



February 2021, No 599



The Revd Dr Colleen O'Reilly.

## Retired vicar, former Melbourne Grammar leaders and barrister honoured

by Mark Brolly

A RETIRED vicar and pioneer of the ordination of women, a former chairman of the appeal to restore St Paul's Cathedral and the immediate past Headmaster of Melbourne Grammar School are among Anglicans recognised in the Australia Day Honours List.

The Revd Dr Colleen O'Reilly, who was Vicar of St George's Malvern for 12 years until reaching the mandatory retirement age in 2019, was appointed a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) for significant service to the Anglican Church of Australia, and to religious education.

Previously Vicar of St Faith's Burwood from 1999-2007, Dr O'Reilly was a leading advocate for women's ordination long before her own ordinations as deacon and priest in 1995.

Her friend, fellow advocate for women's ministry and writer Dr Muriel Porter said Dr O'Reilly "could be said to be the 'mother' of the movement that was a key factor in bringing about the ordination of women through many years of determined struggle".

"In 1975 she co-founded Anglican Women Concerned, the first group campaigning for women to be ordained in the Anglican Church of Australia," Dr Porter said. "In 1984, the group had become the highly influential Movement

for the Ordination of Women – a spin-off of an English organisation – with Dr O'Reilly a co-founder with the late Dr Patricia Brennan."

National Anglican legislation for women's ordination was passed in 1985 for deacons and in 1992 for priests.

Dr O'Reilly is an adjunct lecturer at Trinity College Theological School in Parkville.

Mr Charles Clark, who chaired Melbourne Grammar's School Council from 2004-10, the St Paul's Cathedral Restoration and Renewal Appeal from 2003-09 and was Lay Chairman of the Brotherhood from 1997-2000, was appointed an Officer of the Order of Australia (AO) for distinguished service to the wine industry through leadership roles, to finance and business, to the arts and to charitable initiatives.

Melbourne Grammar School's Headmaster from 2009-19, Mr Roy Kelley, was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) for service to education, and to professional associations.

Barrister Mr Daryl Williams, QC, who was Church Warden at All Souls Sandringham from 2012-19, was appointed an AM for significant service to the legal profession, to the community and to cancer research.

Continued on page 4

# Churches brace for new normal as holidays end

by Stephen Cauchi

**M**OST CHURCHES WITHIN THE Diocese of Melbourne have reopened, although many may struggle to fit in their congregation when holidays finish, Bishop Paul Barker has told TMA.

Bishop Barker, who oversees the Jumbunna episcopate in Melbourne's south-east, said clergy were exhausted after the demands of 2020 and that the financial pressures on parishes would increase once JobKeeper finished in March.

### Churches reopening

Bishop Barker said that despite the Black Rock COVID outbreak in early January, 80 per cent or more of Anglican churches remained open.

"There are a couple that haven't yet reopened. I'm not aware of any of them, because of the scare, closing again but I had a couple of churches approach me on that issue."

However, bigger churches faced problems. "In half the churches, either the building's (too) small or they're the bigger churches for attendance – there is still the pressure of fitting in."

Most churches that did livestreaming in lockdown are trying to do something similar now that physical church has resumed, Bishop Barker said. However, "doing the hybrid thing is hard work because you're catering for two different audiences at the same time".

### JobKeeper

Financially, annual reports indicated that JobKeeper had more than compensated in most parishes for the drop in congregational giving in 2020. However, parishes that relied on income from op shops or rents had suffered, he said.

"We're expecting bigger financial pressures in our parishes over the next six months because JobKeeper runs out at the end of March and so we think that financial pressures on churches will grow then."

### Morale and fatigue

Morale generally within the churches was "generally positive", Bishop Barker said, although "when people are tired, it's hard to feel positive".

"I think there's still an uncertainty for the future, so people are hoping for a better year this year. But people are still talking in terms of what happens in winter with a third wave."

Clergy, however, were fatigued by the demands of 2020 and the difficulty in taking leave during the year. "A lot of clergy are very tired and more than normal are taking parts of January as holidays."

Bishop Barker said he knew of at least three clergy whose holidays were cut short due to the closure of the Victorian border.

He estimated that a national meeting of Anglican bishops scheduled for mid-March in Adelaide, and the General Synod scheduled for the end of May in Queensland, both had a 75 per cent chance of going ahead.

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**"We're expecting bigger financial pressures in our parishes over the next six months because JobKeeper runs out at the end of March."**

Bishop Paul Barker

Some churches had December services, but decided that because January was quiet they wouldn't reopen until February.

"In January, a lot of people are away and it's the quietest month for attendance anyway," Bishop Barker said.

The real test for churches would be 31 January, when holidays had finished and school resumes.

"What's that going to be like? How many people are we going to lose? I'm aware of some churches where people are not coming back and that's not always COVID-related."

"It may be that people have decided to take a break, or go to another church, or not go at all. So that will be a pressure, I think."

Churches with small congregations were easily able to fit in their worship space with the two-metre-square rule, he said.

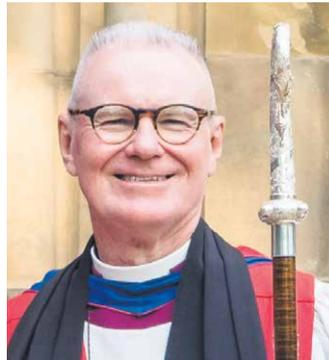
**SPECIAL MELBOURNE SYNOD**  
**12 February**  
St Paul's Cathedral,  
7pm, Friday 12 February.

# Trust in God – a way through troubled times

**A**T THE FIRST CHRISTMAS during the Second World War, King George VI broadcast his Christmas message on the radio. Perhaps his quotation from Minnie Louise Haskins' poem, *God Knows* or, as it was later retitled, *The Gate of the Year*, left the biggest impact:

*I said to the man who stood at the Gate of the Year, 'Give me a light that I may tread safely into the unknown.' And he replied, 'Go out into the darkness, and put your hand into the Hand of God. That shall be better than light, and safer than a known way.' So I went forth and, finding the Hand of God, trod gladly into the night.*

We are an Australian generation encountering unknown challenges. This is not just in the COVID-19 pandemic context but in our international relations,



**"None of us, especially in our culture, likes weakness but it is a field in which God's grace is active and fruitful."**

with our most important overseas trading partner and in the whole unresolved climate change crisis. Our society struggles with fairness and in creating opportunities for the most vulnerable to fully participate. We are a generation that has not faced so many challenges on so many fronts before. Even now, with 2021 well enough advanced, you could easily add your own points to those I have named.

Minnie Haskins' poem was

written in 1908 while she was serving in Madras with the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society and working with the Zenana mission to women. She published a volume of her poems in 1912. While we can imagine that Minnie Haskins was well disposed to trust God and face the future with the confidence of God's presence as her guidance; she also knew adversity and hardship and saw much around her that made the future uncertain. New events and different circum-

stances challenge us and can easily destabilise a faith that has become settled in more predictable times. Her advice, reiterated by the wartime King, is as relevant now as ever.

St Paul deals with this question on several occasions: "We look not at what can be seen but at what cannot be seen; for what can be seen is temporary, but what cannot be seen is eternal" (2 Cor 4.18). And "if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience"

(Romans 8.25). Importantly, he widens out the perspective from what we do to what God does as we look, hope and wait; "the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words. And God, who searches the heart, knows what is the mind of the Spirit because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God" (Romans 8.26, 27).

None of us, especially in our culture, likes weakness but it is a field in which God's grace is active and fruitful. That was true in the New Testament period, true for Minnie Haskins and true for the people facing World War II. It can be true for us if we stop, wait, look to and trust our loving God - Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

*Philip Melbourne*

## Churches brace for new normal as holidays end – Continued from page 1

**Special Melbourne Synod**  
A special session of Melbourne Synod is due to be held at St Paul's Cathedral at 7pm on Friday 12 February. The sole purpose of this session is to enact the Diocesan Meetings

(Temporary Arrangements) Bill 2021.

The legislation, if passed, would validate the parish annual meetings that occurred in late 2020.

A date for a full-length

Melbourne Synod has not been finalised.

No sitting of Melbourne Synod was held last year due to the pandemic. Melbourne was in its long second lockdown when Synod normally would have met

in mid-October.

Due to COVID-19 guidelines, Trybooking registration for attendance at this month's Synod is required. The Synod must strike a balance between the quorum of 250 and the attend-

ance limit in the Cathedral of 450.

The deadline for submission of questions regarding Bills was 22 January.

Archbishop Philip Freier is on leave until 2 February.

## Clergy Moves



### Vacant Appointments as of 28 January 2021:

St Michael & All Angels Beaumaris; St Agnes, Black Rock; St Stephen, Belmont; Bellarine Anglican Parish; St Edward, Blackburn South; Brimbank; St Faith, Burwood; St Luke, Cockatoo; St Alban, Coburg West; St Dunstan, Camberwell [from March 2021]; Darebin South; Christ Church, Essendon; All Saints, Greensborough; St Cuthbert, Grovedale with St Wilfrid, Mount Duneed; Hume Anglican Parish; St Hilary Kew, North Balwyn and Mont Albert, North; Jika Jika, Ringwood; Holy Trinity Lara with Christ Church, Little River; Pascoe Vale-Oak Park [from April 2021]

### Appointments:

**GERBERT, The Revd Daniel**, appointed Priest-in-Charge [renewal], St Aidan, Parkdale, effective 16 January 2021  
**JOHNSON, The Revd Ronald**, appointed Incumbent, St Nicholas Mordialloc, effective 8 April 2021  
**KNAAP, The Revd Rene**, appointed Incumbent [from Priest-in-Charge] All Saints, East St Kilda, effective 23 December 2020  
**POULTER, The Revd Jennifer Marie**, appointed Assistant Curate, St Paul, Caulfield North, effective 14 February 2021  
**SANDERSON, The Revd John Frank**, appointed honorary Priest-in-Charge, St Paul, East Kew, effective 11 February 2021  
**SCHEFFER, The Revd Matthew Scheffer**, appointed Incumbent [from Priest-in-Charge] St James, Pakenham, effective 19 January 2021  
**WONG, The Revd Lui (Ben)**, appointed honorary Priest-in-Charge, St Mark, Templestowe, effective 9 February 2021

### Permission to Officiate:

**MATHES, The Revd John**, appointed Permission to Officiate, Diocese of Melbourne, effective 15 March 2021  
**MILLS, The Revd Breeana**, appointed Permission to Officiate, Diocese of Melbourne, effective 31 January 2021  
**SMITH, The Revd Warren**, appointed Permission to Officiate, Diocese of Melbourne, effective 15 January 2021

### Permission to Officiate Renewal:

**ALDERSEY, The Revd Richard Aubrey**, appointed Permission to Officiate, Diocese of Melbourne, effective 3 December 2020  
**AMES, The Revd Conon Dr Stephen**, appointed Permission to Officiate, Diocese of Melbourne, effective 17 December 2020  
**FEATHERSTON, The Revd William Roger**, appointed Permission to Officiate, Diocese of Melbourne, effective 10 December 2020  
**HUMPHREY, The Revd Howard Jack**, appointed Permission to Officiate, Diocese of Melbourne, effective 17 December 2020  
**HURREN, The Revd Suzanne**, appointed Permission to Officiate, Diocese of Melbourne, effective 10 December 2020  
**INGLIS, The Revd Jennifer Frances**, appointed Permission to Officiate, Diocese of Melbourne, effective 17 September 2020  
**MCALLEY, The Revd Helen Maree**, appointed Permission to Officiate, Diocese of Melbourne, effective 3 December 2020  
**MINOTTI, The Revd John**, appointed Permission to Officiate, Diocese of Melbourne, effective 23 December 2020  
**RENISON, The Revd Jill**, appointed Permission to Officiate, Diocese of Melbourne, effective 15 January 2021  
**SCUTT, The Revd Alexander**, appointed Permission to Officiate, Diocese of Melbourne, effective 17 December 2020

### Resignations:

**MILLS, The Revd Breeana Azelie-Lillian**, Assistant Priest St Barnabas, Glen Waverley, effective 31 January 2021  
**SHANNON, The Revd David Percy Jacob**, Assistant Curate, St Mary, Camberwell South, effective 20 January 2021

### Obituaries:

**SIMONDSON, The Revd Geoff**, 18 December 2020  
**WILLIAMS, The Revd Roger**, 13 December 2020

For Vacant Parishes listing contact [registrar@melbourneanglican.org.au](mailto:registrar@melbourneanglican.org.au)  
 See Tributes at [www.tma.melbourneanglican.org.au](http://www.tma.melbourneanglican.org.au)  
 Clergy Moves is compiled by the Registry Office and all correspondence should go to [registrar@melbourneanglican.org.au](mailto:registrar@melbourneanglican.org.au)

## Angles on Science, Faith and Culture



Angles is a podcast on faith, science and culture produced by the Anglican Diocese of Melbourne in partnership with ISCAST (Christians in Science and Technology).

It's hosted by the Revd Dr Chris Mulherin, Anglican priest

and Executive Director of ISCAST. Each episode Chris is joined by guests from a range of fields to talk about the religious, scientific and cultural angles of the major events and developments in the modern world.

Listen to it on Apple Podcasts, Google Podcasts, or your podcatcher of choice, or at <https://angles.buzzsprout.com/>

## REGULAR SERVICES at St Paul's Cathedral

**Sundays** *Online and In-Person*  
 8am BCP Eucharist with Sermon  
 10am Sung Eucharist with Hymns, all-age Bible Talk and Sermon  
 1pm Mandarin Eucharist 華語崇拜

**Weekdays**  
 2.30pm Choral Evensong  
*Mondays on C31/Digital 44 only*  
 5.10pm Choral Evensong  
*Tuesdays online, Thursdays in-person*  
 12.15pm Lunchtime Eucharist  
*Wednesdays in-person only*

[www.cathedral.org.au/worship](http://www.cathedral.org.au/worship)



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# Dr Freier supports stated intention of Conversion Bill but has concerns

by Mark Brolly

**ARCHBISHOP PHILIP FREIER** has declared support for the stated intention of Victoria's Change or Suppression (Conversion) Practices Prohibition Bill (2020) to protect vulnerable people from harm but acknowledged polarised views about it and said there were parts of the Bill that deserve "a thorough public conversation".

In a letter released on 23 December, Dr Freier wrote that there "were aspects of retrospectivity along with enlarging the definition of sexual orientation that could have unintended consequences".

The Bill passed the lower house of State Parliament, the Legislative Assembly, with an amendment on 10 December and was introduced in the upper house, the Legislative Council, on the same day. Parliament was due to resume on 2 February.

"Many Anglicans have asked about the Victorian Government's legislation to denounce and prohibit conversion therapy to change sexual orientation," Archbishop Freier wrote. "There have undoubtedly been practices carried out in Victoria that should not be continued. We have a sorry criminal and medical record of people being treated very badly in some of our state institutions. The construction of interventions in people's lives on the basis of a perception that they have a 'broken' sexuality or personality is an abuse of a Christian vision of the human person. Scripture affirms that we are all created in the image and likeness of God. The Bible also teaches that all have fallen short of this image and likeness and need renewal in Christ."

Dr Freier wrote that the Bill was intended to create safety for any who, on the basis of their sexuality, were likely to be sub-



**Premier Daniel Andrews has strongly defended the Conversion Bill.**

jected to the practices the Bill prohibited. The scheme in the Bill had a number of dimensions including legislative prohibition, a civil response scheme as well as criminal offences and set the Victorian Administrative Appeals Tribunal (VCAT) as the

decision-maker in these matters, imposing criminal penalties and civil liabilities for infringements.

"Many leaders of Victorian churches and other faith communities have expressed concerns about aspects of the Bill. As I read the Bill, there are aspects of retrospectivity along with enlarging the definition of sexual orientation that could have unintended consequences. At the very least there are matters in the Bill that deserve a thorough public conversation.

"I have consulted with the assistant bishops and we are concerned to encourage this conversation within the Church and in the community. We recognise that there are polarised views on the Bill. Questions of the protection of vulnerable people, freedom of speech, the protection of religious belief and the protection of conscience have all been raised in the public debate so far.

"The Anglican Diocese of Melbourne does not defend or carry out coercive conversion therapy and has repudiated these practices at our Synod. We support the stated intention of the Bill to protect vulnerable people from harm, and acknowledge that this has occurred in Australia in the past."

Archbishop Freier encouraged Anglicans and other citizens to contact their MPs, Premier Daniel Andrews and the Attorney-General to express their concerns and ask them to continue the consultation with people of faith, among others. He added that as the Bill had passed the lower house, in particular it would be good to contact upper house members, including crossbench MPs and to seek their views on any matters of concern.

See Viewpoints on page 19 and 20 and Over to You on page 14.

## Brotherhood opens 90th anniversary celebrations virtually with worship

by Mark Brolly

**THE BROTHERHOOD** of St Laurence launched a year of celebration on the 90th anniversary of its founding on 8 December -- but not quite as planned.

A virtual service of worship was held from the Fitzroy chapel named after the co-founder of the Brotherhood, Father Gerard Tucker, and from two other locations due to COVID-19 restrictions.

The Revd Debra Saffrey-Collins, Brotherhood Head of Chaplaincy and Diocesan Partnerships, welcomed participants to the first public event marking 90 years since the organisation was founded in NSW

as a religious community in St Stephen's Church in Adamstown, Newcastle, on 8 December 1930.

"We were of course originally planned to be in the Cathedral but we are pleased to offer this service virtually today," Ms Saffrey-Collins said.

The Brotherhood moved to Melbourne three years later and Father Tucker's Chapel was originally the hall of St Mary's Church, his first parish in Melbourne (although he had been born in the vicarage of Christ Church South Yarra).

Ms Saffrey-Collins was joined by the Chair of the Brotherhood board, Archbishop Philip Freier, board member Bishop Kate Prowd, Executive Director Connie

Lenneberg, a great niece of Father Tucker, Sally Wallis, and her fellow chaplains, the Revds Scott Holmes and Michelle Trebilcock.

"This service acknowledges the founding of the BSL in the Anglican tradition but it also recognises that in our time, we represent people of many faiths and none as we give thanks for the many people who have so faithfully served and supported our organisation for 90 years," Ms Saffrey-Collins said. "We also acknowledge that our organisation works on land that has been sacred to the First Peoples of this nation for tens of thousands of years."

Archbishop Freier said he well remembered the Brotherhood's

80th anniversary celebrations in St Paul's Cathedral, "but it's great that in the gifts of the technology and the mercy of God in our desire to connect together, we can do this today in a virtual space ..."

Dr Freier said it was a divine characteristic that God is as focused on us in our time of need with even more attention than all of the other things that are happening in the world that we seem to think are important.

"I think that the ministry of Gerard Tucker, the ministry of those who followed him, has something of that character at its best," he said. "It means that we see things through that same lens of divine compassion and we see people with a real clarity of focus,

so that what we do and how we work for them is informed by that picture.

"... I am glad that we can recall our beginnings, celebrate the present things that we are very involved in and look with confidence towards a future to continue that same inspiring clarity of commitment that we celebrate today."

Ms Wallis lit a candle and offered a prayer on behalf of the Tucker family as part of the service.

On the same day as the service, the Brotherhood launched a history microsite online at [www.bsl.org.au/90](http://www.bsl.org.au/90) and called for stories from people in the community about their connection to the organisation.

In normal times we meet many families who are just like Rosa's. Starting life in a new country is tough and people experience enormous vulnerability. Add a worldwide pandemic and it's even more stressful. For Rosa, and many other families like hers, being linked to Brotherhood of St. Laurence (BSL) programs, has been a lifeline in so many ways. New friends, training opportunities and support networks are helping Rosa and her family to find their feet. We have been so grateful and blessed by the kindness of parishes and individuals in supporting our work, children and families over these last months. **Thank you.**



Every blessing for 2021 and thank you for your ongoing support.

*Debra Saffrey-Collins*

**Debra Saffrey-Collins**  
Head of Chaplaincy and Diocesan Partnerships

## Your gift will restore hope to families

With your support, we can help ensure no child or family is left behind as we emerge from the COVID health crisis.

**I'm happy now ... because I'm not alone, the Brotherhood of St. Laurence is there to support me.**

– Rosa, BSL participant & single mum of five



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# Galatians 'perfect' for lockdown – new study

by Stephen Cauchi

**S**T PAUL'S LETTER TO THE Galatians was the "perfect framework" for dealing with lockdown, the launch of a new Uniting Church study guide was told.

*In Lockdown with the Galatians: Paul's Good News for Burdened People* was published by the Creative Ministries Network Congregation, a Uniting Church Melbourne-based congregation that meets in private homes.

The 41-page booklet was launched at the Uniting Church's Presbytery of Port Phillip East Zoom cafe on 11 December.

Congregation member Linda Hoskins said Galatians "was the perfect framework to look at what was happening to us and trying to understand it".

Being confined to homes during lockdown was a "really extraordinary position to be in" for a Western democratic country such as Australia, she said.

Reading Galatians "provided comfort, it provided intellectual stimulation and it also provided in our studies a place to share the everyday frustration and experiences through that period".

The study guide is based on four sessions: firstly, power and (white) privilege; secondly, powerlessness and agency – What does it mean to be human when you are powerless?; thirdly, prayer as agency – Can prayer restore your humanity in times of suffering?; and fourthly, pandemic: power, powerlessness and prayer.

Each of the four studies in the series begins with testimony from congregation members about a challenge in their life that prompted faith reflection.

The Revd John Bottomley, the program coordinator for the Creative Ministries Network Congregation, said that all the personal stories in the book were "heartfelt, open-hearted storytelling which make a very strong connection with Paul's letter".

Lockdown was a time of unprecedented government control and the Roman Empire, similarly, was an empire of "state-sanctioned control", he said. "Paul shows us what it means to live in that space."

Galatians was "good news for people who are burdened by life," Mr Bottomley said. "We experienced the Good News in reading Galatians and listening



What does it mean to be human when you are powerless?

to each others' testimony.

"Every time we came away from our sharing together, people would talk to each other about how they felt better, how they felt that the burdens of life had for that time been lifted.

"We received the study as a gift to us and we are thrilled to be able to offer it as a gift to other parts of the church and to any who are looking for how God's grace might speak to them in the midst of the burdens of life."

The study guide was launched by the Moderator of the Synod of Victoria and Tasmania, the Revd Denise Liersch.

