That was a key factor for St Peter's, East Lindfield, according to Simon Robson.

"The old website didn't look like a modern website that you would go to for any other purpose," he says. "It had an great deal of content and there was somebody who tirelessly used to update it but it didn't have a fresh, modern look and feel."

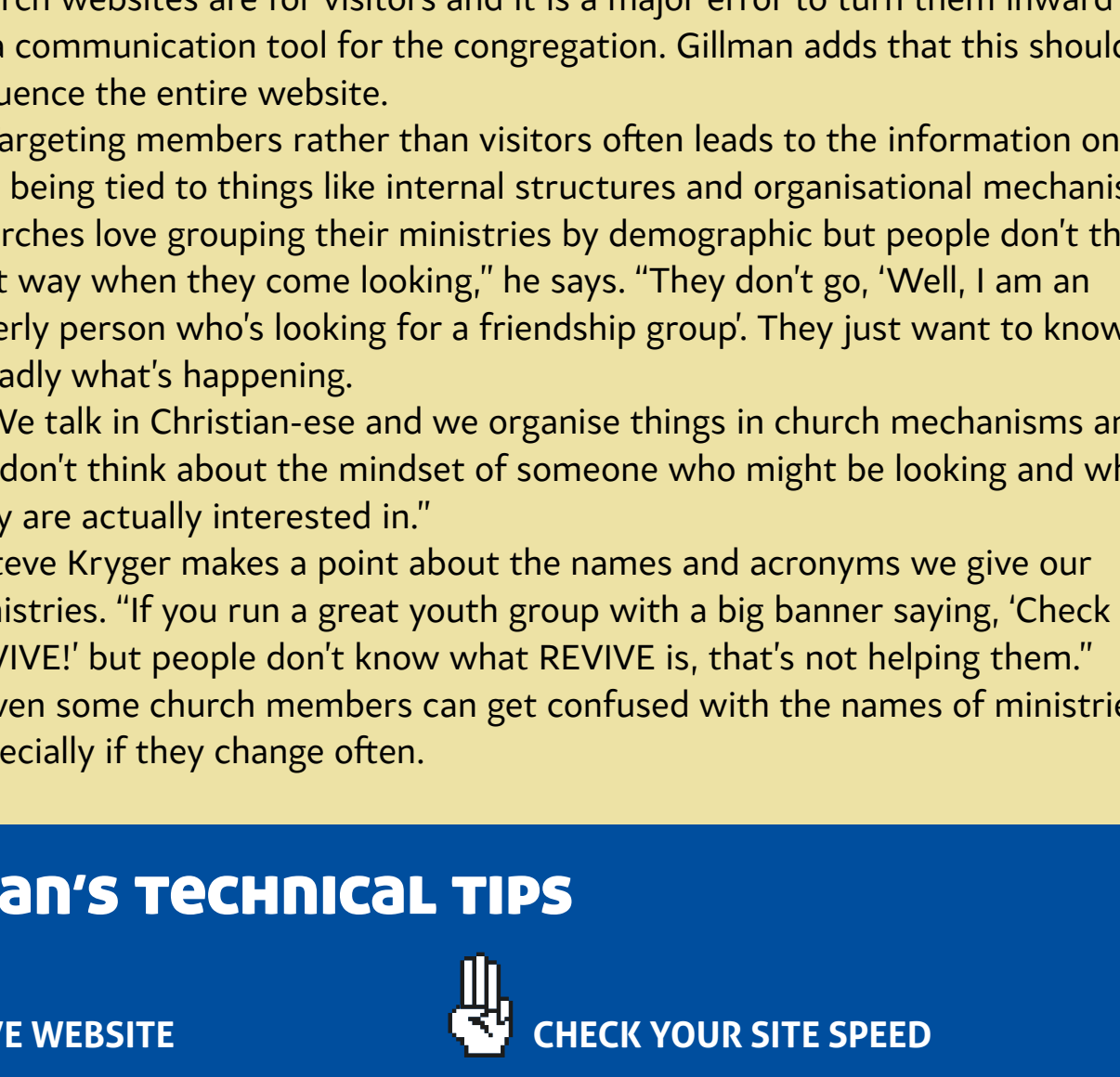
"As part of the rebrand we took a lot of content out of the website but we made it, I think, far more appealing to an audience – particularly people who perhaps are looking at the church for the first time. They simply want to get information about the church and, for many people, it is mobile first. A lot of people access information on their phone or their tablet but less so on a computer, and we needed something that worked well on all those devices."

