SA’s Archbishop Smith the new Primate

by Mark Brolly

Archbishop Geoffrey Smith of Adelaide is Australia’s new Anglican Primate. He succeeds Melbourne’s Archbishop Philip Freier, whose resignation took effect on 31 March after Dr Freier had served almost six years in the post.

The new Primate took office immediately following an electronic ballot by the Primatial Board of Electors that was held over a 24-hour period from 4pm on Monday 6 April.

He is to serve an initial six-year term.

ARCHBISHOP GEORGE Smith.

Ms Anne Hywood, the General Secretary of General Synod, confirmed Archbishop

Continued on page 10

COVID-19: Have a ‘big vision’, says Archbishop Freier

by Stephen Cauchi

ARCHBISHOP PHILIP Freier has urged Anglicans to have a “big vision” to serve others despite the many difficulties imposed on Church and society by the COVID-19 pandemic.

He made his comments as April marked the first full month in the new reality of social distancing, with church life now mostly taking the form of Zoom meetings and phone calls.

“Let’s have a big vision as we emerge from this COVID-19 crisis,” Archbishop Freier said in a video message on 22 April.

“We need to be not just looking at the present day troubles and tribulations but have a strong vision for the future – how ministry is going to be active and vital.

“Who knows what opportunities are being opened for us personally in our life to go deeper in our discipleship?”

The pandemic was a chance “to show the character of what it means to be born into the life of God, to tolerate the tribulations of the world for a day but with the knowledge of eternal glory”.

Archbishop Freier said the Diocese of Melbourne

Continued on page 4
We can shape a better society out of crisis

I HAVE COMMENTED IN THIS column on a previous occasion about the work of the Australian Government in reconstruction after the Second World War. It was about having a bigger vision for Australian society when the war ended and, in its way, giving a pathway that made all of the wartime sacrifice worthwhile. The language used during the present COVID-19 pandemic resonates with some of the language used in those distant days. We have much in common with those wartime years – we don’t know when our crisis will end or the damage that will be left. We do know that, unlike the cessation of military hostilities, the end of the COVID-19 crisis is unlikely to be as clear or decisive.

On the way through the COVID-19 pandemic there have been many changes to the way we live our lives and, as a result, the kind of society we have. It has been a time of anxiety and uncertainty. The early results demonstrate that the preventative measures have been effective. Along with the restriction of personal freedom and the limited use of coercive police powers, there has been a higher level of social networking and free expression of opinion. The present times have shown us that many institutions in Australia and internationally are more brittle than previously thought. Newspapers in rural and regional Australia are ceasing publication, and we may well see greater concentration of media in the same way that we seem likely to return to a monopoly in Australian domestic air travel.

The scale of financial response from government at every level is unprecedented. The intention of ensuring, as far as possible, the integrity of institutions and the well-being of citizens is laudable. The long-term effect of these measures is unknown but I am persuaded that we will not return to the “normal” as we knew it only a few months ago. The future is certain to have many discontinuities with our pre-COVID-19 experience. We need to be prepared for and to shape the society of the future.

The doubting of Centrelink benefits for the period of the crisis is one such marker about the future. It is commendable that there have also been fresh investments to provide stronger pathways into training and employment for the unemployed. The community and welfare sectors in Australia have long recognised that the level of benefits for the unemployed are too low and have had their value further eroded over time. It is inconceivable that JobSeeker and other Centrelink benefits can be halved to the pre-COVID-19 levels after six months. As in many other areas of our society, we will face hard choices that balance living a decent life with other government spending priorities.

I feel confident that we can shape a better society out of this crisis. We all need to have flexibility in our thinking and active imaginations as we contemplate these things. Christians should feel confident to contribute from our biblical understanding of justice and the value of the human person and human family. As a church, we have shown some promising signs of adaptation as we provide pastoral care and lead worship. We have learned new ways of using electronic media in ministry that will undoubtedly be valuable for our future.

Keep praying for wisdom in dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic. We know that the international scale of devastation is not yet known and that our apparent success in Australia is not the experience of many others elsewhere.

Grace and peace in Christ Jesus,
**AROUND MELBOURNE**

**Hospital chaplains have ‘never been so crucial’**

by Muriel Porter

THE REV'D CHRIS MORRIS is facing some significant challenges as chaplain to the Alfred Hospital during the pandemic crisis, not least of which has been the loss of his beard! Now that he has to don the requisite personal protective equipment, his substantial beard simply would no longer fit its confines, so it has had to go.

But his beard has been the least of the issues he is facing. As he told TMA, the situation in the hospital is changing daily. New directives come out all the time and the hospital has an eerie feeling, as elective surgery patients and anyone not critically ill is moved out to make way for a dreaded influx of COVID-19 patients.

“We are planning for the worst but hoping for the best,” he said. “At the moment, it is the calm before the storm.”

With patients confined to their rooms and allowed only one visitor a day and that for only a brief period of time, patients are feeling very isolated and even claustrophobic. They need not just spiritual and pastoral care from the chaplain, but also companionship, Chris said. And staff also need more pastoral care than normal, given the stressful situation.

Care of COVID-19 patients is particularly challenging, he said, citing the example of a patient who died.

“It was quite a touching experience,” he said. “The six medical staff with me found it very moving, and were very thankful.”

With the patient’s family members in isolation because of their close contact with the patient, the only pastoral support Chris could provide was through phone calls. Although this was not ideal, he found it was greatly appreciated.

Hospital chaplaincy was not a ministry Chris ever expected, until he did his pre-ordination Clinical Pastoral Education training at the Alfred. When the opportunity came up to take on the role of chaplain three years ago, he applied.

“I do this work for the love of Christ, and to bring the love of Christ to people in practical ways,” Chris said.

The role of hospital chaplains has never been so crucial, explains the Revd Stephen Delbridge, the coordinator of Anglican Health Chaplains. In this crisis, only chaplains currently based in hospitals are able to minister to the sick.

Parish clergy who would normally visit parishioners in hospital are now denied access.

In these tough new conditions, the Anglican chaplains are keeping in touch with Zoom meetings. “We are a very strong network, and are supporting each other,” Stephen said.

Archbishop Philip Freier has been unswerving in his support for the work of hospital chaplains, Stephen said. “He has been our greatest champion.”

The current situation is surely demonstrating just how critical their role is and the need for prayerful and financial support. Donations can be made through the chaplaincy fund of the Melbourne Anglican Foundation.


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**Bishop retires again but his helping hand knows no rest**

by Mark Brolly

BISHOP JOHN Harrower has retired again, this time as Bishop Assisting the Primate now that Adelaide’s Archbishop Geoff Smith has succeeded Melbourne’s Dr Philip Freier in the national role.

Bishop Harrower, who in 2015 retired after 15 years as Bishop of Tasmania, formally finishes his role with Archbishop Freier in July but has started long-service leave after “hand-over” duties on primatial matters.

Yet, even now, he is not quite finished: he is to help the Archbishop with some pastoral matters on a voluntary basis until mid-2021.

But four-and-a-half years in what was meant to be a half-time role in the Primate’s office has convinced him that the Primacy should be full-time and probably based in Canberra.

“I think the Anglican Church desperately needs a full-time person in that role,” Bishop Harrower said. “Philip could have contributed so much more if he had have had the time.

“When you have something like a Royal Commission [into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse] come along, you realise that our lack of a national structure is a grave weakness.

“French society is demanding more. Look at the Royal Commission’s report on the Anglican Church.”

He described his time assisting Archbishop Freier as “a very satisfying relationship for both of us”.

“We knew each other well and had great confidence in each other. We would discuss things and would not always agree on everything but that was part of the richness of our relationship.”

He praised Archbishop Freier for his keen intellect, saying he has “a fine Christian mind”.

But the role assisting the Primate was bigger than he had anticipated and he spoke warmly of working with Dr Freier and people such as his media adviser Barney Zwarts and the General Secretary of the General Synod, Ms Anne Hywood, as difficult issues such as child sexual abuse and same-sex marriage tested the Church.

He said the Archbishop’s regular TMA column was a very good monthly discipline “because it brought from the man the contribution that we all wanted and needed for both the Church and society”.

Bishop Harrower also praised Archbishop Freier for his “reassuring and particularly comforting voice” in 2016 when police thwarted plans for a Christmas bomb attack at Flinders Street Station, Federation Square and St Paul’s Cathedral.

Bishop Harrower is looking forward to spending time with his wife Gayelene, their two sons and three grandchildren.

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**Visit www.tma.melbourneanglican.org.au**

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Hope, and a meal, in the midst of suffering

by Rachael Lopez

Its doors may have closed, but St Peter’s Eastern Hill is busier than ever. The inner-city parish normally has thousands of people walking past each day due to its proximity to Parliament Station, and now it is working with the Parliament House kitchens to deliver hundreds of pre-packaged meals every day to people in need during the coronavirus pandemic.