Ms Liersch noted that in Galatians 1:4, Paul referred to the "present evil age". "I think we can all relate to that in various ways, whether we think of poverty, of forced migration, dispossession, corrupt politicians and corporate power, exhaustion, inequality, oppression."

A member of the congregation, Mr Steve Crump, told the launch that he went away from the Galatians study sessions feeling "quite joyful and I think inspired as well".

"The study and the reflections brought us more in touch with our own humanity and brokenness during the lockdown and I think that the study was like ... a real healing," he said.

"Because people were sharing some really vulnerable things about themselves, there was a real trust and openness."

To get a pdf of the study guide, visit <https://victas.uca.org.au/resources/covid-19-worship-resources/> and look for "Pandemic study 2 - Galatians" under Related Documents.

## Retired vicar, former Melbourne Grammar leaders and barrister honoured – from page 4

Mr Williams chairs the Professional Standards Committee for the Anglican dioceses of Melbourne, Ballarat, Bendigo and Wangaratta.

At Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre, Mr Williams was a director from 2011-17, chaired the Human Research Ethics Committee from 2011-14 and served on the board of the Peter MacCallum Cancer Foundation from 2015-17.

A leading Anglican on the Bellarine Peninsula, **Mr Gordon Carlyle Dendle**, has been posthumously awarded an OAM for service to the community of Leopold.

The late Mr Dendle served

Bellarine Gateway Anglicans as treasurer and parish warden and St Mark's Leopold as a lay preacher and church warden.

• Melbourne Rabbi **Dr John Levi** was one of only four people – and the only Victorian – to be recognised with Australia's highest honour, the Companion of the Order of Australia (AC), for eminent service to Judaism through seminal roles with religious, community and historical organisations, to the advancement of interfaith understanding, tolerance and collaboration, and to education.

Rabbi Levi served at Temple Beth Israel from 1960-97, the last 23 years as Senior Rabbi and as

Rabbi Emeritus since 1997.

Among his interfaith roles, he has been Patron of the Australian Council of Christians and Jews since 2005, was co-founder and co-President of the Council of Christians and Jews (Victoria) from 1985-97, Adjunct Professor at the Asia-Pacific Centre for Interreligious Dialogue at Australian Catholic University from 2008-17, Honorary International President of the World Conference on Religion and Peace (now known as Religions for Peace) from 2000-06 and a member of the Joint Committee of the Executive Council of Australian Jewry and the Uniting

Church in Australia since 1991.

The other AC recipients were tennis legend and Pentecostal pastor Margaret Court, West Australian mathematician and champion of women in STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) careers Emeritus Professor Cheryl Praeger, and former Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull.

• Governor-General David Hurley said in announcing the Honours List that he was determined it reflect the diversity and breadth of the community. He urged Australians to nominate individuals from their own community for recognition. "I am determined to make

sure that the Order of Australia reflects the diversity and breadth of our community," he said. "More needs to be done to achieve gender parity and increase diversity in other areas. Over the last 12 months I've initiated various initiatives in this regard to encourage people and organisations to nominate individuals they think are worthy.

"The Order of Australia belongs to all Australians – my strong message to the community is that if you know someone that is worthy, take the time to nominate them. People cannot be recognised if they're not nominated and that has to be driven from the community."



## 2021 Lent Appeal

Your gift will support those in need during this pandemic



This Lent, ABM asks you to consider making a donation in support of St John's Theological Seminary in Zambia, Asset-based Community Development Project in the Philippines and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Mission Grants.

Your donation will empower people during this pandemic.

To make a secure donation online, please scan the QR code with your mobile device.

To find out more, please visit:  
[abmission.org/Lent21](http://abmission.org/Lent21)

# Eighty years young, Archbishop Woods' son David reflects on a 'lucky' life

by Mark Brolly

**D**AVID WOODS CAME TO Melbourne from an English boarding school more than 60 years ago but in a semi-public role as the son of this city's new Archbishop. He was to spend well over 40 years in classrooms in three countries – decades of them at Melbourne Grammar School.

But none of this hints at his passion for the outdoors, including a 1000-kilometre canoeing trip in the Arctic and a cross-country ski trip in Norway. Or for music. Or – after a career spent almost exclusively educating males – being the only male in a family with three women with their own high accomplishments.

Mr Woods, who celebrated his 80th birthday last October in lockdown at the family holiday home in Apollo Bay with his wife Elizabeth and one of their daughters and her family, says he feels lucky, "lucky I'm still fit and healthy and enjoying a range of activities and to have many friends in Melbourne and some other places".

"I think I'm lucky to have had an interesting and enjoyable career ... I don't really feel like I'm 80. Liz says I don't look 80."

The son of Archbishop Frank Woods, Melbourne's Anglican leader from 1957-77, and Jean Woods, David arrived in Melbourne in 1958, nine months after the rest of his family settled here when his father took up his appointment. Bishops court in East Melbourne and the public nature of his father's role were among the surprises.

"I was very excited to go to Australia straight after leaving school ... I stayed at boarding school in England for the best part of the year ... (and) left England two weeks after leaving school and

came to Melbourne," he said.

"I was quite overawed by the arrival here, by the lovely house we moved into and the scope of Melbourne city and so on.

"Obviously my father's job was quite exceptional really and everything to do with it was pretty new really, apart from the fact that he was still a clergyman but in a vastly different position to anything he'd had and it meant the family was in a different position too and had to get used to being rather more public ... We were all in a state of flux."

David Woods went to university to complete an arts degree after some assistance from the Headmaster of Melbourne Grammar, Brian Hone.

Life at Bishops court was anything but dour with four student-age young people in residence. Intriguingly, the house had eight telephones and two lines.

The family had a Wolseley 680, "a glorious car after what we had in England, an Austin A40".

"We brought a Standard 8 from England, the smallest car you could get in England at that time. I did have it to learn to drive, which was very handy, and I had the circular drive to learn on."

On one or two occasions, the Woods rolled up the carpet at Bishops court for Scottish dancing with friends.

Summer university vacations were spent mostly spent as instructor at the Australian Outward Bound School in NSW.

"I actually got quite a like of teaching out of it ... I was doing an arts degree but I wasn't doing it to go into teaching," Mr Woods said.

"The Outward Bound really did point me in the direction of teaching, quite unexpectedly, quite unintentionally. It's not why I went there."



David and Elizabeth Woods with their daughters Rebecca and Emily.

In 1963, he was preparing to go to England on a cargo ship and saw Mr Hone to thank him for his assistance. When he told his mentor that he was thinking of teaching, the headmaster said he would need a Diploma of Education and would have a job for him on his return, "so my future was suddenly opened up".

He studied at Trinity College, Cambridge, where his father had studied and been chaplain. Then Mr Hone suggested David get some experience first, so he went to a summer camp in Canada and spent a year teaching English near Toronto.

"So I had a year teaching there, which was a good way of making all the mistakes and then going away and nobody remembers anything about you."

He joined one of the teachers at the school was going on the Arctic expedition in early 1965, a six-person expedition by canoe after driving across Canada. The group spent three months in tents and ended up in Alaska.

Mr Woods returned to Australia where Mr Hone offered

him the job of resident master at Grimwade House before moving to Canberra Grammar for a couple of years.

His career took a decisive turn when an opportunity arose at the Dragon School at Oxford, an unusual Anglican school which had what Mr Woods said was a very high academic standard and "an extraordinary blend of scholarship and fun".

"It really gave me a new approach to teaching, I think before that I thought, 'What did my teachers do and I'd better try to do something like that'. After the Dragon School, I was thinking what is the best way of teaching rather without trying to model yourself on what you'd seen in the past.

"I felt very confident coming back to Melbourne Grammar ... Teaching at the Dragon School gave one much more of a feeling of the scope and possibilities in teaching and not only that, geographically, it was convenient for skiing in Switzerland and skiing in Norway."

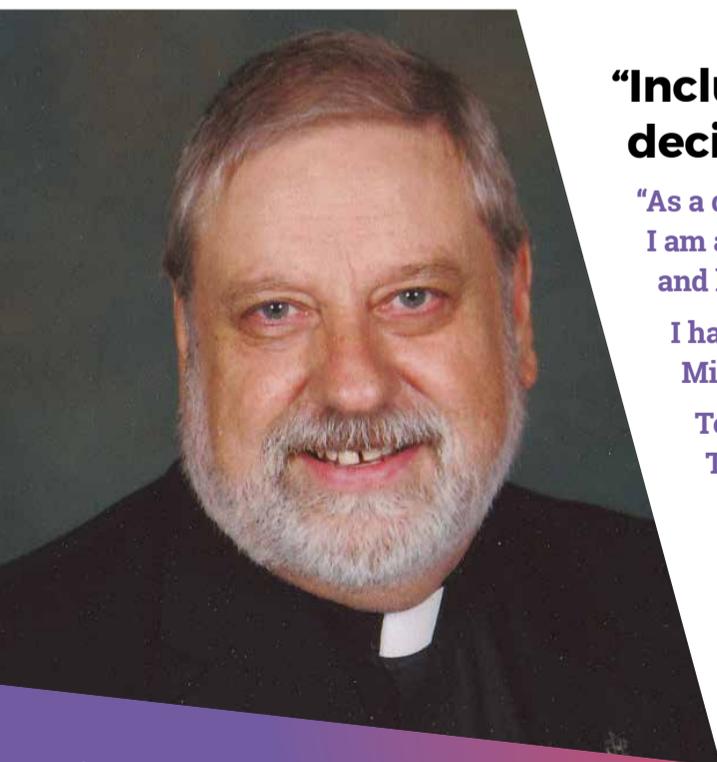
He returned to Melbourne

Grammar in 1973 as a history teacher in the Senior School and immersing himself in the extra-curricular life encouraged, and at times enforced, on students – as Editor of the school's annual magazine, the *Melburnian*, for 20 years; debating (28 years); the Melbourne Grammar School Symphony Orchestra (37 years); the Duke of Edinburgh Award (20 years) – and, of course, outdoor pursuits such as sailing and camps, as well as trips to the Highlands of Papua New Guinea.

In 1977, he married Elizabeth, an ABC education producer whom he'd met the previous year through a Melbourne Grammar staff member. Their daughters Rebecca and Emily are both married with two children each and have been or are managers in the public and private sectors.

In retirement, Mr Woods, who worships at St John's East Malvern, is Vice-President of Stonnington Symphony Orchestra, a member of Victoria Chorale and guide at his old home, Bishops court (both with Elizabeth), a National Trust Guide at La Trobe's Cottage and Government House, a former President of the Melbourne Grammar Retired Staff Association and a member of Kooyong Lawn Tennis Club.

Looking back to his father's life as a clergyman and bishop, he says: "I'm very privileged to have grown up in a house with somebody who was so remarkable, he was quite remarkable. He was a wonderful person, he was a great speaker, he was a man of God, he inspired people to be men of God and threw himself into every avenue that would help make that possible. He was terribly charming ... I was terribly privileged to grow up where that was everyday life."



## "Including Anglicare Victoria in my Will was an easy decision."

**"As a devout Christian and an important member of the Anglican Family in Victoria, I am always looking for ways to help out and make a difference to those disadvantaged and less fortunate than me.**

**I have been supporting Anglicare Victoria for many years, in fact I supported the Mission to the Streets and Lanes in Melbourne, as many Anglicans did.**

**To me, to include a Gift in my Will to Anglicare Victoria was an easy decision. To me this truly reflected God's love in action."**

**Father Richard Murray – Vicar, St George's Travancore, AV donor and bequestor and Friend of Anglicare Victoria.**

Find out more about including a Gift in your Will to Anglicare Victoria at [www.anglicarevic.org.au](http://www.anglicarevic.org.au)

Or email [giftsinwills@anglicarevic.org.au](mailto:giftsinwills@anglicarevic.org.au) or phone **Peter Burt on (03) 9412 6197** if you would like to discuss your personal wishes in more detail.

# Long for spiritual revival in 2021 urges CMS chief

by Stephen Cauchi

**T**HE CHURCH MISSIONARY Society has urged Australian Christians to prioritise spiritual revival via “determined evangelism” and “steadfast prayer” at its annual Summer Under the Son conference in Melbourne.

The Revd Dr Wei-Han Kuan, Executive Director of CMS Victoria, said that the theme of the conference this year was “Longing for Revival”.

The conference, held in recent years by CMS Victoria at Sydal Baptist Church, was conducted on Zoom this year due to the pandemic.

“We long to see spiritual revival,” Dr Kuan said in his opening address. “We long to see more and more people step forward into missionary service, to take that good news of Jesus to every tribe and tongue and people and nation.”

“Determined evangelism” was crucial to this, he said.

“Our founders observed that this vital commitment to world mission tended to produce a vital commitment to local evangelism, and vice versa. Local evangelism and world mission go hand-in-hand.

“Perhaps 2021 is the year for you to start a book club with your neighbours to help them discover Jesus. I’ve been doing this with John Dickson’s *Is Jesus History?* and (there’s) Rebecca McLaughlin’s *Confronting Christianity*.

“Perhaps this year you will help lead an Alpha Course, or Christianity Explored or Explained.

“Perhaps this year you will find



The Revd Dr Wei-Han Kuan.

practical ways to increase your support and encouragement of those people, churches, ministries that prioritise concerted efforts in evangelism. We long for revival, by prioritising the ministry of evangelism.”

The other priority besides evangelism was “steadfast prayer”, Dr Kuan said.

“Everywhere in scripture we are encouraged – actually commanded – to pray, to ask, to seek God’s face, to fast and pray – that the Father might hear and respond and he loves to do [that].

“The preacher and indeed revivalist Charles Finney, in the early 19th century, wrote that revival comes when the church

**“... find practical ways to increase your support and encouragement of those people, churches, ministries that prioritise concerted efforts in evangelism.”**

prays, repents and seeks after God earnestly.”

Retired Australian minister and researcher Robert Evans, he said, “asserted that every Australian revival – and there have been many that he’s documented – was preceded by cross-denominational revival prayer meetings.”

At CMS, Dr Kuan said, “prayer meetings have been the engine room from which so much energy for missionary endeavour has come forth.”

“2020 was our CMS year of prayer. I’ve been so encouraged in this past year – with all of its challenges – because of the evidence of prayerfulness in our Society.

“So many Christian churches and ministries that I know would give their right arms to have the volume and earnestness of prayer that CMS has in its membership.”

Dr Kuan urged CMS to follow the 3Rs of spiritual revival: repentance from sin; reading the Bible; recommitment to God.

He gave three examples of the 3Rs formula in the Bible, two from the Old Testament and one from the New Testament.

In 2 Chronicles 34, King Josiah of Judea repented from idol worship, renewed temple worship and found the Book of the Law, he said.

Nehemiah 8-10 told how the returned Israelite exiles read of the Book of the Law, engaged in praise and celebration, confessed their sin and then renewed the covenant.

The first spiritual revival of the New Testament, he said, centred around the ministry of John the Baptist in Matthew 3:1-12.



John the Baptist urged his listeners to repent, “for the kingdom of heaven has come near”, and to read and respond to the Word of God in Isaiah: “A voice of one calling in the wilderness, Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him.”

As a result of the repentance and reading the Word of God, people came from all over Jerusalem, Judea and the whole region of the Jordan to confess their sins and be baptised by John in the River Jordan.

“In Josiah’s time, they renewed their temple worship of Yahweh,” Dr Kuan said. “In Ezra-Nehemiah’s time, they renewed their covenant with God. Here in Matthew 3 they were baptised as a public and visible sign of their recommitment to God, repentance from sin and determination to live for God from henceforth.”

John told the Pharisees “don’t rely on the fact that Abraham is your father,” Dr Kuan said.

In the same way, “it’s not because your parents were Christians or that you belong to a church family”. “What matters is repentance towards God and growth in godliness.”

Dr Kuan said the spiritual fruits of revival were “growth in godliness, in hunger for more of God; repentance and putting to death the sins of our flesh; (and) the fruit of the Holy Spirit maturing and ripening in our lives, steadily in every season”.

## Ancient church community ‘key for the Christian faith today’

by Stephen Cauchi

**T**HE EARLY church at Antioch as described in the Acts of the Apostles was a crucial story for the spread of the Christian faith today, Pastor Rene Breuel told CMS’ SUTS conference.

He also said the way God moulded Moses still applied to modern-day leaders.

Mr Breuel – who with his wife Sarah founded the Hopera church in Rome – said the story of the church in Antioch in Acts chapters 11 and 13 “encapsulates the dream, the vision, of evangelistic, dynamic, multicultural churches flourishing in the great cities of the world”.

The story showed, for the first time, the gospel “crossing cultural barriers and flourishing for the first time in a major ancient metropolis: Antioch”.

“What happened in Antioch was key for the development of Ancient Christianity. What happened in Antioch is key for the expansion of the Christian faith today.”

Antioch held five lessons for the modern church, he said.

The first was that God is an expert in turning “obstacles into launch pads, suffering into blessings”.

Mr Breuel noted that the church in Antioch started because the persecution in Jerusalem that killed



Stephen had forced Christians to scatter to outlying regions. The upside of this was that they were able to spread the gospel.

From a Jewish faith centered in a provincial capital (Jerusalem), it crossed cultural barriers and becomes a multicultural faith centered in the third-largest metropolis (Antioch) of the Roman Empire.

This experience held lessons for us today, he said.

“If you are at a bad place at the moment, you are at a great place... (Christians) lose their sense of home, stability and family connections, possibly. Seasons of suffering are often the most fertile times.”

2020 was a “very difficult year”, but it was an opportunity to “make the best of this season” and “help people suffer well”.

“We’ve been talking healing our past, dealing with baggage, suffering with God, forgiveness.

“Hard stuff, but it has been wonderful. To invite God into our pain, deal with the tough issues, and receive his healing.

“There’s where breakthroughs often start: with suffering.

“If you are going through a tough season, I say: ‘Wonderful! Make the



The Hopera church in Rome.

**“It’s an ongoing, everyday kind of evangelism done not by leaders but mostly by regular Christians. That’s when the gospel comes alive.”**

best of it. Don’t waste your pain.”

Secondly, the Acts story also pointed to the power of “everyday evangelism” as opposed to a “master plan” organised by the church.

Acts tells how people from Cyprus and Cyrene went to

Antioch and began to reach Greeks. They begin to tell the good news to Greeks and “the Lord’s hand was with them”.

“It’s an ongoing, everyday kind of evangelism done not by leaders but mostly by regular Christians. That’s

when the gospel comes alive.”

He told the story of how two women living in a neighbouring apartment were converted when a Christian woman moved in with them.

Thirdly, Antioch showed the importance of the Church keeping an open mind.

The Church had not trained the Christians preaching to Greeks in Antioch, so they sent Barnabas to investigate.

“Here the story could easily have been: ‘Guys, we have to put a lid on this. You’re reaching Greeks. None of you has been trained by Jesus. There’s no apostolic succession here.”

Barnabas’ visit could have kept the Christian faith as a sect within Judaism, but fortunately Barnabas was open-minded and had vision,” Mr Breuel said.

“He was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and faith. When he saw the grace of God at work, he was glad and encouraged them all to remain true to the Lord.

“He sees this ragtag group of Christians reaching people in their own way ... and encourages them.”

Mr Breuel said he, too, tried to keep an open mind to “out-of-the-box developments”, such as when he encountered some

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# Put personal revival and a heart for service first

by Stephen Cauchi

**LEADING EUROPEAN EVANGELIST** Sarah Breuel urged personal revival before community revival and the importance of a “Hineni” heart in her address to the Summer Under The Son conference.

We longed for revival in our communities, churches, nations, continent but we had to revive ourselves first, she said.

“Evan Roberts, who was the leader of the Welsh revival in 1904, put it this way: ‘God cannot do a good work through you unless He first does a great work in you,’” she said in her YouTube address.

“I so believe in that. As we long for revival, we first have to long for God to revive our own lives.

“Revival in our lives is the theme for this session.”

Ms Breuel and her husband Rene – both originally from Brazil – recorded their addresses from Italy, where in 2012 they started the Rome-based Hopera church.

Ms Breuel also holds senior positions with the International Fellowship of Evangelical Students and the Lausanne Movement.

The birthplace of personal revival, said Ms Breuel, was a heart fully consecrated to God – a “Hineni heart”.

Hineni translated from Hebrew to English means “Here I am”. It appears a number of times in the Old Testament and “is my favourite Hebrew word”, she said.

“It means I’m at your service. It means the answer is yes before you even ask me. It means I’ll give you a blank cheque.

“I want revival to start first in my heart, God, so I offer my full heart to you.”



Sarah and Rene Breuel with sons Pietro and Matteo.

The term Hineni appeared seven times in the Old Testament, being cited by Moses, Abraham and Samuel before they spoke with God.

Hineni, this day is yours. Hineni, this life is yours. Hineni this dream is yours, Hineni this thing that is important for me is yours. I’m

**“God is calling the Church in the West back to Him. God is looking for *Hineni* hearts that are willing to say, ‘Here I am.’”**

In the same way, we should each say Hineni when we talk to God, Ms Breuel said.

“I want Hineni to be the work of my life. I want to present before God and say God, ‘Hineni.’

“On a daily basis I would say

submitting to you a Hineni heart.

“Are you longing for revival? Are you longing to see God bring amazing things in your community and your church and your nation? He is calling me and you to present to him a Hineni heart.”



On the occasion that Abraham said Hineni, God asked him to sacrifice his son Isaac. Despite the overwhelmingly difficult request, Abraham obeyed “early next morning” – promptly, in other words – until an angel intervened.

This radical, costly, even foolish, obedience was what God was looking for. “God is looking for that kind of obedience, that kind of Hineni heart.”

All people potentially have an Isaac – something that, while extremely important, could take the place of God and become an idol, she said.

American theologian Tim Keller said the definition of an idol was “anything that absorbs our heart and imagination more than God – good things that have the danger of becoming the ultimate thing”, while French theologian John Calvin said that “the human heart is an idol factory”.

“What is your Isaac? What are the things that might be on the throne of our hearts? We are experts at creating idols in our hearts.”

Family, security, career, ministry, a dream, plan, reputation, achievement all had “the potential of becoming the ultimate thing”.

“Whatever (idol) God reveals to you, our encouragement today is that we will respond Hineni – God, I’m willing to sacrifice my Isaac to you.

“God is calling the Church in the West back to Him. God is looking for Hineni hearts that are willing to say, ‘Here I am. I’ll give you anything, I’ll give you my Isaac.”