Steve Kryger agrees. "One of the biggest opportunities I see is to ensure the church website works well on the different devices that people use to access the site. Pick up your phone and type in the web address for your church – how does it look?"

"A study conducted jointly by Google and Galaxy in June 2015 discovered that 74 per cent of Australians rely on their phones at least as much as they rely on their desktops when searching for information, ideas or advice. I couldn't find a more recent statistic, but I'm sure it's only increased."

Website designer Jordan Gillman agrees that making responsive websites is a major issue. He describes sites that either don't load on a phone at all – as well as others that, when they load, are "zoomed out all the way so you can see the whole site on a phone or tablet but nothing is readable".

"You are making it really difficult for well over half of the people that might be looking to find out what's happening at your church," he says.



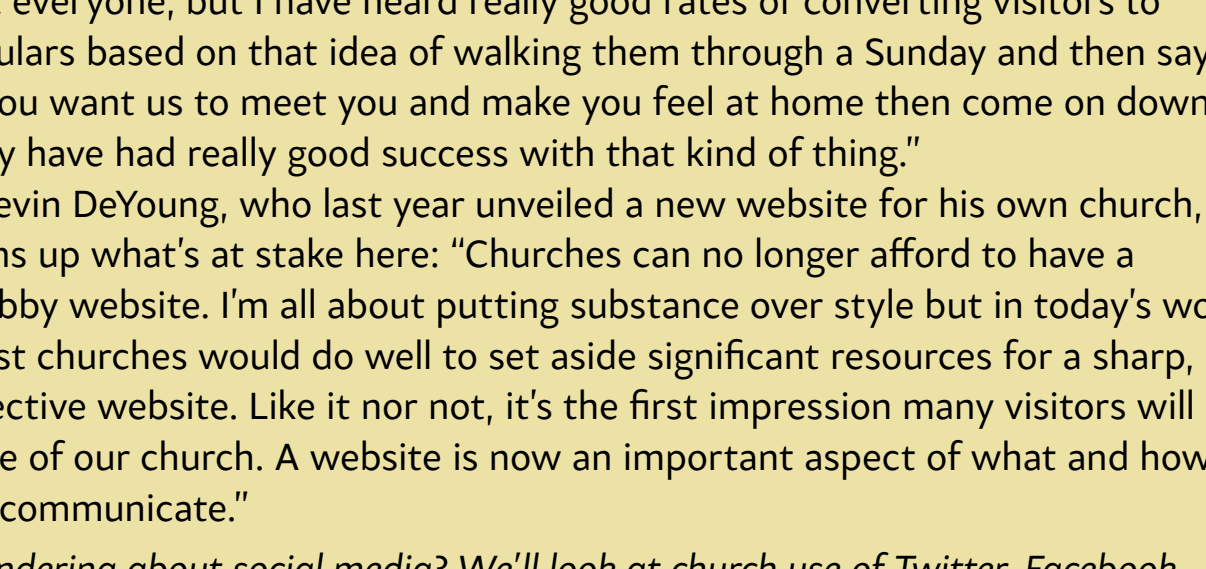
Gillman runs Jdesign.com in Wollongong, which has designed a number of Sydney Anglican sites – including a makeover of the Redfern one1seven church site. He echoes Kevin DeYoung's advice about making your site look authentic to your church, saying the use of "stock" photography is the main mistake.

"This happens a lot with churches because photographers are expensive and churches think that having homemade photos looks cheap and doesn't give off the right impression," he says. "But the thing is that stock photos don't give the person viewing the site an indication of what the church is actually like. I'd rather see lower quality photos that actually tell me a bit about the church."

"If you show me some faces, then I start to get a picture of the age demographic, the cultural make-up – even things like what sort of clothes people are wearing. What's the inside and outside of the space like? Those are all things that give a potential visitor a sneak peek into the church to know what they might expect when they come, which just makes it a bit less scary."

