

SOUTHERNCROSS

THE NEWS MAGAZINE FOR SYDNEY ANGLICANS

DECEMBER 2024 - JANUARY 2025

Surfside service

THE AWARD-WINNING SURFER CARING FOR LIFESAVERS

*A new career in faith - at 64 • Baptism testimonies
Grandparent wisdom • Summer films, books and prayer*

Longboarder, lifesaver, chaplain...



Surf's up: Andrea Bohm shows her style.

Tara Sing

Andrea Bohm wears many hats. Among them, she is a longboarder, surf lifesaver and surf chaplain. At Freshwater Surf Life Saving Club on the northern beaches, she has the incredible opportunity to combine her passion for the ocean with her heart for the Lord and serving others. Since becoming a chaplain more than a decade ago, she has walked alongside many in the community, showing the love of Christ through the care and support she provides.

"I grew up going to church," she recalls, "because my Dad was the warden and it was seen as the 'right' thing for the local

bank manager to do." For years, faith remained irrelevant until her daughter started attending the local youth group. "I said, 'Good – ask them all of your questions:'"

Through her daughter's curiosity, Mrs Bohm's own heart began to soften. "My friend suggested I read Luke's Gospel. It was the first time I read the gospel and it had meaning. It spoke to me because my eyes were opened. Looking back, I can say that a lot of people were praying for me and the Holy Spirit was definitely part of changing my heart."

When she was asked to become the female chaplain at

Freshwater Surf Life Saving Club, it felt like a natural fit with her love and passion for the beach. "Serving Christ is easy when you combine it with your gifts," she says.

As the last in her family to become a surf lifesaver – a role once unavailable to women – Mrs Bohm was excited by the combination of serving Christ and serving those at the beach.

"My brothers were champion surf lifesavers, and my sister joined in her forties. There's a softening of my siblings towards this role. Now even my brother has started saying, 'You can do the grace, Andrea, because you're a chaplain!'"

WHEN YOU'RE NEEDED, YOU REALLY ARE

Chaplaincy is all about "intentional lingering with love", Mrs Bohm says, reflecting on the gift of being present in the community. "Just being around, and a friendly face, to all different people in the club. You're not always needed, but when you are, you *really* are."

Being a chaplain allows her to bring spiritual support to the sand. "Surf clubs do a good job of looking after each other. That's something churches used to do in our communities. Being part of the community as a surf chaplain, that's the strongest link I can make between the church

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COVER: Andrea Bohm in competition. PHOTO: Surfing Australia

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on the hill and the club on the beach.

“Over the past few years we’ve had a few suicides or tragic events. The role of the chaplain is there for those people in grief. I pray that God will give me the right words when I chat with people.”

Initiatives like Fluoro Friday, a mental health awareness event, have also been part of Mrs Bohm’s ministry. “Fluoro Friday was started by Grant Trebilcoe in Bondi,” she says. “He was suffering from depression, so one day he decided he would wear a black suit, not a wetsuit [into the surf.] Everyone had a laugh, but he felt it was a bit boring, so he had a fluoro suit made. It’s about showing people that one wave can change your headspace.”

She brought the initiative to Freshwater, and it took off. “During mental health month in October, on a Friday we go down to the beach and wear our craziest clothes. If anyone wants to jump in the water, I help them



“Intentional lingering with love”: Andrea Bohm (right) with beachgoers at the Surf Live Saving Chaplaincy tent.

with their surfing. Otherwise people go for a walk and a chat, or a dip and a chat, or a surf and a chat.”

Chaplaincy is always a team effort. “It takes the church to support you in this role. We can’t do it on our own, can we? I couldn’t do any of this without my husband, who is always

very supportive, and my family, my minister, and my daughter, whose faith is a blessing to me.”

CHAPLAIN AND LONGBOARDING CHAMP

Although she grew up at the beach – bodysurfing, boogie boarding and doing other styles of surfing – Mrs Bohm didn’t start longboarding until she was in her forties. This was also inspired by her daughters.

“I thought, ‘If I’m going to teach them, I might as well do it myself!’” she laughs. She never imagined that, years later, she would be taking national titles for her new hobby. In 2023 she placed first in the over-60s category of the Australian Longboarding Titles, and this year she placed third.

Learning to longboard sparked a desire to empower other women in the water. She began advocating for better opportunities for female surfers.

“Men had every age group, every five years from 35 up, and the women only had over 35s,” she says. She began campaigning for expanded competition categories – never expecting to win one herself.

“We’ve shown that our attitude to competition is healthy and, as older women, we don’t take ourselves too seriously. It’s about

sharing that passion and love of surfing.”

The unpredictability of the ocean reminds Mrs Bohm of God’s sovereignty. “That’s the surf: you’re not in control,” she says. “It can make or break champions by the waves that are out there. That’s a bit like life... God’s in control and we’re not.”

ALL FOR GOD’S GLORY

Mrs Bohm credits God with every opportunity she has in chaplaincy.

“As a club member, people respect that I know the ocean, and I’m thankful for that gift. Even though I’m an older patrolling member, I give thanks that I’ve had the knowledge to help others. At the moment, our Freshwater community needs a lot of prayers. As much as we live a life that is plentiful and blessed, when there is trouble there seems not to be hope.”

Whether mentoring young surfers, supporting grieving families, or simply being a friendly face on the beach, her aim is simple – to glorify God in all she does.

“Putting yourself out there, purposefully lingering and making ourselves a presence, does take time but rolls on to making really good connections with our communities.” SC

Summer prayer diary 2025

It's summertime and we're getting out into the sunshine, sharing the good news and diving deep in understanding the word of God. With the weeks packed with camps, conferences and missions, we've put together a prayer diary featuring some of the great kingdom initiatives we can bring before the Lord.

Join us in praying daily for people to know Christ and grow in him!



Digging in: A young holidaymaker is covered in sand by an SUFM leader.

DAY 1

SUFM

Through Dec and Jan, all over NSW

Scripture Union sends teams to spread the gospel to holidaymakers in beachside and rural towns across the state. This season there are 24 mission teams, made up of more than 1200 volunteers, running children's programs, family events and gospel activities in campsites, caravan parks and town centres. More than 15,000 people are expected to come along to mission activities and hear the gospel.

Pray:

- that God will soften hearts and open doors for gospel conversations
- for the teams and relationship building after years of upheaval, with COVID and natural disasters impacting annual missions
- for safety ahead of a risky bushfire season
- for leaders and volunteers, especially those who are new, that God would grow and equip them, and help them use their gifts for him

on growing hearts for long-term crosscultural mission. Over 3000 attendees begin their year with in-depth Bible teaching, encouraging missionary sessions, corporate worship and a youth and children's program that gets young people thinking about the role they can play in global mission.

Pray:

- that God would use the conference to cultivate partnership, motivate participation and set apart those seeking to serve in mission
- that the missionary sessions would inspire people to action in supporting global mission
- that youth and children will be impacted by God's heart for the nations

camps have been running now for 20 years and, this summer, two camps will be co-ordinated independently by St Barnabas', Fairfield and Cabramatta Anglican.

Pray:

- for teens at SYC to respond to the good news of Jesus

- for good rapport and relationships to build quickly between leaders and youth
- for effective follow up post-camp, and for many young people to connect with local church youth groups to continue growing in their faith

DAY 2

CMS SUMMER SCHOOL

January 4-10, Katoomba

CMS Summer School is a global mission conference with a focus

DAY 3

SYC (SUMMER YOUTH CAMP)

*Fairfield SYC – January 6-10, Springwood
Cabramatta SYC – January 7-10, Stanwell Tops*

SYC (Summer Youth Camp) is an evangelistic camp for teenagers and their friends, packed with adventure and gospel truth. Teens spend time making friends, experiencing new things and exploring the hope Jesus offers. The SYC

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It's raining buckets! Kids and leaders muck around at The Green Tent and NIGHTLIFE in January.

DAY FOUR

THE GREEN TENT & NIGHTLIFE

January 13-17, South Turramurra

The parish of St Philip's reaches out each January to the people of South Turramurra and its surrounds with its fun filled, gospel-focused programs. The Green Tent is a daytime program to connect primary school kids with Jesus and explore the good news of the gospel. NIGHTLIFE is for junior high schoolers, providing a space for dinner, games and exploring the Bible through a talk and discussion groups. Last year the daytime program hit max capacity.

Pray:

- for the volunteers and leaders, that they will feel supported, encouraged and equipped to serve Jesus
- for families to return to the daytime program, and for many high schoolers to come in the evenings
- for new connections to be made between locals and St Phil's, effective follow-up, and that many would join kids/youth ministries next year
- that over the course of the week many young people would come to know Jesus, grow in their understanding and want to follow him for life

DAY FIVE

SWEATCON

January 14-17, Hoxton Park

SWEATCON is a Bible training conference for every Christian, equipping people in southwest

Sydney to know, teach and share the message of Jesus with others. People from churches across the southwest will attend day sessions to grow in their Bible knowledge, while in the evening there is solid Bible teaching and the chance to connect with other Christians in the area.

The aim is to build up Christians for service in southwestern Sydney churches, which are often resource-poor, and equip people to talk about Jesus with their colleagues, neighbours and networks.

Pray:

- that delegates will be equipped to serve and teach the Bible in many under-resourced churches in southwest Sydney
- for delegates to use what they learn to share the gospel in their families, workplaces, and crossculturally in their communities
- for the children's programs and leaders, as they continue with their preschoolers' program and reintroduce primary and high school programs for the first time since COVID

DAY SIX

LEADERS IN TRAINING CONFERENCE

January 22-26, Port Hacking

January 26-30, Port Hacking

Youthworks' Leaders in Training has been growing youth in years 9-12 as Christians, leaders and servants of Jesus since the early 2000s. More than 700 youth are registered to attend and explore

2025's theme of *Our Crucified King*.

Pray:

- for good partnerships with the 170 local churches who support LiT by sending their teens to be trained, and supplying leaders to help run the camps
- for the young leaders, that they will be raised up in the gospel and strengthened for a life of discipleship and ministry for Jesus, wherever he sends them
- that what is done at LiT might be a blessing for local churches and help them do effective children's and youth ministry.

DAY SEVEN

LIFE SAVING CHAPLAINCY AUSTRALIA

All summer, beaches everywhere

Our beaches are always busy during January, but the water can be a dangerous place. There are more than 60 chaplains who care for surf lifesavers across Australia, working closely with various lifesaving clubs. These chaplains walk alongside surf lifesavers amid the various challenges and griefs that their vital role can bring.

In the Sydney Diocese, there are eight Anglican chaplains involved with surf lifesaving clubs up and down the coast.