Ms Breuel said that Christians considering missionary work should have a Hineni heart. Moses was stunned when God called him to lead the Israelites. “Moses asked – who am I that I should go to Pharaoh?”

In the same way, “you might be wondering, like Moses, who am I to think about Japan or the Middle East or Europe or any other nation?”

God didn’t even bother entertaining Moses’ question with an answer. Instead, God simply responded: “I will be with you.”

Ms Breuel noted she had been through this experience herself. “Who am I, a Brazilian woman, to be dreaming about revival in Europe? And God was like, ‘That’s not the point. I will be with you.’”

When Moses raised further objections to becoming the leader of the Israelites, God answered by asking: “What is that in your hand?”

“That is the question that God is asking – what is that in your hand?”

Moses had a staff in his hand, reflecting his profession as a shepherd and many years of shepherding sheep in the desert. This was symbolic of his appointed task to be the shepherd of the Israelites.

“What is in your hand? ... Maybe it has been a passion of a particular place that God has placed in your heart. Maybe it is a particular gift, or a skill”

While Christians were longing for renewal in our lives, in our churches and in our nations, Ms Breuel said, “God is the one who sees. He hears the groans”.

“And that’s what sets his heart in motion. He’s asking us what is in our hands. What is in your hands. And he’s looking for Hineni hearts who are willing to say: ‘Here I am, send me.’”

## Missionary tells of dealing with COVID and Islam in Afghanistan

by Stephen Cauchi

**A MISSIONARY** who worked in Afghanistan told CMS’ SUTS conference of the intense fear of COVID as well as the challenges of being a Christian missionary in an Islamic country.

Mark A – whose name could not be revealed for security reasons – said that social media in Afghanistan was “just awash with all kinds of crazy rumours” about the pandemic.

“The amount of disinformation and fake news about COVID that was going around ... no one had access to the science or the health literacy to interpret what was going on,” he said. “A lot of people believed that if you got COVID that was an automatic death sentence.”

Mark, who works for an organisation that partners with CMS, said the organisation had a large mental health program. Their counselling team found themselves talking to COVID-positive patients – even to doctors.

“A fairly senior doctor working in the COVID ward decided to kill himself because he’d been given this positive result. Thank

God he was able to ring one of our counselling team. They talked to him and persuaded him not to kill himself and he recovered from this COVID diagnosis and was able to go back into work.”

**“The local Taliban commander is saying to some of our staff ... ‘If you ever wanted to come back and do more, you’d have a free path.’”**

The example of that doctor “turned the tide” among the medical community as they realised it was not an automatic death sentence.

“The impact of that has been incalculable.”

Mark said that, initially, everyone assumed that COVID would



put everything on hold but soon missionaries were busier than ever.

“What actually happened was that our counsellors went into overdrive because they moved to telephone-based counselling.”

Mark said missionaries in the country were trained in non-violence and used creative techniques to solve disputes.

On one occasion, the missionaries staged a sit-in in a mosque and threatened not to leave until a village dispute over access to water had been settled.

“After about a day it was so embarrassing for everybody. They said, ‘Let’s get together and do it.’

“And they did, they resolved what were some of the underlying tensions. It wasn’t about the water, it was about some other stuff.

“That all created a lasting feeling of respect”.

That particular village is now in Taliban-ruled territory, meaning the missionaries have left.

Continued on page 14

## 'An incredible privilege' to serve the Diocese: Dorothy Hughes



Dorothy Hughes.

**LONG-SERVING STAFF** member Dorothy Hughes has concluded her time with the Diocese of Melbourne after nearly 15 years of service.

Ms Hughes most recently served as Children and Families Ministry Facilitator.

"Dear colleagues and friends, it feels so strange to be writing this final email to say goodbye after months of not seeing you

and Families Ministry consultant.

"Dorothy has served faithfully, with a deep commitment to outreach and discipleship, over the years assisting many parishes with resources to enable the flourishing of the faith journeys of children and families in this Diocese," Bishop Prowd said. "Her ministry has focused on the development of leaders in this area of ministry, including the establishment of a community of practice for children's and families workers.

"I'm grateful for her dedication, and the relationships and networks she has formed. We will miss her enthusiasm and breadth of knowledge in this very important area of ministry and pray God's blessing upon her in her retirement."

In other staffing news, **Nicole Tyrrell** has resigned from her position as Personal Assistant with the Diocese and finished work in January.

Ms Tyrrell started work in the Diocese in November 2018

was sad to see Ms Tyrrell leave.

"Clergy have expressed appreciation for Nicole's friendly assistance regarding many parish matters," Mr Arnold said.

"Nicole eagerly helped organise all of the regional clergy conferences in 2019 and worked with Bishop Genieve's personal assistant Kathleen [Abrahall] looking after the Bishops' arrangements.

"Nicole is returning to work in real estate and while sad to see her leave, we wish her every joy and satisfaction in her new role."



Jane Hart.

**Jane Hart** has resigned as Property Projects Manager for the diocese after more than three years. Her last day with the diocese will be 19 February.

Diocesan Chief Operating Officer Matthew Wilson said Ms Hart had started with the diocese in October 2017 and had worked passionately with parishes supporting them with numerous property projects from concept to development.

Mr Wilson said she was creative in ideas to improve church properties and oversaw the major renovation works at 209 Flinders Lane, which would stand as a positive legacy for years to come.

"Jane was also instrumental in creating and improving processes for parishes and the property department during her time at the diocese," he said.

"I know that Clergy, parish and staff at the diocese have appreciated Jane's positive support, service and assistance that she has provided to all ... whilst sad to see Jane leave, we wish her well and all success in her future endeavours."



Nicole Tyrrell.

as personal assistant to Bishops Genieve Blackwell and Paul Barker. In 2019, she worked as personal assistant to Bishop Barker and Bishop Prowd.

The Diocese's interim Chief Executive, Chris Arnold, said he

## Former Malvern vicar in honoured company

**THE REVD Dr Colleen O'Reilly** (see front page) has joined some illustrious, and familiar, company in being recognised as a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) on this year's Australia Day honours list.

Among them is the former Bishop of Gippsland and now Archbishop of Perth, **Kay Goldsworthy**, who was appointed an Officer of the Order of Australia (AO) in 2017.

The AO was awarded for "distinguished service to religion through the Anglican Church of Australia, as a pioneer and role model for women, to church administration, and to pastoral care and equality".



Archbishop Kay Goldsworthy.

Leading Melbourne layman and statistician of all things Anglican, Mr Colin Reilly, alerted TMA to these and other features of honours for Anglican clergy two days after Dr O'Reilly's AM was announced.

Mr Reilly said 424 Anglican clergy who have ministered in Australia have been decorated with imperial or Australian honours (including wartime military decorations). Of these, 203 have been honoured in the Order of Australia, with former Primate Archbishop Peter Carnley of Perth and Dr Peter Hollingworth, a former Executive Director of the Brotherhood of St Laurence and Archbishop of Brisbane, the only two Anglican clergy to be recognised twice.

Archbishops Carnley and Hollingworth, along with the Revd Dr Michael Spence of Sydney, are the only ordained Anglican recipients of the highest honour, the Companion of the Order of Australia, although several Anglican archbishops were knighted in the days of imperial honours – most recently in Melbourne, Archbishop Sir Frank Woods in 1972.

And Dr Hollingworth, as Governor-General from 2001-03, was Chancellor of the Order of Australia, formally approving awards to recognise the service and contribution of outstanding Australians through the Australian Honours and Awards System.



The Revd Ruth Redpath.

Dr O'Reilly, who was vicar of St George's Malvern and earlier of St Faith's Burwood, was a pioneer of the movement to ordain women in the Anglican Church from the 1970s.

She joins other female clergy from Melbourne who have been honoured as Members or Officers of the Order, some for their lives before ordination. They include the widow of Archbishop David Penman, **the Revd Jean Penman**, whose work as an ordained minister and school chaplain came in the years after her husband's death in 1989; former Canon of St Paul's Cathedral, **the Revd Ruth Redpath**; and former Archdeacon Marjorie McGregor, Australia's first female archdeacon.

## "Dorothy has served faithfully, with a deep commitment to outreach and discipleship, over the years ..."

around the office, and in the case of the newer members of staff, having not had the pleasure of meeting you," Ms Hughes wrote in December.

"This is my last day of formal work, ending close to 15 years on the Diocesan staff team, and I leave with many happy memories and few regrets.

"It has been an incredible privilege to support the wider ministry of the Diocese in my work of encouraging and enabling the ministries of parishes to children and families.

"I have been blessed to work with many wonderful people and have appreciated the friendship and the support that so many of you have showed me."

Bishop Kate Prowd said Ms Hughes had been a member of the Parish Mission Resourcing team, working as the Children's

## Tributes to two long-serving Priests: The Revds Geoff Simondson and Roger Williams

**The Revd Geoff Simondson** has died after seven decades of service to the Anglican Church as deacon and curate.

Mr Simondson died on 18 December, aged 99. His funeral was held on 4 January at Holy Trinity Surrey Hills.

Mr Simondson was ordained in Melbourne as a deacon in 1950 and to the priesthood in 1951. Geoff served as curate at the Melbourne Diocesan



The late Revd Geoff Simondson.

Centre (1950-52); minister at Holy Trinity Hastings (1952-55); minister at Holy Trinity Doncaster (1955-59); Vicar of St John's Heidelberg (1959-78); and Vicar of St James Glen Iris (1978-91).

He continued to serve the Diocese with a Permission to Officiate after his retirement, when aged in his early 90s, in 2014.

**The Revd Roger Williams**, who served in a number of positions in Western Australia and Victoria – most recently as chaplain with Mentone Grammar School – has died.

Mr Williams died on 13 December last year and his funeral was held at



The late Revd Roger Williams.

22 December at St John's in Toorak.

Mr Williams was ordained in Perth as a deacon in 1972 and to the priesthood later the same year.

He served as curate in Mt Lawley/Inglewood (1972-75); curate in Kalgoorlie/Boulder (1975-78); chaplain of Sandringham Tech and Honorary Assistant at All Souls' Anglican Church in Sandringham from 1979-82; Senior

Chaplain at Melbourne Grammar School (1983-97); chaplain to Tennis Australia (1991-98); and Chaplain Mentone Grammar School (1998-2014).

Mr Williams continued to serve the Diocese with a Permission to Officiate after his retirement in 2015.

Archbishop Philip Freier paid tribute to both priests in his *ad clerum*, giving thanks to God for their lives and ministries. "May [they] rest in peace and rise in glory." "We also pray," he said, "for their families at this time of their loss."

See Over to You on page 14.

# One year on – returning to Mallacoota

A year ago, Juliet Stanton reflected in *TMA* on the summer of 2019/2020 when she was in Mallacoota with a Scripture Union youth outreach. On returning a year later, she had the opportunity to reflect on what it means to move forward, and the importance of offering hope.

**R**ETURNING TO MALLACOOTA again this summer, it was near impossible to forget what had happened one year before. There were visual reminders everywhere you looked. The pipe-cleaner trees with their fuzzy regrowth. The 360-degree view of Mallacoota from the top of the sand dune at Tip Beach, now visible thanks to the leafless trees. The layer of ashy sand you could find just a few centimetres below the surface. The blackened road signs still left standing. The houses still only half-built.

Although it seemed to me the scars of last year's fires were everywhere, I found it interesting that in conversation with locals, they didn't dwell on the trauma of the fires or the things they had lost. That was not because everything was "back to normal" or people didn't need to think about their losses anymore. Far from it – one year on, many locals are still replacing their houses. For some, homes and livelihoods are gone forever; they will never be rebuilt.

Instead, locals told us that living through the fires, COVID, and everything else that came with 2020 was far from easy. But people were getting on. They were moving forward. The contrast here

with "getting over it" and "moving on" is important. People were not under the illusion that by getting on they could walk away from the fires and their aftershocks. Nor were they ensnared by hypothetically greener grass in the future

**"The contrast here with 'getting over it' and 'moving on' is important."**

– indeed, moving forward into 2020 meant facing up to many difficulties totally unrelated to the fires. Still, people in Mallacoota chose to move forward, because that's what life was doing, whether they wanted it to or not.

So, as a young adults' beach mission this past summer, our team had two purposes. First, was to help young people in town (or those returning from out of town) to move forward, even when that would mean having to contend



Scenes from last year's fire and its devastating effects in Mallacoota.

with unseen problems of the future. We knew teenagers who, after the fires, rather than try to keep in step with life as it advanced persistently forward, had chosen to completely escape it. One of these was local girl "Gemma," who for the better part of last year used alcohol to withdraw from life. I believe one of the most valuable things our drop-in centre provided this year was a reason for "Gemma" to stay sober for almost a week. I hope we helped her to choose moving

forward this year, rather than escaping.

Our second purpose was to offer hope. For those teenagers and young adults who had committed to getting on but were facing worse traumas than the ones left behind, our purpose was to show them hope for better things to come. To this end, it was nice to at least be able to say, "Yes, we'll be back again next year".

But really, there was only one way to give those young people a

hope we knew was worth holding onto. And so we told them stories about the times in our lives we had needed to just move forward, and how we could do so because of the real, sure hope we had in our loving God. And this year as we wait to see those young people again, we pray they would come one day to share that hope with us.

Juliet is an Arts student at Melbourne University and a member of St Jude's in Parkville.

**PLEASE REPORT ABUSE  
CALL 1800 135 246**

**KOYOORA** | OFFICE OF PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

The Anglican Diocese of Melbourne does not tolerate abuse, harassment or other misconduct within our communities. If any person has concerns about the behaviour of a church worker, past or present, they can contact Kooyoora Ltd.

We are deeply distressed that there have been occasions when abuse and misconduct have occurred in our communities. Kooyoora Ltd is independent of the Diocese and receives and manages complaints about abuse and misconduct by members of the clergy and church workers.

The Diocese of Melbourne is committed to doing all that is possible to ensure that abuse does not occur. All complaints of abuse are taken very seriously and we do all we can to lessen harm. We offer respect, pastoral care and ongoing long-term support to anyone who makes a complaint.

You can contact Kooyoora Ltd by calling 1800 135 246  
For further information: [www.kooyoora.org.au](http://www.kooyoora.org.au)



ANGLICAN  
DIOCESE OF  
MELBOURNE

## REPORTING CHILD ABUSE

If a child is in **immediate danger** at any point **CALL 000**

### What is Child Abuse?

Abuse and neglect includes but is not limited to: physical abuse, emotional abuse, family violence, sexual abuse, spiritual abuse, grooming, neglect

### Who can report neglect and abuse of a child under the age of 18?

Children, parents, staff, volunteers, anyone

### What sorts of things must be reported?

All child safety concerns must be reported:

- Disclosure of abuse and harm
- Allegations, suspicions or observations
- Breaches of the Code of Conduct

### All suspicions or reports of child abuse must be reported to the groups below:

- Ministry Supervisor
- Child Safe Officer
- Kooyoora Professional Standards

IMPORTANT CONTACT NUMBERS

POLICE  
000

CHILD PROTECTION  
1300 360 391

KOYOORA PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS  
1800 135 246

# Australians 'spiritually hungry' due to COVID

by Stephen Cauchi

**COVID-19** IGNITED Australians' spiritual hunger in 2020 but churches are poorly regarded and may not reap the benefits, according to *The Future of the Church in Australia* report released by McCrindle Research.

Mark McCrindle, a social researcher at the Sydney-based firm, told *TMA* that spiritual hunger was "alive and well and indeed increasing during COVID".

According to the report, said Mr McCrindle, 47 per cent of Australians had thought about their mortality during COVID. A similar proportion had thought more about the meaning of life.

"A quarter of Australians have prayed more – this in a nation where only 16 per cent go to church regularly," he said.

"Definitely COVID has rattled Australians and it's also had the outcome of people considering spiritual things more."

Mr McCrindle added that 33 per cent of Australians had thought more about God during COVID and 26 per cent had had more spiritual conversations.

The positive impact of COVID on people's spiritual lives was not without precedent, he said.

"It's a case historically – like World War I, World War II, the Spanish Flu and even economic crises – people recognise that uncertainties abound and they look to the issues of faith."

"Regardless of someone's religious perspective, 57 per cent of Australians said that this has been the most difficult year of their life, which is pretty phenomenal. That just shows the extent of it."



**"Around 75 per cent of churchgoers said 2020 had been a year of spiritual growth compared to the 25 per cent who said it had been a year of spiritual dryness."**

Mr McCrindle said that 78 per cent of people said that they had experienced more change this year than ever before.

"Uncertainty, change and the fatigue that comes with that, the frustration, the anxiety – these were the dominant sentiments of Australia because of COVID. It's little surprise to see people are turning to the issues of faith."

Churchgoers had also benefited spiritually, even though they had lacked physical contact with the church, he said.

Around 75 per cent of churchgoers said 2020 had been a year of spiritual growth compared to the 25 per cent who said it had been a year of spiritual dryness.

"They've had to take charge of their own spiritual lives, rather

than relying on professional paid clergy, and ministry's been put back in their own hands," Mr McCrindle said. "So they've been more active in that sense – talking to others or arranging their own Bible studies or spiritual lives."

Having said that, "the majority of churchgoers are looking forward to getting back to the gathered church, that's clear".

More people preferred live online church to pre-recorded church.

"More said that they want a low-key service – a church unplugged – than a big performance service, because of the context. They're viewing it in their lounge room."

Mr McCrindle said churchgoers expected, and wanted, the future to be a mix of online and physical church.

"They want church online to continue, so that it can increase their own regularity of attendance."

"Not everyone can attend every week and you've got those with young children, or those that are older, or when we're sick or indeed those with mobility (issues) or career responsibilities ... (they) also have found greater access through church online."

"Digital ministry and online church is here to stay."

It was also easy to invite people to online church, he said. "A significant proportion say it's been easier to invite people to online church than to a religious service because you (just) send a link."

"It makes the invitation easier, it makes the attendance easier, and again can allow for more regular attendance when for other reasons we couldn't physically get there."

Outreach also had benefited during COVID. The developer

of the Alpha Course, UK vicar the Revd Nicky Gumbel, said that Alpha Online had been an unexpected success despite the pandemic, Mr McCrindle said.

The report quoted Mr Gumbel, who is Vicar at Holy Trinity Brompton in London, as saying online church during COVID was "the greatest evangelistic opportunity of our lifetime".

Alpha numbers have been higher than they've ever been," Mr McCrindle said. "The completion rate or attendance rate has been higher. People have not been missing them because there's no reason to miss it when it's on Zoom."

However, the study – which was based on interviews with more than 30 church and charity leaders – reveals that churches have a long way to go to rebuild trust with their communities.

"Many view faith groups as irrelevant, institutional and untrustworthy due to high-profile cases of leaders abusing their power," it said.

The report suggested that churchgoers themselves could rebuild that trust.

Almost two in five churchgoers (38 per cent) agreed that COVID-19 had made them more active in ministry as they felt they could not leave it to the paid church staff.

Many had also invited more people to church online (47 per cent) or had opened their homes and hosted watch parties for church (34 per cent).

"A number of Christian leaders are thinking about this moment in time as a 'reformation moment' where the Word of God is put back into the hands of the people," Mr McCrindle said.

The report was released in November last year.

## Church agencies condemn JobSeeker cuts

**SOCIAL WELFARE** agencies from the Anglican, Uniting and Roman Catholic churches, and the Salvation Army, have all condemned the Federal Government's decision to cut the JobSeeker payment by reducing the coronavirus supplement.

At the height of the coronavirus pandemic, the coronavirus supplement was \$550 a fortnight. It was reduced to \$250 in September last year and was cut on 1 January to \$150 a fortnight.

It will stay at that level until the end of March.

JobKeeper payments, including the \$150 supplement, are currently \$715 per fortnight.

Kasy Chambers, the Executive Director of Anglicare Australia, said the old rate of JobSeeker was frozen for almost three decades.

The coronavirus supplement "righted that wrong", she said.

"People out of work were finally given a path out of poverty. These cuts will take that hope away – and push people back into poverty and hardship."

The old rate of JobSeeker "became a poverty trap, locking people out of work and forcing them to turn to agencies like ours

just to get by", she said.

Anglicare recently released research showing that people out of work were skipping meals because their payments were so low. "Many were left with as little as \$7 a day after paying their rent. Others were forced to couch-surf."

Ms Chambers said the Government was contradicting itself on JobSeeker.

"The Government admitted that there aren't enough jobs for those who need them. It's also trying to convince workers to take pay cuts because of weakness in the economy. But when it comes to JobSeeker, it insists that the economy is strong enough for cuts."

"The Government is disregarding the evidence it doesn't want to hear. It's ignoring near-universal calls for an increase, and it passed these latest cuts with no debate in Parliament. That's not good enough."

"After years of ignoring calls from experts, economists and the community sector, the Government is now failing to listen to its own citizens."

"This shows that it's time to take these decisions out of the hands of politicians and create an independent body to set payment rates.



**"Anglicare recently released research showing that people out of work were skipping meals because their payments were so low."**

"If the Government won't listen to its own MPs, experts, and inquiries – or respect the evidence – then it's time to hand the power over to someone who will."

The Uniting Church's social welfare arm, UnitingCare Australia, also condemned the cuts.

"The coronavirus supplement has lifted people out of poverty and allowed them to meet their most basic needs, many for the first time," said National Director Claerwen Little.

"Our services report countless stories of families being able to afford fresh fruit and vegetables, and people being able to access medication and health services.

"Yet our services are now bracing for an escalation in need when the coronavirus supplement is wound back. We have grave concerns about the escalation in housing stress, food insecurity, debt and hardship that many households will face if payments revert back to pre-COVID rates."

Ms Little said a recent report from Anglicare Australia found that without the supplement, more than a third of JobSeeker recipients were left with as little as \$7 a day after meeting basic living costs.

"These survey results are nothing short of alarming. Before the coronavirus supplement was introduced, 72 per cent of people surveyed were regularly skipping meals, usually 3-4 meals per week," she said.

"Of particular concern are the implications for more than one million children who are living in homes that will be impacted by the cut."

"Unless there is a permanent increase to income support payments, Australia faces the prospect of deepening inequality and an increase in poverty and hardship."

"A strong social security safety net is an integral part of achieving more than just an inclusive society."