So, what does the website designer recommend for "real" photos? "People photos are great," Gillman says. "For me, it is photos of people who are happy and they are having a good time. My favourite is the morning tea photo. You've got people who are standing around, not posed, but just having a conversation. It has a 'hospitality feel' which is always really valuable."

"If you are looking for examples, not everyone is MBM (Multicultural Bible Ministry, see [mbm.org.au](http://mbm.org.au)) but their website photography is one of the best examples I have seen in terms of hitting the sweet spot of being all real people but they are having a good time, and they look personable, and it just looks welcoming. That's the term I would use – you want it to feel welcoming."



Everyone interviewed for this article, including Jordan Gillman, agrees that church websites are for visitors and it is a major error to turn them inward as a communication tool for the congregation. Gillman adds that this should influence the entire website.

"Targeting members rather than visitors often leads to the information on the site being tied to things like internal structures and organisational mechanisms... churches love grouping their ministries by demographic but people don't see that that way when they come looking," he says. "They don't go, 'Well, I am an elderly person who's looking for a friendship group. They just want to know broadly what's happening.'"

"We talk in Christian-ese and we organise things in church mechanisms and we don't think about the mindset of someone who might be looking and what they are actually interested in."

Steve Kryger makes a point about the names and acronyms we give our ministries. "If you run a great youth group with a big banner saying 'Check out REVIVE!' but people don't know what REVIVE is, that's not helping them."

Even some church members can get confused with the names of ministries, especially if they change often.

## JORDAN GILLMAN'S TECHNICAL TIPS



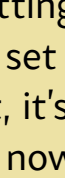
### BUILD A RESPONSIVE WEBSITE

Your site should look good and be fully operational on mobile devices such as smartphones and tablets, as well as desktop computers. Don't use "Flash" technology, which doesn't run on devices made by Apple.



### SERVICE TIMES AND LOCATION IN AN EASY-TO-FIND SPOT

I would say on every page of the website you should be able to find it, because if I follow a link to a sermon and decide I want to join then I want to be able to quickly find out where to come.



### CHECK YOUR SITE SPEED

Think about and test the speed with which the site loads. When we talk about good images the downside is that big images load slowly. This is often an easy, quick win. Resize your images and you can have massive improvements. Google has a site tester.



### MAKE IT EASY TO UPDATE

Technology is at a place now where the ability to make changes, like adding and removing pages, is within the capabilities of most people. It is possible to set sites up so that office staff who have only basic technical knowledge can upload weekly sermons and make changes. There is no reason to still be seeing Easter service times in June.

## SERMONS... OR NOT

"I am still an advocate of having the sermons/messages on the site," Jordan Gillman says, arguing that, among other things, it gives people an indication of the teaching.

"I have spoken to some churches recently who are hesitant about that because of people not wanting to be quoted out of context in the media as the sermons are fully accessible. I get that. I'd still say it is a good thing to have, though."

It can be a personal preference and, for many churches, it can be just one of the resources they offer. "You might have a church that offers sermons as a resource but then if you have a minister who blogs, or you have articles from other publications like *Southern Cross* or something like that, you can actually start to build a resources section," he says. "That's what we did with one1seven at Redfern and Green Square. We treated it as a resources section. Yes, it includes all of the sermons but it also has regular blog posts going on there and other things that they do."

Of course, all this can give the visitor information overload, but Gillman believes there is one more thing that is essential. "I think it is still a good idea to have some kind of... I call it a 'What to Expect' page. It runs the visitor through what to expect on a Sunday. Where to come, parking details, is there anything to do with the kids – what do I do with them and what to expect – all of those basic things. Any question that you think someone might ask in order to come on a Sunday, then answer them pre-emptively."

"I know churches that have done that and have even included a contact form at the end. It says, 'Hey, let us know if you are thinking of coming and we will have someone there to meet you.' It's obviously optional because that doesn't suit everyone, but I have heard really good rates of converting visitors to regulars based on that idea of walking them through a Sunday and then saying, 'If you want us to meet you and make you feel at home then come on down'. They have had really good success with that kind of thing."