Pray:

- for protection and safety in the waters for all beachgoers and surf lifesavers
- for wisdom and words as chaplains support the

lifesavers who have been on the front line, rescuing and attending to people hurt or in danger

- Praise God for the opportunities chaplains have to uniquely care for surf lifesavers and their families and offer spiritual guidance and resources to those who want them
- for great conversations about Jesus at lifesaving events, including the NSW Surf Life Saving Championships at Freshwater and Queenscliff in February-March.
- for the growth of prayer and Bible reading groups in surf lifesaving clubs

DAY EIGHT

LAUNCH CONFERENCE

February 3-6, Stanwell Tops

Launch is a place for Christian school leavers about to start university to connect with each other, with current university students, and with a number of Christian campus groups at each of Sydney's major universities. It's a place for young people to work out what it means to align their priorities to God's in this next phase of life, while meeting others who are doing the same thing.

Pray:

- that the conference would help a new generation of school leavers live for Jesus
- for the team of students from many different universities to be united in the gospel as they prepare to lead on the camp

Bringing Hope to the Illawarra

Russell Powell

March 2025 will see one of the largest evangelistic campaigns for many years in the Illawarra region.

“Hope For The Illawarra”, a partnership between the US broadcast ministry Leading The Way and churches in the Illawarra, will culminate in a number of outreach events. A youth celebration on March 28 will feature Dave Jensen as the main speaker and a children’s event on March 29 will include a talk by the Rev Adam Jolliffe and music by singer-songwriter Colin Buchanan.

The evening celebration on March 29 will be addressed by Dr Michael Youssef, senior pastor of The Church of The Apostles in Atlanta, Georgia, and founder of Leading The Way.

Although Dr Youssef heads an international ministry, he is a graduate of Moore College and started his ministry in Australia.

“I am the servant of the local pastors,” he says. “So when I come into a town, I’m not coming to take people from the church – I want to add people to the church.

“The heart of our evangelistic campaigns, wherever they may be, they’re designed for the building up of the church of Jesus Christ. So, wherever we go, we’re gonna leave behind disciples. One of the towns here [in the US] said, ‘We’ve been praying this for 10 years, that God would do something. And this is the answer to prayer.’”

In the preparation phase, churches are hosting personal evangelism and discipleship training. Hope for the Illawarra organising committee chairman, Bishop Peter Hayward (right), compares it to an iceberg.



Worldwide evangelism: Dr Michael Youssef speaks at a Leading the Way event in Ireland.

“Ten per cent of the overall endeavour is related to the actual events [in March],” he says. “Sixty per cent is engaging local churches and mobilising them and equipping people in our churches to witness and to speak of Jesus – and then the last 30 per cent is in the long-term follow-up of people who make a decision to follow Jesus



at the actual event.”

So far, more than 700 people have attended preliminary information and training and more will be held in the lead-up to the main events.

Bishop Hayward is pleased to welcome Dr Youssef, who also has links to the Illawarra.

“He was ordained at St Michael’s Cathedral [in Wollongong], so in March he’ll

be literally 300 metres away from the cathedral at the entertainment centre, 50 years later.”

He adds that Leading the Way has run similar campaigns overseas. “They’ve undertaken

outreach events mobilising churches in Cairo, Dublin, Belfast, Boston and Mexico City. After that, the next obvious place you would choose is, of course, Wollongong!” SC
More at hopefortheillawarra.com.au

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English Archbishop steps down over abuse failure

Russell Powell

The leader of the Church of England, the Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, will leave office on January 6 after resigning in the wake of an abuse scandal.

The abuse case, which was one of the most serious in recent times, involved barrister John Smyth, who attacked boys he befriended at church camps in the 1970s and '80s. He continued the abuse after moving to Zimbabwe and then South Africa, where he died in 2018 without facing charges for hundreds of attacks.

An investigation known as the Makin Review found that Archbishop Welby could and should have reported the suspicions of abuse after becoming aware of them in 2013.

The Archbishop of Canterbury said Smyth “manipulated Christian truth to justify his evil acts” and that he would take personal and institutional responsibility. He apologised to abuse survivors and resigned “in the best interests of the Church of England”.

The Archbishop of Sydney, Kanishka Raffel, said, “Considering the anguish and deep hurt surrounding these events, and the priority that must always be given to the welfare of survivors of abuse, the Archbishop of Canterbury has taken the only appropriate action”.

Archbishop Welby had been due to retire in 2026 but was the subject of resignation calls even before the Makin Review made headlines.

His time as archbishop has seen Anglicans around the



Should have reported suspicions: Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby.

world distance themselves from the English church over fundamental issues such as the authority of Scripture and Christ’s teaching on marriage.

Major groupings such as the Global Anglican Future Conference (Gafcon) and the Global South Fellowship of Anglican Churches have declared they are no longer able to recognise the Archbishop of Canterbury for his failure to uphold orthodox, biblical doctrine.

DISTRESS AT WELBY INTERVIEW

Archbishop Welby further distressed Anglicans around the world recently with an interview on an English podcast in October.

When asked whether homosexual sex was permissible, the Archbishop replied, “All sexual activity should be within a committed relationship, whether it’s straight or gay.”

“We’re not giving up on the idea that sex is within marriage, whether marriage is civil or religious. And therefore we’ve put forward a proposal that where people have been through a civil partnership or a same-sex marriage, equal marriage under

the 2014 Act, they should be able to come along to a church and have a service of prayer and blessing for them in their lives together. So we accept that.”

This statement, along with claims that many English bishops thought the same way, was condemned by Gafcon leaders. The Gafcon primates, who represent the majority of Anglicans across the world, said that while the Archbishop may claim he had not changed the doctrine of marriage, he had “demonstrably changed the doctrine of sin, by promoting the sanctification of sin by means of a divine blessing”.

In a strong rebuke, the primates called on Archbishop Justin Welby to “personally and publicly repent of this denial of his ordination and consecration vows”.

The communique ended with support for Anglicans in England and Europe who hold firm to the authority of Scripture. This includes the Anglican Network in Europe (ANiE), supported by Gafcon as a grouping for those who cannot by conscience remain within the revisionist structures. It also includes The Alliance

group, which remains within the Church of England in defence of biblical marriage.

“UPHOLDING THE DOCTRINE OF CHRIST”

The Rev Canon Vaughn Roberts, a director of The Alliance, told *The Pastor’s Heart* podcast that the Archbishop’s comments were not unexpected. “It is not a surprise that it is his personal view, but it is extraordinary that someone in his role should think it’s appropriate – if that is his personal view – to say so.”

Canon Roberts said a bishop’s consecration vows required upholding “the doctrine of Christ as the Church of England has received it” and refuting error. “It is very clear it is the traditional teaching of the Church, which is the apostolic teaching that’s held by the Church throughout the world and up and down the ages, that the place for sex is in the marriage of a man and woman,” he said.

“So here we have the leader of the Church of England saying, ‘I don’t agree with the Church of England’s doctrine, and not only don’t I agree but the majority of the House of Bishops don’t agree.’”



Welby statements condemned: Gafcon primates with guests including Archbishop Raffel (back row, centre), the Rev Jodie McNeill (back row, second from right) and the Rev Canon Vaughan Roberts (back row, third from right).

of Bishops had created within the English church.

“They are also considered scandalous by the majority of Anglicans around the world,” the committee’s resolution said.

The Standing Committee reaffirmed the Diocese’s commitment to “maintaining and upholding the teaching of Scripture that marriage as instituted by God is a lifelong exclusive union between a man and a woman, and that it is entirely inconsistent with that teaching, and harmful to the people of God, to purport to bless patterns of behaviour that God does not bless but clearly describes as sinful”.

The committee, of which Archbishop Raffel is president, called upon the bishops of the Church of England to “uphold the teaching of Scripture in accordance with their consecration vows, and to reconsider the position that many bishops in the Church of England have taken to depart from that teaching”. SC

Canon Roberts added that the English archbishop’s comments that he needed to be a “politician” were inappropriate.

“That’s one of the confusions we’ve got within the Church of England. I’ve heard bishops say, ‘Well, we’ve got to catch up because we are the established church and we can’t be out of touch with the world because otherwise it won’t work as the established church’. That’s not a logical or appropriate position.

“Yes, we are an established church by accident of history, but that doesn’t mean to say that it’s our role as the established church to reflect what the culture and community is saying. The Church from its origins is called to be countercultural and we need to be speaking prophetically, not just reflecting what the world is saying.

“So, first and foremost an archbishop or a bishop – and indeed a pastor like myself – is

not a politician but a servant of Christ and called to live and uphold the teaching of Christ.”

The Standing Committee of the Diocese of Sydney noted Archbishop Welby’s comments with deep regret, concern and sorrow. It recognised the comments were contrary to the teaching of Scripture and the theology of the *Book of Common Prayer*, and said they would further exacerbate divisions that previous decisions of the House

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A new career in faith – at 64

Judy Adamson

Tim Worton is going to Bible college. On its own, that doesn't sound particularly unusual or significant – or the fact he's giving up his secular career to move into ministry. So how about this? He's 64 years old.

"I'm a 100 per cent commitment person," he says with a laugh. "I've always put 100 per cent into my career, marriage, family – anything I do – and I just feel like I need to put 100 per cent into this."

"At some point in time I'd have had to retire, but I've decided to leave on my own terms to go into something I think is much more important."

"I feel like I still have a lot of energy and can do even more to help people, to support people, to mentor people and to encourage people. These are things I've always done in my workplace, but I'm going to be doing them in the general community in a faith context, and it will mean more."

For decades, Mr Worton's secular job has involved the oversight and management of a range of stadiums and arenas. He's enjoyed meeting entertainers and professional sportspeople but, as a music lover, always got the biggest kick out of the musicians who came across his path.

One of his big music loves is progressive or "prog" rock, with lengthy songs that have a classical twist. In listening to what he loved, he came across a singer named Neal Morse – who had become a Christian and then felt called to leave his band to strike out on his own.

"His solo music is all about his conversion and about his life since," Mr Worton says. "They are in-your-face Christian lyrics

– I loved them musically, but the lyrics went in one ear and out the other. But I was listening to Neal's music relentlessly.

"One Saturday night after we'd played his music all day... I said to my wife, 'I can't explain why, but I feel this strong desire to go to church tomorrow'. I think she almost fell off the lounge! But without hesitation, she said, 'Yes, of course... where would you like to go?'"

Mr Worton decided to attend Menai Anglican, which was nearby and was the church where his grandson had been baptised some years earlier.

"I felt very nervous about it and I thought, 'Do I even belong here?'" he recalls. "But everyone was so welcoming and friendly... you could tell they would love it if you came back but there was no pressure at all. I actually think the first person who came and spoke to me was [the rector] Andrew Barry.