# *Dadirri* is our greatest gift to Australia, says Indigenous elder, Senior Australian of the Year

**Congratulations to Indigenous elder, artist and educator Dr Miriam-Rose Ungunmerr-Baumann AM for being named the 2021 Senior Australian of the Year. Apart from her artwork, and work in education, she is perhaps best known for her reflections on *dadirri* – “inner, deep listening and quiet, still awareness”. *Dadirri*, she says, “is perhaps the greatest gift [Aboriginal Australians] can give to our fellow Australians ... *dadirri* recognises the deep spring that is inside us. We call on it and it calls to us. This is the gift that Australia is thirsting for. It is something like what you call ‘contemplation’”. The following reflection on *dadirri*, which is a speech she gave in 2002 when she was Principal of a Catholic primary school in Daly River in the Northern Territory, also seeks to integrate *dadirri* with her faith as a Christian:**

**N** G A N G I K U R U N G K U R R means ‘Deep Water Sounds’. *Ngangikurungkurr* is the name of my tribe. The word can be broken up into three parts: *Ngangi* means word or sound, *Kuri* means water, and *kurr* means deep. So the name of my people means ‘the Deep Water Sounds’ or ‘Sounds of the Deep’. This talk is about tapping into that deep spring that is within us.

Many Australians understand that Aboriginal people have a special respect for Nature. The identity we have with the land is sacred and unique. Many people are beginning to understand this more. Also there are many Australians who appreciate that Aboriginal people have a very strong sense of community. All persons matter. All of us belong. And there are many more Australians now, who understand that we are a people who celebrate together.

What I want to talk about is another special quality of my people. I believe it is the most important. It is our most unique gift. It is perhaps the greatest gift we can give to our fellow Australians. In our language this quality is called *dadirri*. It is inner, deep listening and quiet, still awareness.

*Dadirri* recognises the deep spring that is inside us. We call on it and it calls to us. This is the gift that Australia is thirsting for. It is something like what you call ‘contemplation’.

When I experience *dadirri*, I am made whole again. I can sit on the riverbank or walk through the trees; even if someone close to me has passed away, I can find my peace in this silent awareness. There is no need of words. A big part of *dadirri* is listening. Through the years, we have listened to our stories. They are told and sung, over and over, as the seasons go by. Today we still gather around the campfires and together we hear the sacred stories.

As we grow older, we ourselves become the storytellers. We pass on to the young ones all they must know. The stories and songs sink quietly into our minds and we hold them deep inside. In the ceremonies we celebrate the awareness of our lives as sacred.

The contemplative way of *dadirri* spreads over our whole life. It renews us and brings us peace. It



Dr Miriam-Rose Ungunmerr-Baumann AM.

makes us feel whole again...

In our Aboriginal way, we learnt to listen from our earliest days. We could not live good and useful lives unless we listened. This was the normal way for us to learn – not by asking questions. We learnt by watching and listening, waiting and then acting. Our people have passed on this way of listening for over 40,000 years ...

There is no need to reflect too

**“... there are deep springs within each of us. Within this deep spring, which is the very Spirit of God, is a sound. The sound of Deep calling to Deep. The sound is the word of God – Jesus.”**

much and to do a lot of thinking. It is just being aware.

My people are not threatened by silence. They are completely at home in it. They have lived for thousands of years with Nature’s quietness. My people today, recognise and experience in this quietness, the great Life-Giving Spirit, the Father of us all. It is easy for

me to experience God’s presence. When I am out hunting, when I am in the bush, among the trees, on a hill or by a billabong; these are the times when I can simply be in God’s presence. My people have been so aware of Nature. It is natural that we will feel close to the Creator.

Dr Stanner, the anthropologist who did much of his work among the Daly River tribes, wrote this:

things up. We let them follow their natural course – like the seasons. We watch the moon in each of its phases. We wait for the rain to fill our rivers and water the thirsty earth ... When twilight comes, we prepare for the night. At dawn we rise with the sun.

We watch the bush foods and wait for them to ripen before we gather them. We wait for our young people as they grow, stage by stage, through their initiation ceremonies. When a relation dies, we wait a long time with the sor-

*“If you stay closely united, you are like a tree, standing in the middle of a bushfire sweeping through the timber. The leaves are scorched and the tough bark is scarred and burnt; but inside the tree the sap is still flowing, and under the ground the roots are still strong. Like that tree, you have endured the flames, and you still have the power to be reborn”.*

My people are used to the struggle, and the long waiting. We still wait for the white people to understand us better. We ourselves had to spend many years learning about the white man’s ways. Some of the learning was forced; but in many cases people tried hard over a long time, to learn the new ways.

We have learned to speak the white man’s language. We have listened to what he had to say. This learning and listening should go both ways. We would like people in Australia to take time to listen to us. We are hoping people will come closer. We keep on longing for the things that we have always hoped for – respect and understanding ...

To be still brings peace – and it brings understanding. When we are really still in the bush, we concentrate. We are aware of the anthills and the turtles and the water lilies. Our culture is different. We are asking our fellow Australians to take time to know us; to be still and to listen to us ...

Life is very hard for many of my people. Good and bad things came with the years of contact – and with the years following. People often absorbed the bad things and not the good. It was easier to do the bad things than to try a bit harder to achieve what we really hoped for ...

I would like to conclude ... by saying again that there are deep springs within each of us. Within this deep spring, which is the very Spirit of God, is a sound. The sound of Deep calling to Deep. The sound is the word of God – Jesus.

Today, I am beginning to hear the Gospel at the very level of my identity. I am beginning to feel the great need we have of Jesus – to protect and strengthen our identity; and to make us whole and new again.

“The time for re-birth is now,” said the Holy Father to us. Jesus comes to fulfil, not to destroy.

If our culture is alive and strong and respected, it will grow. It will not die.

And our spirit will not die.

And I believe that the spirit of *dadirri* that we have to offer will blossom and grow, not just within ourselves, but in our whole nation.

This tribute to Dr Miriam-Rose Ungunmerr-Baumann AM first appeared on the blog *Living Water*. You can view it, along with supplementary material on how to experience *dadirri* at [www.thelivingwater.com.au](http://www.thelivingwater.com.au)

# Look after the world's poorest to beat COVID, says Archbishop of Canterbury

by Hattie Williams

**CORONAVIRUS WILL NOT BE** defeated anywhere until it is defeated everywhere, the Archbishop of Canterbury warned last month.

Speaking on BBC Radio 4's *Today* program on 27 January, after 100,000 COVID-related deaths were reported in the UK, Archbishop Justin Welby said that the UK, like other rich nations, must look after others as well as its own. So far, just under four million people have received the first dose of the vaccine in the UK. About 71.1 million doses have been distributed globally, mostly in the United States and China.

"It is in our own interests that all round the world the vaccine is given," Archbishop Welby said. "The Government has been very, very good about supporting the COVAX program; we are the biggest donor to it ... We are one of the countries with one of the highest levels of infection and death rate in the world, and it is necessary to focus on those in need to stop it spreading."

The COVAX program, led by the World Health Organisation (WHO), is a global initiative, involving two-thirds of the world's countries, to ensure that every person, regardless of wealth, will have access to COVID-19 vaccines once they are available.

Being generous to nations that could not afford the vaccine was fulfilling Christ's teaching to love your neighbour as yourself, Archbishop Welby said. "It doesn't mean you let yourself die in order to love your neighbour ... but Jesus calls us to a generosity of heart and spirit, and there will be a point when we have to start giving away."

"Places like Canada have ordered five times what they need, and I am sure they will look at how that will be distributed around the world, and similarly here. I've no doubt that is on the Government's mind."

The UK Government has given £548 million (more than \$980 million) to the COVAX program, thought to be the program's largest donation. This would supply one billion doses of COVID-19 vaccines for up to 92 developing countries, with deliveries set to begin in the first quarter of 2021.

Archbishop Welby praised the Government for its "exceptional moral leadership" on COVAX, but advised that a global vaccine campaign led by fact was also needed to overcome the pandemic.

Speaking in a debate on overseas development aid in the House of Lords on 21 January, the Archbishop said: "There are three particular obstructions to overcome. One relates to the use of surplus supplies of vaccine; for example, Canada has ordered more than five times what it needs for its population."

"The second is misinformation, mythical dangers or false stories



On 16 January Salisbury Cathedral was transformed into a vaccination centre and people were vaccinated to the sound of organ music.

being deliberately spread about the vaccines. Thirdly, in many parts of the countries that will need the vaccine, there are immense logistical difficulties in distributing it."

Responding, the Minister of State for the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, Lord Ahmad, said that the UK had not over-ordered and would be imploring other countries to look at fair distribution through COVAX.

He agreed that misinformation on approved vaccines was "highly regrettable" and must be combated with clear information. He promised that logistics would be addressed through "training and by ensuring that front-line healthcare workers in the field in developing parts of the world are vaccinated first".

Prime Minister Boris Johnson told the House of Commons on 27 January that – to "honour the memory" of the 100,000 people who had died – the Government had "launched the biggest vaccination program in British history".

"We are on track to achieve our goal of offering a first dose to

everyone in the top four priority groups by the middle of February," Mr Johnson said. "I can also reassure the House that all current evidence shows that both the vaccines we are administering remain effective against the new variant."

**"Being generous to nations that could not afford the vaccine was fulfilling Christ's teaching to love your neighbour as yourself."**

There was not yet enough evidence, however, to indicate when current restrictions might be lifted, he said, although this may be clearer "by mid-February". Plans would more likely be pub-

lished when Parliament returned from recess on 22 February. "As we inoculate more people hour by hour this is the time to hold our nerve in the end game of the battle against the virus."

In his interview on the *Today* program, Archbishop Welby defended the decision by the authorities at some churches and cathedrals, including Canterbury Cathedral, to close their doors and not offer the building as vaccination centre. Those that had the capacity were distributing vaccines only if it had been deemed safe to do so, he said.

"The buildings may be closed, but the church is incredibly open. The clergy are exhausted, but continuing to serve their communities, reaching out to the bereaved in the most extraordinary way. I've never been so grateful for our clergy across the country."

Some larger churches have been opened as vaccination clinics, while clerics are among those who have been trained to administer the vaccine. Canon Sue Clarke, a retired hospital consultant and retired self-supporting minister

who is currently ministering in south London, re-registered with the General Medical Council and trained online. She has so far vaccinated 200 people in the local Baptist church hall. She described it as a "profoundly moving experience."

"A number of parishioners were surprised to see me in scrubs wielding a syringe; other parishioners were there as volunteers, guiding patients through the process and keeping everyone cheerful, despite the freezing temperatures inside the hall with the exit doors wide open," she said.

"The community came together as patients, GP-practice professionals, and volunteers to begin the work of protecting us all from infection."

• Archbishop Welby received his first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine on 16 January. He was eligible to receive the vaccine as a healthcare chaplaincy volunteer at the central London St Thomas' Hospital, opposite his Lambeth Palace official residence. He has been volunteering at the hospital during the pandemic, offering spiritual care and support to patients, staff and visitors as part of the National Health Service (NHS) chaplaincy team.

"I want to encourage everyone to get the Covid-19 vaccine when they are invited", Archbishop Welby said. "Staff across the NHS, and health workers across the world, are under immense pressure on the front lines of this pandemic. They deserve not just our admiration but our support – and getting the vaccine when we have the opportunity is something we can all do to help relieve the burden on them."

"It has been a privilege to volunteer at St Thomas' over the past year. Chaplains here and across the country are doing a vital job of providing spiritual and pastoral care to patients, staff and relatives at this acutely painful and difficult time."

"The rapid development of the vaccine is an answer to prayer – and it is central to the recovery from this terrible pandemic. Jesus Christ calls us to love our neighbour as ourselves. Getting the vaccine is part of that commandment: we can show our love for each other by keeping each other safe from this terrible disease. To everyone in this country and across the world, I want to say please, please accept the invitation to get the jab when it comes – and encourage everyone around you to do the same."

Meanwhile, three Church of England cathedrals are joining government efforts to vaccinate all adults in the country by the end of September. Lichfield, Salisbury and Blackburn cathedrals are amongst 10 mass COVID vaccination centres that have opened in England.

Church Times, with ACNS



Archbishop Justin Welby received his first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine on 16 January. He was eligible to receive the vaccine as a healthcare chaplaincy volunteer at the central London St Thomas' Hospital, opposite his Lambeth Palace official residence. He has been volunteering at the hospital during the pandemic, offering spiritual care and support to patients, staff and visitors as part of the National Health Service (NHS) chaplaincy team.

# President Biden starts inauguration day with Mass at historically significant cathedral

**P**RESIDENT JOE BIDEN BEGAN the day of his inauguration with a Mass at one of the most historically important Catholic Churches in Washington.

The Cathedral of St Matthew the Apostle is less than a mile away from the White House, and a place Mr Biden knows well. During his tenure as Vice President he would sometimes quietly drop in for Mass there. It is also the Cathedral where President John F Kennedy's funeral was held, and where Pope Francis delivered a homily during a trip to Washington in 2015.

Mr Biden is only the second Catholic president in the history of the United States, and has often spoke about his faith giving him hope and strength during dark times, especially after his wife and daughter were killed in a car accident in 1973 only days before he was to begin his first term as a US Senator, and after his son Beau's death from brain cancer in 2015.

Mr Biden and his wife Jill were joined by to-be Vice President Kamala Harris and her husband Doug Emhoff, as well as Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell,

**"Mr Biden is only the second Catholic president in the history of the United States, and has often spoke about his faith giving him hope and strength during dark times ..."**

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, and Senator Charles Schumer.

The Revd Kevin O'Brien, the president of Santa Clara University, delivered the homily.

"Let all of us hear the good news today: The Lord is near, so no need



President Joe Biden.

to worry or to be afraid," O'Brien said. "One of the surest signs of God's nearness to us [is] the people whom God sends our way."

O'Brien also offered a reminder

of "the Lord's promise, so beautifully proclaimed in the second reading from Paul's letter to the Philippians (chap. 4, verses 4-9): 'The Lord is near. Have no anxiety

at all, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, make your requests known to God. ... Then the God of peace will be with you."

## Trump's religious allies and critics condemn Capitol riots

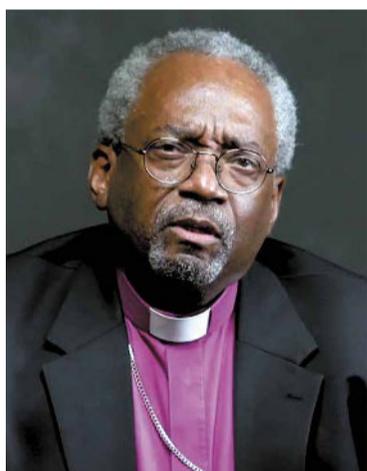
**AMERICAN FAITH** leaders from across the political spectrum have condemned the 6 January Washington D.C. riots which left hundreds injured and five dead, including a Capitol police officer.

Speaking on the Friday following the riots, Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church Michael Curry implored Americans to choose community instead of "chaos".

"This past Wednesday, ... a monument to democracy, the Capitol of the United States of America was desecrated and violated with violence by vandals. Lives were lost. A nation was wounded. Democracy itself was threatened," Bishop Curry said.

"In the moment of a national crisis, a moment of great danger, ... a people must decide, 'Who shall we be?'"

"I want to submit that the way



Bishop Michael Curry.

of love that leads to beloved community is the only way of hope for humanity. Consider the alternative. The alternative is chaos, not community. The alternative is the abyss of anarchy, of chaos, of hatred, of bigotry, of violence, and

that alternative is unthinkable. We have seen nightmarish visions of that alternative."

A number of President Trump's religious allies also lined up to

condemn the riots, although many compared what happened at the Capitol to previous protests by left-wing protestors.

**"I want to submit that the way of love that leads to beloved community is the only way of hope for humanity."**

Close Trump-ally and Dallas megachurch pastor The Revd Robert Jeffress tweeted: "Disobeying and assaulting police is a sin whether it's done by Antifa or angry Republicans", adding in an email to Associated Press

that "it is especially important that those of us who claim to be Christians are consistent in condemning all anarchy, regardless of the ideology behind it".

Echoing those sentiments, CEO and President of Samaritan's Purse and the Billy Graham Evangelical Association, Franklin Graham, said: "I do not support violence from the right or the left. Our country is in trouble. We need God's healing and God's help."

Stalwart supporter of President Trump, The Revd John Hagee of Cornerstone Church in San

Antonio, offered perhaps the greatest rebuke from among the former president's allies, calling the riots "an un-American abomination and disgrace to our democracy".

"There is nothing patriotic about storming our Capitol," he said. There is nothing honourable about physically attacking our institutions of government."

Hundreds of supporters of former President Donald Trump stormed the United State Capitol after an inflammatory speech by the president, vandalising and looting the building on the day that Congress was set to formalise President Joe Biden's electoral college victory. Mr Trump has been impeached for the second time for "incitement of insurrection" by Congress, although it is expected the Senate will not convict him.

See viewpoint on page 18.

## Nigerian killings of Christians must stop, Barnabas Fund tells Prime Minister Morrison

**MORE THAN** two million Nigerian Christians have been displaced and at least 8400 murdered since 2015, according to an open letter to Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison from international charity Barnabas Fund.

The letter, which can be read at [SaveNigerianChristians.org](http://SaveNigerianChristians.org), said that ethno-religious cleansing by Islamic militants had accelerated in the past six years.

Jihadi Boko Haram militants and armed Fulani herdsman had left thousands of victims maimed, burned, kidnapped or

forced to flee, it said.

The chief executive of the Fund's Australian arm, Ashley Saunders, said in December that the Nigerian Government's "indifference" to the persecution should not be ignored by Australia.

He said the persecution should be investigated by the Commonwealth Heads of Government.

"Please join our impassioned plea to Mr Morrison to consider diplomatic pressure and policy responses to the Nigerian authorities' inadequate protection of Christians, and



Photo: [www.savenigerianchristians.org](http://www.savenigerianchristians.org)

their failure to bring perpetrators to justice," Mr Saunders said.

"It must be a priority to protect these persecuted people as early as possible."

Mr Saunders said the slaughter was not mere tribal violence. The religious motivations of the perpetrators to drive out Christians from northern Nigeria were well-known.

"Local observers identify it as a campaign of ethno-religious cleansing," he said.

"Please add your voice for Nigeria's Christians at [SaveNigerianChristians.org](http://SaveNigerianChristians.org)"

# Your say on Conversion bill and a life of service

## Conversion bill discriminatory to same-sex-attracted and to others

By the time you read this we may have a new law in Victoria prohibiting "Conversion Practices". What would be banned would not be changing faith, but the receiving or giving of any assistance to change "gender identity".

In the 2019 synod a motion was passed, amended significantly along the way, opposing "Conversion Therapy". The amendment expressed support for those "seeking to live in accordance with biblical teaching".

Almost unnoticed before Christmas, the Bill passed the lower house, with no debate and little media comment. Opponents were characterised as extreme conservatives. The bill will be considered in the upper house soon, if this has not already occurred. The legislation as proposed has major negative implications for helping professionals, teachers, parents, churches and same-sex-attracted people, young and old.

The synod motion opposed "Conversion Therapy", something which everyone opposes today. But the bill, as it has or could become law, prohibits anything that could be represented as a "Conversion Practice", and sets draconian penalties. Freedom of speech, freedom of religion, parental and professional judgement, and indi-

vidual rights are each jeopardised here.

The challenge for proponents of this bill comes from those who are same-sex-attracted and troubled by their situation. Those who are same-sex-attracted and who are comfortable in their situation would be afforded a full range of rights, but in contrast, those who are same-sex-attracted and troubled by their situation appear to be denied any right to seek assistance. It is hard to see much equality or justice about this situation, and to see how the legislation is not highly discriminatory.

In passing the bill, as it stands, the Parliament is in danger of legislating a value judgement between these two groups of same-sex-attracted people. This should worry everyone.

**David Powys**  
Bentleigh

See Viewpoints on pages 19 and 20.

## A Flight of Faith

The funeral service for the Late Revd Geoff Simondson, aged 99, was a poignant reminder of faithfulness to our Lord Jesus' Great Commission to go into all the world and make disciples. An RAAF pilot in World War II, Geoff served on the Council for Mission Aviation Fellowship from



The late Revd Geoff Simondson.

its formation in 1947 till he retired from active ministry and MAF in 1992. He then approached me with a request to consider becoming his replacement on the Council. As he rightly said, there was a blessing both ways to involvement in a multi-denominational, multi-national Mission that took the Gospel into the remotest places on earth.

Nearly 75 years have passed since Geoff and wife Joyce helped paint the canvas wings of MAF's first airplane, a Tiger Moth, for the maiden Flight of Faith.

MAF continues to be a blessing to many in desperate need and isolation. Hundreds of missionary families and thousands of villagers across the world thank God for faithful servants like Geoff who

dedicate their lives and support others to His service.

**Michael Goodluck**  
by email

## Revd Geoff Simondson – A great encourager

The Lord uses many people of many types and backgrounds to help us to grow in Christian faith and obedience. One very important person in my Christian growth was Revd Geoff Simondson, who died recently aged ninety-nine.

I first met Geoff when he was vicar of St James Glen Iris in the late 1970s. I was a new Christian and had just moved from Sydney to Melbourne. I was warmly welcomed at St. James, especially by members of the young adult evening congregation. I was prepared for Confirmation by Geoff and confirmed at St James. One of his great gifts was quiet encouragement of others. He encouraged many young adults and others in all sorts of Christian ministries. In the 1980s he encouraged us to teach Sunday school, lead youth groups and Bible study groups, to lead music, prayers and services as well as preaching. I began my preaching ministry with Geoff's support. He prompted us to be involved in a door-to-door Gospel outreach program. He encouraged young people to join vestry (par-

ish council) and to help organise church camps. A group of us wanted to start monthly family services on Sunday morning and Geoff supported us in that. From that cohort of young adults came two CMS missionaries and three people who went into ordained ministry as well as numerous other Christian leaders. I am very thankful to the Lord Jesus for the life and ministry of Geoff Simondson.

"Well done good and faithful servant".

**Revd Geoff Milton**

See Obituary on page 8.



Over to You is a forum for civil and respectful dialogue about material published in TMA, or issues affecting the church or society more broadly.

Please email letters (preferably no longer than 250 words) to

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Letters may be edited for clarity, length and grammar.

## Ancient church community 'key for the Christian faith today' – from page 6

non-believing artists producing a play about God. Many came to faith as a result.

Fourth, Antioch showed "the joy of working as a team".

Barnabas could have taken over that ministry by himself, Mr Breuel said, but he travelled to recruit a teacher, Paul, who had a passion for reaching non-Jews.