The church’s coffee cart Heaven at the Hill recently expanded from coffee to catering, giving valuable job training for those wanting to enter the hospitality industry.

While the coffee cart is still open, staff and volunteers are now also busy preparing and packing nutritious cooked meals, as well as packs of staples such as eggs, bread and milk, after the Vicar, the Revd Dr Hugh Kempster – who is also Chaplain to State Parliament – was asked by the President of the Legislative Council, Mr Shaun Leane, if Heaven at the Hill could help distribute meals to people in need during this pandemic.

It is Dr Ree Boddé who is the driving force behind Heaven at the Hill. She volunteers full-time as its Operations Manager, overseeing the full-time barista as well as volunteers. She was eager to take on this next challenge and is now supervising 13 volunteers, including students from four universities.

Since the program started on 26 March, meal distribution has grown from 60 to 350 meals per day, and more than 7000 meals have been distributed. Volunteer drivers are going as far as Corio and Sunbury to deliver meals.

“Meal distribution has grown from 60 to 350 meals per day.”

Volunteers pick up meals to distribute to vulnerable people.

COVID-19: Have a ‘big vision’, says Archbishop Freier – from page 1

endured much financial hardship during the 1890s depression but showed “great determination” and started many new churches.

“What’s the future look like that we’re being called to embrace with hope and with courage?”

CEO of the Melbourne Anglican Diocesan Corporation, Ken Spackman, said the financial impact of church closures was not yet fully understood.

But the Diocese was “pretty quietly confident” of receiving the Federal Government’s JobKeeper allowance for its 750 staff. It was also applying for other Federal and State Government grants, he said.

“One of the big risks for the Diocese generally is the length of time that churches might be closed under the current regime,” he said. “The longer it goes on, in many cases, the worse the financial position becomes.

“We need to … have a strong vision for the future …”

“We are hearing so many heartbreaking stories of job losses, poverty and fear,” Dr Kempster said. Through its chaplaincy program to RMIT University, St Peter’s has discovered Australia’s new poor. There are many students who used to rely on casual work to survive but are now jobless and not eligible for Centrelink support.

“One young woman who comes to pick up meals told us that she is in a flat with five other students. When the restrictions broke, all six lost their jobs in one day,” he said.

He also spoke about a man who came to pick up food. “I have never been out of work in 40 years, the man told us, “but last week, in one day, my wife and I both lost our jobs. We don’t have much in the way of savings. I don’t know what we are going to do. These meals are a life saver! Thank you!”

To give to St Peter’s Eastern Hill Charitable Foundation, visit https://spehcf.com.au/donations

Archiepiscopal Indigenous Network (AIN) in late March concluded that governments were not taking into account the extra needs of Indigenous communities, particularly older and at-risk people, the Anglican Communion News Service reported.

“The Diocese is bracing for a possible surge of COVID-19 cases as Australia prepares to enter winter and the peak of the flu season.

As this issue of TMA was being finalised, the ABC reported that the number of deaths from COVID-19 at Newmarch House aged care facility in NSW, operated by Anglicare Sydney, had reached 12, with five residents succumbing to the virus in two days. In all, 56 people, including 22 staff, have been infected there.

Anglicare Sydney CEO Mr Grant Millard said the outbreak had been “unprecedented and traumatic”.

“We were warned on the weekend to expect a number of very difficult days this week with residents passing, so we do anticipate more deaths,” he said.

Anglican Indigenous leaders from around the worldwide Communion have also expressed concern for the health of Indigenous peoples from the COVID-19 pandemic.

A Zoom meeting of the global Anglican Indigenous Network (AIN) in late March concluded that governments were not taking into account the extra needs of Indigenous communities, particularly older and at-risk people, the Anglican Communion News Service reported.

If we see continuing restrictions beyond, say, September then I think that’s going to be a real problem because unless the

JobKeeper and other schemes are continued then that’s when that financial support runs out.”

Mr Spackman said churches had shown “amazing resourcefulness” to continue worshipping and in some cases churches had grown as a result of people attending online services.

Churches had also shown innovative ways of encouraging giving. “We’ve had one example of somebody going around on a bicycle to collect the envelopes every week,” he said.

The Diocese is bracing for a possible surge of COVID-19 cases as Australia prepares to enter winter and the peak of the flu season.

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ARRCC goes online to remain vigilant on climate

by Tim Kroenert

It all happened very quickly. As 2020 dawned, members of ARRCC — the multi-faith activist group the Australian Religious Response to Climate Change — were steeling themselves for a big year. The next Schools Strike 4 Climate was due to take place on 15 May, with ARRCC planning to throw its full weight behind the protest marches. In Melbourne, this would have included a multi-faith service to be held prior to the main speeches.

Meanwhile, ARRCC was continuing to support efforts to disrupt the Queensland Adani mine. Early this year, Melbourne members gathered in front of the offices of Marsh insurance brokers – mooted as a major target of action this year – singing hymns with customised environmental lyrics: “Amazing grace!” they sang, “How sweet the sound / When we can truly say, / How we’ll rejoice and earth be glad / That coal is dead today.”

Just weeks later, COVID-19 began to rear its head; social distancing restrictions were rolled out, and suddenly ARRCC was, like most of us, having to rethink what this year was going to look like. Robert Dawlings, who has attended St Philip’s Collingwood for more than 20 years, had only recently taken responsibility for coordinating ARRCC Melbourne meetings when everything changed — though, as he tells TMA, the differences are more in form than in substance.

“We’re writing to councils to say please don’t work with any Adani subcontractor,” he says. “We’re about to do an online campaign against Marsh because their AGM is in May, so we expect to do a lot of emailing and social media along with the Stop Adani network. The school strikers are planning to go totally online, so we’re now planning an online multi-faith service before the online speeches. So that’s how our public interaction has changed.”

Like many social and community groups, ARRCC has embraced online video conferencing for its meetings – and, like many such groups, has found unexpected blessings in being forced to find new ways to connect.

“We’re getting more people to our online meetings than we had attending in person,” says Robert. “We’re actually holding more meetings in the lead-up to the climate strike, which we wouldn’t have been able to do if people had to travel.”

There’s no question that these are times of high anxiety, and that for many people issues like climate change have, understandably, slipped down the list of priorities. Additionally, the massive disruption to “business as usual” that social distancing laws have entailed can skew the data when it comes to the current state of the climate. In fact, ARRCC is convinced that now more than ever is a time to be vigilant when it comes to these issues.

“There is evidence that, at least temporarily, the arrival of COVID-19 has cut greenhouse gas emissions,” ARRCC head Thea Ormerod said in a message to the group’s mailing list.

“Given that so many people are suffering, this is not the way we want emissions to go down. Furthermore, a crisis that happens to cut emissions should not be confused with an actual strategy for cutting emissions. The fight for that must continue.”

For more information on how to attend the multi-faith nationwide online service and Schools Strike 4 Climate on 15 May, visit www.arrcc.org.au

See articles on page 2 and 15.

Tim Kroenert is a Melbourne writer.

Anglicare Victoria launches appeal to help during coronavirus

As a result of COVID-19 and its economic impact across the community, demand for emergency relief such as food and other essentials is coming with some extra challenges. And that’s why Anglicare Victoria is running a fundraising appeal to help those in need.

While social distancing and regularly disinfecting surfaces were minor adjustments for Anglicare Victoria’s emergency relief centres, the bigger issue has been sourcing food to keep up with the demand.

“Emergency relief is an incredibly important part of our business at Anglicare Victoria, and even more so right now with many people doing it tough during the COVID-19 pandemic,” says Tom Hadkiss, head of Anglicare Victoria’s Diocesan parish partnerships.

“We have had to find new ways of sourcing food for emergency relief efforts as a result of the challenges with the supply of some items and the need to ensure appropriate hygiene and social distancing at all times.

“Many of our amazing volunteers are of an age where they are at higher risk for coronavirus, and this has meant doing things very differently to how we have in the past. Like many industries, we are actively embracing new solutions with the help of our supporters.”

Mr Hadkiss said that on the plus side, Anglicans are a big-hearted and generous community, and those who feel financially secure are keen to help others who are out of work and wondering how they are going to get by.

To assist Anglicare Victoria’s work during this time, please visit https://www.anglicarevic.org.au/donation/

For more information call 1800 809 722.

STREAMING SERVICES at St Paul’s Cathedral

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<td>10am Sung Eucharist with Hymns, all-age Bible Talk and Sermon</td>
<td>Sung Evening Prayer (Wednesday &amp; Friday)</td>
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The COVID-19 crisis is the most disruptive phenomenon our society has experienced since WWII. For the church, social distancing laws have necessitated rapid adaptation. A crisis requires different leadership to more predictable times. While the actual tactics adopted in response to the sudden challenge will be unique to each church and denominational structure, effective leadership in a crisis follows an identifiable, three-phase pattern.