"I started going every week from then. At the time I couldn't really understand why I was there, but I felt there was a reason... and if I don't know what that is, why don't I just keep going while I'm enjoying it and stop going one day if I don't? And it never happened!"

CHOSEN BY GOD

Mr Worton's first Sunday at church was in January 2022. By June he had given his life to Jesus and decided to be confirmed in his faith. After that, he was hungry to learn – doing courses such as *Christianity Explored* – and on a visit to Moore College to watch a young friend take part in the Mark Drama, discovered people his age and older enrolled at college. He determined he



Off to Moore College in 2025: Tim Worton.

would be among them, and began studying the Preliminary Theological Certificate.

He was a changed man, but realised some people who already knew him might find this hard to grasp.

"Like a lot of people who aren't Christian, I was hardly a saintly person beforehand – let's put it that way!" he says. "I felt that people who knew what I was like, this sometimes crazy guy, would see that for me to go down this path was such a dramatic 180."

"When I told the first person who wasn't a Christian about what had happened, I was petrified. I was scared that they'd think I was completely different or ask me what had gone wrong. But happily, the response I got was, 'Wow, that's fantastic, I'm so happy for you'. After that, the second time was easier, then the third time, and now – try and shut me up!"

"I love telling people what happened, how it's changed my life, and now what I want to do is to go deeper into it, to develop my faith, my biblical knowledge and expertise more, because it's

still rudimentary, and then go out into the world and make a difference with it."

Initially, Mr Worton planned to finish up his job at the end of 2025 to go to college, but his wife Claudia saw the overflow of joy he had in telling people what God had done for him – particularly in sharing it with his musical idol, Neal Morse, after they saw him play live in the US last year – and she encouraged him to make the change sooner.

A NEW BEGINNING

So, on December 20, Mr Worton will wave goodbye to his secular career, with thanks and great memories but without regret. He's also busily finishing the final subjects in the PTC so that he'll be ready to go when he begins the one-year Diploma of Bible, Mission and Ministry at Moore in February.

He already co-leads a Bible study with Dave Jensen, and takes part in Menai's music ministry, but he will do that and more next year as Mr Barry has also signed him up as a student

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Lived faith creates joyful change



A different life for students here and in Japan: Maria Mertzanakis chats with Emily Jane Davison and Cole Haack at Oran Park Anglican College.

Judy Adamson

When a local school sets up an exchange program with an educational institution overseas, there are always hopes for what students from each country will gain – whether that be friendship, a greater understanding of different cultures, family systems and more.

What those at Oran Park Anglican College (OPAC) who run the student exchange between their school and another in Japan *didn't* expect was that two of the students who visited them would watch the way they lived, ask questions and subsequently give their lives to Jesus.

“The program was always about cultural learning and exchange; there was never the intention of converting these children, it just naturally happened – because they asked,” says Maria Mertzanakis, the OPAC teacher in charge of facilitating the program.

Each year, students come to OPAC from a high school in eastern Tokyo and are billeted with school families for a week. Each weekday includes half a day of intensive English classes, with the other half spent in class with college students. They also take part in whatever their host family does, which ranges from video games to youth group, and sightseeing to church on Sunday.

Last year, one of the Japanese students noticed the behaviour of his teachers, asking two of them why they were so consistently happy and interacting so positively with the students and other staff.

Mrs Mertzanakis says the teachers explained the hope they had in Jesus, told him the gospel and said this was why they had such a positive outlook on life.

“This student wanted to find out more and began to do some research and reading because he hadn't ever heard of Jesus,” she explains. “Around the same time,

another student was exposed to the gospel message at church and youth group... and because those two students were good friends, they debriefed about their days and this Jesus guy that people seemed so excited about.”

After they returned to Japan, one of the two rang Mrs Mertzanakis to ask if she could bring some Christian resources the next time Oran Park students visited their school. He and his friend had begun a Bible study outside school time so they could learn more and tell their friends and schoolmates about Jesus. Might she also be willing to speak to the group while she was there?

Mrs Mertzanakis was delighted and, when she was next in Tokyo, took part in the Bible study and Q&A session with the 30 or so students present. She discovered that the two Christian students had also connected with a church and

were preparing to be baptised the following Sunday – her only disappointment was her inability to attend when invited.

“They really wanted to commit their lives to Jesus. It was so exciting!” she says.

DISCOVERIES IN SYDNEY

Two Year 9 students at OPAC, Emily-Jane Davison and Cole Haack, each had a Japanese student stay with their families earlier this year and, more recently, spent a return exchange week in Tokyo.

Their students enjoyed the different family dynamics, such as more children, eating dinner together around the table and holding hands for grace. It also surprised the Sydneysiders to discover that, at home, the Japanese students could be at school each day until up to 8pm.

“I think ours definitely appreciated the very public community at youth group,” Cole

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Miracle School partnership blossoms



Enslaved, but free: (from left) a young child in prayer; a group of girls at a Miracle School; a nativity play at the brick kilns.

In just under a decade of partnership with the Archbishop of Sydney's Anglican Aid, the work of bringing education to the children of Pakistan's enslaved brick kiln labourers has more than doubled.

There are more than three million people in Pakistan living in slavery, and 20,000 brick kilns where they are forced to work.

Miracle School ministries, which began partnering with Anglican Aid in 2015, now educates 2000 children.

"The partnership with Anglican Aid has borne great fruit with us and it is the love from Anglican Aid, and the love of Australian friends, that means today there are thousands of children under the umbrella of the Miracle School Ministries

— transforming their lives not only by education, but education with faith," says the director of Miracle Schools Ministries, Angela Michael.

Ms Michael shares the story of two of the children for whom the ministry has been life-changing.

Kallis was a bright young boy when he was invited to the brick kiln school.

"We found him with his

parents and he was the one child out of four, the eldest one, who had a keen interest to have an education," she says.

"He was the child who was bonded, enslaved [to] the brick factory. When we invited him to the Miracle School his parents were very confused. They said we have no money, we cannot pay the fees, we cannot afford all the things like books, a uniform

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minister. There are thoughts about a future role in chaplaincy, or parish ministry, or evangelism — whatever God wants him to do.

"I feel like it's not my decision," he explains. "God's obviously got a plan because it involved opening up my heart to him

at the ripe age of 62. There's something special I'm going to do with this passion for my faith, I believe he knows it and he'll tell me when he's ready. But I'm open to everything, though I have a desire for evangelism.

"And I'm excited! I'm anxious

and I'm nervous and I'm bittersweet about what I'm leaving behind — 33 years of a fantastic work life — but this next phase of life is much bigger. To work for God, to grow his kingdom and to work for his glory, is such a privilege.

"He could've picked someone else. But he picked a wretch like me. So, I feel like that's the greatest thing that could ever happen to anybody — that you get called by God to work for his glory. That's my new mission statement, I think." SC

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says, "just sitting around with a group and then afterwards, during free time, he fell in love with the ping pong table! He definitely liked the company and having so many people to talk to."

Adds Emily-Jane: "We took Haruna to see the Opera House and the Harbour Bridge, and to a wildlife park... but I think her favourite part was just our family, being with us and spending time with us.

"Mum watched a lot of videos of Japanese singers together

with her, she cooked a meal for us as well... and she fell in love with our dog!"

Mrs Mertzanakis says that the two young men who have come to faith also stayed with Christian families while they were in Sydney, and "saw that they could pray and put their trust in something other than themselves, which for them is so countercultural.

"In Japan, you're in control... and their reflection on this was that, no, they aren't in control,

and it makes so much sense to rely on a 'higher being', as they put it, to have faith in.

"Another thing they noticed was the importance of serving. There is an impetus on serving in Japan as well, but for a different reason.

"What they saw in Australia is people serving because you want to be Christlike and living out those values... but there in Japan it's to benefit each other as a society rather than give glory to God." SC

PRAY

- Praise God that two students saw the difference in the lives of Christian staff and families at Oran Park Anglican College and discovered the reason was Jesus
- Give thanks that they have committed their lives to Jesus through baptism
- Pray they might continue to bless others with God's word and the knowledge that he has a plan for their lives, too

and everything. We said... 'Your child will have a free education', and with the grace of God [he was] very, very attentive."

Kallis has since graduated and is now completing a Bachelor of Science with honours in Information Technology.

"That is a great evidence of a child from bricks to books – this is what we say," Ms Michael says.

The story of Nimra, a teenage girl, began with training from the Miracle sewing centre. She received a sewing machine as a graduation gift and is now self-employed, sewing women's clothes to help her family improve their circumstances.

Nimra became a Christian after joining the Miracle church.

"She was very weak in learning and over age to attend the school, but she joined the adult literacy group and sewing centre and became a regular member of a Bible study group," Ms Michael says. "She is very determined, hardworking Christian girl.

"Our Christian graduate

students not only have a piece of paper of a 'worldly' degree but also we are growing them with faith, so that they can have [the] ability to face the challenges of life that every second Christian is facing back in Pakistan."

As well as 2000 students, Miracle Schools Ministries is building faith with 15 Sunday schools teaching 50-60 children each, home Bible study groups, house churches and 56 Christian leaders studying the Moore College PTC.

Thanking Anglican Aid supporters for their partnership, Angela Michael explained Miracle School's goal.

"I believe that education without faith is just like putting books on a donkey," she says. "Have you ever seen a donkey with books? There are so many donkeys in Pakistan. Miracle is a parachurch organisation in which we believe that God is our everything and Jesus Christ is our Saviour."

SC anglicanaid.org.au/projects/miracle-school-ministries/



A graduation gift: Nimra with her new sewing machine.



LET'S BUILD MORE OF THESE!

Until fairly recently, the site of Hope Anglican Church in Leppington was an empty field. Now, thanks to what God is doing and the partnership of generous donors, it's a thriving gospel community where people are being saved!

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NEW CHURCHES FOR NEW COMMUNITIES

God does not leave us alone

Kanishka Raffel

As the year ends, one human problem seems more common than ever. The problem is loneliness. In NSW, there is an inquiry into its causes and impact. It has already heard that almost half of the population experience loneliness – and many experience it often. We are sometimes tempted to think that no-one understands our loneliness. But if we turn to the Bible, we see that the child Jesus, the Saviour, was also to be called Immanuel – God with us.

Jesus knew and understood loneliness because he was divine yet housed in humanity. In the Christmas child, God is present among us, as one of us. Our experiences of anguish, disappointment and yes, even loneliness have become his. Our experiences of joy and friendship and love and longing have become his.

God knows what it is like to be human from inside human skin. The birth of Jesus in a stinking stable amid squalor and stench was God's everlasting "Yes" to human existence. His affirmation of human life with all its ambiguities, pains and fleeting pleasures. The birth of Jesus says to us that human life matters to God.