"At Antioch, Paul and Barnabas form a bond, serving God together," he said.

"That's one of my favourite aspects of ministry: doing it with others.

"In our living room we have pictures of our family and our kids. But at a corner with have pictures of our beloved church family.

"These people are like family to us. Half of the joy of ministry is doing it with others."

Fifth, Antioch showed "the beauty of a community of prayer".

"They worshipped, fasted, and heard the Holy Spirit say: 'Set apart two of your key leaders for the dream that has been burning in their hearts. I have called them to that work.'

In the same way, evangelists today must "seek God, fast, pray and listen to the Spirit".

In his session on 'Revival in our Nations', Mr Breuel spoke of the importance of Moses as an example for leaders.

Moses had a difficult upbringing and spent years in the desert "understanding his story, addressing his anger, wrestling with the contradiction he was born into and the trauma in his life".

The desert was a place all of us had to visit, Mr Breuel said.

"Joseph did it, in a prison. David did it. Paul did it, in Arabia. Even Jesus did it.

"We all have to examine our stories and deal with the hurts of the past. Ask



ourselves: 'How did I become this person? What did I inherit? What issues was I born into? How did I react to them? What is my calling in all this?'"

In his own case, Mr Breuel said, it was the realisation that his school friends were not really Christian, despite identifying as Catholic.

"As a teenager, something in me said: 'This is not OK. We need to do something about this.' Over time it led to me saying: 'I'll go start a church in Rome.'

"We all have to come to terms with this. What issues burn in my heart? Why are they there? How can I address them well?"

"Moses spent decades with these questions."

Moses' experience at the burning bush also showed the heart of God, Mr Breuel said. God said he had seen the suffering of the Israelites and would come and rescue them.

"That's the heart that meets Moses' heart in the desert, when God looks for a man who thirsts for justice, even a man in the desert, even a man with a checkered past, and sends him back to his nation.

"A God with open eyes, with open ears, who looks for men and women who see the world with his eyes, a God whose core business is redemption."

Mr Breuel urged believers to pray: "Lord, use me in a redemptive way. Help me look at suffering, to not look away. Use me to heal the nations."

Read more about the Breuel's ministry on page 7.

## Missionary tells of dealing with COVID and Islam in Afghanistan – from page 7

But the impression created by the missionaries was such that they have been invited back by the Taliban.

"The local Taliban commander is saying to some of our staff who still live locally but who work for other people now: 'If you ever wanted to come back and do more, you'd have a free path.' We would love you to come back and do that kind of project in other places because look at the impact of it.

"I wish we had the people and the capacity to be able to do that."

Having said that, Mark said, Afghanistan was "a restricted country in terms of Christian work". "It's not somewhere where you go there overtly and use the 'm' word about what you do."

Afghanistan was a "relational culture" – people were very hospitable.

But "actually getting to a stage where somebody will trust you to open up about what's on their heart is a [much] longer journey", he said.

"Hospitality is important but trust in other humans, particularly somebody who's outside your own family group, is difficult and has been more fractured over years of warfare and hardship and poverty."

It was a country that required a long-term commitment, he said.

His organisation was trying to do the job correctly and fix any mistakes.



"It's not a 'disappear after a year' type of thing," he said. "It's not a rapid fruitful environment where you're going to be able to (bring about) loads of people converting. That's not on you, that's on the Spirit of God on how people's hearts are moved and brought to him."

Mark, the director of the organisation, lived and worked in Afghanistan with his family for 16 years.

A renewables engineer by background, for most of that time he worked in community development projects in rural villages – helping people get safe water and build latrines, grow more food, make a living from their skills, teach each other to read and make decisions as a community.

One project involved rehabilitating a water pipeline.

"We'd teach one or two people in each village how to be a master plumber and actually go in and fix pipes."

Another village drank from a river with "nasty water". "They're now all drinking from clean water. That village is now full of medium-sized little trees, it's become greened."

**"Getting to a stage where somebody will trust you to open up about what's on their heart is a [much] longer journey."**

# Please, no more 'white Christs'!

**We domesticate and distort Christ when we make Him conform to our own culture and disenfranchise others when we make Him in our cultural image, writes Peter Adam.**

**IT IS TIME FOR US TO DISCOURAGE** the use of white representations of Christ in Bibles, educational materials, pictures, stained-glass windows and statues. We should also discourage the use of white representations of Mary, Joseph, the disciples, people of the Old Testament and most of the saints. (St George was not English!).

I am most concerned about white Christs. For white Christs - whether as baby, boy, adult, crucified, risen, or ascending - are historically inaccurate, culturally insensitive and theologically heretical: Christ was not an Aryan, he was a Jew! Hitler not only opposed the Jews, but also the Jewishness of Christianity and the Christian church (Zion Baptist Church in Berlin had to change its name!). But as Karl Barth wrote: "The Word did not simply become any 'flesh' ... but Jewish flesh" [*Church Dogmatics* 4/1 166]. In the Incarnation, the Word was made Jewish flesh, of Mary, his Jewish mother.

For Australia's Indigenous nations, white people are powerful reminders of past and present expressions of racism and oppression, and so a white representation of Christ must be hard to swallow. [See Noel Loos, *White Christ Black Cross: The emergence of a Black church*, Aboriginal Studies Press, 2007]. Indigenous people have been made to submit to white people: white representations of Christ implicitly invite them to worship a white Saviour and Son of God.

We aim to be a multi-cultural and multi-ethnic church, but every white Christ contradicts this value. White Christs are an expression of the cultural imperialism of northern European culture, and

they reflect unconscious and unintended but powerful racism.

We cannot escape the historical particularity of the Incarnation, of God's Salvation History, nor of the

Biblical revelation. To de-historicise any of these is to misrepresent them, and so to distort our faith. It looks as if we are claiming ownership of Christianity, making God in our own image, and of misrepresenting our Lord's humanity. We domesticate and distort Christ when we make him conform to our own culture. We disenfranchise others when we make him in our cultural image.

culture, especially in a multi-ethnic and multi-cultural world.

Representations of Christ as if were 'incarnated' in a particular culture, time, place and artistic style are attractive, because it makes the point that Christ is close to people of that culture, time and place. See some moving examples at <https://thejesusquestion.org/2015/12/25/more-nativity-paintings-from-around-the-world/> and at <https://thejesusquestion.org/2015/12/25/more-nativity-paintings-from-around-the-world/>.

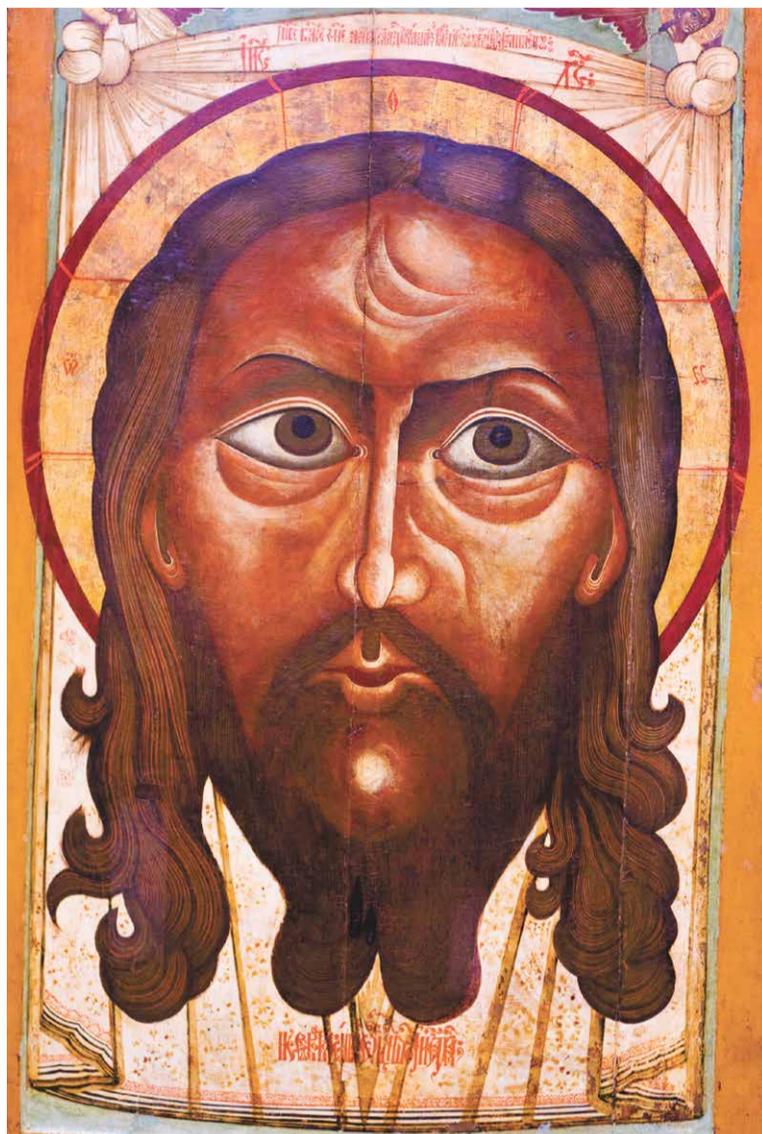
It is more problematic in bi-cultural or multi-cultural settings. Here the choice of representation in one style gives the impression that Christ is close to people who look like that and remote from people who don't. The artistic "incarnation" must not overshadow the historic Incarnation. White people may be attracted to a white Christ: others may be alienated.

We need to keep the same issue in mind in our Bible translations: We should not make the Bible sound so contemporary that it loses its original cultural moorings.

When we say the Creeds, we affirm the eternal reality of the historical particularity of the historic Incarnation of our Saviour and Lord.

I realise it is unrealistic to imagine that we could remove or invisibly mend our existing white Christs, white Marys and all the rest. But we could agree not to use any more white Christs. Christ challenged us to make disciples from people of "all nations" [Matthew 28:19]. Bonhoeffer challenged us to be "A church for others". We must do our best to avoid making Christ and his church captive to white culture. Please, no more white Christs!

The Revd Canon Dr Peter Adam is Vicar Emeritus of St Jude's Carlton and a former Principal of Ridley College.



**"For Australia's Indigenous nations ... a white representation of Christ must be hard to swallow."**

**"We domesticate and distort Christ when we make him conform to our own culture ... especially in a multi-ethnic and multi-cultural world."**

It is easy to see the bad effects of people doing this in the past. The German Reformer Martin Luther translated the Bible into German, which was a wonderful gift to God's church. The translated Bible is one of the wonders of Christianity, as God speaks to us in our mother tongue. Lucas Cranach provided the illustrations for Luther's Bible, and portrayed the Bible characters as if they were contemporary 16th Century Germans. They are beautiful and powerful images ... but ultimately misleading. Christ was incarnate for Germans, as for people of every time, place and culture, but he was not a German of the 16th Century, but a Jew of the 1st Century! We must not domesticate him to our



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Applications to David Powys, Vicar, [bentleighvicar@bigpond.com](mailto:bentleighvicar@bigpond.com), closing 28 February. Enquiries 0491 723 174



## 2021 Sharwood Lecture in Church Law:

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The fourth Robin Sharwood Lecture will be delivered by the Honourable Justice Debra Mullins AO. Justice Mullins is a judge of the Court of Appeal of the Supreme Court of Queensland. Since 2014 she has been the Chancellor of the Diocese of Brisbane, having previously served as Deputy Chancellor since 2004. Justice Mullins is the Chair of the Church Law Commission of the General Synod of the Anglican Church of Australia.

#### DATE:

Melbourne Tuesday 16 March 2021 7:30pm, Craig Auditorium, Gateway Building, Trinity College, 100 Royal Parade, Parkville, Melbourne

#### RSVP:

Friday 12 March 2021

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# Little appeal in Tribunal majority opinion on same-sex blessings

**Melbourne Anglican lay minister and General Synod member Fiona McLean says the Appellate Tribunal majority last November has left it to synods to resolve the theological issues it has created.**

**I**N NOVEMBER LAST YEAR, THE Appellate Tribunal of the Anglican Church of Australia (ACA) released its opinions on the Wangaratta and Newcastle moves towards the blessing of same-sex unions. There was a majority (five out of the six members) and a dissenting opinion in both cases. Some Anglicans may see the majority opinion as a significant step forward in affirmation of same-sex attracted people in our Church. However, whatever one's position on the theological issues, the majority opinions are deeply dissatisfying and leave much unresolved.

The majority opinion of the Tribunal was that Wangaratta's regulations allowing the blessing of civil marriages (whether heterosexual or homosexual) was not inconsistent with our national Anglican Constitution. It also concluded that the Synod of Newcastle had authority to amend its diocesan clergy discipline regime to exempt from church discipline clergy who bless a same-sex marriage or enter into one themselves. From these conclusions, you could be mistaken for thinking that the Tribunal endorsed same-sex marriage and same-sex sexual practice. In fact, the Tribunal goes out of its way not to do this.

Firstly, the Tribunal repeatedly stresses that it is not permissible in the Anglican Church to solemnise a same-sex marriage: "No one argues in the Reference that it is presently lawful for a same-sex marriage to be solemnised in the ACA ... [It is] common ground that the Wangaratta service does not solemnise marriage" (paragraph 70; see also paras. 37, 54, 124, Wangaratta Opinion). The ceremony that Wangaratta wishes to use merely "blesses the couple" (para. 37).

Secondly, the Tribunal accepts that marriage in the ACA is exclusively between a man and a woman. "The canon law of the ACA presently restricts solemnisation of matrimony to the wedding of one man and one woman" (para. 39; see also 72, 73). For example, an Anglican clergy person cannot conduct a same-sex marriage - only "bless" it afterwards. The majority also acknowledge that the view that marriage has been between one man and one woman has been "remarkably and entirely consistent through the last two millennia" (para. 189). Accordingly, as they concede, "the Liturgy Commission's *Blessing of a Civil Marriage*" - the one adapted by Wangaratta to bless same-sex relationships - "is deliberately framed so as to be confined to the blessing of marriages between a man and a woman" (para. 65).

regarded by the Anglican Church as sinful. How, then, can a same-sex civil marriage be blessed? The Tribunal majority offers the very unlikely solution that same-sex civil marriages may not, in fact,

Church teaches that persistent, unrepentant sin precludes a person from God's kingdom" and that sexual immorality "is as liable to the judgment of God as other sins (James 2:10)". "All sin requires

majority (33 out of 40) of the submissions to the Tribunal in these matters, and in accord with the unanimous reports received from the House of Bishops and Board of Assessors.

In her clear and helpful summary (at para. 27), she concludes that the Wangaratta regulations are invalid because they are "inconsistent with the Fundamental Declarations, as the doctrine of the Church is that marriage is only permitted between one woman and one man; Scripture teaches that same-sex marriage is not permitted; and the witness of the Church Universal is opposed to same sex practice". She points out that the regulations "seek to bless same-sex civil unions which would not qualify for Christian marriage"; and that they "seek to bless sinful practices, contrary to the Church's teaching that persistence in sexual immorality endangers salvation".

So given these opinions from the Appellate Tribunal, where does this leave us?

It is both illogical and impractical for us to seek to accommodate diametrically opposite points of view on marriage and sexuality: one saying that homosexual sexual practice can be good and holy and therefore blessed by God, and the other saying that it is sinful and incompatible with following Jesus. Some resolution is needed: and it is not fair or appropriate to expect a body such as the Appellate Tribunal to resolve this theological issue for us. As the Tribunal itself repeatedly says (e.g. para. 226, 238), General Synod (which meets in May/June this year) has a significant role to play - as do local diocesan synods, including our Melbourne Synod. We will have the opportunity in these forums to respond to the Tribunal opinions, and to try to resolve the way forward.

I encourage all clergy and lay synod members to think and pray and inform themselves about the issues at hand, and to read for themselves the Opinions of the Appellate Tribunal (which can be found here: <https://anglican.org.au/tribunals-appellate-tribunal-227/>) and the opinions of the House of Bishops and the Board of Assessors (which can be found at the bottom of this page: <https://anglican.org.au/governance/tribunals/appellate-tribunal-current-matters/appellate-tribunal-reference/>).

Fiona McLean is a lifelong Anglican, who works as a lay minister at St Jude's, Carlton, and is also a parishioner at St Stephen's, Greythorn, with her husband and children. She serves on Melbourne Synod, Archbishop-in-Council, General Synod, and the Standing Committee of General Synod, as well as on the Board of Gafcon Australia ([www.gafconaustralia.org](http://www.gafconaustralia.org)) and the Executive of the New Cranmer Society.



Thirdly, the majority opinion does not comment on the morality or otherwise of homosexual sexual practice. They acknowledge that throughout the history of the church, homosexual practice has been regarded as sinful: for example, in the early church, "the 'crime' of sexual immorality encompassed any sexual activity outside of heterosexual marriage,

be sexual in nature. In para. 27, it says that there is "the very real possibility that some marriages will not involve sexual intimacy" (para. 27; see also para. 30). In para. 200, it asserts that "it is, we understand, common ground ... that some same-sex marriages will be celibate". Similarly, in para. 249, it suggests that some same-sex marriages "will be chaste".

repentance and forgiveness, with a view to following a life of obedience." In response to the question asked by the Tribunal of the House of Bishops, "Do you see any doctrinal impediment or difficulty with the baptism of a child of a same sex married couple ...?", the Bishops' answer includes the statement that there "is certainly a difficulty, if not an impediment, when the parents are living, without repentance, in a manner which is contrary to the faith and practice of the Church".

Similarly, the Board of Assessors affirms that the "Anglican Church of Australia does teach ... that persistence in sexual immorality precludes a person from salvation in Christ Jesus ... Scripture condemns homosexual activity and the belief that it is morally permissible for any Christian".

In fact, the view that homosexual sexual practice is contrary to the Bible and impermissible for Anglicans is not an "extreme" view, but one expressed by our bishops, elected clergy, and official Anglican documents and formularies.

In fairness to the Tribunal, it was not deciding whether or not same-sex marriage or same-sex sexual practice was moral; rather, it was advising on the Constitutional question as to whether the Wangaratta and Newcastle synods had power to legislate the way they did. However, to conclude that a Diocesan synod has legislative power to do something is not the same as endorsing such actions as authentically Anglican or Christian. Nevertheless, even recognising their limited scope, the majority opinion of the Tribunal is inconsistent and confused.

In contrast, the minority opinion in both matters, by Ms Gillian Davidson, is clear, logical and consistent with historical Anglicanism. Her opinion also accords with the

**"To conclude that a Diocesan synod has legislative power to do something is not the same as endorsing such actions as authentically Anglican or Christian."**

which included homosexual activity" (para. 221). Nevertheless, they "are not expressing any opinion as to whether marriage between persons of the same sex is consistent with or contrary to the Scriptures" (para. 214); and "This Tribunal will not be driven to 'endorsing' any particular scriptural position on the matter of (blessing) same-sex marriage" (para. 237). They conclude their opinion by expressly rejecting the suggestion that they have "endorsed the formal blessing of homosexual sexual practice which is contrary to the teaching of the Church" (para. 290).

You might be feeling a bit confused at this point; and with good reason. The Tribunal has concluded that it is acceptable for Anglicans to bless a same-sex relationship that is referred to as a marriage, despite the fact that the only form of marriage recognised by the Anglican Church is between a man and a woman, and that homosexual sexual practice is

This seems a very odd and implausible justification for blessing same-sex marriages. It implicitly imposes the expectation of celibacy on homosexual couples - but not on heterosexual couples. If same-sex relationships can be blessed only if the couple are chaste, surely the couple whose relationship is being blessed should be informed of this restriction! Further, it seems very odd to call a relationship that is intentionally and permanently non-sexual a marriage.

Another reason for disquiet is that, on both theological and pastoral grounds, the majority opinion does not sit well with the unanimous views of both the House of Bishops and the Board of Assessors. The Tribunal identifies as "extreme claims" the view that homosexual practice is sinful and can debar people from God's Kingdom (para. 83).

But the House of Bishops' report states clearly: "The Anglican

# FAITH SEEKING UNDERSTANDING

The Revd Dr Michael F. Bird is Academic Dean and Lecturer in Theology at Ridley College in Parkville.



## Christians and dangers of conspiracy theories

**Picking truth over tribe, helped by some biblical teachings, will inoculate Christians and all Australians against buying into conspiracy theories that have recently proved so damaging in the US, says Michael Bird.**

**WE HAVE RECENTLY SEEN** the US Capitol stormed by people spurred on by then President Donald Trump with the belief that the 2020 presidential election was either rigged or stolen from them, which in turn justifies them marching on the Capitol building with all of their vitriol and violence. The rioters were filled with QAnon logos and Christian signage as if Christianity and conspiracy theories go together. Many of us were appalled at the violence, at the attack on a democratic institution and the interjection of Christian faith in the middle of it. It was a horrible mix of civil religion and white nationalism. But before we look down on our American friends, we must ask whether we, as Australians and as Christians, might end up being similarly duped one day.

You have to remember that conspiracy theories are how one group of elites without power attacks another group of elites with power by tricking the masses into thinking that they've been ripped off or lied to. As then so now, conspiracy theories are a great way to mass a following by repeating the story that you've uncovered the secret that our enemies have been hiding, and it means that everyone has been tricked and is destined to be powerless unless they act now.



**“Those who buy into conspiracy theories have allowed themselves, consciously or not, to become tools of untruth.”**

In this vein, Trump had been stirring up his base by saying that they are victims of a conspiracy to steal the presidency. But remember that US Democrats have been peddling their own conspiracies about Trump for the past four

years. They argued that Trump was illegitimately elected and that Russian interference and collaboration with Trump's people are the reason why Hillary Clinton lost the 2016 election. Yes, Russian

twitter bots did push pro-Trump ideas, but Russia's objective was not to support Trump as much as it was to create chaos – Trump was just a means to that end. The reason why Clinton lost had nothing to do with Russia and everything

to do with the tarnished Clinton brand, her demonising of the white working-class, her continuation of policies that would send manufacturing jobs overseas and her refusal to safeguard America's porous borders.

Before we thank God that we are not like America, keep in mind that Australia has its own share of conspiracy theories. At the moment, I would say that two biggest conspiracy theories in Australia both pertain to religion.

First, if Twitter is anything to go by, that Hillsong Church in Sydney is secretly taking over the Australian Government with more than half of the Cabinet allegedly being members of Hillsong. Second, reports that billions of dollars from the Vatican were transferred to Australia, partly to assist with funding the case against Cardinal George Pell. Beyond those two conspiracies, I am sure we could easily find other theories related to COVID-19 and vaccinations.