1. Stabilise
   This phase requires directive and decisive leadership.
   By this time, most churches have attained some stability, making choices about how services will be offered by distance, and how parish council will meet.
   This is not the time for perfection. “Good enough” decisions that give some degree of stability and certainty are the order of the day. There will be complaints and criticisms, and these are best ignored.

2. Normalise
   This phase requires leadership that is both decisive and inclusive.
   The normalising phase requires broadening involvement of constituents to the greatest possible extent. The temptation for the leader is to hunker with their key people and confine responsibilities to this small group. Involvement fosters commitment, so getting as many congregation members involved in maintaining the church’s modified operations serves to preserve and build commitment at a time when there’s a risk of people disengaging.
   Most importantly, the normalising phase requires contact with constituents: personal, frequent and brief contact. It reassures and calms your constituents that things are okay.
   Most churches are now trying to ensure connection to their congregations. This usually means drawing a sociogram mapping out who’s connected to whom, and mobilising small group leaders and pastoral carers to intentionally build and maintain connection.
   The impulse may be to send a comprehensive weekly mail, loaded with information about what’s going on and where to get resources. It’s better to send a very brief note with one topic every few days.
   A church Facebook page can be a useful place for people to connect. Short, light posts are best. Longer pieces can be posted on a blog.
   Congregation members will want to see their leader’s face and hear their voice. This can be achieved by creating a very brief piece-to-camera every few days and posting it on YouTube. Zoom or Google Hangouts can be used to set up a regular “chat” session with no agenda other than to touch base.

3. Mobilise
   Move to goal-directed action in light of new realities.
   Rather than “waiting it out”, churches will do well to identify opportunities created by the crisis. A chance to build some neighbourhood co-operation, provide contact and help to isolated people, find a way to serve people in essential services. Churches are good at providing food and solace. This is our opportunity to shine if we can spot the opportunities.
Ministry of restoring hope through education
by Muriel Porter

Back in March, before lockdown restrictions were imposed here, a visitor from Uganda offered a welcome reality check.

The founder of a remarkable project that is rebuilding the lives of vulnerable and abused women in Uganda, Alice Achan’s story – recounted in a newly-published book, *The School of Restoration* – is a story of immense resilience and courage.

“We need to look outwards,” Alice told TMA. “We need to keep things in perspective.”

Alice’s visit to Australia, to launch her new book, had to be cut short because of the pandemic crisis. Nevertheless, she found time to speak to TMA by telephone from Sydney before her urgent return home.

The Pader Girls Academy, the school she founded in Northern Uganda – known as the “school of restoration” – has 250 students across its two campuses. Girls rescued from poverty and exploitation as sex workers learn a variety of vocational and academic skills to equip them to lead a safe, independent life.

More than 1,000 girls have been educated at the school since Alice founded it in 2008.

The 47-year-old had herself experienced great suffering in the turmoil of the civil conflict in her country. As a 13-year-old, protecting two young family members, she was forced to flee for her life when her village was attacked. She spent five years on the run from the Lord’s Resistance Army, the violent rebels who have impacted Uganda and other African countries since the mid-1980s.

Decades of conflict and poverty have destroyed the family and society networks that had protected young women. With the networks broken, young girls are often married off as young as 14. Unable to sustain the relationship, they run away and end up on the streets, where commercial sex puts them in great danger. Those able to come to the school often turn up with babies in tow.

The school offers academic and vocational training for girls whose education has been disrupted. Those in the academic stream have gone on to become midwives, nurses and primary school teachers; a few going to university to become accountants, social workers, educators and administrators. Girls in the vocational stream have become seamstresses, bakers and hairdressers.

But poverty continues to threaten numbers of the girls, who can be at the school only while their scholarships continue. If the scholarship runs out before their four-year course is finished, the girls have to leave, often with no alternative but to go back to their dangerous lifestyle. Funding for more scholarships is really needed, Alice said. At $300 a year, which includes boarding fees, they are good value for money.

The school is part of the broader CCF (Christian Children’s Fund) Northern Uganda project, which also works in the area of providing safe birth and maternal health, a critical issue in Uganda. If young girls give birth in their villages, either with no assistance or only traditional assistance, both they and their babies can die, Alice explained. They can also become infected with HIV, which is rampant in the country.

The maternal health project also relies on donations, with just $15 providing a safe birthing kit, and $50 a full safe birth.

Donating, Alice said, can be a means for Australians, whose lives are so blessed, to bless somebody they don’t know. “This is a ministry, reaching out to the needy. This is restoring hope, and a life that has been stolen.” Such a ministry connects directly with the Gospel of Jesus, by reaching out to the poor and needy, said Alice, who is a devout Christian from an Anglican upbringing.

To donate, visit [https://ccfpader.org/donate/](https://ccfpader.org/donate/)

*The School of Restoration*, co-written by Alice Achan and Australian journalist Philippa Tyndale, is published by Allen & Unwin.

**URGENT COVID-19 CRISIS APPEAL**

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The bones of Eanswythe: a reminder of a shared story

by Chris Lancaster

It’s not often that the bones of your parish patron saint are in the news. But that was the case in early March, when the parish of St Mary and St Eanswythe, in Folkestone, Kent, announced the outcome of fresh analysis of bones discovered over a century ago in the church.

Eanswythe was a Kentish princess, granddaughter of the first English king to convert to Christianity, and she is thought to have founded one of the first women’s monastic communities in England around AD 660. She died not long afterwards, in her late teens or early twenties, and her memory is honoured as the patron saint of the town of Folkestone.

In 1885, workers renovating the parish church found within the walls a lead box containing human remains. It seemed plausible, if not likely, that they were the bones of Eanswythe herself: hidden safely away at the Reformation when so many saints’ relics were destroyed, and then forgotten. In January this year, funded by a National Lottery grant, a team of experts from Canterbury Christ Church University analysed the bones with the latest available technology. Everything added up. The bones, about half of a skeleton, came from one person, probably female, probably aged between 17 and 20. There were no signs of malnutrition, suggesting a person of high status. Radiocarbon dating placed them with high likelihood in the mid-seventh century.

Dr Andrew Richardson, of the Canterbury Archaeological Trust, said these results were highly significant. “It now looks probable that we have the only surviving remains of a member of the Kentish royal family, and one of the earliest Anglo-Saxon saints … The project represents a wonderful conjunction not only of archaeology and history, but also of a continuous living faith tradition at Folkestone from the mid-seventh century to the present day.”

There is another strand of that living tradition here in Melbourne. In the 1920s the Revd W.H. Edwardees was the first priest of the new parish at Altona; he had begun his ordained ministry 40 years earlier in Folkestone, and so suggested that this new church on the other side of the world might also be dedicated to St Eanswythe. As far as we know, it is the only St Eanswythe’s Church outside Kent.

Over the years, various parishioners from Altona have made a point of visiting the church in Folkestone when in the UK, and we have a processional cross that was given by that parish of St Mary and St Eanswythe. The connection was renewed when some of those involved in the Finding Eanswythe project contacted us to pass on this news of Eanswythe’s bones.

And so we are left to wonder at the fruit that is still emerging from the short life and even shorter ministry of this remarkable young woman from the seventh century, as her story and her bones connect Christians from both sides of the world.

The Revd Chris Lancaster is Vicar of St Eanswythe’s Altona with St Clement’s Altona Meadows

War memories from an Anglican parishioner

by Stephen Cauchi

JAN VIS, an Anglican parishioner who joined the Dutch resistance against the Nazis, has contributed to the new book Blood, Toil, Tears and Sweat: Remembering the Pakenham District’s WW2 Service Personnel 1939-1945.

The book was written by historian Patrick Ferry to mark the 75th anniversary of the war’s end and is being published by the Berwick-Pakenham Historical Society and Pakenham RSL.

Mr Vis, who worships at St James’ Pakenham, told TMA his faith helped him get through the war and then adapt to life in Australia after he emigrated from the Netherlands in 1952.

During the war he joined the Dutch underground resistance, which meant churchgoing was not feasible. “But I was boarding with people who were of my same faith so we always had evening prayers and Bible reading,” he said. “I never doubted my faith.”

After the war, Mr Vis joined the Dutch Army in the Netherlands East Indies (now Indonesia) until 1948. He returned home and then in 1952 emigrated with his wife Jannetje to Australia.

Five years ago, he joined St James’ and became an Anglican for the first time.

Mr Vis has been active with Pakenham RSL for many years. According to the book, he is one of a “handful” of surviving World War 2 Pakenham veterans.

Read the full story at tma.melbourneanglican.org.au/news
Foodbanks ‘overwhelmed’ by pandemic

by Stephen Cauchi

Foodbanks, including those run by churches, are under intense pressure as the coronavirus pandemic drives job losses, wage cuts and food hoarding.