Kevin DeYoung, who last year unveiled a new website for his own church, sums up what's at stake here: "Churches can no longer afford to have a shabby website. I'm all about putting substance over style but in today's world most churches would do well to set aside significant resources for a sharp, effective website. Like it or not, it's the first impression many visitors will have of our church. A website is now an important aspect of what and how we communicate."

Wondering about social media? We'll look at church use of Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and other social media in a forthcoming edition.



# The king and the refugee



Why being a refugee in this world  
is something we should emulate,

writes **ANDREW SHEAD**.

Southern Cross JULY 2017

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**C**OUNTING PEOPLE WHILE THEY ARE RUNNING IS DIFFICULT, BUT LAST YEAR the UN managed to count a record 65.3 million people displaced by war and persecution around the world. That's one in every 113 people on the planet, four times the rate it was just 10 years ago. And it comes at a time when wealthy nations are repudiating shared responsibility, preferring instead to use refugees as fuel for the fires of xenophobia and nationalism.

Without having lived it, it's hard to imagine the crushing anxiety and mounting despair of having no home to return to and no safe place to stay. But God knows, and in the book of Psalms he has preserved for us the cries of many such people. Psalm 2 focuses more on the chaos that creates refugees than on the refugees themselves, but its vision of God as the God of the refugee is the right place to begin.

Psalm 2 orients us to the whole 150-psalm collection by announcing its main characters: God and his Messiah; his arrogant enemies; his lowly servants. And it introduces the book's main theme: the reign of God. It is a highly visual poem, rather like a screenplay that gives us an establishing shot followed by character dialogue, before cutting to a new scene with new characters. There are four brief scenes, and the tone is violent and confrontational throughout.

## PSALM 2

### Scene 1

<sup>1</sup>Why do nations riot? Populations  
cry and mutter empty imprecations?  
<sup>2</sup>Kings of earth stand adamantly steadfast,  
dignitaries join in solemn council –  
to oppose the Lord and his Anointed!  
<sup>3</sup>"Let us tear their manacles asunder,  
fling from off ourselves their binding shackles!"

### Scene 2

<sup>4</sup>The one who sits in heaven laughs,  
the Lord m-m-m-mocks them!  
<sup>5</sup>Then speaks to them in burning wrath,  
in his fury panics them:  
<sup>6</sup>"It's I who have installed my king  
on Zion, my holy mountain".

### Scene 3

<sup>7</sup>Let me recount the Lord's decree:  
"You are my son," he said to me,  
"I did this day beget you.  
<sup>8</sup>Ask it of me and I shall make  
nations into your freehold,  
earth's ends your estate.  
<sup>9</sup>You'll batter them with an iron rod,  
like porcelain you'll shatter them".

### Scene 4

<sup>10</sup>Now therefore, O kings, be wise,  
be instructed, earthly judges.  
<sup>11</sup>Serve the Lord with fearfulness  
and rejoice with trembling.  
<sup>12</sup>Kiss the Son or he will rage –  
and you will drop in your tracks,  
for his wrath will flare in a flash.  
Happy are all who seek refuge in him.

[author's translation\*]

Scene 1. The camera pans across the earth and shows a scene of chaos. But out of this chaos an assembly forms, a united nations. In the face of a global threat they put aside their differences to resist the common oppressor. It sounds like the alien invasion film *Independence Day!* Except that the Lord is no alien – he's the world's rightful owner.

Whether you find the Lord's response shocking or glorious depends on whether you find the human struggle for autonomy noble or horrifying. It can certainly seem noble in the abstract, but in our world the quest for autonomy motivates both the warlords who displace millions and the comfortable Westerners who leave them to suffer.

Scene 2. The camera sweeps up to the heavenly realms, from where the Lord has been watching and listening... and laughing. And yes, the spectacle of evil weaklings kidding themselves that they are both great and good is darkly and absurdly humorous. But this is not amused laughter; it is angry outrage. The language of mockery conveys derisive imitation of foreign speech, as if to say "Can you hear yourselves?!" Having silenced them with his laughter, the Lord pronounces seven words of terror (verse 6 is seven words long in Hebrew).

