



St Mary's North Melbourne members Paul Eikelboom, Bev Phillips and Lindy Golding at the walk.

Triumph as asylum seekers are released

ADVOCATES HAVE celebrated as more than 40 asylum seekers held in detention were released from centres in Melbourne, Brisbane, Perth and Adelaide, in March and early April.

The refugees had been held in detention under the federal government's now-defunct Medevac legislation.

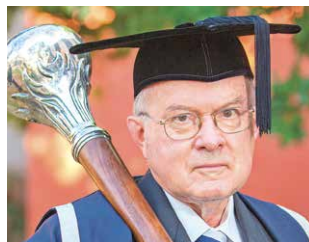
People at more than a dozen Walks for Justice around Australia on Palm Sunday celebrated the release but called for more support for refugees, including permanent visas and the closure of offshore detention.

Refugee advocate Bishop Philip Huggins said it was important to keep asylum seekers in mind as the country headed into election mode.

He said the refugees needed to have clarity that they could stay in Australia and that that they would have what was needed in order to live, including access to Medicare, training and education.

"They should be able to find the means to settle after years of this level of uncertainty. They should be able to settle in Australia, if there is no security issue about them," he said.

Story
— P4



Farewell to a man of kindness

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A calling of her own

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Marriage, violence on agenda

First livestreamed General Synod to address same-sex unions, violence prevention

by Jenan Taylor

GENDER BALANCE AND FAMILY violence will be key issues on the agenda at the 18th Anglican General Synod in May, according to agenda documents.

The solemnisation of same sex unions is also set to be debated by delegates.

The event will be the first Australian General Synod with a livestream, to accommodate any isolating delegates.

Family violence and the equal representation of women were among issues listed as strategic priorities for the assembly in a Standing Committee report detailing the agenda, along with same-sex unions.

The synod will be asked to ratify a new Families and Cultures Commission to help support the Anglican Church's activities to address widespread family violence.

Established to investigate and make recommendations on domestic violence matters, the Families and Cultures Commission arose out of resolutions from the 2017 General Synod.

It also aims to underscore the commitment of Anglican churches as safe places for all people and prioritise protecting those experiencing domestic violence.

Work done at that assembly also resulted in the Family Violence Working Group and the National Anglican Family Violence Research Project, which published outcomes in June 2021.

Other resolutions included the release of Ten Commitments for prevention of family violence to be undertaken by all dioceses, and a call for churches to review any material that potentially gave rise to "unhealthy views about power and the marginalisation of women".

A resolution in respect to increasing women's membership of General Synod groups has not been passed since 2007 according to the standing committee. But a policy approved after the 2017 assembly aimed to address that and should be actioned at the forthcoming synod.

"The Families and Cultures Commission ... aims to underscore the commitment of Anglican churches as safe places for all people ..."

Under the new gender balance policy a woman would be nominated for any vacancy on a General Synod body if less than 40 per cent of the body's membership constituted women.

According to a report by the synod's Standing Committee, considering the period up to December last year, some of those groups included the current Appellate Tribunal and Doctrine Commission.

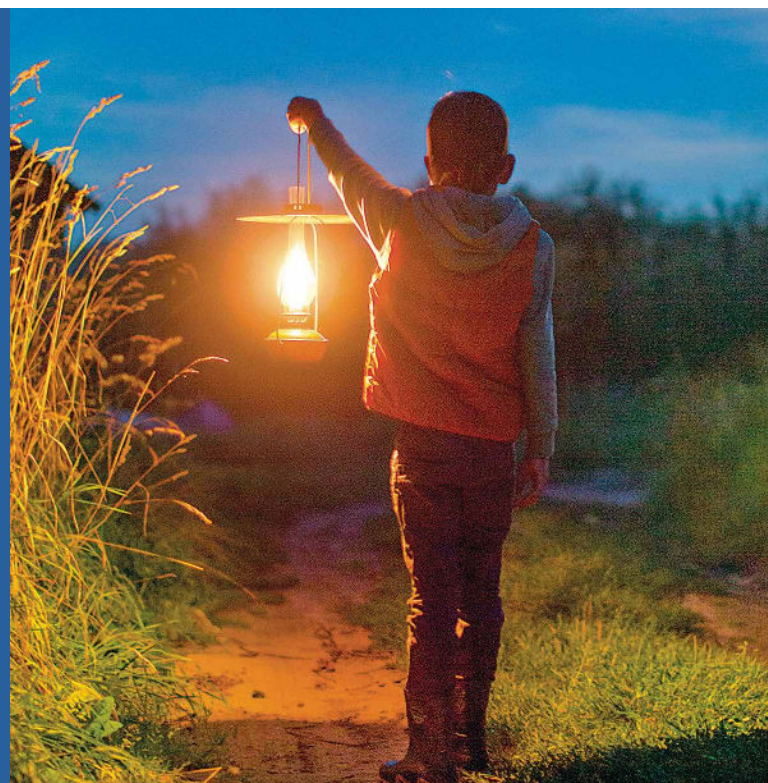
The new gender balance policy sets a target of 40 per cent women, 40 per cent men, and 20 per cent discretionary membership to pursue equal representation, instead of aiming for a 50:50 balance of men and women.