At St Mark’s Anglican church in the Sunraysia town of Red Cliffs, demand for foodbank supplies soared in March and April, according to the church’s pastor, the Revd Dale Barclay.

In March, the foodbank helped 300 people – five times as many as it did the previous March, he said. Demand for April is also way up on the previous year.

The foodbank sources its stock from Foodbank Victoria in Melbourne, he said. But in early March, Foodbank Victoria was “overwhelmed”.

“Foodbank Victoria was inundated about a month ago. They had a huge demand on their stock so we weren’t able to order enough basics – food staples like pasta and pasta sauce and cereal (and) rice.

“We weren’t able to order as much and so we had to try and source stuff locally,”

Mr Barclay said he was forced to go to Mildura, 15 kilometres away, to buy staples for the foodbank. But because supermarkets have restrictions on how many staples could be bought, that meant visiting three or four supermarkets to source enough stock.

“People can keep more of those staff on, this downturn. The changes announced today will help the UnitingCare Australia and other Christian organisations.

Church agencies welcome JobKeeper changes

Anglicare Australia and UnitingCare Australia have welcomed changes to the Federal Government’s JobKeeper scheme that will open it up to more charities.

“This announcement is good news for thousands of charities across Australia – and for their staff,” said Anglicare Australia Executive Director Kasy Chambers.

“Charities run differently from businesses. Our budgets are not just about simple profits and losses. Before this announcement, thousands of workers were looking at being stood down.

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“These staff are trained in key areas, like childcare and disability, which are at the centre of Australia’s workforce. They will be critical to restarting the economy and recovering from this downturn.

“What’s more, these staff are highly skilled in assisting people who have been affected by the coronavirus pandemic,” she said.

“Until now, churches have had to pick up the slack and fill any gaps,” she said.

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‘Humbling’ generosity after devastating fires

by Nicola Templeton

Donors to the Melbourne Anglican Foundation have raised tens of thousands of dollars for the emergency relief funds in the Anglican Dioceses of Gippsland and Wangaratta after the devastating summer fire season. Clergy from both dioceses thanked donors for their generosity after MAF was able to distribute just under $70,000, which was raised in January and February, to the two dioceses.

“Fire can sweep through an area in such a short time and leave a legacy of destruction, both physically and emotionally,” Registrar of the Gippsland Diocese Richard Connelly said.

“The whole East Gippsland region has been devastated. How the community can be expected to support their church at this time is so reduced given people’s personal need for recovery. We have been continually overwhelmed by the generosity of so many people. The simple act of one person being generous to strangers in fire-affected towns is so humbling. The generosity of the Melbourne Anglican Foundation has been greatly appreciated.”

In Gippsland the funds were used in the immediate aftermath to provide a voucher system for groceries and fuel, and support pastoral care and services by locums in remote communities.

Coordinator for the Gippsland Diocese Bushfire Recovery, the Revd Cathy Turnbull, said 60 per cent of the MAF donation had now been distributed.

“We have a number of requests from clergy for those who have their home but lost everything, including their income. To be able to provide immediate financial support helps people materially and reminds them that they don’t have to do it all on their own.”

She said a key concern now was for people’s mental health following this summer’s horror.

“Trauma experienced can manifest itself in so many ways and is not immediately apparent. So many people will say ‘I’m OK,’ but when you spend a length of time with them, you discover often they are not. We have been able to respond to needs by linking people to services and grants or providing direct help through the Diocesan Emergency Relief Fund.”

In Wangaratta, $27,000 was used to repair and fence properties damaged by fire, hold community-building events, subsidise fuel costs for four Victorian Council of Churches emergency personnel, support a counselling service and appoint two part-time coordinators to enable Anglican ministry in affected areas throughout January and February. The fires in Wangaratta devastated small communities such as Walwa, Cudgewa and Corryong, 218km from the City of Wangaratta. They then stretched south-west into the Alpine region to Harrietville, Bright, Myrtleford, Carboor and Whorouly.

Starting on 30 December, the fires burned continuously for two weeks.

“The Corryong area is the farthest outlying area of the Diocese, about 85km from the closest parish. It’s only a small community and the major concern was how we would be able to respond given the need,” Bishop of Wangaratta Clarence Bester said. “These areas were heavily impacted economically as both [regions] depend on tourists for economic survival.

“We would like to express our thanks to all donors who gave to the Melbourne Anglican Foundation,” he said.

If you would like to support bushfire recovery in Gippsland or Wangaratta, please visit https://www.melbourneanglican.org.au/melbourne-anglican-foundation/

Nicola Templeton is Director of Development and Communications, Melbourne Anglican Foundation.

SA’s Archbishop Smith the new Primate – continued from p1

Smith’s election in a letter to General Synod members, writing that he had received the requisite majorities in each house of bishops, clergy and laity “and has accepted this office in writing”.

Archbishop Smith, who celebrated his 60th birthday last year, told the Anglican Communion News Service: “I am very conscious of the enormous privilege we the church have in sharing pastoral care and services by locums in remote communities.

Archbishop Smith’s other roles have included being Rector of Taraka in Papua New Guinea, first Vicar of the Parochial District of Sawtell-Bonville in NSW, National Director of the Anglican Board of Mission – Australia and Bishop of the Southern Region of the Brisbane diocese.

Last month’s ballot follows a deadlock at the first meeting of the Board of Electors in Sydney on 14 March – before COVID-19 restrictions were imposed – in which it is understood that Archbishop Smith fell only one vote short in the House of Clergy in four of the seven ballots held then. Bishop Richard Condie of Tasmania was the last remaining contender.

The vote last month is believed to have been 31-11 for Archbishop Smith, with clear majorities in all houses.

Sydney Anglican priest and blogger the Revd David Ould wrote on davidould.net that Archbishop Smith’s election “follows a decision to abstain by a number of those clergy who had previously voted for Bishop Condie of Tasmania”.

“The new Primate’s first task was to have been chairing the General Synod,” Mr Ould wrote.

“That meeting has now been postponed until 2021. Attention will now turn to the Appellate Tribunal who will make a ruling on the Wangaratta and Newcastle dioceses’ decision to approve a blessing of persons in a same-sex marriage.”

Archbishop Freier announced last November that he would step down as Primate before his term was due to expire and would not seek re-election but that he would continue as the Archbishop of Melbourne, a role he has held since 2006.

Brisbane’s Archbishop Phillip Aspinall, who was Primate from 2005-14, was acting Primate in the brief period between Dr Freier’s resignation taking effect and Archbishop Smith’s election.
Melanesian church acts as Cyclone Harold hits

The Diocese of Vanuatu and New Caledonia in the Anglican Church of Melanesia activated its Emergency Operations Centre in response to Cyclone Harold, which caused severe devastation across the Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, Fiji and Tonga last month.

A Good Friday message from Bishop James Tama of the Diocese of Central Vanuatu and New Caledonia announced that the Emergency Operations Centre had been activated.

In Vanuatu, nearly 160,000 people needed assistance. The land was stripped of crops and homes, leaving thousands in need of shelter, water and food.

The Red Cross described the situation as “catastrophic”.

The Category 5 Cyclone came as many countries in the Pacific Islands were on strict lockdown due to COVID-19. Most Pacific Island nations had been praised for their early response to the pandemic, with many remaining virus-free.

It was feared that Vanuatu’s efforts to keep COVID-19 out would delay the usual international efforts to offer relief – and Australia became embroiled in a controversy with China over delays in delivering humanitarian relief due to a RAAF C-17 aircraft being unable to land because a Chinese plane was on the tarmac.

Bishop Tama said the diocese already had working parties clearing the debris throughout each parish, and that clergy were being deployed as members of the Health Cluster Emergency Medical Team to provide COVID-19 awareness and spiritual encouragement to affected communities and people living with disabilities.

“I call on all partners of the Anglican Church and the Anglican Community at large to assist us in this time of great need so that we may rebuild, we may build back our communities and we may resume the mission of the church,” he said.

“The trees and gardens may be destroyed, but our spirit remains intact. Our homes and families may be struggling but our faith and our Church remain standing.” [with ACNS]

Anglicans worldwide celebrate a dispersed and digital Easter

by Mark Brolly

Archbishop Justin Welby of Canterbury celebrated Holy Communion on Easter Sunday from the kitchen of his flat at Lambeth Palace due to the coronavirus pandemic.

The service, recorded on the Archbishop’s iPad, was part of the Church of England’s first national digital service for Easter Sunday.

“Even in the dark days of this Easter we can feed on hope,” Archbishop Welby said. “We can dream of what our country and our world will look like after the pandemic.

“There needs to be a resurrection of our common life, something that links to the old, but is different and more beautiful.”

In the US, Presiding Bishop Michael Curry of The Episcopal Church pre-recorded his Easter sermon from Washington National Cathedral for inclusion in the live stream of the Cathedral’s Easter Sunday worship service.