At first glance these words are comically underwhelming. Zion was the capital of a tiny kingdom in the hill country of Judah, never a threat to any great powers of the day. Could this psalm simply be a grandiose enthronement anthem for Israelite kings, recited with fervent national pride but not to be taken literally? The answer to this is "No" – Psalm 2 remained in use long after the monarchy collapsed and Israel's population was forcibly displaced, because its message is future-oriented and prophetic. But the historical reference to the tiny Israelite kingdom is no accident, because God's power is shown precisely in the way he chooses to use the small and humble to bring down the great and powerful.

Scene 3. In this pivotal scene, perhaps set in Zion's throne room, the film director makes an unusual choice. Rather than witnessing the moment where the Lord crowns his king, we are told about it by the king after the fact. The effect of this technique is to put us readers, along with the nations, firmly on the outside looking in as we observe the birth of a new (and terrifying) relationship, brought into existence by the Father's decree. This scene is all about the Father-Son relationship. Together there is nothing they cannot do. As God tells the Son, "I shall make... you will break".

As God's Son (divine sonship was a fairly common way of describing ancient kings), the king receives the nations as his coronation gift and immediately – shockingly – smashes them to pieces. The opening scene has somewhat prepared us for this shock, but the language of inheritance and possession makes us hope that once the rebellious leaders are deposed the nations may yet be restored to peace under their rightful king.

Scene 4. Back on earth the psalmist, like a herald, brings a message to the rebellious nations. By himself, Israel's king could be brushed aside like a pesky fly; but he is not by himself. Do not be deceived by appearances! Recognise that in opposing the Son you oppose your Creator: God himself. And recognise that if you want to do the smart thing and lay down your arms at God's feet, it will have to be the Son's feet you kiss.

In different ways, every scene of this psalm has drawn us to reflect on the relationship between the Lord and his Messiah, Father and Son. As a result of the Lord's decree God now has a face, and it is the face of Zion's king. The king now has a voice, and it is the voice of God. This psalm gives us a prophetic portrait of the risen and exalted Lord Jesus, and Jesus is never more royal than when he says, "The one who has seen me has seen the Father" (John 14:9).

Whatever the Father does, the Son also does these things in the same way... The Father, in fact, judges no one but has entrusted all judgment to the Son, so that all people may honour the Son just as they honour the Father. Anyone who does not honour the Son does not honour the Father, who sent him (John 5:19b, 22-23).

Like many great poems there is a twist at the end of Psalm 2 and it involves the identity of the refugees in the final line – the line which breaks the "fourth wall" and addresses us readers directly. It's not an obvious twist, however, because it depends on the way the psalm connects to its context. Bear with me for a moment and I will try to tease it out.

If you had been reading Psalms from the beginning, you might have noticed that the word "happy" was the first word of Psalm 1, where it describes the person who sinks deep roots into the word of God. That is the sort of refugee Psalm 2 has in mind, and this is confirmed as we read on. Eight times in the psalms that follow, the King encourages God's faithful people to seek refuge in him: "Let all who take refuge in you be glad; let them ever sing for joy. Spread your protection over them, that those who love your name may rejoice in you" (Ps 5:11; see Psalms 17; 18; 31; 34; 36; 37; 64; also Psalms 91; 118).

No twist yet! But there is more. As we read on in Psalms we notice that the people are not actually the main refugees – their king is. Time after time David flees to God, seeking asylum: "Lord my God, I take refuge in you; save and deliver me from all who pursue me" (Ps 7:1; see Psalms 11; 16; 18; 25; 31; 57; 61; 141; 144).

It turns out that the all-conquering son of Psalm 2, the one whose rod shatters the nations, was himself a helpless and desperate asylum seeker. In Psalms 3-7 he presents his pain with devastating honesty and casts himself on God's protection, with no back-up plan.

So also with Jesus. When God raised the crucified Son to glory, he was repatriating a refugee from his sojourn in a far country. And by joining his lot to ours, Jesus opens the door to his own home for all who seek refuge in him. God does not ask us to present ourselves with forms filled in before a blank-faced border protection agent, but to lay everything at the feet of a man "acquainted with grief".