How does one avoid getting suckered by conspiracy theories? I have a few suggestions!

First, watch out for confirmation bias. If someone is telling you something bad that you like hearing, ask yourself why you like it. Does it confirm your view that a certain person or a certain group is wicked by exaggerating the nature of their infraction? Beware of bad news about people you already think are bad. That's not just bait, it's ideological crack and cocaine from demagogues peddling conspiracy theories and trying to attract followers.

Second, get out of your echo chamber. Whether it is your circle of friends, social media bubble or preferred news sites, make sure you have a diverse diet of news coverage and commentary. You may not like the News Corp rags, *The Guardian*, the ABC or Fairfax (now Nine) press, but if you want to be genuinely informed rather than just have your presuppositions confirmed, then you need to have a diverse diet of sources for forming an opinion.

Third, practise discernment. Don't believe fantastic stories without evidence. Ask about sources, evidence, exaggeration and reliability. Think about another possibility or consider a wider perspective. Paul put it well: “Test all things and hold onto that which is good” (1 Thess 5:21).

Fourth, pick truth over tribe. Irrespective of where you sit on the political or religious spectrum, truth is not what is good for my tribe, beneficial for our agendas and promotes our cause. Truth is what is true. Those who buy into conspiracy theories have allowed themselves, consciously or not, to become tools of untruth. As Christians we should never fear the truth because all truth is God's truth. As Jesus taught: “You will know the truth and the truth will set you free” (John 8:32).

So, to be inoculated against conspiracy theories, whether from the loopy left or rancorous right, remember your biases, get out of your news bubble, practise discernment and obey the truth. Or, as Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn famously said: “Live not by lies!”

## Chief Communications Officer

The Anglican Diocese of Melbourne is seeking a **Chief Communications Officer** responsible for developing and delivering the communications and marketing plan of the Diocese including social media, media liaison, strategy and advice for the Archbishop, Bishops and other Diocesan leaders. The role leads the Communications Department and the team that produces the monthly newspaper *TMA* (The Melbourne Anglican) and the *TMA* website, social media.

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# The US needs a revolution – in consciousness

by Roland Ashby

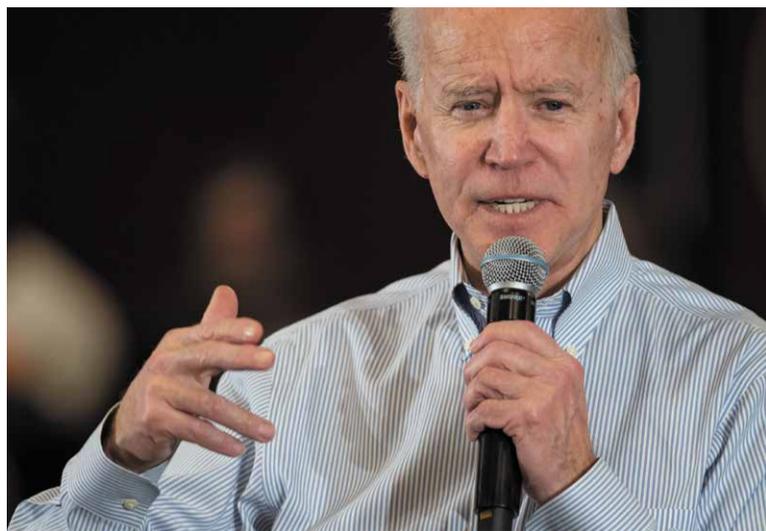
**P**RESIDENT BIDEN FACES enormous challenges: not just COVID-19, climate change, racial injustice, and social and economic inequality, but also a deep sickness of pandemic proportions – the fear and loathing of closed hearts and minds. Not something that can easily be legislated against!

During the deadly assault on the Capitol on 6 January, one protestor described it as a “revolution”. Whether revolution or not, it does cry out for a *revolution in consciousness*. This spiritual revolution has actually been going on for millennia, with the Buddha and Jesus having been among its most prominent leaders.

What author and theologian Matthew Fox calls “the reptilian brain” – the dualistic thinking of “I’m right, you’re wrong; I win, you lose” is tragically alive and well today in our civil discourse, and has been on naked display during the Trump presidency.

Spiritual revolutionaries for millennia have been seeking a transformation of consciousness, which happens when we tune into what hermit Maggie Ross calls “Deep Mind”, a deep level of consciousness in which we find the source of the “better angels of our nature”, as that great Republican president Abraham Lincoln described them. Buddhists would call this source, this deeper consciousness, the Buddha mind or Buddha nature, while for Christians it’s the Christ mind or Christ consciousness.

Mystics would say this consciousness is to be discovered in silent contemplation in the “cave



President Joe Biden.

**“Spiritual revolutionaries for millennia have been seeking a transformation of consciousness.”**

of the heart”, where you encounter pure being itself, beyond the dualistic/reptilian mind and grasping, fearful ego. What might be described as the “demons of our nature”.

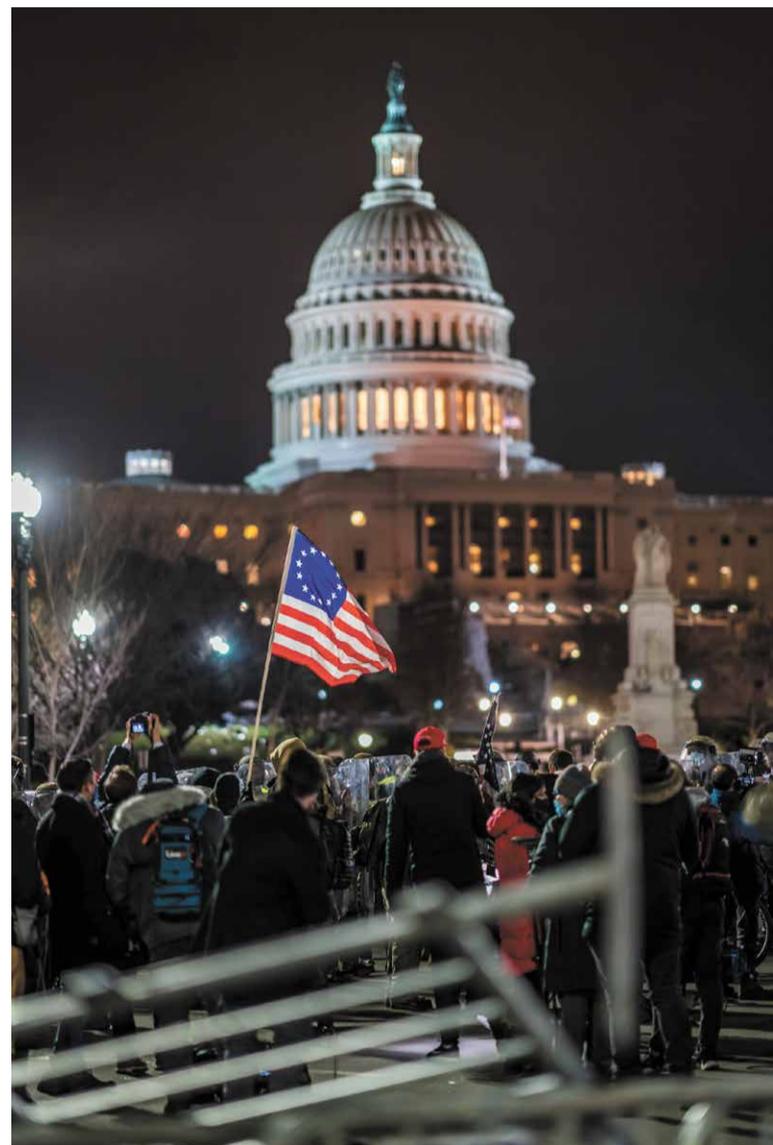
Pope Francis, in his 2015 address to Congress, named the Trappist monk Thomas Merton as one of four great Americans (the others being Abraham Lincoln, Martin Luther King and Dorothy Day). Merton described the encounter with pure being, pure

consciousness, as one of pure love, pure compassion, pure forgiveness.

In this encounter, the sense of other people as *other* is seen as illusory, a creation of the dualistic mind and the ego. Merton lived as a hermit, devoting much of his time to silent prayer and meditation. This became the ground for a revolutionary consciousness of deep, intrinsic union with all of human life, and culminated in one of his most profound epiphanies observing passers-by “shining like the sun” in the centre of a busy city:

*“It was as if I suddenly saw the secret beauty of their hearts... the core of their reality, the person that each one is in God’s eyes. If only they could see themselves as they really are... There would be no more war, no more hatred, no more cruelty, no more greed.”*

In this vision, this expanded consciousness, there is no division



After the violent insurrection by pro-Trump supporters.

into republican and democrat, black and white, rich and poor, believer and non-believer, gay and straight; just human beings infinitely loved and with a divine potential for infinite love.

America’s future, and the future of the human race, will depend on

whether the “better angels of our nature” will prevail, or be shouted down by the “demons of our nature”.

This first appeared on Roland’s blog, *Living Water*. See [www.thelivingwater.com.au](http://www.thelivingwater.com.au)

## Why the ‘Indigenous Voice’ proposal should be rejected

*A voice for Indigenous people entrenched in the Australian Constitution would be divisive and not unifying, warns Nigel Jackson.*

**AT THE** turn of the year in 1942-43, German pastor Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote a fragmentary essay, *After Ten Years*, in which he summed up, tersely and profoundly, insights he had gained during the previous 10 years of National Socialist government. He set out to show what are the qualities needed to withstand the onset of political tyranny and in particular how Christians should respond to its manifestation.

One vice he warned against was folly, which he saw as a moral defect whereby people make fools of themselves or allow others to make fools of them. “Folly is less common in the unsociable or the solitary,” he wrote, “than in individuals or groups who are inclined or condemned to sociability ... The upsurge of power is so terrific that it deprives men of an independent judgement.”

There is good reason to feel that a dangerous outbreak of folly has occurred in Australia at the present time concern-



**“At present we enjoy a great strategic advantage in having a politically united continent and should not let this go.”**

ing Aboriginal political issues, including the agitation for a so-called “voice” for Indigenous people. It is clear that very many well-intentioned persons, many of them Christians, have been

caught up in this movement and enthusiastically support it.

The truth is that the establishment of such a “voice”, no matter in what form, would be a backward step for this nation. It

might eventually have very serious and unpleasant consequences for Australians generally, including those having Aboriginal descent. The reasons why are glaringly obvious.

Such a change would be divisive and not unifying. It would be another move towards the establishment of a separate, Indigenous nation, which might then fall under the influence of an outside power. At present we enjoy a great strategic advantage in having a politically united continent and should not let this go.

The “voice” proposal also threatens to unjustly favour one small group of our national community at the expense of the great majority of the rest of us. It involves a serious limitation of the powers of the Parliament, that body which currently represents all Australians on an equal basis.

In an article on 22 January in *The Australian* (‘Co-design brings Voice an octave closer to success’), the prominent Jewish leader Mark Leibler, who co-chaired both the Referendum Council and the Expert Panel on Constitutional Recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians,

dismissed opponents of the proposal as “ideologically intransigent naysayers” and ignored their concerns. However, these are substantial and should not be brushed aside. It is hard not to feel that at present they are almost being censored out of the national consciousness by powerful interests.

We can cherish the unique and valuable contribution to our nation of Aboriginal history and culture; and we can initiate reasonable and just benefits for present-day descendants of the Aboriginal tribes without foolishly committing national suicide by succumbing to false accusations designed to arouse guilt and shame. We are members of a properly constituted *de iure* nation and entitled to defend the infrastructure we have inherited thanks to the arrival of the British in 1788 and the work of our forebears. Any wrongdoings unfortunately committed in the past, real, exaggerated or invented, do not invalidate this truth.

Nigel Jackson is a Melbourne writer, commentator on public affairs and member of Holy Trinity Anglican Church Upwey.

# Who pays the Bill? The dangers of Victoria's Conversion legislation

**Legislation aimed at preventing gay conversion therapy or questioning Transgender therapy or surgery for teens is a dangerous form of State overreach, warns Gordon Preece.**

**B**Y THE TIME YOU READ THIS article the *Change or Suppression (Conversion) Practices Prohibition Bill 2020* to prevent practices such as gay conversion therapy, "praying the gay away", or questioning Transgender therapy and surgery for teens will almost certainly have been passed by the Victorian Parliament. But the issues raised are very serious and need addressing, even if the horse has bolted.

Some see this bill as the most significant threat to religious freedom in living memory. Others see it as positive and progressive or have been quietly indifferent or ignorant.

Let me give some context for why this legislation is a dangerous form of State overreach and ideological indulgence threatening civil society, parental and religious liberties, and vulnerable youth.

## Synod rejects Conversion Therapy

Let's examine Motion 19 on 'Conversion Therapy', passed in a close 2018 Synod vote, with my bracketed and following comments comparing the Government's Conversion Therapy Bill:

That Synod

- a) Acknowledges that all people are made in the image of God, regardless of sexuality or gender identity. [Agreed affirmative Creation anthropology]
- b) Acknowledges the Australian Psychological Society [APS] that "strongly opposes any approach to psychological practice or research that treats [LGBTI] people as disordered, and ... attempts to change an individual's sexual orientation". [b] follows from a) if in talking about LGBTQI+ people *only*, being *intrinsically* disordered or in the Government's bill 'broken', wrongly implying more broken than heterosexuals. But 'we all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God' (Rom. 3:23), while still bearing God's image. Further, APS's professional standards are for paid members' practices, not informal, pastoral and voluntary examples of *consensual, uncoerced* prayer or counsel asked for by someone struggling with ambiguous sexual or gender, from a Bible study or youth leader, which the bill may punish.]
- c) Calls Church members to be sensitive to diverse expressions of sexuality and gender identity, to accept, validate ... those ... seeking to live ... biblical[ly] and in union with Christ and his calling



[i.e. Conversion], and to *not* recommend 'Conversion Therapy';

- d) and calls on the state government ... to ban ... 'Conversion Therapy'."

Points c) and d) need unpacking. In short, let's be careful what we ask for as the Government's legislation goes way beyond Synod's request. It risks conflating outdated, abusive "conversion therapy" with normal practices of Christian conversion, and risks outlawing "prayer", counsel and "suppression" (e.g. counselling celibacy).

**Gender not Birth Sex Certificates**  
Another Government bill effectively *suppressed* biological sex as the basic determining factor of male or female public and legal identification. *The Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration*

**"The Government's bills have gone far beyond what the 2018 Synod thought it was supporting."**

*Amendment Act 2019* removed the requirement for a person to have undergone "sex affirmation surgery" in order to alter a birth sex registration. Such gendered post-modern Gnosticism, where it's all in the mind, has immense implications for physically male use of women's only spaces such as sports facilities, toilets, pools and domestic/family violence refuges. Many feminists, from J.K. Rowling

to the Victorian Women's Guild, even some transgender persons, are gravely concerned about this denial of women's physiological reality and needs for privacy,

tion, rather than unquestioning 'affirmation'."

Lawford-Smith notes that the conversion therapy bill would eliminate the possibility of a more

security and equality. These need careful negotiation along with transgender needs.

## Why is Transgender Conversion not Conversion Therapy?

Now we've noted the literally mind-bending and body-erasing state of sex identification revealed in the reworked birth registration laws, we return to the Conversion Therapy banning legislation and the Government's ideologically blinkered refusal to include Transgender Conversion within it.

Melbourne University philosopher Holly Lawford-Smith cites evidence "that youth who claim a trans identity are often LGB, autistic, struggling with mental health issues, or have been exposed to gender identity ideology through social media or peers. If ... affirmed ... in their claimed gender identities - which ... the bill demands, ... lest [dissenting adults] be accused of 'conversion therapy' - the result could be the 'conversion' of these categories of kids 'to identify as trans, ... on a path toward puberty-blockers, cross-sex hormones, and surgeries, ... which can lead to loss of sexual function and infertility, and other long-term health risks'.

"These practices remain experimental, as the UK High Court recently determined in a case brought against Tavistock Clinic by detransitioner Kiera Bell, which found that under 16-year-olds are likely to lack the competence to consent to medical transition."

The Bell decision cited numerous studies linking trans identification with autism, e.g. 45 per cent of patients in Melbourne youth gender clinic. The high and lasting health stakes of misleading trans identifications means "there is good reason for adults involved with trans-identifying kids to approach them with cau-

**"Well-meaning but zealous politicians and therapists risk treating young people as guinea pigs in a socio-sexual experiment, where they will bear potential life-long costs of these bills."**

patient, questioning approach. Counselling a child that they may not be trans will be legally deemed a "change" or "suppression practice" subject to costly criminal charges, heavy fines and possible jail.

"That should be reason enough for LGB groups, feminist groups, parents, and anyone else concerned about ... unnecessary medicalisation of children struggling with a variety of personal, social, or mental issues to support amendments to the legislation."

But sadly, concerned, cautious parents may also pay for the Conversion Therapy Bill, such as the Australian parents whose 15-year-old was taken from their care, for wanting her to wait before undertaking hormone therapy.

## An Ideological bill for a largely now non-existent problem

No sane or humane person now supports outdated and abusive methods to change sexual orien-

tation such as the largely secular psychiatric electro-shock or other aversion therapies of the 1950s to '70s. They are long gone. As are most of the "pray away the gay" or exorcising approaches of a minority of Pentecostal churches and charismatic ministries in the 1970s to '90s. The Government would be best served by not driving them underground but leaving it to churches to discipline their own where a small minority of wayward or possibly coercive practices still operate, as Synod sought to do.

So what is the bill's goal? Why is such a sledgehammer being used to crush a largely now non-existing nut? It boils down to the broad-brush definition of "change or suppression practices" as a form of emergency or crisis thinking justifying an undemocratic "cancel culture". Hence, Premier Daniel Andrews labelling any other views as "bigoted", especially religious views, or questioning the rush to gender transitioning (from six in 2009 to 336 cases in 2018 in the Melbourne Youth Gender Centre), or upholding traditional Christian and religious sexual practices.

Therefore, counselling someone to remain chaste may be regarded by the bill as a "change or suppression practice", regardless of their informed consent and initiative. Preaching against homosexual practice or encouraging celibacy may be allowable according to the bill's advisory notes. But it could be banned in the fourth piece of legislation, a mid-year revision to Racial and Religious Vilification legislation. Religious and ethnic community leaders with strong interests in these proposed changes should be consulted in good time and not ambushed as in the earlier bills.

The Government's bills have gone far beyond what the 2018 Synod thought it was supporting. They are dangerously flawed, not only for religious people but for young people negotiating stages of sexual ambiguity. They should not be left as isolated individuals between competing ideologies in the culture wars. Wise, patient and non-coercive counsel should be available, along with objective research regarding transgender treatments. Well-meaning but zealous politicians and therapists risk treating young people as guinea pigs in a socio-sexual experiment, where they will bear potential life-long costs of these bills. And others, seeking change of orientation or celibacy by their own will, will be deprived of the opportunity, consenting or not, thus infantilising them, "suppressed" by the Nanny State.

Gordon Preece is Chair of the Diocesan Social Responsibilities Committee and Director of Ethos: EA Centre for Christianity & Society. This article represents his views alone.

See next page for a further view.

# Learning from the 'Conversion Therapy' Bill

by Angus McLeay

SOME ARE CALLING THE Victorian Change or Suppression (Conversion) Practices Prohibition Bill "the most aggressive action ever taken by an Australian government to attack freedom of religion". That is the view of Christian lobby group, Freedom for Faith. A more measured response is reflected by Archbishop Philip Freier, who notes the polarised views about the Bill and encourages Anglicans to participate in the public conversation over how to balance concerns for religious freedom, with the protection of those harmed by religiously-based practices. My purpose here is to consider how we can engage in this debate, as the Archbishop recommends.

I am a PhD student researching religious freedom practices within religious bodies. I have participated in numerous government consultations addressing religious freedom, and have personal experience of those affected by so-called "gay conversion" practices. I gave advice to the landmark report, *Preventing Harm, Promoting Justice*, which examined evidence of the practices and canvassed policy responses for Victoria.

The Bill seeks to address the experience of those known as "survivors". This type of legislation faces enormous policy complexity because the problems are not centred on dramatic forms

**"Over many years, I have heard survivor accounts and each one teaches me more."**

of conversion therapy. Rather, survivors stress that mundane religious practices, such as prayer or counselling, can be deployed in a targeted, systematic fashion against their sexual or gender identity.

Over many years, I have heard survivor accounts and each one teaches me more. Some assert that conversion practices are historical relics or at least vanishingly rare. Such claims suggest insufficient knowledge of contemporary evi-



dence and a failure to engage with survivors themselves.

Concerns about the impact of proposed legislation are natural and deserve serious attention. Nonetheless, in these debates some aim to stoke fears and paint worst-case scenarios about the intentions of government, or other stakeholders or indeed anyone whose views they oppose. Strongly emotive language and dubious analysis often go hand-in-hand. Before accepting or endorsing

evaluations by any such group or individual, look for independent sources and steer clear of treating something as complex as this Bill as simplistic propositions involving "them" and "us".

Partisan analysis is already in circulation, such as warnings about prosecution and jail for clergy with traditional views, who simply teach their beliefs in church services. These types of claims are reductive and misleading. While the Bill has criminal sanctions for

conduct involving specific forms of significant injury, it also establishes a civil (or non-criminal) scheme. The Bill's civil measures have nothing to do with "prison", "prosecution" or "offences"; in fact, they primarily involve voluntary participation by all concerned.

A final signpost is to re-frame debate over the Bill from a tool of ideological battles to an opportunity for bridging divides. For some, the Bill is part of a struggle for LGBTIQ+ inclusion in the church. For others, it embodies a threat from hostile secularism aimed at destroying religion. Government makes better legislation when it is able to engage with well-informed stakeholders who are sensitive to those with different experiences and perspectives. As the Archbishop has encouraged, this Bill should be a chance to learn. We can learn both from survivors and from those with traditional views. By understanding each other as *people*, more than merely issues, we can find ways to better safeguard all our rights and embrace our mutual responsibilities.

The Revd Angus McLeay is an honorary minister at Merri Creek Anglican.