In Jesus, God breaks into human history and transforms it. His birth is the beginning of the end of time and we live our lives, so short, in the shadow of that great event. It gives meaning and

significance to all our experiences – whether the heights of joy or the depths of pain, whether famous or secret.

Without the incarnation, the greatest of human achievements are banal trivialities. What significance can you give to the goings on in one human life among eight billion, on a planet among thousands of thousands, in a galaxy among millions? Why would "three score and ten" count for anything? But God became human and, because of that, even the slightest detail of human life is of significance and not without importance. What do we make of this Jesus? He is God with us.

THE SACRIFICE OF LOVE

But for God to become one of us involves the immense cost of sacrifice. God becomes human – it is all sacrifice.

He who gives us every breath we breathe gasps for air. He who makes the grain grow cries with hunger. The hands that flung stars into space could feel pain at the candle's flame; the one who commanded the galaxies to come into being lays his infant head on his mother's shoulder to sleep.

When God comes to us in his Son, it is at immense cost to himself. Jesus not only surrenders everything that is his, like a



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king leaving his palace to visit an orphanage, but – like a king becoming an orphan – limits himself to what is ours. God becomes man.

Yet the sacrifice involved in God coming to us as one of us is eclipsed when God becomes a sacrifice on behalf of us. “You are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins,” says the Gospel of Matthew. He is God for us.

God in Christ Jesus does not come among us because he needs to save us – he comes because we need to be saved. He does not come because he needs to forgive us – he comes because we need his forgiveness. He does not come because he needs to love us – he comes because we need his love. He is God for us.

Jesus in his death crowns the sacrifice of his birth. The vulnerability of the child born in the manger reaches its extremity when those little hands, now grown and calloused by hammer and fishing net, are laid out upon a rough cross.

The baby Jesus escapes the sword of Herod but he will succumb to the cross of Calvary. He makes a sacrifice when he leaves his heavenly palace and enters our shabby world but he becomes a sacrifice when he is lifted on a cross under a placard that reads “The King of the Jews”. The sacrifice of God coming to live as a human anticipates the greater sacrifice of God given *for* humans.

The Bible teaches that the death of Jesus was not a mere tragic ending to a life of beauty. The Bible teaches that the death of Jesus was the purpose for which he came – the culmination of the work he came to do. He gave his life as a sacrifice, in place of us, bearing the penalty that belonged to us so that we may have the privilege that belongs to him.

THE REAL COST OF CHRISTMAS

Christmas is a costly business. God becomes man, Immanuel, God with us. It is *all* cost to him. He experiences in his life the vulnerability of childhood, the marginalisation of poverty, rejection by his own culture, the betrayal of his friends, and yes, the loneliness. Finally, a death for the sin of the world. And he was called Jesus because he would save his people from their sins.

The Bible uses many words to picture what Jesus does for his people. Justification, sanctification, adoption. We might say forgiveness, cleansing, welcome. But the angels use just one word: peace, to those on whom his favour rests. *Shalom*. The peace of God that passes understanding – rest, freedom, hope, re-creation. The gifts of Immanuel. God does not leave us alone in a vast, silent universe. God is with us, and for us, in Jesus. **SC**

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Faithfulness



Mark D. Thompson

P*erhaps one of the most easily misunderstood characteristics of Christian discipleship, and so in some circles one of the least appreciated, is faithfulness. It is the seventh of the nine graces that make up the fruit of the Spirit in the Christian life (Gal 5:22-23), sandwiched between goodness and gentleness in the list led by love.*

Faithfulness is one of the proofs of the Spirit-directed life. As F.F. Bruce put it, “Because God is faithful, because he can be relied upon, his people are to be faithful too, and the Spirit enables them to be so”. It is a massively encouraging truth to know that God is faithful. He will not let us down. He can be relied upon. When all else and everyone else fails, he will not. “If we are faithless,” Paul wrote to Timothy, “he remains faithful, for he cannot disown himself” (2 Tim 2:13).

In another context Paul would write, “the Jews have been entrusted with the very words of God. What if some were unfaithful? Will their unfaithfulness nullify God’s faithfulness? Not at all! Let God be true, and every human being a liar” (Rom 3:2-4). God’s character is both consistent and constant. He is worthy of our trust. Even when we are not, he is. That’s the testimony of the New Testament again and again: God is faithful (1 Cor 1:9; 10:13; 2 Cor 1:18; 1 Thess 5:24; 2 Thess 3:3).

That faithfulness is, of course, concentrated in Jesus. He is himself the manifestation of God’s faithfulness since he is the

fulfilment of God’s ancient promises: “For no matter how many promises God has made, they are ‘Yes’ in Christ” (2 Cor 1:20). Throughout his earthly life he was faithful, both to his Father’s will and mission, and to those he came to save. Despite the opposition, betrayal and unfaithfulness that surrounded him, he stayed the course and laid down his life for his sheep (John 10:11).

He is, as Hebrews puts it, “a merciful and faithful high priest” (2:17). His great prayer of John 17, prayed on the very night he was betrayed, is the perfect example. He prayed for “those whom you gave me out of the world” (v6), with reference to the first disciples, but also for “those who will believe in me through their message” (v20). Later, he promised to be with those he had commissioned “always, to the very end of the age” (Matt 28:20). Hebrews again: “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever” (13:8).

MEDITATE ON GOD’S FAITHFULNESS

Too often we assume the faithfulness of God but do not meditate upon it. God always acts in conformity to his own character. He is not pushed around or reconfigured by factors outside of his own nature. He is never knocked off course by world events or by the details of an individual’s life. No force comes close to shifting him, even a millimetre, from the throne.

We don’t have to wonder if, when we wake up in the morning, he will be the same. We don’t have to fear that he has moved on from wanting the very best for us. That is one of the reasons why

we can pray to him. In the flux of human life – the uncertainties, shocks and surprises – he always remains faithful.

It is God’s wonderfully encouraging faithfulness that grounds and energises the faithfulness of the Christian. We can only be faithful because he remains faithful to himself and so to us. He has united us to Christ in his death and resurrection (Rom 6:5). He has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in Christ (Eph 1:3).

The work of his Spirit in us is a further way God is faithful to us. His Spirit applies the truths of the gospel to our hearts and completes in us his eternal purpose for us. His Spirit brings us from death to life (Rom 6:13), writes his law in our hearts (Jer 31:33), enables us to call him Father (Rom 8:15), and conforms us to the image of his Son (Rom 8:29), from one degree of glory to another (2 Cor 3:18).

WHAT SHOULD OUR FAITHFULNESS LOOK LIKE?

So, if faithfulness is a critical and indelible aspect of God’s character, what does it look like in us? How do we reflect this aspect of the character of God? Put simply, as God is consistent and constant in seeking our welfare, we are called to be consistent and constant in pursuing his glory in his Son, being enabled to do so by his Spirit. It is a reliability in focus that refers everything to God’s purpose in Christ.

What will bring him the most glory in my response to this situation or opportunity? How do I point back to the glory of Christ in the face of this setback or disappointment?

Faithfulness is first and foremost about character. But it has a particular application to Christian ministry. At this point, we need to remember that faithfulness isn’t measured in numbers. The number of people in my church – large or small, since it is possible to take pride in either – is no reliable gauge of our faithfulness or the faithfulness of our leaders. We need to put a large question mark alongside our recent fascination with numbers.

As the parable of the talents (Matt 25:14-30) makes clear, faithfulness comes in all sizes. The first two servants in the parable are praised as having been faithful with little; but there was a substantial difference between each “little”. One servant had doubled five talents, and one had doubled two. Yet both were “good and faithful” servants.

In that sense, faithfulness is not tied to numbers and results but to pursuing the interest of the master with whatever has been measured out to us. Some will have plenty of resources at their disposal and a range of opportunities. Others will have fewer resources, and opportunities might not present themselves as readily. But the question is whether both are diligent in pursuing the interests of their master with what they have been given.

As Paul said about himself to the Corinthians, “it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful” (1 Cor 4:2).

In the parable, it is only the one who did nothing at all who is addressed by his master as “You wicked, lazy servant”. He is the one who is unfaithful because he did not pursue his master’s interests. Instead, he took an easier road. It wasn’t so much that he did not have the creativity of the other two, or that he lacked an energetic, entrepreneurial spirit. His own excuse was that he knew what the master wanted and was doing exactly that: the master just wanted to receive back what was his at the end of the day. It was a matter of maintaining the status quo. When the master returns, he will be happy that things are just as they were.

But that was not what the master wanted. The servant, it seems, had made no attempt to align his decisions and actions with those

of the master. Perhaps the master had an inkling that was how it would be before the event, even though he had still given him the opportunity. After all, he only entrusted one talent into his hand.

Being faithful in this setting should have meant being attuned to why the master had given this opportunity to him in the first place and pursuing that with an eye on the master’s return. Even if he, too, had doubled what he was given, it still would not have been as much as the other two. But he would have been faithful. In the end, though, as the parable shows, he could not be trusted even with that, and it was taken from him.

Faithfulness in Christian discipleship and faithfulness in Christian ministry has its focus on the one who has been faithful to us: it is a consistent and constant pursuit of the interests of our master. We can see why faithfulness is well positioned alongside the other “graces” such as love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness and self-control. All nine are inseparable as the fruit of the Spirit’s work in us. Each needs the other and the role faithfulness plays is to emphasise constancy, consistency, reliability and trustworthiness.

So, we need to value faithfulness and not disparage it. We ought never to consider it an alternative to fruitfulness (as if “you might be fruitful, but I am faithful”), nor as simply equated to fruitfulness (when we believe that our fruitfulness, however we might measure it, is our faithfulness). Instead, let’s celebrate both. But don’t forget the priority of faithfulness. **SC**



The Rev Canon Dr Mark Thompson is the principal of Moore College.

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Insight

What PREACHERS TEACHERS can learn from TEACHERS PREACHERS

Tim Hawkes

've given sermons. I've given lessons. Of the two, the lessons have generally been better – which is strange when preaching and teaching have so much in common.

Preaching and teaching are pastoral professions requiring learning, cluttered desks and an audience voluntarily seeking improvement, or compelled to do so. Yet both professions are derided nearly as much as they are admired.

George Bernard Shaw opined that, "He who can, does; he who cannot, teaches". Ouch! Preachers fare little better. Of preaching we read that "Many are comfortable in the pulpit. Few are capable".

Professor Mike Graves, editor of *What's the Matter with Preaching Today?* suggests that preachers employ the weakest of

communication styles and concludes that the sermon is a sacred cow that now needs to be slaughtered. Teachers, meanwhile, are bombarded with jeremiads muttering about lack of relevance, falling academic standards, poor morale and inappropriate levels of school funding.