If there is one thing Psalm 2 shows us, it is that the only way for anyone to survive God's shining, fearsome wrath is to become a refugee. Do we ever think of the poor souls on Nauru and Manus Island as role models to emulate? Like them, we must abandon the security of home and possessions and cast ourselves on God's protection, with no back-up plan. And then we in turn must emulate God, showing concern for every weak and vulnerable person, not least the refugee.

In the end, however, we need to recognise that even the most generous of host nations can offer refugees nothing more than a transit camp. For the storms of violence and injustice that batter this world can be stilled only by a word of judgment from heaven. In solidarity with refugees the world over, let us pray, "Your kingdom come".

*The Rev Dr Andrew Shead is head of department of Old Testament and Hebrew. He lectures in Hebrew and Old Testament.*

\* The translation attempts to capture some of the more poetic features of the original, especially the way the sounds and rhythms of the words enrich the poem's meaning. That is why the language of Scene 1 is pompous and long-winded, for example, or why the line rhythms change from scene to scene.



## PASS IT ON – TO THE GRANDKIDS



Discussion over a cuppa at the National Grandparents' Conference.

A conference aiming to equip grandparents for ministry to their families and others in the modern world was held in Figtree last month, in what's believed to be the first National Grandparents' Conference.

"We felt, especially as Christians, that it's important for us in thinking about grandparenting to have a clear idea of how we can pass on our legacies – not just in terms of faith but also the kinds of values that we once had that are worth passing on," says the rector of Figtree Anglican the Rev Ian Barnett.

"As I got to talking to people like Peter and Christine Jensen there was this growing sense that there wasn't a lot out there looking at this. So I made a decision for us as a local church that we'd take the title of 'national' and see what happened when we ran the first one. It turned out better than expected."

Dr Peter Jensen and Christine Jensen were the main speakers for the conference, but attendees also heard from children's author Emma Allen, former principal of the Australian College of Ministries Dr Keith Farmer, former director of the Anglican Education Commission Dr Bryan Cowling, and musician and pastor Peter Shurley. The variety of speakers was designed to cover a range of experiences and ways of relating to family.

"There is a sense in which grandparents really felt that they had a desire to engage, that they felt they had something to learn and to offer," Mr Barnett says. "A number of people were struggling to come to terms with the brokenness in their kids' marriages, and the flow-on is that it impacts the relationships they have with their grandkids."

"In a world that is changing, where it seems every new technological thing or social development can both help and hinder relationships, it seemed great to have a day where grandparents can come together and hash these things out. It was also good to hear from our speakers, who have different experiences of that, and for them to share publicly what they have learned."

A second conference has already been earmarked for June 2018, with prospective speakers such as David and Maxine Cook (formerly of Sydney Missionary and Bible College) and medical ethicist Dr Megan Best being lined up.

"The response has been excellent, so we got straight into organising the next one," Mr Barnett says. "We were thinking we might get 50 to 100 people this year if we were lucky. 150 people came, and I was blown away by that! We can see this is something that will grow – and I think it will grow mostly because there is a huge need for something like this."

## MAYNE'S TAMAR DOCTORATE



Achievement for TAMAR: Dr Mayne receives her PhD in May.

A doctoral thesis on the TAMAR (Towards a More Appropriate Response) group and the diocesan response to sexual abuse within the church has recently been published.

The thesis, written by TAMAR member Dr Patricia Mayne, 83, takes in the full view of events from 1996-2008 – also the lifetime of TAMAR. The group was established by Sydney Anglican women seeking to reform diocesan responses to sexual abuse and to lift the lid on an issue that was too often silenced, both directly and indirectly, within the church.

"I was a foundational member of TAMAR and I really wanted to document and research everything that happened after the group officially disbanded," Dr Mayne says. "We had all either had personal experience with clergy and sexual abuse, or had family members with the same. It was a collective of all those experiences that formed the glue that bound us together."

"It was also a desire for genuine reform – we were all Anglican women and we had a love for the church. Even so, we had to face a church that in so many ways had nurtured us, but in this context had failed to do so. It was this that really motivated us towards real change."