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Walk with Jesus, following the light of life



"Jesus calls people of any age and every life experience to walk with him on that illuminated path of peace and joy."



JESUS' WORDS IN JOHN 8.12 have been a source of sustained reflection for me over these past months. I mentioned them last month in the context of our journey through Lent. These words are a wonderful reassurance in a time of moral darkness that extends even to the affairs of nations, most notably through war and conflict. "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life." These words, of course, echo the creation narrative, with light among the first of God's creations. Just as God sees the light of creation as good so the

light that Jesus gives to all who follow him is also good – and not only good but life-giving. Living in the light of Christ is, to follow Irenaeus of Lyons, to show "the glory of God in a human life".

We know "moral darkness" when we see its effects. The reckless destruction of people and property in Ukraine by the Russian army is a case in point. No wonder there is such tight control over information within Russia and dissembling about the facts of what happened. A regime that acts in this way has the most to fear from the moral conscience of ordinary people. Time and again history has shown us that

people are attracted to the light and that, even in the worst of times, the light of Christ shines out through the sacrifice and generosity of ordinary people.

We now know that "moral injury" is a real issue among those who serve under arms. I cannot imagine what harm now adheres so closely to the young Russian conscripts who perpetrated or even just witnessed the atrocities in the occupied cities of Ukraine. We need to guard our own souls from the vicarious effects of things that we see in such graphic detail. Despair, anger or just a sense of futility about life can easily build up in

the hearts of people like us so far away from the tragic events we see in news reports.

"I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life." These words are rich for us to reflect on, to speak to each other and to hear in our minds as from the Lord himself. "Walking with Jesus in the light of life" can be a physical as well as a mental exercise. Many of us improve our bodily fitness by walking, and we can also hold these words in our thoughts as we walk. Small practices like this can nurture a better awareness of whom we walk with, whom

we follow and who is the source of light, life and hope for the world – the Lord Jesus himself. Baptism draws us into the life-long journey of the integration of head and heart as we grow into the life-changing reality of living in the light. This is a beautiful gift that we have received and that we can share. Jesus calls people of any age and every life experience to walk with him on that illuminated path of peace and joy.

Philip Mellowe

Clergy Moves

Vacant Appointments as of 19 April 2022:

Holy Trinity, Bacchus Marsh with Christ Church, Myrniong and St George's Balliang; St Martin, Belgrave Heights; Christ Church, Berwick; St Edward, Blackburn South; St Peter, Bundoora; St John Chrysostom, Brunswick West; St Faith, Burwood; St Paul, Caulfield North; St Catharine, Caulfield South; St Alban, Coburg West; St Michael's & St Luke's North Dandenong; Darebin South; St Mark Dromana; St Margaret, Eltham; Christ Church, Geelong; St Stephen, Greythorn; St Martin, Hawksburn; St James, Ivanhoe; St Matthias, Mernda; Christ Church, Newport; Pascoe Vale-Oak Park; St Matthew, Panton Hill; St George the Martyr Queenscliff and St James Point Lonsdale; St Andrew, Somerville; St Aidan, Strathmore; St Luke, Sydenham; St Thomas, Upper Ferntree Gully; All Saints' Carlotta Tye Memorial, Selby; St James, Wandin with St Paul, Seville; St Thomas, Winchelsea with Holy Trinity, Barrabool and St Paul's, Deans Marsh; St Paul, Westmeadows; Christ Church, Whittlesea with St Peter's, Kinglake

Appointments:

FISKE, The Revd Linda Lesley, appointed Assistant Priest, St Margaret, Eltham, effective 24 March 2022

SCHULLER, The Revd Wayne Paul, appointed Assistant Priest, St James, Pakenham, effective 10 July 2022

WATT, The Revd Kathryn Ann, appointed Priest-in-Charge extension, Holy Trinity, Balaclava, effective 24 March 2022

Permission to Officiate:

BHONSLE, The Revd Prashant, appointed Permission to Officiate within the Diocese of Melbourne, effective 24 March 2022

PARSONS, The Revd Conrad Trent, appointed Permission to Officiate within the Diocese of Melbourne, effective 1 April 2022

PFITZNER, The Revd Louisa, appointed Permission to Officiate within the Diocese of Melbourne, effective 13 April 2022

POWYS, The Revd Dr David James, appointed Permission to Officiate within the Diocese of Melbourne, effective 7 April 2022