There is also the risk of marginalisation caused by modern technology. Classes can click on AI and access the world's best knowledge engines. Congregations can watch and listen to the world's best preachers. This threatens to condemn the parochial and provincial to irrelevance. It is hard for pulpit or classroom to compete with a global, multimedia spectacular!

However, there is fightback. Dr Stephen Witmer says congregations need more than a voice in their ears – they need a life before their eyes. He suggests that podcast sermons are a tremendous supplement but a terrible substitute. Yet it rather depends on the quality of the “life before their eyes”, doesn't it?

So, with all these challenges, how can preachers help teachers, and how can teachers help those that preach?

WHAT TEACHERS CAN LEARN FROM PREACHERS

A valuable reminder preachers can share is for teachers to accept their role not just as educators, but as parent, prophet and priest. As parents, teachers need to step in when parents step out – which is quite a lot these days. As prophets, teachers need to predict the future and prepare their students for it. As priests, teachers need to accept their role as moral pilots, in suggesting that some behaviours are worthy of the human condition and others are not.

Another useful reminder is that the job is not just to prepare students for an exam, but for life. Indeed, preachers take it a step further by preparing their congregants for death. Either way, there is an undeniable future focus that needs to characterise both professions.

Preachers can also point to the importance of early intervention. An early intervention can set a student on a trajectory of success; Proverbs 22:6 speaks of training a child in “the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it”.

With more than 60 per cent of teachers reporting unacceptable levels of stress and disaffection, any comfort a preacher can bring would be welcome. This might include reminders of teachers' worth and vocation. They are not just digging a ditch or providing for a family. They are building a cathedral – or, in their case, raising up future generations. That is not a bad reminder on a hot Friday afternoon when they're struggling with a disruptive group of Year 9s!

More than one teacher has been frustrated by the contemporary pressure to ascribe equal esteem to all quality of work. Preachers can impart some support here, even when educational theorists will not. The Bible acknowledges the predilection in all for error, and the need to identify and correct it. In 2 Tim 3:16 we read: “All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness”. Teaching, like preaching, should be used for all these things.

Preachers can also remind their cousins of ensuring lessons are linked to developmental stage. Just as preachers have a range of sermons for evangelism, establishing or equipping, this differentiated learning needs to be mirrored in schools and individualised to meet the needs of the gifted and neurodiverse. Furthermore, preachers can lend weight to foundational educational theories such as Dr Howard Gardner's “Theory of multiple intelligences”, which posits that everyone has a strength

in some area. The Bible agrees (1 Cor 12:4).

Perhaps one of the most valuable reminders preachers can give is the value of not knowing, and of the importance of faith, intrigue and wonder. Religion is mystical and generates questions. It causes us to wonder. This same fascination needs to be seen in the classroom. The teacher of today can profitably be reminded of the value of wonder, of causing their students to explore with the humility of not knowing.

Preachers can also speak into the troubled space of truth. Many contemporary teachers are heavily impacted by postmodernism. Typically, postmodernism rejects absolute truths in favour of selfism (my truth). The preacher can remind teachers that enlightenment without values can lead to a dark place. There can also be comfort in shared pain, as both professions help their flock cope with a painful world and provide firm islands in the swamp from which students and parishioners can take their bearings.

In an age that habitually chants the mean, mode and median mantra, preachers can usefully encourage teachers not to content themselves with producing “normal” students, but to explore the possibility of producing excellent students. Paul wrote that he sought to “press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus” (Phil 3:14). Low expectations are the greatest block to student achievement.

Finally, preachers can remind teachers that impact is greatly enhanced when there is congruency between what is said and done. A teacher needs to model the behaviours they want in their students.

WHAT PREACHERS CAN LEARN FROM TEACHERS

Teachers know they need to deal with a range of distractions – from a disinterested child to hard seats, flickering fluoro lights, or a noisy leaf blower outside. There is time loss due to mandated bureaucracy, or knowledge loss from being in a stifling room without air-conditioning.

All this results in herculean efforts to engage students. Good teachers vary learning tasks, mixing direction with student-initiated activity. They reinvent the lesson, change from using words to action to visual stimuli. They mime, act, gesture and move. They joke, draw and sing. They use project-based learning, direct instruction, provide directives and encourage student inclusion and “voice”.

There are lessons here for preachers. What variations do they employ to increase congregant attentiveness? Many need to do more than tell a story of having a picnic with the family that, evidently, reminded them of the bounty of God.

Preachers can also profitably be reminded by their teaching cousins that there is only 5 per cent knowledge retention occasioned by lecturing and preaching. This rises to 50 per cent when discussion is involved. It is distressing that so many preachers talk on well past the point where there would be a riot if they were in a classroom! A lack of structure and depth betrays preparation hours that are nowhere near the combined listening hours. It's hardly surprising that members, as they leave, would more likely be talking about the weather than the sermon.

Teachers can remind preachers of the need to use a range of techniques – the sort used to prevent a classroom degenerating into sullen disinterest – such as igniting engagement from the outset, explaining the relevance of what's being taught, catering to different learning styles, using humour and reinforcing key points.

All too often, both professions are given to answering questions

that are not being asked. Just as listening to student “voice” is important, preachers need to be reminded that knowing their congregation’s needs is important. If they feel preaching on the set passage does not meet a congregation’s need, go to one verse in the passage that does, and preach on that. If one verse does not meet a congregation’s needs, go to one word in the passage and preach on that. Do whatever it takes to make the sermon relevant.

Teachers today are the “guide on the side” rather than the “sage on the stage”. This is also not a bad lesson for preachers. Lead from the middle. Admit doubt. Be vulnerable. It adds authenticity and helps provide the common touch. Great preachers, like great teachers, encourage engagement by *learning with*, rather than *preaching to*. That said, a calling in either profession will be questioned if the person cannot contribute to learning. Earnest preachers telling congregants to pray more and be good are likely to be as engaging as a teacher who tells their class to behave better and study hard.

There is wisdom in finding something in the passage or topic that listeners have not heard before. Classrooms do not respond well to boredom, and neither do congregations. So, as far as possible, add scholarship and deeper understanding. Most teachers know they need to start a lesson by awakening interest. They need to follow it up with the body of the lesson, which has a logical flow and is sprinkled with “I-didn’t-know-that” facts. They then finish with a well-crafted conclusion that reinforces key concepts, encourages application and helps to remember.

Preachers can profitably be reminded of the massive, documented impact of giving good feedback. This is not easy in a preaching setting, although some churches have had success in using discussion tables instead of pews. Other churches use Bible study groups to do much the same thing. Either way, teachers know that follow-up and feedback can greatly help to reinforce the message.

A preacher of today also needs to be on top of technology. Why? Because many of their congregants are digital natives, speak code and swipe constantly. Furthermore, Gen X, Y and Z, together with Gen “Alpha”, do not so much live *with* technology as live *in* it. They are immersed in it and have grown fond of its trills, buttons and visuals. They like being in charge. They like its place-of-need and time-of-need convenience. They like its empowerment.

Paul wrote in 1 Cor 9:20 that “To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law... so as to win those under the law”. We need more of our preachers to be tech savvy in order to win the tech savvy! Too many churches are decades behind in their use of technology.

As Christians, we need to be reminded of our countercultural necessity. Paul required us to be “fools for Christ” (1 Cor 4:10), and the Lord himself told his disciples in John 15 that “the world hates you”. Preachers and teachers will be enriched by learning from each other and humbly following Christ’s example. In the end, it is our hearers who will benefit with increased knowledge, skill and faith. **SC**

Dr Tim Hawkes has been an educator for more than 50 years, including 19 years as headmaster of The King’s School.

Children’s children are a crown to the aged,
and parents are the pride of their children.
Proverbs 17:6



Talking points

Grandparenting with wisdom

Ian Barnett

As the old saying goes, “Time flies when you’re having fun”. This is so true when it comes to being a grandparent. That is why we are called “grand”! So, as we rapidly approach the end of 2024 and prepare ourselves for another Christmas and another year of opportunities, here are five things grandparents can do that can – and will – make a profound difference in the lives of your grandchildren and their parents (yes, it is also important that, if we lift up by name our grandchildren to our heavenly Father, we make sure that we, and I can’t stress this enough, pray for our adult children and their partners as well).

Here are five things grandparents can always do:

- **Pray** There is never a time when prayer is wasted or not needed by someone in your family. Persistence is the key (Luke 18:1). As grandparents we know one of the most profound truths that we may have not considered when we were young and strong. What is it? God knows our families better than we do and there is nothing he cannot change, no matter how hard it may look to us.
- **Communicate** Text, call, even write letters telling them how much you love them and how much of a blessing they are to you. Be positive, especially with the words you use as you write and speak to them. Go further by reminding them that God has a plan for them and, following on from point one, tell them that you pray for them. Be intentional – it does matter.
- **Influence** This one is so often neglected. You are an influence; the only question is what type of influence? Yes, you are leaving a legacy for others to follow. So, ask yourself the question: what am I leaving behind that others can follow?

Also, don’t be hard on yourself if you are already in the last season of your life. It is never too late to start. I like how Job puts it when he says, “Is not wisdom found among the aged? Does not long life bring understanding?” (Job 12:12). Yes, as grandparents we not only know a thing or two, we have also seen a thing or two.

If the world needs anything right now apart from love it is wisdom, and I believe that grandparents have that in buckets.

- **Play** Of course this might depend on the age of your grandchild or great-grandchildren. However, no matter their age, my point is that you should seek to be active with them in both word and deed. Never underestimate how they can pick things up from you, like your character and how you treat others. Even doing simple things like playing a card or video game, baking a cake, planting a tree, even digging a hole with them, can be so much fun. Especially if you need their help to get up (Isaiah 40:31).
- **Expectations** A final thought is tied in with our expectations. Sometimes we as grandparents think that if we do all the four things above that our grandkids will instantly value us, engage with us and their parents will finally come to realise that without us in their lives they are without all hope.

If that is you – and we all have expectations about how others will react to us – just be careful. I seek to do the four things above, often badly, in the hope that my grandchildren will see Jesus in me. Grandparents are second only to parents. I encourage us all to grab hold of this time and to keep in mind that it is our grandkids’ eternal salvation that matters most (Acts 4:12).

Finally, if there is anything that is required of us in this age, it may be summed up in the word “discernment”. Don’t let the words – or even the whispers – of those around you make you believe that you are of no value and that you have nothing to say. It is simply not true (Psalm 145:4). What we now possess in wisdom alone is much more valuable than the things of this world.

So let us pass on the baton of faith to those who follow us, with grace and kindness.

SC

The Rev Ian Barnett is CEO and founder of the National Grandparent Movement (ngmlegacy.com.au).