The 428-page thesis includes primary materials such as Synod resolutions, media stories and articles, as well as examinations of similar processes in the wider Anglican Church. Key events such as the establishment of the PSU, the screening of *Behind Closed Doors* at Synod and the closure of the Anglican Counselling Centre in 2000 are all included.

At its heart, though, are the remembrances and records of TAMAR members, other victims of abuse and key figures within the church at the time, including the two Sydney archbishops during that period, the Most Rev Harry Goodhew and the Most Rev Dr Peter Jensen.

"I actually called that the period of 'Two Archbishops and One Woman', because I and my husband Tom had known both Harry and Peter before they became archbishops, and I felt I personally could go to both of them as trusted friends," Dr Mayne says.

"But in the context of this it was initially difficult, because I was very unsure how things would go and what the results of conversations about abuse in the church would be. I suppose in some sense I always knew, because of the people they are, that things would be alright but there was hesitancy. Really, I was just representative of many people who knew abuse and the question at the time was always, 'Who would believe me?' That was the kind of thing TAMAR was created to try and deal with at an institutional level."

Dr Mayne was awarded her doctorate on May 24 by the Australian Catholic University. Her complete thesis *A history of TAMAR (1996-2008) in relation to the Anglican Church of Australia in general and the Diocese of Sydney in particular. TAMAR (Towards A More Appropriate Response) was formed by a group of Sydney Anglican women to address the issue of sexual abuse in the Australian Anglican Church* is available through open access at <http://researchbank.acu.edu.au/theses/612/>.



# Wild winter's tale

JUDY ADAMSON

## Wind River

Yet to be classified: likely MA15+

**A**MID THE NEW AND NOTABLE FILMS FROM AROUND THE GLOBE AT LAST month's Sydney Film Festival was this taut, wintry thriller written and directed by Taylor Sheridan, which won him the award for best director in the Un Certain Regard section at Cannes in May.

The films selected for Un Certain Regard are chosen because they pursue, to a greater or lesser extent, a different style – whether that be in terms of look, story, performance or general aesthetic.

*Wind River*, at first glance, seems fairly standard: two well-recognised actors in Jeremy Renner and Elizabeth Olsen, a setting in the US and a mystery that needs to be solved. But then matters get more interesting.

This isn't Woody Allen's New York or the sunny West Coast. This is Wyoming, where "town" is on the edge of untameable mountains, spring has to fight to loosen winter's grip and locals trying to run sheep or cattle are at the mercy of the elements – and prowling predators.

Interestingly, although the job of wildlife officer Cory Lambert (Renner) is to track and kill animals preying on livestock, it's a human predator that comes to the fore very quickly in this film.

The action opens with a young Native American woman running desperately across the tundra. It's night, she's barefoot, gasping with distress and fleeing as though she's being pursued – although we can see nothing but trees, acres of snow and the distant peaks.

Lambert, who's out hunting for a mountain lion that's picking off cattle, discovers the woman's body a day or two later and the mystery is set in motion. She has also been brutally assaulted, but that's just one of the pressing questions needing an answer. How did she get here – three miles from the nearest house, and in the snow? Why is she barefoot? And where could she possibly have been going?

Young FBI agent Jane Banner (Olsen) is sent to investigate, as the body was found on a Native American reservation. She's woefully out of her depth with the weather and the locals – unfamiliar with Native American culture and what lies beneath the stoic quiet of the tribespeople – and asks for Cory's help as tracker, hunter and son-in-law of one of the reservation elders.

*Wind River* could move itself into a predictable CSI-style pattern at this point, but it doesn't. That's partly because of Sheridan's script, which is sparse but packed with layers that are slowly peeled away as you watch. Cory's deep sorrow at the woman's death, the watchfulness and unspoken misery of those on the reservation, and a struggle for survival that has nothing to do with the harsh terrain are just a few avenues viewers get to explore.

Another reason the film works is the cast. Renner is always good value, and here his stillness, silence and expressions are just as informative as any words. Olsen is able to inject humour and juggle fragility with surprising toughness, and their surrounding ensemble is excellent – particularly Gil Birmingham as the dead girl's father.