## Guide to origins, practice of the Jesus Prayer

*To Call on His Name: Perspectives on the Jesus Prayer*, by John Gill (Sacristy Press, 2019)

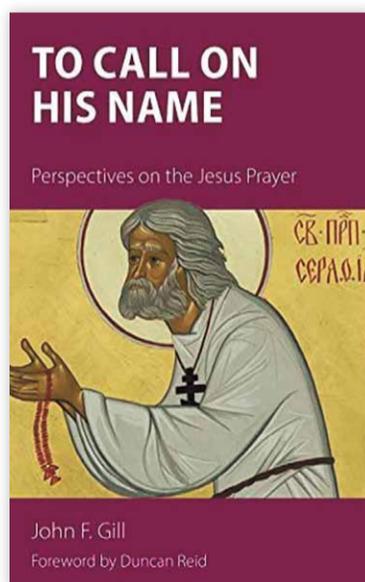
reviewed by Philip Harvey

JOHN GILL is a member of the local Melkite Church in Melbourne. His discovery of Eastern Orthodoxy came while reading the Russian spiritual classic, *The Way of a Pilgrim*, with its explanations of the Jesus Prayer. John was "surprised to find that there was a dearth of material relating the Jesus Prayer from the East to the prayer traditions of the West". One outcome has been this book about prayer life itself, starting in Scripture and

the words of Jesus when asked how do we pray.

Through the development of hesychastic practice in Orthodoxy, separating oneself from the passions through prayer, vigils, and good works, Gill says the Jesus Prayer, of which it is a part, became "not merely a practice, but rather a complete approach to the whole of Christian life". It can become a way of constant prayer, but "to be efficacious the invocation of the Name of Jesus requires genuine faith".

This "exploratory journey", as he calls the book, as well as outlining what we know of the Jesus Prayer and its evolving use, also takes care to acknowledge



what we don't know. One lively chapter is entitled 'Precautions and controversies'.

The author makes connections with mantra in Eastern tradition and the influence of meditation techniques in the Church through time. This includes, in our age, the related method of centering prayer taught by Benedictine John Main and others. He traces how Carmelite, Ignatian and other Western prayer traditions focus on the same relationship to Jesus in prayer. The prayer in one of its forms is in the Kyrie of the Mass, while being present in the entire action of the Eucharist. It is the place we start from, and return to, in prayer.

Perhaps the best place to start reading is the Appendix, a set of suggestions or guidelines for the regular practice of the Jesus Prayer. These appear to have come directly from John Gill's own personal prayer life, giving insight coincidentally into the nature of the person whose words we are reading. A valuable, sensible and sensitive set of measures, they reveal both who it is who is writing to us, and why he would have been inspired to write such an informative and well-researched work of spirituality.

Philip Harvey is Poetry Editor of 'Eureka Street' and on the book review committee of TMA.

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# Rigorous, harrowing study of domestic abuse

See *What You Made Me Do: Power, Control and Domestic Abuse*, by Jess Hill (Black Inc., 2019)

reviewed by John Carrick

*For four years I've squinted hard at the phenomenon of domestic abuse, grasping for the perfect combination of words to make you feel it so acutely, with such fresh horror, that you will demand – and keep demanding – drastic action from our leaders.* – Jess Hill

JESS HILL'S BOOK IS A COMPREHENSIVE study of domestic abuse in Australia, which, as Hill makes clear, is perpetrated overwhelmingly by men against women. There is a multitude of strengths to Hill's book: it is very well researched and rigorous; she constantly asks "why" questions, ever seeking to get to the heart of the particular issue she is analysing. The issues are many. Hill explores the similarities among abusers and the two most common types of perpetrators. Hill looks at shame, patriarchy, children, the family court system, abuse among Indigenous people and more. Hill explores the many reasons that have been given for violence and abuse, exposing the often flimsy nature of many assumptions which have gained currency in Australia and/or globally. I certainly do not see her book as some kind of ultra-feminist tome, or penned with a misandrist axe-to-grind. I was thankful to see the word "redemption" used by Hill when she highlighted programs that have had significant success in reducing abuse; she writes: "These programs work because they are community-led; they generate

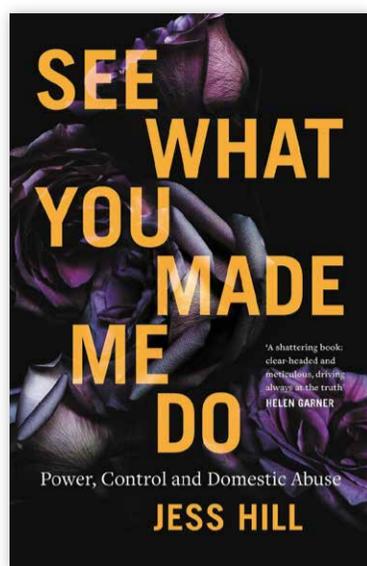
deep collaboration; they see perpetrators as individuals capable of rationality and redemption." (italics mine).

As churches we are well placed to see successful transformation, we are communities, we generate collaboration (we've been doing this this for 2000 years) and at our core, we believe in redemption which results in transformation.

Redemption is indeed needed. Hill's book is so often dark and bleak. The details of abuses are harrowing, confronting, depressing and wholly lamentable. These are compounded by the statistics which Hill often lays bare. The prevalence of abuse is at an epi-

## "Hill's book is very important for Australians because it shines a light on what is hidden and festering."

demic proportion in Australian culture. What is one to do with such confronting information? I thought of examples of biblical atrocities. In particular, the story of the Levite and his concubine (Judges 19); when the Israelite heard of this woeful event, the lamentable cry rose up, "Such a thing has never been seen or done ... We must do something! So speak up!" Hill's book is very important for Australians because it shines a light on what is hidden and festering. I think it is an essential read for politicians, police, family law personnel, abusers and the abused (the list could go on). As a church leader, of one of the



churches undertaking the Pilot Programme, Preventing Violence Against Women (PVAW), Hill's book has strengthened my resolve to give focus to this issue. As a father and husband, it has profoundly encouraged me to seek the best of myself and, hopefully, shape my children to have respect for themselves and those who will be significant in their lives.

There are a few weaknesses I perceive in Hill's work. She does a fine job of discrediting the "logic" behind victim blaming. To expose the root, Hill takes us back to the origins of what our culture may consider "common sense", of many commonly held beliefs

about the victim. Hill writes, "Common sense is constructed for us, brick by brick, by academics, filmmakers, storytellers, experts – by culture. Every cliché we have about victims – from women's masochism to learned helplessness – was invented by somebody first, before it was woven into the fabric of what is considered 'normal' or 'abnormal.'" Implicit in this statement is relativism: Hill posits a social construct theory. Yet Hill's thesis, as a whole, is arguing that violence against women is wrong – objectively wrong. I agree that it is wrong and, I could add, it is common sense that it is wrong. But, does this mean that my view has equally been constructed? Has Hill failed to see that her relativism undermines her thesis? It may be said that it is beyond the scope of her book to provide an objective reason for her thesis, but if you are going to write off other views as merely "constructed" should you not realise you are constructing yet another view with no more or no less validity than those you oppose? As one social commentator remarked, "You cannot insist that all morality is culturally constructed and relative and then claim that your moral claims are not."

Additionally, I was unconvinced by Hill's evolutionary explanation of shame. In an important chapter on shame, Hill, without her usual willingness to critique a view, quotes researchers arguing that shame serves a "function ... to prevent us from damaging our social relationships, or to motivate us to repair them". Accordingly, shame was a necessary aspect of our evolution. It is here I see that our Scriptures have

an alternative view and something profound to offer through the life, death and resurrection of Christ, which speaks profoundly to our human shame. Human shame was first of all experienced in the garden (Genesis 3) when we, in shame, hid from God. The Gospel speaks of light coming into the world (John 1) and calls us all to live by the truth and come into his light (John 3) where shame is done away with. Hill writes, "The need to address the destructive force of male shame is stark and urgent – for women and men." She is right. I hope that as a church we will address this shame by pointing to Christ through ourselves, coming into his light so that our transformed lives might speak volumes.

A point that Hill makes time and again is that abuse and violence occur at all levels of society, perpetrated even by those we might consider good guys. Hill states, "It would be easier for us to believe that domestic abusers are sick, and recognisably different from normal men. But we cannot avoid the uncomfortable truth that violent and sadistic behaviour can come from otherwise 'normal' minds."

G.K. Chesterton once wrote that original sin "is the only part of Christian theology which can really be proved". As I read Hill's book I was reminded, almost by every page, that this is true. Yet we live at a time where this doctrine is unknown or out of favour and so we are left bewildered by uncomfortable truth.

The Revd John Carrick is Lead Minister at St Thomas' Burwood and Area Dean, Deanery of Waverley.

# Faith perspective goes to the heart of teaching

*Binding Things Together: Teaching as a Religious Activity*, by Ronald Noone (Monash University Publishing, 2020)

reviewed by Cathy Altmann

THE STRENGTH of this book is the encouragement it gives to teachers to value relationships and integrity: things it can be easy to lose sight of, as they are so fundamental they often go unsaid. The Revd Dr Ronald Noone explores the often-fraught relationship between religion and education. He uses his 40 years' teaching experience, including as school chaplain at Geelong and Melbourne Grammar Schools, to argue that there is a place for religion even in state education.

The book is partly a homage to two of Noone's influential teachers, Gabriel Moran (American scholar in the field of Religious Education) and author and cultural critic Neil Postman (best known for his book *Amusing Ourselves to Death*). There are extensive quotes from these two. Postman's idea that education should be conservative if the environment is innovative, or be "innovative when the rest of society is tradition-bound", leads

to Noone's illuminating list of principles, including: "Conserve the idea of schools as places where the attainment of wisdom remains possible – an environment that encourages thinking at a deep level and an even deeper knowledge of the self through reflection and contemplation"; "Subvert the idea that schools and teaching need to be directed towards more economic and business outcomes"; "Conserve the idea that schooling in a liberal humanist general education has intrinsic worth"; and "Subvert any claims that the new information environment ... enhances the classroom experience by making it more interesting, engaging and fun".

Noone argues for the broadest interpretation of teaching. At its essence, it is simply "showing how". More profoundly, this extends to showing "how we live", including "the moral dimension". We need teachers who do all that machines cannot. Religion is "part of being human". "It's in our DNA", so it follows that spirituality should be available to all. In fact, education without religion is boring, since it does not meet the deep needs of the human heart, or the deep questions: "What is love? Is there a God?"



Teaching as a Religious Activity

Ronald Noone

## "Education without religion is boring, since it does not meet the deep needs of the human heart, or the deep questions."

Why is there so much evil and suffering in the world? What happens to us when we die?" Religion binds things together because it makes

sense of these deeper questions of meaning.

Noone considers the history of ACCESS Ministries, which offered Special Religious Instruction in Victorian primary schools, and he claims that the changed curriculum and aims of some teachers resulted in its downfall. He argues that it was a case of "shooting oneself in the foot". He proposes instead that General Religious Education should be taught in state schools by qualified teachers.

The book is more concerned with underpinning ideas about education and religion than practicalities. The discursive style allows for a conversational tone,

wide-ranging discussion and illuminating quotes, although the thread of argument is sometimes hard to follow. Noone has seri-

ous concerns about technology. His experience of laptops being introduced in a private school was that it was mainly for marketing reasons. He later established a unit on the "God of Technology" for his Year 10 Religious Education classes. He helpfully discusses the value of Zoom and other platforms, which have made education possible during the coronavirus pandemic, while echoing what many teachers, families and students have found: "They can never replace the real thing."

Most encouraging was the reminder that there is great value in a well-crafted lesson, that as a teacher your integrity is on the line every day, and that "the person of the teacher" is paramount. For Noone, teaching is about relationships and most importantly, therefore, about love.

Cathy Altmann is Deputy Head of English at Presbyterian Ladies' College, Melbourne. She is the author of two books of poetry, *Circumnavigation* (2014) and *Things we know without naming* (2018), both published by Poetica Christi Press. She worships at St Thomas' Anglican Church, Burwood.

# Analysis of familiar, yet unsettling, Song of Mary

*Reading the Magnificat in Australia: Unsettling Engagements*, by Anne F. Elvey (Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2020)

reviewed by Duncan Reid

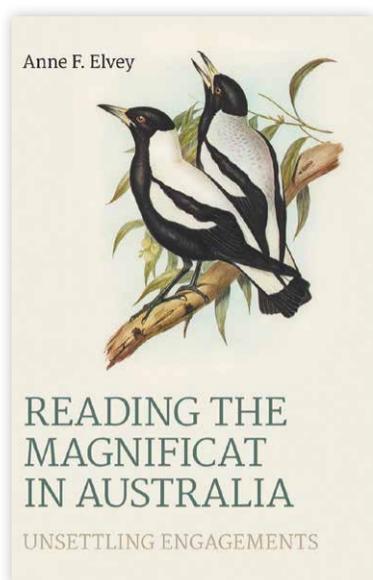
**"MY SOUL DOETH MAGNIFY the Lord: and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour." These words will sound very familiar to anyone brought up on the old Book of Common Prayer Evensong. "He hath shewed strength with his arm: he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts." Pride comes from the "imagination of the heart" (paradoxically, such an imaginative turn of phrase), so just be careful. And fasten your seatbelts, passengers, for some turbulence up ahead. The Magnificat, or Song of Mary (Luke 1:46-55) always had a sharp edge to it: better to be one of the "have-nots" of the world than their opposites, for if you happen to be mighty, rich, well fed, proud, or possessed of any of the other privileges fate may bestow, you might just be in for a reversal.**

In this book, Anne Elvey leads us through this deeply unsettling text, and she does it with an eye to our Australian context. We are, most of us, settlers or descendants of settlers in this country, clinging to the edges of a wide desert continent which, if we're honest, we still hardly know, and which sits next door to Asia on one side and the Pacific on another. In addition, there's the threat of ecological catastrophe. If all this were not already enough to unsettle us, we have the Magnificat to give expression to our collective sense of unease.

Elvey's response is to read with a shift towards "in-habitation", that is with a view to our human and non-human habitat, and "inter-contextually", in the light of "the interplay of multiple contexts when the reader attends to the ecological texture of a text" (p.19). To achieve this, Elvey brings an overarching and self-critical hermeneutic of suspicion in three dimensions: restraint, intertextual engagement and creative witness.

Restraint refers to requesting and receiving permission to quote certain authors. The humility acknowledged by Mary (the self-identified "hand-maiden"/slave) is to be applied to listening to Country and its Indigenous custodians. Intertextuality – the interplay between the text and its various levels of context – requires the exercise of an acute awareness of the places and situations in which the Magnificat is sung and the land on which the author herself is writing. Creative witness occurs when the Magnificat is brought into conversation with other relevant texts and artefacts, and then deconstructed, and reconstructed in ways that reveal and draw out certain implications embedded between the lines. This complex of approaches is outlined in the introductory chapter; the chapters that follow take us ever deeper into the Magnificat's undulating texture.

Chapter 2 reads the Magnificat as the song of a slave woman in a country subjected to systemic domination. Looking back to the songs of Miriam and Hannah and thus to the prophetic tradition in the Hebrew Bible, in its Lukan setting



it takes place in the "breath-filled encounter between two women whose pregnant bodies are signs of peace" (p.54). In Australia, we have to read this as the song of people and ecosystems subjugated to our own version of colonial hegemony, so that it expresses the voice of the First Nations in "contexts of conflict". It is about entanglements, in the context of invasion not simply as an event in the past but "an ongoing system" (pp.38, 72).

Chapter 3 extends this exploration into intersections of love, trauma and resistance in ways in which the Magnificat has been received in and the effects it has exercised on art and literature, in Australia and beyond. The focus here turns to various categories of subjugation, on the basis of race, gender, sexuality, and – in line with the ecological concerns running through the book – species. Mary's song of defiance speaks for all the oppressed. Elvey draws here

on both her technical background in biblical scholarship and her broad familiarity modern Western culture. The aim is to find "shared nodes of interest and meaning" and so "enable a connection that might open to a two-way conversation between ancient texts and contemporary reception" (p.68). The images of violence in the Magnificat "do not simply reinscribe the oppressions they resist" (p.96) but entail deeper and more radical reversals, "their own subtle unsettling" in which the oppressors themselves are enabled to "review their intentions". The chapter ends with a creative response that locates Mary's visitation to Elizabeth, transformed to speak to Australian readers, in the West Australian wheatbelt.

Chapter 4 picks up on the how a diversity of Australian artists have responded to Mary's hymn of praise. Here Elvey refers to the window-like nature of text, opening up what lies behind the text, the world of the text itself in context, and most unsettlingly, the in-front-of-the-text mirror that reveals to themselves the readers' own imaginations of the heart (p.105). Can we truly survive such honesty from an ancient text? Not, it seems, without being transformed, heart, mind and soul. Elvey leads us through this process, her creative conclusion involving a deconstruction of the text in which the words of the Magnificat are scattered randomly across a page, followed by several re-orderings of these same words, reconstructions, that bring to light diamonds hidden in the mud.

Chapter 5 is about birds and birdsong, the deep history of

all human singing. Here Elvey employs a "neo-literal" reading, which refuses to opt for either the conceit of a clear and obvious meaning of the biblical text, or the tendency to allegorise the winged non-human creatures that appear so plentifully in that text. What do the biblical birds, from the eagle to the turtledove, and the Australian song-birds have in common, and what sort of life do they breathe into a sung Magnificat? The birds are taken seriously in all their matter-of-fact birdy-ness (p.157). This is not without humour: the element of satire at the expense of the proud and mighty (our local kookaburra comes to mind) is, after all, a part of what makes the Magnificat ring in our ears.

Towards the end of the book, Elvey tells us, almost as an aside, that the Magnificat was banned by the imperial authorities in India in the early 19th century: it was too dangerous a text to put into the hands of a colonised people. The book's conclusion is not a matter of closure, but rather a set of openings, invitations to ways we might see, hear, sing and be transformed by this very familiar, and yet on closer examination also strangely unfamiliar ancient text. If you love the Magnificat, read this book; if you haven't met the Magnificat yet, read it (or better, hear it sung), and then read this book.

The Revd Dr Duncan Reid is head of Religious Education at Camberwell Girls Grammar School, an adjunct faculty member of Trinity College Theological School, and a member of the Network for Religion and Social Policy of the University of Divinity.

## Prayer Diary

(Can also be downloaded from <https://www.melbourneanglican.org.au/spiritual-resources/>)

### February

**Sun 7:** Pray for The Anglican Church of Burundi (Archbishop Martin Nyaboho); The Diocese of Newcastle (Bp Peter Stuart, Asst Bps Charlie Murry, Sonia Roulston, Clergy & People); Anglican Criminal Justice Ministry Chaplaincy (Rob Ferguson, Senior Chaplain & Chaplains); St Philip's, Deep Creek (Megan Curllis-Gibson); Church of the Ascension (Anglican Church, Burwood East – Pastoral Service (Bp Paul Barker); St Mary's, Melbourne North – Pastoral Service (Bp Genieve Blackwell); Redemption Church, Craigieburn – Pastoral Service (Bishop Kate Prowd);

**Mon 8:** The Diocese of North Queensland (Bp Keith Joseph, Clergy & People); Archdeaconry of Dandenong (Johnsan David); The Parish of St John's, Diamond Creek w. St Katherine's, St Helena and St Michael's, Yarrambat (Tim Johnson, Ros Rudd, Julie Blinco, Kirk Mackenzie);

**Tue 9:** The Diocese of North West Australia (Bp Gary Nelson, Clergy & People); Mentone Grammar School (Mal Cater, Principal; Andrew Stewart, Michael Prabaharan, Chaplains); Christ Church, Dingley (Wayne Walters, Tanya Cummings); St Mark's Templestowe – Commissioning Service (Bp Genieve Blackwell);

**Wed 10:** The Diocese of Perth (Abp Kay Goldsworthy, Asst Bps Jeremy James, Kate Wilmot, Clergy & People); Anglican Men's Society; Holy Trinity, Doncaster (Andrew Price, Mark Chew, Esther Ruan, David Xu, Geoffrey Hall, Vijay Henderson, Alan Xue);

**Thu 11:** The Diocese of Riverina (Bp Donald Kirk, Clergy & People); Anglicare Victoria

(Paul McDonald, CEO); St David's, East Doncaster (Judy Frost);

**Fri 12:** The Diocese of Rockhampton (Bp-elect Peter Grice, Clergy & People); Chaplain to Anglican Centre staff (Clemence Taplin); St Mark's, Dromana (Paul Woodcock);

**Sat 13:** The Diocese of Sydney (Abp Glenn Davies, Regional Bps Chris Edwards, Michael Stead, Peter Hayward, Peter Lin, Malcolm Richards, Gary Koo, Clergy & People); Overnewton Anglican Community College (James Laussen, Principal; Helen Dwyer, Robert Koren, Chaplains); St Margaret's, Eltham (Keren Terpstra, Chris Garcia);

**Sun 14:** The Anglican Church of Canada (Abp Linda Nicholls, Primate); The Diocese of Tasmania (Bp Richard Condie, Missioner Bp Chris Jones, Clergy & People); Anglican Overseas Aid (Bob Mitchell, CEO); St Mark's, Emerald (Andrew Bowles, Jerome Dias, Vivianne Dias); Holy Trinity Hampton Park – Pastoral Service (Bp Paul Barker); Deep Creek Anglican – Pastoral Service (Bp Genieve Blackwell); St Philip's Collingwood – Confirmation Service (Bp Genieve Blackwell); St Lukes' Sydneyham – Confirmation and Baptism Service (Bp Kate Prowd);

**Mon 15:** The Diocese of The Murray (Bp Keith Dalby, Clergy & People); Archdeaconry of Essendon (Vanessa Bennett); St Matthew's, Endeavour Hills (Kim Wellard);

**Tue 16:** The Diocese of The Northern Territory (Bp Greg Anderson, Clergy & People); Ridley College (Brian Rosner, Principal; Tim Foster, Richard Trist); Parish of St John the Evangelist, Epping (Raffaella Pilz);

**Wed 17:** The Diocese of Wangaratta

(Bp Clarence Bester, Clergy & People); Authorised Stipendiary Lay-Ministers; Christ Church, Essendon (Vacant Incumbency, Dave Thompson);

**Thu 18:** The Diocese of Willochra (Bp John Stead, Clergy & People); Benetas (Sandra Hills, CEO); St Thomas', Ferntree Gully Upper (Anne Kennedy); St Mary's Warburton – Commissioning Service (Bp Paul Barker);