Bishop Curry likened the circumstances of Easter 2020 with that experienced by the women who went to Jesus’ tomb on the first Easter Day.

“It was Easter, but it didn’t look like it,” he said.

In Sydney, Archbishop Glenn Davies and Dean Kanishka Raffel led the Easter Sunday service from St Andrew’s Cathedral, which was telecast nationally on 9 GEM.

Dr Davies said: “Our God is not socially distant. He longs to hear our prayers and answer them ... He will not abandon us.”

Dean Raffel said the pandemic had caused a re-evaluation of life by many people.

“In the Western world, we have slowly persuaded ourselves that only what can be seen, only what can be touched is real – but the coronavirus has brought to light again that this world is not a sufficient explanation of itself or of us.”

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This month’s Prayer Diary can be found at http://www.melbourneanglican.org.au/spiritual-resources/

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Faith can help us lay our ghosts to rest

by Andrew Sloane

I t’s been a long time since I worked in clinical medicine, but like all doctors, I have memories of hard decisions. Taking a young woman off a ventilator, knowing she would die – but also knowing that keeping her on it was just drawing out her dying, not helping her to live.

But the haunting images from Italy and Spain, and now New York, are different. These aren’t pictures of doctors making decisions about withdrawing or withholding futile treatment. These are scenes of doctors choosing between people, all of whom might benefit, but only one of whom can be treated. The others will probably die.

How do we deal with such choices? Many of us are going to have to work that out in this time of coronavirus. Doctors, nurses, but also politicians, economists, and employers face looming, excruciating choices. Do I lay off this worker, knowing she’ll struggle to pay the rent? Do I close the schools, knowing that hospital workers and transport drivers won’t be able to go to work? How much money can we spend to prop up a hibernating economy?

These aren’t wrong or immoral decisions. They are forced decisions in extreme circumstances. But I don’t think that we’re well-equipped to live with the spectre of these choices – to bury these ghosts, let alone remember. Bitterness at the ways I had to care for him. Twice-daily chest physio, rather than playing with my friends. Alisdair felt the sting of my resentment until the day of his untimely death. I can’t change that.

I have found that ghosts like these are very hard to lay to rest. It’s been the resources of faith that have given me freedom from my guilt.

For there is turning, and there is grace. We can acknowledge our failure – and acknowledge it as a moral failure. Mine was not just a human failing, but a character flaw, a wrong done to a vulnerable boy, my brother. Turning to face it in truth – the old word is confession – brings it to light. And my experience has been that most ghosts flee the light. And such turning opens us to the possibility of grace – another old word. An unmerited favour, a release from a burden we otherwise need to bear, and bear alone. I know that release.

Mine came from an old, old story that tells of a man who bore a burden for us, and bears it with us, and invites us to freedom. Not a freedom from tragedy – the story of Jesus is, in many ways, a tragic one. But it’s one that enables us to face the prospect of tragedy with courage.

“The story of Jesus is, in many ways, a tragic one. But it’s one that enables us to face the prospect of tragedy with courage.”

And made a better decision possible. I should have done better – my decision was tainted by prejudice, or self-interest, or laziness. And nothing I can do can change that. These are the ghosts that are hardest to lay to rest.

I have some of my own. My brother’s ghost is one of them. When we were growing up, he suffered a traumatic brain injury. He lost memory, and his razor-sharp intelligence. His lungs were never the same. He required so much care. And I resented it, and him. Impatience at his slowness to learn, or even forget, good things. Bracing, but true. Surely now’s the time to remember that.

The second is that we need to learn to mourn. To name the ghosts of forced decisions and associated guilt, regret, and second-guessing. We weep for those who we could not save. We raise our voices with those who don’t know how they’re going to look after the kids. And when we do, we might find that we are not alone, and nor are they. Good grief, while painful, can achieve that.

The third lesson might be the most unfamiliar and confronting. Sometimes I should be blamed. I have done things I should regret; there is true as well as false guilt. I should have known better – there were facts that could have shed new light on what I did.

I have memories of hard decisions. Taking a young woman off a ventilator, knowing she would die – but also knowing that keeping her on it was just drawing out her dying, not helping her to live.

Find more opinion pieces at tma.melbourneanglican.org.au/opinion

“Suddenly, with the coronavirus spreading across the world, governments have been forced to intervene in the economy and the lives of communities in ways they never imagined. One revelation is that the health of our economy depends upon the well-being of the community. This, of course, has always been central to Christian faith.”

The Revd Dr Ray Cleary on how the prevailing economic thinking is being challenged by the COVID-19 crisis.
Looking for answers in a coronavirus world

Oxford mathematics professor John Lennox, whose latest book ‘Where Is God in a Coronavirus World?’ was released last month, reflects on where a Christian worldview may fit in helping to make sense of the coronavirus crisis and its unsettling effects.

When life seems predictable and under control, it is easy to put off asking the big questions, or to be satisfied with simplistic answers. But life is not that way right now – not for any of us. It is not surprising that, whatever your faith or belief system, the big questions of life are breaking through to the surface, demanding attention.

Coronavirus confronts us all with the problem of pain and suffering. This, for most of us, is one of life’s hardest problems. Experience rightly makes us suspicious of simplistic “answers” and facile attempts to come to terms with it.

What I want to try to do here, then, is to avoid those kinds of “answers”, and to think with you, as honestly as I can, through some of the ideas that have helped me to wrestle with these difficult questions as coronavirus has begun to change everything.

Our attitude to these deep issues is influenced by our worldview – the framework, built up over the years, which contains the thinking and experience that each of us brings to bear on the big questions about life, death and the meaning of existence. We all have such a framework, however much or little we have thought about it.

James Sire, in a very helpful book entitled The Universe Next Door, points out that there are essentially only three major families of worldviews.

First, there is the theistic worldview, held by the three Abrahamic religions – Judaism, Christianity and Islam. This teaches that there is a God who created and upholds the world and who created human beings.

Second, there is the polar opposite of the theistic approach – the atheistic worldview, which holds that this universe (or multiverse) is all that there is; there is no supernatural dimension.

Third, there is the pantheistic worldview, which merges the concepts of God and the world into one impersonal entity.

I am also well aware that there are people who take a sceptical or agnostic perspective. But no one is sceptical or agnostic about everything, and so deep down most people fit somewhere into one of the three worldviews just mentioned.

I fit into this picture, too. I have a worldview. I am a Christian, and I shall therefore try to make clear why I think that Christianity has something to say about the issue of natural disasters like coronavirus – something that is not to be found elsewhere. Perhaps you will agree with me, and perhaps not. But I hope you will end this book understanding why Christians are able to speak confidently about hope and to feel a sense of peace, even in a world of uncertainty in which death has suddenly loomed closer.

— John Lennox is an Emeritus Professor of Mathematics at the University of Oxford and Emeritus Fellow in Mathematics and the Philosophy of Science at Green Templeton College. He is also an Associate Fellow of the Said Business School and an Adjunct Lecturer for The Oxford Centre for Christian Apologetics.

WHERE IS GOD IN A CORONAVIRUS WORLD?

The University Next Door

John Lennox

Professor John Lennox.

“Christians are able to speak confidently about hope and to feel a sense of peace, even in a world of uncertainty …”

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The Melbourne Anglican • May 2020 • 13

www.tma.melbourneanglican.org.au
Perhaps it is time for Christians to admit that the Law of Moses is an embarrassing irrelevance, and stop reading it altogether in church.

That's what some popular preachers are saying – echoing no doubt the unspoken position of many around the world (many congregations would baulk at the thought of a sermon series on Numbers).

It's also a grave error. The ancient church rightly condemned Marcion's hubris in exempting Christians from Moses' instruction. It is historically naïve and spiritually lethal to try holding on to Jesus' teaching while jettisoning the Bible he preached from. Love thy neighbour, surely the most famous of Jesus' teachings, is of course straight out of Leviticus 19:18! Indeed, it's hard to think of a New Testament ethic that isn't built on Torah.

Thankfully, it is also an error which our Anglican heritage provides a bulwark against.

Article 7 establishes that all the laws are relevant, but not relevant in the same ways. The ceremonial laws were only relevant in the same ways until the destruction of the temple. In the ancient near eastern context how idiosyncratically a ceremonial law could be treated consistently by the legal system (19:15, 34). Compare Moses to the Akkadian Law of Eshnunna, or the Babylonian Law of Hammurabi: it is striking in its ancient near eastern character and civil aspects of life can be compartmentalised.

This paragraph, introduced in 1563, is a unique among the reformation documents. Our English forebears took Scripture especially seriously. Its threefold division into moral, civil and ceremonial goes back at least until Origen; arguably to the Jews' post-exilic reckoning with the destruction of the state and temple.