Testimonies

Stories of faith



Tara Sing

The stories of people coming to know Christ and turning from darkness to light are incredibly special. They showcase the way God works his extraordinary power in ordinary lives. Each story reflects God's grace, and celebrates the way Jesus meets people where they are, in their struggles, doubts and individual circumstances. It's always so encouraging to hear the different ways that God brings people to himself and builds them up.

We love celebrating people publicly confirming the faith that God has given them. Here are three stories from people who have boldly stood before their family, friends and church communities to proclaim Christ as their Lord.

"I HAD A DOUBLE CELEBRATION – I WAS BAPTISED ON MY BIRTHDAY"

Kishriy Koreen Madjaco
Doonside Anglican Church

I grew up in a Christian family where attending church was a regular part of our lives. My parents are deeply rooted in their faith, which had a strong influence on me.

When I started primary school, I attended a Baptist school in the Philippines. Each morning, during devotions, the pastor – who was also the head of the school – would ask questions like, "Are you saved? Do you really give everything for Jesus? Do you truly know him?" These questions stayed with me and sparked a desire to learn more about Jesus.

As I grew older, my curiosity deepened. I started observing the church services more closely – prayers, worship and other activities – and began asking my parents and church leaders questions. While they answered as best as they could, I still struggled to fully understand. Then, in 2018, when I was 10 years old, my parents moved to Australia, and my brother and I stayed with our grandparents, who are also strong in their faith.

When the pandemic hit, churches closed and we began holding family services at home. My uncle suggested we take turns leading worship and prayer. This is when I started singing and became more active in worship. As the situation improved, our church leaders began visiting homes and, eventually, a small church was established in our suburb. Joining the music team and being an active member of the church helped me grow spiritually.

In 2020, our church grew, and our pastor decided to hold a water baptism. On my 13th birthday, I was baptised alongside many church members, including my brother. It was a double celebration for me – my birthday and my public declaration of faith! That day, our pastor gave a clear explanation of baptism and salvation, which helped me understand my relationship with Jesus even more.

When I moved to Australia, I faced challenges – adjusting to a new environment, reuniting with my parents and adapting to school life. At times it felt overwhelming, but I believe God used these struggles to strengthen my faith and maturity. These experiences gave me a deeper thirst



for understanding how God works through life's ups and downs.

I am incredibly thankful for my parents, who supported me through every challenge, even during my emotional moments. Through them, I encountered God's love. I am also grateful for our church, our pastor and our leaders. They constantly encourage me to be strong in my faith and use my talents to serve God.

Bible studies have been especially meaningful, helping me grow in my understanding of my identity in Christ. I know that my relationship with God is a lifelong journey, full of lessons he wants me to learn. I am deeply grateful for his endless love, grace and the sacrifice he made for me on the cross.

One of my favourite verses is Jeremiah 29:11: "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord". This verse reassures me of God's purpose in my life. All glory to him for his faithfulness and guidance!

“I FELT LIKE I WAS FINALLY HEARING GOD’S WORD”

Lisa Elliott

Christ Church, St Ives

Growing up, my father was Anglican and my mother was Catholic, but we never went to church. My parents never went, ever. For me, I always felt like I had a relationship with God, but I didn’t have to go to church or read the Bible in order to have that relationship. I’d been under that premise my whole life. I’d always thought, “I don’t have to go to church, I don’t have to read the Bible, I just have a relationship with God”. Now I see that’s not true, but I thought that was the way it was. I would always acknowledge God and thank him for blessings and always talk to him but, looking at it now, it was a very one-way relationship.

I had a devastating thing occur in my family. I’ve always been close with my parents, and my mother has begun the road to dementia. I was accused by my mother of stealing her jewellery – it’s a very common thing. I said, “Mum, don’t be ridiculous,” but she was adamant that I stole her jewellery.

It was a week before Christmas, and I was not permitted to see my parents. I wasn’t allowed to go into the house. They changed the locks. My father couldn’t talk to me or see me because my mother said, “It’s her or it’s me” and, obviously, he is going to support his wife. I felt like I lost both of my parents in one week.

My brother went over to the house, and he couldn’t find the rings anywhere. He found a bunch of other items my mother had hidden.

I went through Christmas, the New Year, my son’s birthday, crying every day. It was completely devastating. I basically gave everything over to God and said, “This burden is really heavy on my heart and soul. I don’t care what you do; I am leaving this with you. Your will, not my own. You sort this out”.

Three days later, a month after the accusation, my father found the jewellery. He rang me, and he was so excited. He said, “We’ve found it!” and I said, “I’m coming over now”. I hadn’t seen my parents in four weeks and said, “Thank you, God!”. All the way, as I drove to their place, I was thanking God.

Then I had this epiphany: God had heard me, but I’d never heard God.

The next day, I rang the only person

I knew who went to church and said, “I’ve got to come to church”. She said, “Yes, I went this morning,” then added, “I’ll meet you this afternoon.” I said, “You already went.” She said, “God won’t mind if I go twice!”

I’ve been going to church with her most weeks for the past year.

I felt like I was finally hearing God’s word and what he had to say, and I learnt all about Jesus. The moment that it hit my heart was around Easter. My whole life, I knew the story of Easter, but it wasn’t until I went to the Good Friday service, and I was reading Scripture, and read all the things that had happened, that I got in my heart the true meaning of Easter.

I remember being so upset and crying throughout the day because it was so emotional. I remember having big, long conversations with Jesus and God and sharing my heart for what had happened. Then Easter Sunday came along, and that was such a joyful moment. I remember thinking, “I’ve known this story my whole life, but I didn’t know it in my own heart”. That sealed the deal for me.

The more people I spoke to about God and Jesus the more I was learning, and the greater the peace that I was feeling. It’s been this journey of my relationship with God, which has been really positive and amazing.

I’m a really excitable, outgoing person. However, there was also an underlying anxiety that would follow me around everywhere. Once I gave it up to Jesus, and went, *God’s will, not my own*, and reminded myself that God’s got this and God won’t let me fall, it changed.

If I didn’t go through what I went through at the start of the year, I wouldn’t have this relationship with Jesus. That’s how I view it today: God’s will. Whatever happens is meant to happen, and I couldn’t have said that before. I was devastated and heartbroken. I didn’t know it, but I had to go through that horrible thing in order to come to the other side and see Jesus and God.

There’s great peace. Even when it comes to all of those things, I can say, “It’s okay, everything’s fine”, and be grateful. That’s another thing – I always wanted the pretty house and nice car and I didn’t have those



things. I learned through the gospel to be grateful for what I do have. I’ve got a roof over my head, a job, a car that takes me to work, and a family. Just learning to be grateful for what I do have, rather than yearning for what I don’t, has given me such comfort, which wasn’t present before.

I’ve been learning so much about the Bible and reading the stories. I’ve enjoyed a lot of Matthew. I’m still learning a lot about the Bible and the individual stories. In fact, I’ve only just put my hand up for a growth group for next year. It’s a huge thing for me.

As my relationship with God builds and gets stronger and stronger, my only regret is that it didn’t start sooner. Why didn’t I get this when I was young? Why did I have to be in my mid-50s before I had a relationship with God and Jesus? So, I would encourage people to do it – because I wish this had started sooner.

The thing that I ask for is to learn more about God’s word and reading the Bible and spending time in prayer. These are all habits – things that aren’t constant in my life yet – and I know they’re both so important. I get disappointed when it’s the last thing that I do instead of the first thing that I do.

We go through life, we’ve all got issues, but I feel like, through the gospel, there’s a pathway, and you can be shown where to go just by reading the gospel.

“I TRUST HIM WITH ALL OF MY HEART”

Nicholas Prodromou

NewLife Oran Park

I was born into a Greek Orthodox family and christened as an infant.

In terms of involvement with the church, we would go to midnight service at Easter. My godmother would buy me a candle each year to hold while we listened to a priest I couldn't understand. We would normally arrive late, and we would wait for him to say “Christos anesti”, (Christ is risen), in Greek. Then we would go back to a family member's house to eat a special lamb soup and, after staying until about 3am, we'd go home.

The next day, we would have our Easter celebration. We would greet each other saying, “Christos anesti”, and the appropriate response was “Alethos anesti” (He has risen indeed).

We went to many christenings; I heard the Bible being read and chanted in Greek and English. My years of Orthodox Scripture taught me how to make the sign of the cross and helped me to memorise the Lord's Prayer.

Radical scepticism

In high school, a close friend of mine lost his faith. He went from being strongly convicted to completely rejecting it altogether. I ended up having a whole group of friends reject the faith. I no longer had any positive Christian role models. My connection to my childhood faith wasn't strong enough. Life became about music, girls and fitting in. It wasn't cool to be a Christian, so I rejected it.

After high school, I was aimless. I barely scraped by in the HSC and didn't have any clue what to do. I threw myself deeper and deeper into the hardcore punk subculture. I just wanted to go to gigs, play in bands, get drunk and smoke. It was in this scene that I found a home and new friends.

My view of Christianity and church was very negative at this point. I got heavily into conspiracy theories. Any traces of a Christian faith went out the window and were slowly replaced with radical scepticism and a mishmash of new-age beliefs. I watched documentaries that aimed to disprove Christianity as I sought to dismantle every aspect of my old identity and forge a new one. I was hopeless, and believed the world was hopeless, too.

I didn't know they were praying

I met Sam, who would one day become my wife. At first, we had a very immature relationship. She was also clinging to a superficial faith, though Jesus and the Bible had been more prominent in her upbringing. Her faith was an obstacle for my selfish agenda, though I didn't see it that way at the time.

She reformed me to a point and encouraged me to study, which led to a proper job and the ability to support us. Though we were immature, we were loyal to one another, and it wasn't long before we were moving out together, and eventually got engaged.

At this time, Sam grew increasingly concerned that we were living in sin. Her faith was still important to her, and she wanted to learn to live as a Christian. Eventually, she reached out to her local Anglican church, looking to be baptised. We did a short course and started attending the evening service.

Sam moved back in with her parents for the remainder of our engagement. We attended church regularly and joined a Bible study. Little did I know that my soon-to-be wife and the pastors of the church were praying for my conversion!

In our first year of marriage, I was still very much *unconverted*. Christianity was merely a subject of study for me, but I would still go to church with Sam and happily sing the songs. Whenever she would ask me about my personal faith, I would shut down and get angry. I could defend Christianity as the truth intellectually, but it hadn't yet changed my heart. It wasn't until the next big leap in responsibility that things began to change.

From scepticism to surrender

When I held Zoe as a newborn I saw how precious life was; it was time to get serious. God worked on me at that time as I read the Bible. I would listen to sermons instead of apologetics videos. I started to see the danger I was in. The danger of spending an eternity in hell with no second chances. I was consumed by the subject of hell and would listen to sermon after sermon on the way to work.