A tremendous addition to the atmosphere of the movie is the soundtrack, written by Nick Cave and his Bad Seeds bandmate Warren Ellis. The pair also wrote the music for another film written by Sheridan, *Hell or High Water*, and the eerie, almost otherworldly mood they wrap *Wind River* in is enough to raise the hair on the back of your neck.

Humanity is constantly challenged in this vast and isolated country and it would be easy to feel a sense of hopelessness – yet, as Cory says to one troubled young man, it's the choices we make that determine the kind of person we become.

At some stage each person in *Wind River* makes conscious or unconscious choices between life and death, love and hate, hope and despair. Some of these choices are hard to witness: be warned there is violence, swearing, a (mercifully short) rape scene and one incident of self-harm.

Such is the world as we have made it and Sheridan – without any conspicuous grandstanding, and with no reference at all to any kind of faith – is nevertheless clear who the beasts are, and sadly it's not the mountain lions or coyotes.

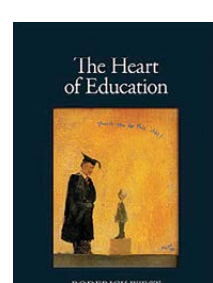
*Wind River* releases nationally in early August.

# Heart and head

MICHAEL JENSEN

## The Heart of Education

by Roderick West  
Salt and Light Publishing



**R**OD WEST, WHO DIED IN EARLY 2016, WAS TRULY A GIANT OF ANGLICAN education in Australia. At his extraordinary funeral service there were no less than 38 clergy present, the majority of whom he had educated at Trinity Grammar School in his term as headmaster (1975-1997). There was also an honour guard of senior educators, including the heads of Shore, Barker and Trinity, all of whom had served under him.

Anecdotes abounded of his individual care for the boys in his school. By word and example, Rod West modelled the Christian life. In his daughter Julia's eulogy, she described returning home from school early only to find her father on his knees in prayer for Trinity. That was what it meant to be a Christian educator!

Rod was working on his memoirs up until his last days, and his wife Dr Janet West and some others have now completed and published the project. For Anglicans in Sydney it is essential reading. If our Anglican schools retain their essentially Christian stamp, and are fruitful grounds for mission, it is largely because of the work of this man and the fascinating life story that he describes.

Rod writes with a lively and engaging style that is elegant without being elevated beyond understanding. His own distinct voice is evident on every page. Remarkably, he was not himself outstanding at school, but made his way as a teacher of classics to Fort Street High School and subsequently to The King's School, Parramatta.

As a House Master at King's, Rod, with Janet, developed an understanding of pastoral care. It truly was remarkable the way in which they were able to care for individuals with sympathy and yet maintain very high standards for the institution itself.

This was very much needed when the Wests moved to Trinity Grammar in the mid-1970s – a school which in those days had fallen on somewhat difficult times. Rod's insistence on a new way did not please everyone, and he describes the tumultuous events of his first speech night (there was a walkout led by the school captain) and his offer of his resignation to the Archbishop. The resignation was refused, and Trinity flourished under his two decades at the helm.

Rod writes:

There was another element at work that was significant to Janet and me, and about which I hesitate to speak... We prayed, our prayers were answered, but we didn't always recognise that. We often spoke of a 'coincidence', when it hindsight it was seen to be God's work in human hearts. Time and again, over my twenty years at Trinity, nasty circumstances have arisen which have in the end been easily solved despite my fears.

This passage introduces his description of the most calamitous event of his career – the murder of Year 11 boy Peter Savage in 1995, a crime that has never been adequately dealt with by human justice.

Rod was always at his best at a funeral and in a crisis, and his description of those dark days and their impact on Trinity and himself is one the most important passages in the book. His faith was of the kind that enabled him to speak powerfully into tragedy and yet declare that Jesus has been raised from the dead.

That was how his own funeral – which he had carefully planned! – finished: with the triumphant singing of "Thine Be The Glory, Risen Conquering Son".

This book deserves a wide readership because more people deserve to have known this man.

To purchase *The Heart of Education* go to [www.saltandlight.com.au](http://www.saltandlight.com.au)