Tutored by Article 7, Anglicans cannot reject Torah – the instruction of Moses – as irrelevant, nor allegorise it into cute otherworldliness. But we don't observe every cultic provision either, if such reconstructionism were even possible after the temple's destruction.

Instead, Anglicans reckon seriously with our historical continuities and discontinuities. The God who demanded holiness from Sinai is the same God who we meet in Jesus Christ and who dwells in our midst since Pentecost. We do not live as Iron Age Israelites; nevertheless the world we live in has the same basic moral realities baked into it from the beginning.

“...all the laws are relevant, but not relevant in the same ways...

"We do not live as Iron Age Israelites; nevertheless the world we live in has the same basic moral realities baked into it from the beginning."

Jesus declared all foods clean (Matthew 15:11). The urgent necessity of holiness when God is in our midst hasn't changed (1 Corinthians 4.5).

The civil laws were binding upon those living in the Kingdom of Israel, but the church is not the state. Even if I lived in Moses' day, as a Gentile I wouldn't have been expected, or invited, to obey every law. In Leviticus only three commands are explicitly addressed to foreigners: those regarding sexual immorality (18:26), child sacrifice (20:2) and blasphemy (24:16). Like overheard marriage vows, I may admire the first covenant but I am not a party to its stipulations.

Torah is precious and relevant to me, not as regulations, but as revelation. It reveals the contours of our world's moral landscape and the character of the God we worship. Some of these principles are urgently needed in today's political discussions. Exodus and Deuteronomy are full of positive obligations to care for the poor and the stateless. Leviticus teaches respect for others (Leviticus 19:3) especially the disabled (19:14). It demands that rich and poor, foreigner and native-born, be treated consistently by the legal system (19:15, 34). Compare Moses to the Akkadian Law of Eshnunna, or the Babylonian Law of Hammurabi: it is striking in its ancient near eastern context how idiosyncratically the Bible insists that all lives are equally value – regardless of sex or social status.

Theologians quibble with the article's simple sketch. Things are, of course, more fiddly when you get down to details. Is the law against adultery moral, civil or spiritual? Few of us would doubt the enduring virtue of fidelity, but adultery is also a ceremonial issue (making the man unclean, Lev 19:20), and a civil concern (as regards the appropriate punishment: Lev 20:29). Torah never entertains the modern fiction that the moral, ceremonial and civil aspects of life can be compartmentalised.

Yet, as thumbnail sketches go, the article's threefold division remains a precious gift of our tradition. To be Anglican is to recognise the enduring brilliance of the Law, and stubbornly continue to sit at the feet of Moses.
Seeking hope in a time of eco-anxiety

Bron Reichardt Chu is an astrophysics PhD candidate and one of the organisers of this year’s Conference on Science and Christianity (COSAC) scheduled for July at Queen’s College. TMA asked Bron to tell us some of her perspective on the future and the challenges it holds for young people.

C OVID-19. You’re probably a little bit sick of reading about it by now. And living through it. I know I am. I sit at the same table for breakfast, lunch, dinner and work. I see the same five people in my house every day. The undercurrents of our discussions on how to keep the kitchen clean, like a flooded river which appears to be calmly flowing along, are gradually increasing in danger. Staying at home, such a simple and necessary thing, is putting a strain on all of us. It’s also changing the way that we view our world and interact with people.

What does the future hold for humanity? How long will we stay stuck inside? Will the world be different when we all emerge?

What part can we, as Christians, play in the world’s future?

Social distancing has meant that, maybe like you, I am now working from home. All of my meetings have moved online, and I am remotely accessing the tools I need to do my research. I have four other housemates working from home as well. Four of us are doing PhDs in Astrophysics. We are developing new ways of communicating during our enforced isolation, and technology is becoming even further enmeshed into our everyday lives. How will this technology continue to be used in our future? This is one of the themes of COSAC 2020, a conference I’ve been involved in organising.

COSAC 2020 brings together two of my favourite topics – science and Christianity. Both affect the way I live in and view my world, but it’s really rare that I get to talk about both with the same group of people. My friends at church don’t understand my day-to-day work as an Astrophysics PhD student. My friends at uni don’t understand my faith. I feel that I have even less chances to talk about the interaction between my everyday work and my faith since the “live and let live” push for diversity within workplaces. Sadly, I often feel that I’m allowed to be a Christian as long as I don’t bring my faith into work with me. Within this climate, conferences like COSAC 2020 are particularly important, giving us the unique space and opportunity to explore how science and Christianity interact and coexist.

I love studying Astrophysics. I research the wavelength signatures of chemical interactions on an atomic level which enable me to trace the movements of gas into and out of galaxies on scales larger than our brains can comprehend. I find it so cool that I get to study how God has made galaxies work! Every time I find out something new it’s like I’m getting to piece together a part of the puzzle of God’s design. And it reminds me that God is a super-creative, detail-loving and ultra-powerful God. But these days it doesn’t feel socially acceptable to share this source of joy with my fellow-astrophysicists. And my friends at church aren’t particularly interested in the latest Gaussian function that I’ve fitted to an emission line from one of my galaxies! So, for me and others like me, COSAC 2020 provides a much-needed opportunity to share, with like-minded people, our excitement about science and the way that our faith informs that excitement.

This year’s conference is titled “COSAC 2020: A Hopeful Future?” We are focusing on how technology will be used by humanity in the future, how we will deal with climate change, and what role faith plays. “Why does technology continue to be used in our future? This is one of the themes of COSAC 2020, a conference I’ve been involved in organising. COSAC 2020 brings together two of my favourite topics – science and Christianity. Both affect the way I live in and view my world, but it’s really rare that I get to talk about both with the same group of people. My friends at church don’t understand my day-to-day work as an Astrophysics PhD student. My friends at uni don’t understand my faith. I feel that I have even less chances to talk about the interaction between my everyday work and my faith since the “live and let live” push for diversity within workplaces. Sadly, I often feel that I’m allowed to be a Christian as long as I don’t bring my faith into work with me. Within this climate, conferences like COSAC 2020 are particularly important, giving us the unique space and opportunity to explore how science and Christianity interact and coexist.

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"To those of us growing up in the 21st century, it’s not necessarily clear that our future on Earth is full of hope.”

the question mark? I hear you ask. Well, to those of us growing up in the 21st century, it’s not necessarily clear that our future on Earth is full of hope. Especially as scientists, or people interested in science. We see the convincing results from science telling us that humans have a great and damaging impact on the habitats of animals and plants, and even on our climate itself. We also see slow-moving bureaucracy and politicians who don’t seem to be listening. We know that we will have to live with the possibly drastic consequences of previous generations’ decisions. And we feel helpless to change anything. You know that feeling of sitting at home in isolation, powerless to stop your friends and loved ones from getting sick with coronavirus? Many of us feel the same for our climate and our future. There’s now even a name for this – eco-anxiety.

Sure: as Christians we still have certain hope that Christ will return one day and bring with him a new creation. But until then, surely we should be doing a better job of taking care of the Earth God created and gave to us to take care of? How are you looking after and appreciating the creation God’s put you in? What do you think its future is? At COSAC 2020 we will be considering how to deal with eco-anxiety, and how as people of faith we can be better looking after our planet.

COSAC 2020’s other focus this year is how technology is shaping and changing our future. What do you think about technological advances that enable deaf people to hear, or blind people to see? Pretty great, right? What if we extend that to extra-human hearing, or seeing more than the visible spectrum? Anyone could become a superhero! How do you feel about self-driving cars? What if the Artificial Intelligence (AI) that we develop to drive

Continued on page 16
Humour, honesty as life/death questions faced


reviewed by Bishop Graeme Rutherford

Bruce Wilson is a former bishop of the Anglican Diocese of Bathurst and this book is a gripping account of the trials and suffering he endured from a heart attack in April 2008, just prior to my own retirement from episcopal ministry in the same year. Until reading the book I was completely unaware of what had happened to Bruce.

Having read one of his earlier books, Reasons of the Heart, he was someone I had a great deal of respect for. So, I picked up the book with eager anticipation. When I started, I couldn’t put it down! I don’t think I have ever read a book so quickly. It was just what I needed in the current lockdown!

In the absence of his own doctor, Bruce’s excruciatingly painful condition was misdiagnosed as pleurisy. When his doctor returned, some three weeks later, tests indicated that in fact, he had undergone a heart attack. After further tests in a Sydney hospital, it became evident that there was a hole in the wall of the heart only held together by blood clots. Immediate surgery was required. The surgeon could only offer assurance in terms of a 50-50 chance of survival. Hallelujah! Bruce survived, though today he often feels exhausted, drained and diminished.

Throughout the book he quotes some of his own reflections on his physical and mental diminishment from journal entries he kept. Putting things down on paper became an important strategy for him. There is no glossing over the murkiness. His honesty and use of intensely raw language is refreshing. Through the experience of pain, loss, grief and hurting, he comes to true self-knowledge. He is aware of a new appreciation of Jesus’ famous words: “When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all truth.” He calls this his “little story” and he tells it “like it is”.