At the time, I still had some contact with old friends, who were into doing



challenges like meditating for 30 days. So, I posed a challenge – to read the Bible as if it's God's inspired word, to pray daily, and to seek to live for God in all they do. This was a turning point for me as I considered the hypocrisy of telling my non-Christian friends to do what I myself, who claimed to be a Christian, wasn't doing.

Soon afterwards, I read the account of Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane. As he prayed, “Not my will, but your will be done”, I considered the love of Jesus, facing the unimaginable horror of the cross for me, and it was clear that, in that moment, I could no longer live as if this didn't matter. I understood that the cup Jesus was praying would be removed from him was the punishment I deserved for my sin. I was the one who deserved hell. God changed my heart that night.

Following this, I was completely broken about the ways I had treated people from my past and sent a bunch of apology messages.

Almost five years later, I am full of purpose. I no longer see everything as hopeless. Jesus is the Lord of my life, and I trust him with all of my heart. I seek to glorify God in all I do. In my household, we seek to serve God in all that we do. I long to give Zoe the upbringing I didn't know I wanted before Jesus saved me.

I still struggle with selfishness, but fight it by remembering what Paul said about Jesus in 2 Corinthians 5:15: “And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again”.

Gallants to go with CMS

After eight years ministering at St Paul's, South Coogee, the Rev Grant Gallant and his wife Alison will leave the parish in mid-January to begin preparing for service with the Church Missionary Society – a move that has been brewing for many years.

In 2011, while an assistant minister at Narrabeen, Mr Gallant travelled to Kenya as sports chaplain to a local rugby team. In addition to ministry opportunities in Kenya, he took side trips to Ethiopia, Uganda and Rwanda to see God's mission work in those countries. "I really was moved by the need, the lack of Bible training for pastors and the need to train pastors in God's world to better teach the gospel faithfully," he says. "Because pastors are generally teaching their congregations before they go to Bible college."

Adds Mrs Gallant: "So, we decided to go back for our long service leave. Instead of a holiday in Australia we went on mission!"

Mr Gallant taught at a Bible college in the north of Ethiopia, while Mrs Gallant took part in children's ministry. There was preaching, community projects and "a wonderful time" – after which they applied to CMS, and were told, "Not now".

This was more than a decade ago. The couple accepted God's guidance and can now see his wisdom in that decision – they have both completed further theological study, have more experience in crosscultural ministry and teaching, and their children are now grown.

"We go to [CMS] Summer School every year, and every year I sit there saying, 'I'm not going to get up and talk to people'," laughs Mr Gallant. "This year I was hearing about all the opportunities in Africa, and in Asia, and I thought, 'I'll just stay seated', but this time I did get up and have a chat to them.

"Two of our children who were serving in the kids' program there were encouraging us... and then when we asked all of them, 'Do you think it would be good if we applied?', they were saying, 'Go Mum and Dad – go!'"

Says Mrs Gallant: "We've been in ministry together, and we've always done God's mission together – and when I say 'together', it's been us and our five children, so to know they're keen to support us and send us off in God's mission overseas is really exciting."

While the couple are now working towards ministry in Tanzania and looking forward to the next steps they will take, it was hard the day they had to



tell the congregation at South Coogee they were leaving.

"We're going to miss them dearly and they were very sad on hearing the news," Mr Gallant says. "But it's also been encouraging to share about the needs overseas and what we're going to be involved in, in Bible teaching and the discipling of pastors.

"At times we also think, 'We're leaving our children, and potentially our grandchildren', but really, they're leaving us. Some of them also have the desire to serve overseas, so it's a good thing to think about.

"Really, knowing Jesus and the gospel is enough. And the inheritance to come. Everything else is a bonus."

The Rev John Stanley retired from St George's, Paddington on September 29.

Former defence chaplain and CMS missionary the Rev Mark Dickens is retiring from the parish of St John's Park, where he will finish up in January.

The Rev Jarrod Booker will leave the parish of Riverwood-Punchbowl, where he has been rector for more than a decade, to become a chaplain at The Scots College in the new year.

VALE



The Ven John Jones AM died on October 24, aged 94.

Born John Elliott Jones on November 9, 1929, he grew up in Grafton and came to Sydney to study pharmacy at university – working as a pharmacist in the early 1950s before his commitment to Christ led him

VACANT PARISHES

List of parishes and provisional parishes, vacant or becoming vacant, as at November 28, 2024:

- Bankstown**
- Belmore with McCallums Hill and Clemton Park
- Caringbah
- Cooks River**
- Cremorne
- Darling Street**
- Glebe*
- Greenwich
- Helensburgh and Stanwell Park
- Jamberoo
- Lawson**
- Liverpool South**
- Oatley**
- Paddington
- Riverwood - Punchbowl
- Rosemeadow*
- Roseville
- St John's Park
- South Coogee
- Turramurra South

* denotes provisional parishes or Archbishop's appointments
** right of nomination suspended/on hold

Dr Amelia Haines

M.B.B.S (Syd),
M. Hlth Sc. (Sexual Health)
Grad. Cert. Psychiatric Medicine

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A pod for God

Russell Powell

Fire Up!

Dave Jensen



Before Steve Jobs at Apple invented the iPod, podcasts were called radio shows. As someone who made radio shows for 30 years, perhaps I am not the best person to review podcasts. But then again, maybe I am. Because the basic rules haven't changed much.

Rule number one is to say something interesting. Rule number two is to be listenable. Sounds simple, right? But not every podcast follows these rules, as just about anyone with a microphone and an internet connection can now be a podcaster.

As for listeners, there are some people who are fans and some who are not. Those with a long commute, exercisers and people who do repetitive tasks by themselves are likely to be podcast enthusiasts.

If you are a Christian, there are a lot of good content options but also a lot of dross. I regularly listen to shows such as *The Pastor's Heart* and *5 Minutes in Church History*, and now I have the choice of Dave Jensen's *Fire Up!* show.

If you have heard Dave speak or read his columns here in *Southern Cross*, you will know he is passionate in evangelising for evangelism. He ticks rule number one: he is always interesting. The *Fire Up!* podcast was launched early this year by Evangelism and New Churches and features co-presenters Ling Shooter and Dan Baker.

Like Dave himself, expect more passion than propriety. This team is committed to coming at the issue of evangelism from every angle. Recent episodes have tackled things such as welcoming at church, reaching Gen Y, what to do at Christmas time and how to step out of the Christian "bubble" – all helpful stuff.

Along the way, Dave drops some golden tips, like this one about testimonies: "The best way of articulating what a testimony is, it's the story of Jesus' story in your story. It's *not* a story about you. It's a story about Jesus and what he's done in your life. Now, don't get me wrong, that is going to involve you. It's going to talk about you, how it has profoundly affected your life and shaped your life and challenged you and so on, but at its core it's a story about Jesus, not a story about you".

This is a helpful corrective to some testimonies I have heard that don't mention Jesus at *all*. Now, we come to rule two: be listenable. I have to say that some of the audio quality of *Fire Up!* (and Dave's excellent partner podcast *Discover*) is pretty tough listening – just a technical thing that I hope will improve because the content is great.

Evangelism and New Churches hopes this podcast will help people to do more evangelism more often. For commuters listening to a podcast encouraging evangelism, it is an ideal crossover. The chance to say a word in season may well come on that journey to and from work. **SC**

to study at Moore College.

After his ordination in 1958, Mr Jones was curate at Gladesville, followed by rectorships in Canley Vale and Harbord, before he and his wife Beth offered to serve with the Church Missionary Society in 1965.

Their family spent a year in Sabah, Malaysia, where Mr Jones' ongoing contact with military personnel led him to move into chaplaincy with the Royal Australian Navy. He began in 1967 at the HMAS Cerberus base in Victoria, before going to sea in 1970 as chaplain on HMAS Melbourne. He was then posted to HMAS Creswell in Jervis Bay, where he was chaplain to the

base and the RAN college before spending 1976-77 back at sea with the Melbourne.

Mr Jones then worked at HMAS Watson at South Head in Sydney where, in addition to his chaplaincy duties at the base, he had pastoral responsibility for those on patrol boats, submarines, at the diving school and in the naval hospital.

In 1980, he was made principal Anglican chaplain and archdeacon to the Navy, serving as Support Command and then Fleet Command chaplain – during which time he received an Order of Australia in the military division for his years of chaplaincy service.

After the best part of five years as Fleet Command chaplain, Archdeacon Jones was posted to Canberra as chairman-secretary of the Principal Chaplain's Committee – Navy.

He left the Navy in 1988 to take up the rectorship of St Philip's, Church Hill, where he served until 2000. Although officially retired, he remained busy – he was made an Archdeacon Emeritus of the ADF in 2001 and worked as a part-time assistant minister at St Matthew's, Manly from 2007-10.

He and Mrs Jones remained part of the congregation at Manly for the rest of their lives, and rector the Rev Bruce Clarke,

speaking at Archdeacon Jones' funeral, described him as "a man of strong conviction about God and his word, and resolute in wanting to live faithfully for the Lord Jesus".

Mr Clarke preached on Romans 8 – one of Archdeacon Jones' favourite passages – and said, "John did not fear dying and for good reason: he knew this truth, that God works for good in all things for those who love him. I asked John two weeks ago, 'Are you ready to meet the Lord?' And he nodded his head and quietly whispered, 'Yes'. And this passage describes so well the hope and confidence that he had."

Dive into books this summer

Tara Sing

Sunshine, salty air and waves crashing – we're diving into summer! Here's a list of books we've reviewed over the past year you could read on those lazy days by the water (or hot afternoons hiding inside with air conditioning!).