**Fri 19:** Anglicare Australia (Bp Chris Jones, Chair; Kasy Chambers, Exec Director); Converge International (Jenny George, CEO, and Chaplains); St Mark's, Fitzroy (Stuart Soley);

**Sat 20:** Theological Colleges, Church Schools & Church Kindergartens; Shelford Girls' Grammar (Katrina Brennan, Principal); Parish of St John's, Flinders w. St Mark's Balnarring (Jennifer Furphy); St Paul's Caulfield North – Ordination Service (Bp Genieve Blackwell);

**Sun 21:** The Church of the Province of Central Africa (Abp Albert Chama, Primate); Mission Agencies of the Anglican Church of Australia; Brotherhood of St Laurence (Conny Lenneberg, CEO, Michelle Trebilcock, Debra Saffrey-Collins, chaplains); Footscray Anglican Parish (Chaplain Soma, Gabriel Mayen); Christ Church Dingley – Pastoral Service (Bp Paul Barker); St James' Old Cathedral – Reception Service (Bp Genieve Blackwell); Geelong Grammar School – Pastoral Service (Bp Kate Prowd);

**Mon 22:** Religious Orders serving within the Anglican Church of Australia; Archdeaconry of Frankston (Helen Phillips); St Mark's, Forest Hill (Philip Knight);

**Tue 23:** Locums and all retired clergy; St Michael's Grammar School (Terrie Jones,

Principal, Kenyon McKie, Chaplain); St Paul's, Frankton (Claudia Mauracher, Dennis Emery);

**Wed 24:** The Anglican Church of Australia (Primate Abp Geoffrey Smith, General Secretary Anne Hywood, the General Synod & the Standing Committee); Bush Church Aid Society (Adrian Lane, Regional Officer); St Luke's, Frankston East (Glen Macrae, Rene Pfitzner, Louisa Pfitzner);

**Thu 25:** The Diocese of Adelaide (Abp Geoff Smith, Asst Bps Denise Ferguson, Timothy Harris, Christopher McLeod; Clergy & People); Melbourne Anglican Diocesan Corporation (Chris Arnold, interim CEO); Parish of St John's, Frankston North w. St Luke's, Carrum Downs (David Sullivan, Cheryl Sullivan);

**Fri 26:** The Diocese of Armidale (Bp-elect Rod Chiswell, Clergy & People); St Stephen's, Gardenvale (Paul Carr);

**Sat 27:** The Diocese of Ballarat (Bp Barry Weatherill, Clergy & People); Peninsula Grammar (Stuart Johnston, Principal, Mark Sweeney, Chaplain); Christ Church, Geelong (Russell Trickey);

**Sun 28:** Anglican Church in Central America (Abp Julio Murray); The Diocese of Bathurst (Bp Mark Calder, Clergy & People); Calling Melbourne2Prayer Group (Jill Firth, Rachel McDougall, Jamie Miller, Philip Trowse); St Paul's, Geelong (Nigel Pope); Chinese Mission of the Epiphany – Pastoral Service (Bp Genieve Blackwell);

### March

**Mon 1:** The Diocese of Bendigo (Bp Matt Brain, Clergy & People); Archdeaconry of Geelong (Jill McCoy); City on a Hill Geelong (Andrew Grills, Lyn Pearson, Peter Taylor);

**Tue 2:** The Diocese of Brisbane (Abp Phillip

Aspinal, Regional Bps Jeremy Greaves, Cameron Venables, John Roundhill, Clergy & People); Tintern Grammar (Brad Fry, Principal, Alison Andrew, Chaplain); Parish of Gisborne (Dennis Webster, Alan Smith);

**Wed 3:** The Diocese of Bunbury (Bp Ian Coutts, Clergy & People); Children's & Families' Ministry (Dorothy Hughes, Facilitator); St Oswald's, Glen Iris (Glenn Loughrey);

**Thu 4:** The Diocese of Canberra & Goulburn (Bp Mark Short, Asst Bps Stephen Pickard, Carol Wagner, Clergy & People); Chinese Ministry (Richard Liu, Missioner); St Barnabas', Glen Waverley (Phil Meulman);

**Fri 5:** Ministry to the Defence Force (Bishop Grant Dibden, Chaplains & Members of the Defence Forces); All Saints', Greensborough (Vacant Incumbency); St John's Bentleigh – Pastoral Service (Bp Genieve Blackwell);

**Sat 6:** The Diocese of Gippsland (Bp Richard Treloar, Clergy & People); Trinity College & Theological School (Robert Derrenbacher, Dean); St Stephen's, Greythorn (Rod Morris);

**Sun 7:** Anglican Province of the Congo (Abp Masimango Katanda, Primate); The Diocese of Grafton (Bp Murray Harvey, Clergy & People); Spiritual Health Victoria Council (Cheryl Holmes, CEO); Parish of St Cuthbert's, Grovedale w. St Wilfrid's, Mount Duneed (Vacant Incumbency); St Columba's Hawthorn – Baptism & Confirmation Service (Bp Genieve Blackwell); St Christopher's, Bentleigh East – Final Service (Bp Genieve Blackwell).

# Home is where the trash – or is it treasure? – is

by Barney Zwartz

**M**Y WIFE HAS INSTRUCTED me that I am never to write about her, and of course I am an obedient husband. So in this diary I am writing about a fictitious family whose husband I will call “I”, whose wife I will call “my wife” and son I will call “my son”. I hope that resolves any confusion.

I have just ordered a skip because, as my son justly observed, we have a vast amount of stuff we ought to throw out, from both inside the house and around the property – years of gradual accretion. I call it “stuff” as a neutral term – my son calls it “junk” and my wife calls it “treasure”.

To be fair, much of it is not ours. We have a good-sized property which has been convenient as a storage place not just for ourselves but for several children, other relatives and the occasional friend. (Exhibit A: a bulky leather jacket of my son’s, never worn, that took up significant space in his former wardrobe for years).

This has led to a long and curious dance of mutual advance and retreat by my wife and son as they try to eliminate/salvage much of this material. My son stalks around looking for things to remove, while my wife anxiously follows closely behind to check what he is doing, both of them muttering to themselves. Here is a typical exchange.

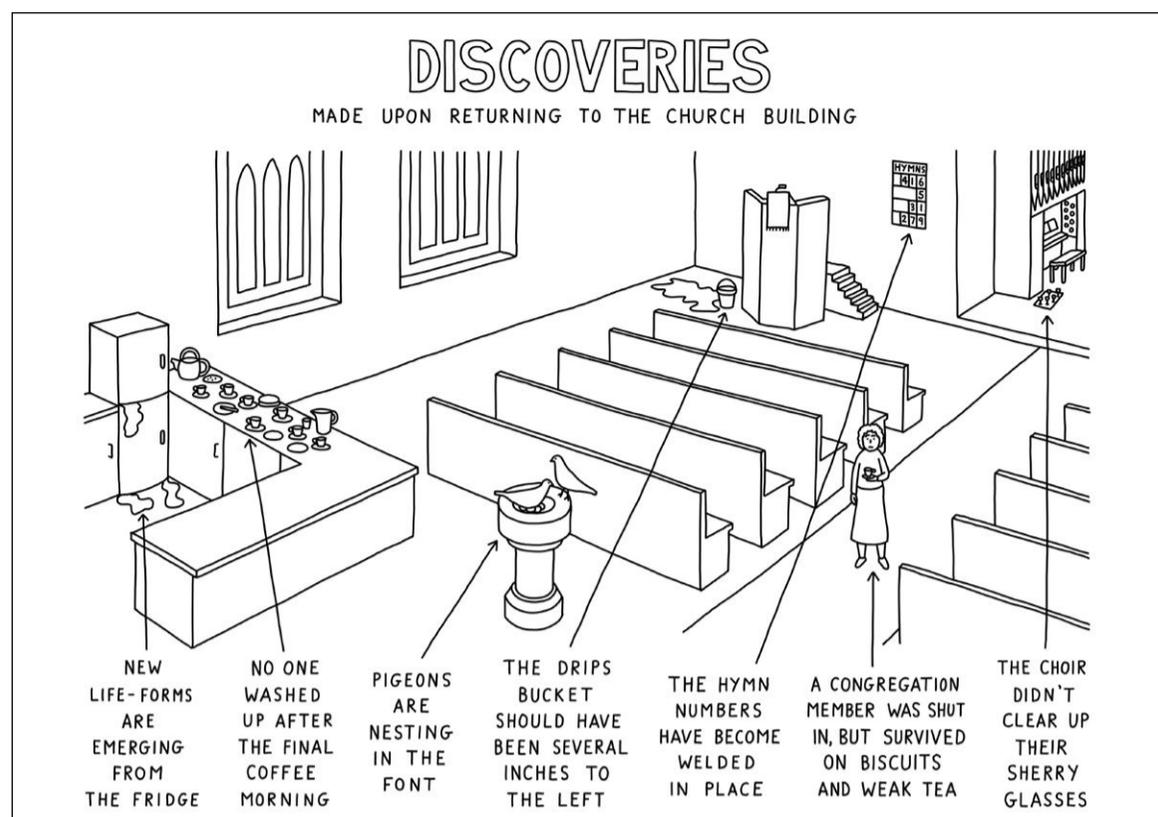
Son (brandishing ancient Red Riding Hood cane basket): “Mum, you don’t want this!”

Wife: “Yes I do.”

Son: “What for? You’ve got a dozen baskets.”

Wife: “One of the children might want it.”

Son: “No we won’t. It’s old and it’s rotting.”



Dave Walker, <https://cartoonchurch.com/>

## “We have a good-sized property which has been convenient as a storage place ...”

Wife: “I’ll take it to the op shop.”

Son: “They won’t want it,” resolutely marching with it down to the spot where we are collecting items. My wife allows this, but after he has gone home pops down to the collection and brings it back up to use in the garden. It’s possible that with a couple of items this cycle

has been repeated. Once she even had to race down to the op shop to retrieve treasures illicitly removed.

A deeply generous soul, my wife is constantly buying gifts for family and friends from her op shop excursions, which adds to the constantly shifting piles, especially of books. Even the kitchen stools get involved. If I remove stuff from the kitchen stools, within moments they are covered again – her hat, her Bible, other books, papers, shopping, folded washing. It’s a rare treat if there is room for a human buttock, let alone two. (I admit that she denies this, but we are all blind to our own faults. If I had any I probably wouldn’t be able to see them either).

But here’s the thing: I utterly and absolutely sympathise with both my wife and my son. We should certainly declutter, and some of the stuff might be a fire hazard (though not so much as the trees, which the local council would not let us lop even if we wanted to). Also, my wife’s list of treasures is slightly excessive, ranging as it does from 30-year-old school papers by the children, to research for her four books carefully piled in separate corners and covered over, to – at last count – 27.3 million gum nuts and dried leaves, shells, heart-shaped stones, bits of interesting driftwood and books. Since I wrote this, it’s probably gone up another 220,000.



**Barney Zwartz**  
is media adviser to  
Archbishop Philip Freier and  
a senior fellow of the Centre  
for Public Christianity.

In fairness, she does constantly find uses for things that she remembers setting aside years ago. Above all, as she points out, it’s her home and she’s entitled to decide what is in it.

We both know and believe what Jesus says in the Sermon on the Mount about not laying up treasures on earth where moth and rust destroy and thieves steal, though I can’t believe the latter would have much interest in this lot – no resale value. We know that heavenly treasure is inestimably more precious.

But the sentimental value my wife attaches to the treasures that belonged to loved ones is also a measure of her love for the people who owned them, and it’s hard to minimise that.

So I sit back, and allow nature to take its course. And there is a sizeable silver lining – in my son’s desire to clean up most of the property he stays out of my study. He ignores its piles of books and CDs that can no longer fit into bookcases and thus live on the desk, on small tables, and on the floor. Some things really are sacrosanct – or perhaps he just knows a lost cause when he sees it.

## Simple lessons drawn from a hard year

by Clare Boyd-Macrae

**WHAT DID** I learn, what was I reminded of, in the year that was 2020?

That I can survive perfectly well without buying clothes for an entire year.

That there are library boxes on the sides of suburban streets, enough for me to read to my heart’s content without having to visit the (closed-for-COVID) library.

That neighbours – actual physical ones – are important.

That even at my advanced age, people can learn new technology fast when they have to. That the team I work with in my office job stayed firm and strong and checked in with each other twice a week, even though we weren’t in the same room for months. That human beings pull remarkable solutions out of dire situations and make them work.

That being able to walk in fresh air is a mighty privilege and gift and sometimes all you need to keep sane and reasonably cheerful. That travel



*a word  
for all  
seasons*

within our state is a luxury and delight, as is eating out. That there are things I have taken for granted that I hope I never will again.

That lockdown suits introverts pretty well, and that even extroverts quietly enjoy the break from the pressure to socialise.

That sometimes our polities can be sensible and listen to the science. That other world leaders make our polities look good.

That in combination with a pandemic, moving house can drive a person to the brink of exhaustion and burn out. That moving into a new home, even if it is one you have willingly chosen and are

excited about, is profoundly discombobulating.

That meditation works beautifully on Zoom and that you can feel the group energy of prayer through cyberspace.

That church can be done in unexpected ways. That worship online is not worship in the flesh but that it is a damn sight better than nothing. That fellowship, Bible study and pastoral care can not only happen via videoconferencing, but that they can result in profound sharing and deeper connections. Also, the converse: that connecting on a screen is a life line, but that nothing replaces holding the ones you love.

That when a baby is born, it changes everything. That such

a completely ordinary and yet momentous event brings hope even, maybe particularly, in grim times. That I can spend hours watching animals and babies, and that this is not time wasted.

That I am one of the lucky ones.

That health and life are fragile.

That God is constant and that the resources available to us – prayer, fellowship, worship and study of the scriptures – can sustain through confusion, illness, doubt and fear.

That the most important thing, the thing that will get us through whatever life dishes up, is relationship. For me, that is about relationship with the creation, my community, my circle of friends and my beloved family. Above all, it’s about my relationship with a faithful God, which continues despite anxiety, ill-health, lockdown, weariness and even, sometimes, despair.

Clare Boyd-Macrae’s blog is at [www.clareboyd-macrae.com](http://www.clareboyd-macrae.com)



## Spirit Words

*As we accompany Jesus through the Gospels, we are present at one dramatic meeting after another. One person after another experiences a mysterious power in Jesus, that, from this moment, changes the course of his or her life. If we are fully present at the moment when we read such a narrative, we ourselves experience the liberating power of this awakening.*

Bruno Barnhart OSB cam.

# Can violence ever hold the moral high ground?

by Tim Kroenert

ON 26 JANUARY 1838 mounted police, at the behest of acting Lieutenant Governor of New South Wales Colonel Kenneth Snodgrass, attacked a group of Kamilaroi people encamped in remote bushland at Waterloo Creek. Although official reports set the number slaughtered at between eight and 50, other contemporary estimates put the figure as high as 300.

While the date of its occurrence makes this event particularly pertinent to #changethedate debates (it is commonly referred to as the Australia Day Massacre), such incidents were of course virtually commonplace, as white settlers sought to violently displace the original inhabitants of these lands. In some places the killings continued well into the 20th century.

So while the fictional events depicted in *High Ground* – the latest collaboration between *Yolngu Boy* writer Chris Anastassiades and its director Stephen Johnson – are relentlessly grim, they are



Travis (Simon Baker) and Gutjuk (Jacob Junior Nayinggul), caught up in racial conflict.

historically apt. The film is interested in the violence that was part and parcel of the colonial project, and wastes little time getting down to the business of blood.

Set in East Arnhem Land after the end of the First World War, it opens with Aboriginal boy Gutjuk (Guruwuk Mununggurr) learning his community's culture from elder Baywara (Mark Garrawurra). Their lives are upended forever when a group of soldiers-turned-cops come to their camp on routine business and wind up slaughtering nearly everyone in sight.

Sniper Travis (Simon Baker), appalled at the conduct of his fellow lawmen, shoots and kills two of the perpetrators, and retrieves Gutjuk from his hiding place in a nearby lagoon. He leaves the boy in the care of Braddock (Ryan Corr), preacher in a nearby mission, and Braddock's sister Claire (Caren Pistorius). The day's events are quietly buried.

But once the seeds of violence have been planted, they bear bitter fruit. Years later, an older and wilder Baywara (Sean

Mununggurr) re-emerges with a 'Wild Mob' to wreak havoc against the property of white stockmen. Travis, who had left police work behind, is drawn into the ensuing manhunt, accompanied by the now grown Gutjuk (Jacob Junior Nayinggul).

Both men have been shaped by the divisions within themselves. Will Gutjuk's loyalties align with the white settlers who raised him, or with his uncle's vengeful cause – which, by rights, is also his own? And how will Travis reconcile his rejection of corrupt institutions with his complicity in covering up the very crime that is the object of Baywara's vengeance?

The film's title refers to the tactical advantage of taking the high ground in a gunfight, but also evokes the concept of moral high ground. It unfolds as a series of terse altercations and violent assertions of moral rightness, with the formations of East Arnhem Land providing a suitably unforgiving backdrop. Relentlessly grim, yes, but so too was the reality it reflects.

## A cheeky magpie helps a family to heal in *Penguin Bloom*

by Wendy Knowlton

AFTER THE accident that left her a paraplegic, Sam Bloom (Naomi Watts) is in constant pain, angry and lost. During a family holiday in Thailand she plummeted six metres onto concrete when a rotten balcony rail gave way, and her active life as a nurse, sportswoman and mother to three lively boys was irrevocably changed. It is only when her oldest son brings home an injured magpie that she starts to see a way out of depression and hopelessness.

Naomi Watts' face is etched with emotional weariness as she embodies Bloom's mourning for her former life. At first, struggling to accept her new reality, she resists the opportunity to nurture the baby bird they name Penguin. Frustrated by her daily dependence on others she hides from well-meaning friends and dwells on her accident with morbid fascination. At one

point she edges a jar of honey off a bench and watches it plunge to the floor and shatter, oozing its contents over the floor in an obvious commentary her own experience. She smashes a gallery of family photographs. They represent her old self but she feels stripped of identity ... as if she is no-one.

But the cheeky and endearing magpie does what Sam's lovingly anxious family and friends cannot. Strutting purposefully about the house, stealing teabags out of cups and cuddling up to a toy monkey, he is the distraction Sam needs and a sign that she still has purpose. The film's symbolism is not particularly subtle, but it is effective. Never confined but needy and frail, Penguin must eventually leave the comfort zone offered by the Blooms' care. In his vulnerability and dependence he reflects Sam's position but offers her hope as he learns to fly and faces the dangers and possibilities of the wider world just as she



Sam Bloom (Naomi Watts) with Penguin, the magpie that helped her emotional recovery.

risks kayaking and journeys to the lighthouse that once seemed out of reach.

It would have been interesting if Glendyn Ivin's film had had the time to explore the rest of the

Bloom family in greater detail, since all their lives changed with Sam's accident. There are quick snapshots of her over-protective mother (Jacki Weaver) and supportive husband Cameron (Andrew Lincoln), whose

exquisite photographs of Penguin and the family punctuate the narrative. Oldest son Noah (Griffin Murray-Johnston) wrestles with guilt, feeling he's to blame for his mother's accident, but his resilient siblings poke her legs, curiously asking "Can you feel that?" and leap from their roof to the trampoline below, oblivious to the visual echoes of Sam's fall. It is Watts' sensitive performance that gives the film its emotional heart, however, as the initially broken Sam gradually opens her mind to new possibilities.

Like *Penguin*, the real Sam Bloom was able to eventually venture into a new life. She redefined her role within her family and rediscovered the active self she believed lost by representing Australia in paracanoeing and surfing. Ultimately *Penguin Bloom* is a modest film that doesn't go anywhere unexpected, but presents its life-affirming message with sweet sincerity.

## Dark secrets surface and relationships are redefined in the desolate landscape of *The Dry*

by Wendy Knowlton

AS THE camera pans over the parched landscape of *The Dry*, drought appears to have swept away the surface of this world. There seems little opportunity for concealment. And yet Detective Aaron Falk (Eric Bana) returns to Kiewarra, the town of his boyhood, in the hope of discovering secrets behind a recent tragedy, and re-examining those from his past. His childhood friend, Luke Hadler, has apparently taken his own life after murdering his wife and son. Unable to grieve properly for their condemned child, Luke's parents Gerry (Bruce Spence) and Barb (Julia Blake) are desperate for different answers and want Falk to find them. But twenty years ago Falk left under a cloud of suspicion himself, potentially implicated in the drowning death of his friend Ellie (Bebe Bettencourt) but protected by the false alibi he constructed with Luke.



Aaron Falk (Eric Bana) is viewed with suspicion by the locals of Kiewarra.

Eric Bana is memorable as Falk, saying little but combining a quiet sense of authority with the haunted look of a man drawn back into a world he has walked away from but never escaped. There is strong support from novice policeman Greg Draco (Keir O'Donnell) and school Principal Scott

Whitlam (John Polson). Rare moments of humour come from publican McMurdo (Eddie Baroo) and Draco's feisty wife Rita (Miranda Tapsell). The stand out performance, however, comes from Genevieve O'Reilly as Gretchen, part of the friendship group with Ellie, Luke and Falk decades before. Tough and completely natural she encapsulates the spirit necessary to survive in this tinder dry world where different sorts of entrapment grip the town's inhabitants and drive them towards desperation.

It's a shame Jane Harper's novel couldn't have been turned into a mini-series, as the sense of menace and the hostility of the landscape need more time to simmer as the two timelines, past and present, gradually unfurl. The animosity exhibited by Kiewarra towards Falk is largely absent, concentrated in the accusatory angst of Ellie's cousin Grant Dow (Matthew Nable) and her father Mal (William Zappa) who virtually ran the Falks out of

town years before. Important clues relating to the back stories of important characters and what really occurred in the recent past are omitted in the interests of streamlining, and this does make the range of false trails, sudden realisations and final revelations feel somewhat rushed and not entirely convincing.

Ultimately the idea of family lies at the heart of this film. Falk's relationship with his father was never the same after leaving Kiewarra, tainted by unspoken truths and lurking suspicions. Falk suspects a connection between the tragedies of Ellie Deacon and the Hadlers, and in a way he is right. It is too late for him to expose the truth about the past to his father, but in attempting to do this for Luke's family, he is in some ways redeeming his own history. Loyalties and betrayals define the relationships of *The Dry*, and as the secrets of each family are uncovered, the terrible consequences of different kinds of love are revealed.