Alongside of this “little story” he sets what he calls the “big story” of the Bible which he sums up in three questions: “Where ultimately do we come from? How should we behave and why? Where does it all end up, us too?”

Having myself written a book entitled A Little Book about A Big Story, my reading pace immediately accelerated! However, though the book is profoundly biblical it is not merely academic.

Academic abilities in terms of psychology, theology and philosophy are most certainly evident throughout. Yet more important than wrestling with purely academic theories, God was at work reintegrating Bruce’s mind and his feelings. He says that facing death and dying, “God questions became gut questions not mind questions.” He aspires to be someone who has a God-centred thought.

“He says that facing death and dying, ‘God questions became gut questions not mind questions.’”

Hope in a time of eco-anxiety – Continued from page 15

them becomes self-aware? Could it? There are ethical considerations to all of these issues, and as Christians we should think about how living out our faith will inform our attitudes to the future.

But it’s not all doom and gloom! Even in the midst of the craziness that is COVID-19, we can see good things.

Social media is becoming truly social and is a lifeline to those of us craving interaction with people outside our own little home-islands. And, if the world has not returned to normal by July, technology will enable us to run a virtual conference – which has the bonus of being better than air travel for the environment. We can learn from this time how to better face our future. We are socially distanced no more!

COSAC 2020 is the 12th Conference on Science and Christianity organised by ISCAST—Christians in Science and Technology. It is scheduled to be held at Queen’s College in Melbourne from 10 to 12 July as well as online. If the face-to-face conference is cancelled, the online event will continue. More details can be found at the ISCAST website: www.ISCAST.org or from ISCAST Executive Director, Rev. Dr Chris Mulherin: ChrisMulherin@ISCAST.org

Read the full version of this article at http://tma.melbourneanglican.org.au/opinion
Bonhoeffer’s steadying hand needed now, too

Journeying with Bonhoeffer: Six Steps on the Path of Discipleship, by Katherine Firth and Andreas Loewe (Morning Star Publishing, 2019)

reviewed by Rhys Bezzant

“Time is short. Eternity is long”: words written by Bonhoeffer in his book Discipleship. They are stark and urgent, and give us a sense of Bonhoeffer’s mood as he tries to shake the German church out of its apathy and compromise during the horror years of the Nazi dictatorship.

As we discover in this series of six studies written by Katherine Firth and Dean of Melbourne Andreas Loewe, calls to obedience such as this are beautifully grounded in the life and teaching of Jesus in Luke’s Gospel, and elsewhere too in the New Testament, for Bonhoeffer reflected deeply and personally on the words of Christ during his ministry leading the seminary in Finkenwalde as well as in his imprisonment. Jesus Christ himself taught his close disciples and those on the fringe that the Kingdom of God had come close, so his listeners faced a pressing decision with eternal consequences. Reading Bonhoeffer is bracing as he meditates on the equally bracing words of Jesus. And Bonhoeffer’s own story gives to his theological convictions heft and hope.

Each chapter of this small book calls on us to pray for spiritual focus. It begins with a prayer composed by Bonhoeffer and includes an excerpt from his series of lectures to students in the Pomeranian seminary now published as The Cost of Discipleship. The authors then provide readings from Luke and commentary on the meaning of Jesus’s words in their original context. There is nothing rushed about these reflections, but rather, befitting their gravitas, they unravel the text and implicitly unravel the complexity of the life of our soul at the same time.

A further section on the intersection of Bonhoeffer’s story and the application of the Gospel’s story make for rich resources in our own walk of obedient discipleship. The chapter ends with questions for individual or group discussion, another prayer to help us appropriate the lesson, with notes for further reading. The whole book is introduced by a chapter outlining the biography of Bonhoeffer which is short yet never shallow.

I greatly appreciated in this book the authors’ inside understanding of German history and culture, with occasional autobiographical asides, like Andreas’s mother’s involvement in contemporary German political concerns. Several well-known biographies of Bonhoeffer are flat in the way they set the man in his context. But we see here as well great insight into the leading themes of the Scriptures, which are importantly the first paragraphs in each chapter. These are not reflections on Bonhoeffer with token parallels to the Scriptures, but quite the contrary. The use of translations of the original German was also most thoughtfully done, which in an afterword is more fully explained. Bonhoeffer is the double-edged sword that pierces to the core of our being.

For more book reviews, visit the TMA website (tma.melbourneanglican.org.au/film-and-book-reviews)

Faith and Courage: Praying with Mandela, by Thabo Makgoba (SPCK, 2019)

reviewed by Richard Prideaux

Thabo Makgoba is not the perfect priest and he is not without selfish ambition. He has successes and failures. Some things he is good at become so huge and burdensome he has to give them up. This is in fact the honest story of a faithful priest who simply saw needs and tried to help. Powerful indeed is his call for Anglicans to maintain unity along with their current deep divisions.

Preaching with an Accent: Biblical genres for Australian congregations, edited by Ian Hussey (Morling Press, 2019)

reviewed by Bishop Paul Barker

For those tempted to channel hop for great preaching around the globe, beware. Your greatest need, not least in time of lockdown and social distancing, is to be with your own congregation being fed, challenged and comforted by your own vicar or pastor who knows you and loves you. And for those of you who do preach, do not be discouraged. This helpful book will refresh and challenge you again to preach that powerful word of God, the double-edged sword that pierces to the core of our being.

www.tma.melbourneanglican.org.au
Let prayer be the lifeblood of your pilgrimage

by Bishop Kate Prowd

What is prayer, and what does prayer look like in our current context? Right now, we may be frantically praying: Stop this virus. End this suffering. Heal all who are infected. Let a vaccine be made immediately. Let us all go back to normal very soon. May jobs be all sorted so that people aren't financially strapped. And that trip I'd planned for 2021 ... many thanks God ... Amen.

Of course, these are understandable prayers, reflecting the secrets of our hearts. I imagine God's been hearing a lot of this!

I've been reading and reflecting on the poetry of 17th century poet and priest George Herbert. His poem “Prayer (1)” is poignant, and here, I confess to having heavily borrowed from the Revd Canon Mark Oakley as my "assistant" in understanding this poem (in his book My Sourd-Sweet Days: George Herbert and the Journey of the Soul). Oakley suggests that this poem consists of a series of metaphors about prayer and I think these metaphors speak in to our experience of life with COVID-19.

Herbert writes that prayer is “the Church's banquet” – such a sumptuous image! Prayer is not exclusively private and personal so much as what we can do communally. There's a sadness right now that we can't meet in the flesh for corporate prayer as the Body of Christ, although we are indeed finding creative, technological ways to compensate for this. Nothing replaces the real encounter of corporate prayer in the flesh, of course, and it can't be more apparent than when, each Sunday, I "select" who to connect with for online worship. I hardly know the words to use: Do I connect with worship? Or watch it? Or participate? Or join? Or sign in? However, many are expressing their deep gratitude for the efforts clergy and parishes are making to offer online prayer and fellowship. It sustains ... for now. Praise God for that!

Here I'm again comforted by Herbert, who refers to prayer as something which is "Angels age" – that is, prayer is boundary-less in time and space. It reaches the eternal and so is never limited by closed church doors or even the restrictions of time or online technology. So, take heart all.

Herbert uses another lovely phrase to describe our experience of prayer: speaking of it as the "heart in pilgrimage". We are all on pilgrimage right now – not one of our own choosing, but nevertheless one where the Risen Christ is our companion on the way, as He was with Cleopas and the unnamed disciple on the road to Emmaus.

Anyone who has been on pilgrimage knows that life is never the same again, for pilgrimage is the time when we become, to use Oakley's words, "a little more acquainted" with God. Just so, in the experience of prayer. For prayer, to borrow one last image from Herbert, is to our souls as blood is to the body – circulating around, giving the body life and energy.

So keep turning up for God in prayer. That will do as your pilgrimage for now. God will keep turning up for you. It's life-giving. And expect the unexpected call to service. And in your quiet time, you may like to read the inspiring stories of mission that are happening globally. Enjoy hearing about what the UK Church Mission Society is terming “Mission unscripted” – stories of mission (even) during COVID-19 (see churchmissionsociety.org).

Pray and serve without ceasing …

Bishop Kate Prowd has oversight of the Oodhthenong Episcopate in the Diocese of Melbourne.

A spiritual awakening for Boris Johnson?

by Roland Ashby

Statements by British PM Boris Johnson about his recent brush with death suggest he may have undergone something of a spiritual awakening. This would not surprise St Benedict, sometimes described as the father of Western monasticism, who in the sixth century advised his monks to “Always keep death before you”.