Subjects and Citizens: The politics of the gospel by Michael Jensen

We are urged to live distinctly through loving others by radical selflessness, hospitality, respect and peace. It is an alternative to self-actualisation, the lust for power and materialism in the kingdom of this world. (Karin Sowada)

The End of Men? by Simon Smart

The book is an attempt to offer some recommendations for the way men can be better men, and in a way that will help boys want to be those men... It's the kind of short, sharp injection of thought that could well boost the dialogue of an ongoing relationship among friends and family. (David Höhne)

The Trials of Jesus: Evidence, Conclusions, and Aftermath by Paul Barnett

A valuable tool for the preacher, an informative volume for every Christian, and an engaging read for the unbeliever, who may be unsure of the historicity of Jesus' death or of its significance. (Glenn Davies)

The Meaning of Singleness: Retrieving an Eschatological Vision for the Contemporary Church by Dani Treweek

In our church culture and our Christian culture, we are enslaved to a number of false narratives about singleness and about relationships in general. But, in this book, Dani Treweek... gives back to us both a biblical picture and a historical account, really, of how singleness was honoured in the church, and of how single and married people can respect each other's vocations and work

together differently. (Andrew Cameron)

Australian Evangelical Perspectives on Youth Ministry, edited by Ruth Lukabyo

Many of the questions we face in ministry are explored through these themes, such as what stories are we allowing to shape our view of our children and young people... do we believe they are passive, or active agents, consumers or contributors? How do we help young people shape their identity, interact with the culture around them, and live wisely in the world? (Naomi de Vries)

About Love by David Mansfield

Reading *About Love* is like going on a journey with Jesus, as well as a journey with David – who has

seen the hardest things and sees relatable illustrations everywhere. He has walked and swum in the text of John's Gospel for many years and, in this book, it is the person of Jesus who shines most brightly. (Andrew Barry)

Double Minded: How Sex is Dividing the Australian Church by Mark Durie

It begins by showing how sexual identity has become the beating heart of how most Westerners understand themselves and their place in our world. This helps explain why our culture has clashed with the traditional teaching of the church on sex. Yet, not all Christians agree on how to respond to this strange new world, and often there are clashes even within the same church. (Jodie McNeill)

His Workmanship: Reflections on Living with Christ by Professor John Clark

His Workmanship would likely most benefit the person who has some experience of church but doesn't understand God's big picture. Bible quotes are copious and well-linked to the argument, but you need to at least have some idea of the Bible as authoritative for it to make an impact. (Russell Powell)

I Am What I Do by Andrew Laird
This came out of Laird's own reflections, the speaking and teaching he has done with City Bible Forum, and the recognition that he was not the only person wrestling with this problem. He put his thoughts on paper to help others understand the issue before they also fell over the edge into burnout. (Judy Adamson)

ARCHDEACON KARA HARTLEY'S BOOKLIST

Highlighting the writing ministry of Sydney women

In the past year there have been a number of books published by women from the Sydney Diocese. While two have a particular focus on the ministries of women, these books cover a range of issues and interests for the church.

I meet with women around the Diocese weekly, and I am constantly encouraged by the range of gifts that God has given to them and how he is working through them for the benefit of the whole church. In particular, I am thankful for the ministry of writing that female authors participate in and pray their works would spur many on to faithful service in the Lord.

In order of their date of publication, some recent books by Sydney women include:

- Ruth Lukabyo, **From a Ministry for Youth to a Ministry of Youth: Aspects of Protestant Youth Ministry in Sydney 1930-1959** (2020)
- Graham Beynon & Jane Tooher, **Embracing Complementarianism: Turning Biblical Convictions into Positive Church Culture** (2022)
- Danielle Treweek, **The Meaning of Singleness: Retrieving an Eschatological Vision for the Contemporary Church** (2023)
- Sarah Irving-Stonebreaker, **Priests of History: Stewarding the Past in an Ahistoric Age** (2024)
- Marcia Cameron, **God's Gamechangers** (2024)
- Jocelyn Loane, **Motherhood** (2024)

Faith and heartache amid dementia

Sally Swan

Dementia, Who Are You and What Have You done with My Mother?

by Sarah Jones



In a professional sphere, I've spent time with hundreds of clients who live with dementia. I've seen grief and uncertainty on the faces of their loved ones; I've seen gentle patience and agonising impatience; I've used all my desperate skills to peek through the layers of clients' minds to find them, even briefly.

I have held hands and sung songs. I have stage-acted my way through strange scenarios. In some cases, I have even run through suburbs searching for escapees.

I have snuggled people back into bed, I have had breakfast with widowers who can't remember where their wives have gone. I have shed tears and prayed with precious people as they've faded away. I have been allowed to love deeply, in unique and sacred ways.

In the diverse and often bleak world of dementia, I have seen so much. I have, however, never experienced the heartache of losing a loved one to the disease – my own, personal loved one. If this is the case for you, too, then this book will be a help. With the population ageing, the estimate is that, by 2050, almost one million Australians will have dementia. If you haven't been touched by dementia yet, you will be.

Written by Sarah Jones, a Christian author from the northern beaches of Sydney, this is a warm and honest autobiographical book, commencing years ago in Jones' childhood. It describes a generous, loving mother and a happy family life, revealing the Jeannie Somerville of "before": she who would become the protagonist in a story of change and unstoppable decline.

Jones recounts a growing disquiet. "Strange things like these kept happening", she writes, as the family begins to observe behaviour that was not usual for their wife, their mum, their grandma – beginning with hearing and memory loss, and then

moving into massive changes of identity that were truly unnerving and, at the start at least, impossible to explain or understand.

"I found myself grappling with the evolution that was taking place," Jones writes, as she and the family lean slowly and reluctantly into the diagnosis of frontotemporal lobar degeneration. We are then taken on the journey through fears and concerns, surprises and joys, as she moves from a relationship of mother and daughter to stranger and carer.

We follow as she transitions from caring for Mum at home, to caring for her through full-time residential care. We watch as long-held family traditions evolve to make way for what was now best or even realistic for Mum. There is guilt and heartbreak and daily grief, and we rise and fall with Jones on the rollercoaster of challenges – great successes (the wondrous effect of music!) and tremendous losses (language, personal hygiene). And almost all of it is out of their control.

This is a personal story, and we've been allowed to look through its window. The book is described as a "daughter's journey". We are invited to observe and learn as privileged readers, as it is both a private journal and a trainer's manual.

Jones has walked alongside her Mum, caring for her rightly and with dignity while wishing desperately for the past, all the while rocketing towards this known, and unknown, future. We witness here the power of holding someone's memories for them, the challenge of loving someone who is present and yet very much absent. And praying for help from God – comfort and courage – every step of the way.

SC

Dementia, Who Are You and What Have You Done with My Mother? is available at www.wordsbysarahjones.com/books

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Beloved book comes to life



Judy Adamson

Magic Beach

Rated G, opens January 16

couldn't tell you the number of times I read Alison Lester's book *Magic Beach* to my kids when they were little, and there are plenty of others who are just as familiar with it – whether they first came across it as a youngster, parent, grandparent, aunt, uncle or family friend.

Celebrating its 35th anniversary in 2025, *Magic Beach* captures the childlike joy of time by the water in summer: waves, rockpools, sea creatures, sandcastles, play and, most of all, imagination.

This is where Robert Connolly's cinematic take on the much-cherished book comes into its own. For although Alison Lester's pictures show her characters using their time at the beach to create "invincible castles and towers" made of sand – and imagine undersea worlds, smugglers and a life exploring the ocean – the film brings these dreams and imaginings to vibrant life for us.

More than that, it does so through a series of vignettes created by 10 different animators, knitting the stories together into a seamless whole through the connection each child (and one dog) has with the beach and each other.

Every story begins with a live action character, and as their imagination kicks in they take us on an animated adventure – from soft-focus impressionistic to stop-motion, claymation, anime style... the list goes on. Some vignettes are quite, quite beautiful, while others are humorous and a little mischievous. I particularly love the watermelon forest and the dog's sausage-laden seaside dreams.

It's a risk to turn a slim, illustrated book into a movie that runs for an hour and 15 minutes – especially one with no more than incidental dialogue. There are no car chases, no aliens, no

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computers and no mobile phones. There's just the beauty of the world as it is, fired by the inventiveness of animators and children's imagination.

One of the girls begins her tale by saying that "in her past life" she was a fish, and that really wasn't needed – her imagination could have had her talking to the fish regardless! The smugglers' story also contains shipwrecks and ghosts, which, although within the G rating, could be a little frightening in places for very young viewers.

That said, there is so much to love about this movie. For starters, it is very different to any other offering you will see for kids this summer. In one sense, all it does is highlight the simple pleasures of a day at the beach, but by using a group of animators with different styles and techniques, Robert Connolly has fashioned a story that is as unique and inventive as the characters within it.

If you're anything like me, you'll finish watching with an almost irresistible urge to go to the beach.

SC

SUMMER MOVIE SELECTION



December 19

Mufasa: The Lion King (PG)

A prequel to the popular Disney film of 1994, this new offering explores how the orphaned Mufasa is adopted into the princely family of Taka (the future Scar), and – through a range of adventures and challenges – eventually becomes king of the Pride Lands. Old friends Rafiki, Timon and Pumbaa are back to help tell what looks like a worthwhile story. New songs by the ubiquitous Lin-Manuel Miranda.

Boxing Day

A Real Pain (MA)

Jesse Eisenberg is writer, director and co-star of this deeply personal film in which two very different cousins from New York fly to Poland to experience the country, and its war history, in honour of their grandmother. It's fast-paced, razor-sharp, and tells a great story about family, self-understanding and different responses to grief – if you can deal with Eisenberg's Allenesque behaviour. Some scenes were even filmed in the house where his family lived before the war. The rating is for coarse language; there is also drug use.

The Correspondent (M)

Richard Roxburgh plays real-life journalist Peter Greste who, along with two Egyptian co-workers, was accused in 2013 of reporting false news and creating a negative impression of Egypt overseas after he covered a military uprising in Cairo for Al-Jazeera. Based on Greste's memoir detailing their trial, subsequent imprisonment and fight for justice, the film gives us a white-knuckle ride through the dangers of simply reporting the truth in areas of conflict – a timely reminder given the ongoing violence in the Middle East and Ukraine.

New Year's Day

Paddington in Peru (PG)

A charming trip to South America with Paddington (Ben Wishaw) and his English family, the Browns, after he receives word that Aunt Lucy (Imelda Staunton), the bear who rescued him many years earlier, is behaving strangely and might benefit from a visit. Cue a range of cute and crazy adventures in the jungle and beyond with that most British of bears, plus a cast packed with guest stars.

January 9

Conclave (PG)

The Pope is dead, and cardinals from across the globe – led by a reluctant Cardinal Lawrence (Ralph Fiennes) – must meet in the Vatican to select his replacement. But, as Morris West's *The Shoes of the Fisherman* made clear on our screens 60 years ago, that will not be easy. Will liberal or conservative voices hold sway? And what should Lawrence do in response to the arrival of an unexpected cardinal, or secrets that surface during their deliberations? Don't expect the strong thread of faith we saw in *The Shoes of the Fisherman* – this is a movie for a modern audience – but it's packed with drama and excellent performances from the likes of Isabella Rossellini, Stanley Tucci, John Lithgow, and Fiennes. Amid the spiritual, political and worldly angst involved in making a choice, Lawrence tells the others how he fears the "sin" of certainty for, if there were no doubt, "there would be no mystery, and therefore no need for faith". We can enjoy the film for its own sake, while also being grateful for the certainty the Bible assures us we do have in Jesus.



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Applications close at 5:00PM on 30 April 2025. For more information and application forms, please email scholarships@moore.edu.au

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