While this at first glance to the modern mind may seem like a morbid fascination with death, Boris Johnson has shown it to be, on the contrary, a profound and joyful insight. A few months ago I could never have imagined that the newly elected Conservative leader would be describing the National Health Service as “our greatest national asset” and “the beating heart” of the nation; and, in a notable rebuttal to “Mrs T”, that he had discovered that

there was indeed “such a thing as society”.

Only a brush with death could have brought about such a seismic shift in attitude. In the silence of his ICU ward, confronted with his fragility and mortality, there was an awakening to what truly matters in life. That we are not just our bodies, or our careers, achievements and plans, and in the haunting words of the courageous Dag Hammarskjöld, the second Secretary-General of the United Nations: “You wake from dreams of doom – and for a moment – you know: beyond all the noise and gestures, the only real thing is [the soul] love’s calm unwavering flame in the half-light of an early dawn.”

The late Anthony Bloom, who was for over 50 years the head of the Russian Orthodox Church in the UK, and had been a medical doctor before he became a priest, wrote about helping a parishioner to face the news that he was ill with an inoperable cancer. After a rigorous process of assisting him to make “his peace with everyone and everything”, the parishioner said to him with shining eyes: “My body is almost dead, and yet I have never felt so intensely alive as I feel now.”

It is fitting that a new hospital in London, tasked with treating those with the coronavirus, has been named after Florence Nightingale. She said, “Life is a splendid gift – there is nothing small about it”, and described nursing as an art which “requires an exclusive devotion because the body is the temple of God’s spirit.”

Those modern day Nightingales, the nurses that Boris Johnson thanked so movingly for their constant vigilance, and their pure, undivided attention, like Anthony Bloom with his parishioner, had also given him the gift of pure love. The 20th century French mystic Simone Weil describes such pure, selfless attention as pure prayer. It is an experience that gives rise to pure gratitude, which in turn gives rise to pure joy.

Pure love, gratitude and joy are all at the heart of spiritual awakening, show us the beauty of human life at its best, and give us the greatest reasons for wanting to live.

Roland Ashby is former editor of The Melbourne Anglican.
Humour in isolation for meme, myself and I

by Barney Zwartz

Black humour is as old as humanity. I’m reasonably certain it began around the time Adam and Eve departed the garden, and it has provided grim comfort in adversity ever since.

Some of the best black humour has come in final moments, most famously Oscar Wilde: “Either those curtains go or I do.” It’s theologically unsound, but I can’t help smiling at Voltaire, asked on his deathbed by a priest to renounce Satan: “Now is not the time for making new enemies.”

The COVID-19 pandemic doesn’t have many silver linings, but one surely is the ironic meme (as we now call them), mostly transmitted at high speed by social media. Many of them are visual, so there’s no point repeating them here, but there are some that, written down, can raise a smile.

There’s the one begun by my wife: “If I get quarantined with my husband, it won’t be the virus that kills him.” *

My thoughts are going out for all those poor married men who’ve spent months telling their wives, “I’ll do that when I have time.”

It is apparently true, according to a survey, that 38 per cent of Americans stopped drinking Corona beer (from Mexico) for fear of the virus. I’m not so sure about the veracity of the company’s alleged response: a replacement line called “Ebola beer”. On a similar theme, a priest, a rabbit and a vicar walk into a bar. The rabbit says, “I may be a typo.”

One tweet: “Day 2 without sports. I found a young lady sitting on my couch today.

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“Some couples and families are discovering whether they really like each other.”

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In a time of fear, draw deeply on the wells that sustain you

by Clare Boyd-Macrae

I was struck by a verse from the Easter gospel reading this year, Matthew, chapter 28 verse 8: “So they left the tomb quickly with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples.”

Fear and joy.

This couldn’t be more apt in a time of pandemic, where not just the poor and powerless, but even those in privileged corners of the world like ours are filled with fear. Fear of economic disaster, endless unemployment queues, escalating domestic violence and crime and homelessness. Fear of illness and death, of cultural decline and of never quite recovering the way we used to live. The fear is felt around the planet, weighing on us all.

But these times are what the Gospel addresses. Fear has been ever with us. The fear experienced by the Hebrew slaves in Egypt, the exiles in Babylon, the quaking disciples huddled in their upper room after the crucifixion, the world during the Bubonic plague, plus the myriad minor daily anxieties that beset us.

Fear is part of our human condition, and it is this condition that God addresses in the words of the prophets and in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus.

And, as the women at the tomb discovered, it is not incompatible with joy. By which I don’t mean an ephemeral type of glad happiness that depends on denial. Real joy is when we face and sit within our deepest fears and griefs, knowing … that God is with us.

Real joy is when we face … our deepest fears and griefs, knowing … that God is with us.”

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* Just kidding. I hope. Or I may be numbered among President Trump’s first-time victims.
Secrets, prejudices simmer in moody mystery

by Wendy Knowlton

As the camera skims the water at the start of the new series of Mystery Road, there is an immediate sense of menace. Below the surface is a body and beneath the facade of Gideon – “the Pearl of the North” – lies a tangle of secrets and horrors. Detective Jay Swan (Aaron Pedersen) has been pursuing a drug syndicate throughout the long stretches of Australia’s north-west, and suspecting a connection, he arrives in the night, belligerent and taciturn, isolated even in the midst of others.

Swan is difficult to know. Having retreated behind a barrier of terse questions, he rarely answers any directed his way. Ex-wife Mary (Tasma Walton) views his intrusion into her new life with suspicion. She’s finally happy, and his presence threatens to leech this away. He’s a man who seems incapable of joy. He wants to be a father to his teenage daughter, but can’t seem to sustain the effort required to earn that right. His job has taken him deep into the dark depths of humanity, and he can’t seem to find his way back. “Where are you from, Detective Jay?” a local asks, and Swan stares blankly for a long moment before the bleak response, “I’m not from here.” Or anywhere, it seems.

Dialogue takes a back seat to atmospheric landscape, and bursts of violence. Monstrous road trains hurtle through the darkness, red taillights gleaming like malevolent eyes. It feels as though something is lurking beyond every spill of lamp or torchlight. Even in daytime, scenic vistas are juxtaposed with desolate stretches that manage to feel vast and empty one minute and claustrophobic the next. Tracks are hemmed in by scrub and suffocated by dust, and cramped interiors seem built to conceal secrets.

Intersecting storylines throw up more than one mystery. Whilst an archaeologist digs up Indigenous history and participants in a sit-down vigil simmer with rage over what they see as the pillaging of their past and the betrayal of some of their own, faded photographs of missing girls on the police notice board suggest if they’re black, no one’s trying too hard to find them.

Moody and tense, Mystery Road promises compelling viewing over the weeks ahead. Issues of belonging, family and the prejudices of Australia’s past and present will be explored as the rough denizens of this environment deny the dictates of law and respond savagely to any challenge to their “rights.”

Podcast prompts deeper thought about films’ themes, contexts

by Tim Kroenert

In the age of isolation, listening to podcasts is one of the most effective ways to pass the time while keeping our minds active. One engaging film-related podcast this reviewer has binged is Show Me the Meaning, by American pop culture platform Wisecrack. It takes a deep dive into the themes and socio-political contexts of films old and new.

The style is conversational and highly accessible, and the presenters’ tastes are broad: they can treat the Japanese curio Tetsuo: The Iron Man, action blockbuster The Matrix and Pixar’s family friendly Inside Out with equal rigour and enjoyment.

Frequently the conversations take a broad perspective. An episode on the Netflix documentary Fyre: The Greatest Party That Never Happened expands into an interroga-

tion of ‘hustle culture’ and its relationship with Instagram. A review of The Incredibles 2 reflects on the role of the “mediated image” in shaping social norms. A retrospective on 1976’s Network considers the place of rage in Trump’s America.

The roster of presenters contains a core crew of three. Wisecrack founder Jared Bauer is the prototypical deep-thinking film geek. Film editor Ryan Hailey tends to focus on entertainment value and cinematic effectiveness. Austin Hayden Smidt is the resident intellectual, who wields a Master of Theology, a philosophy PhD and a deep love of cinema as a vehicle for big ideas about life and the universe.

Admittedly, notwithstanding occasional appearances by women and people of colour, the series suffers from a bad case of “white dude syndrome”. It’s at its weakest when the presenters seem to lack awareness of the privilege afforded by their over-represented perspective.

The show is far more effective when the hosts openly confront the limitations of their perspective. They dedicated a full episode responding to feedback received following their coverage of Jordan Peele’s race relations horror film Get Out. Their reflections on the controversial decision not to include a person of colour on the episode are thought provoking, if not entirely persuasive. There is also an absorbing discussion about evolving perspectives on the 1999 film Fight Club’s satirizing of perceived masculine ideals.

Prompting conversation and deeper thought about films is Show Me the Meaning’s stated goal, and in that it succeeds.