Resignations:

RAISTRICK, The Revd James Hartley, Assistant Curate, Church of the New Guinea Martyrs, Croydon South, effective 27 February 2022

PALAPATHWALA, The Revd Ruwan, Priest in Charge, Christ Church, Whittlesea with St Peter's, Kinglake, effective end date yet to be confirmed

Retirements:

MARTIN, The Revd Peter Philip, Incumbent, St George the Martyr Queenscliff and St James, Point Lonsdale, effective 30 October 2022

WHALE, The Revd Noel, Holy Trinity, Port Melbourne, effective 27 March 2022

For Vacant Parishes listing contact registrar@melbourneanglican.org.au

See Tributes at www.tma.melbourneanglican.org.au

Clergy Moves is compiled by the Registry Office and all correspondence should go to registrar@melbourneanglican.org.au



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Apr 22 – Jun 26

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www.cathedral.org.au/Gaia

Wednesdays 1pm
Lunchtime Concert Series
(see website for upcoming concerts)

Sundays 4pm
'Healing God's Creation' Series
with Canon Glenn Loughery

Sun 15 May 4pm
Easter Carols Service

Sun 22 May 4pm
Choral Evensong marking the
150th Anniversary of the Foundation
of Trinity College
Preacher: The Most Revd Kay Goldsworthy AO

Thurs 26 May 5.10pm
Ascension Day Choral Evensong

Sun 29 May 4pm
Reconciliation Week Service

Tues 31 May 6.30pm
An Evening with Tony Rinaudo,
the 'Forest Maker' & launch of Tony's book

Sun 5 June 4pm
Diocesan Thy Kingdom Come Beacon Event

REGULAR SERVICES

Sundays
8am Holy Communion (BCP)
10am Choral Eucharist
1pm Bilingual Eucharist 華語崇拜
4pm Choral Evensong

Weekdays
12.15pm Holy Eucharist
5.10pm Choral Evensong

(Evening Prayer with songs on Mondays)

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Reaching Sydney Road, one latte at a time

by Stephen Cauchi

A NEW CAFÉ ON SYDNEY Road looks a bit different to the standard. For one thing, there's a crucifix on the wall, for another, there's a priest at the coffee machine.

Run by Christ Church Brunswick, the Lamb and Flag aims to reach out to passers-by, giving the church Sydney Road frontage it has previously lacked.

It's meant Christ Church vicar Bishop Lindsay Urwin has seen his ministerial tasks expand, to encompass that of barista.

Bishop Urwin said customers were curious about why a priest was the one behind the coffee machine.

"They come in and say, 'Oh, you're really a priest? What's going on?'" Bishop Urwin said.

"The purpose of it is, is to generate questions – [it's] a really good way of creating a scenario where people ask you a question, rather than you battering them with a piece of information."

Bishop Urwin said people in Brunswick knew they needed cafes, but didn't know they needed God.

"We're responding to something they do know they need in the hope that we can introduce them to something they're not sure they need, or even are sure exists," he said.

To promote conversations about spirituality, there is a table at the front of the cafe called the "common table". Sitting there is a sign that someone is open to conversation with anyone who turns up.

The café is open from Tuesday to Saturday, but shuts on Thursday so it can offer a free lunch to anyone



Bishop Lindsay Urwin at the Lamb and Flag, a cafe at Christ Church Brunswick.

Picture: Elspeth Kernebone

"We're responding to something they do know they need in the hope that we can introduce them to something they're not sure they need, or even are sure exists."

Bishop Lindsay Urwin

who wishes to attend. This usually draws 40 to 50 people.

Bishop Urwin said this was a social enterprise, which served as a good witness.

He said the location of the café allowed the church – which faces onto Glenlyon Road, around the corner – to reach out to passers-by.

On top of its day-to-day café routine, it hosts a morning tea after Sunday mass and a weekly "Bible and Beer" event.

Bishop Urwin said every week someone had come in off the

street to have a cup of coffee at the church's post-service morning tea.

At Sunday evening Bible and Beer sessions attendees meet for music, teaching – currently on how Philippians might relate to living a Christian life in Brunswick – and prayer, all over a drink. These are advertised at the café, and open for the public to walk in.

Bishop Urwin said the café advertised itself as church-run in subtle ways – a priest behind the counter, a crucifix on the wall – but in Brunswick, that was enough to dissuade some customers.

But he said the café's "soft evangelism" had also attracted customers to the church, with a couple of customers coming along to the Bible and Beer nights.

And other customers would think about it. Bishop Urwin said sometimes a person had to think "I'll come" four or five times before they did so. He said recently a young Turkish woman came in, saw the sign for Bible and Beer, and said "I've never read the Bible, I think I might come on Sunday night".

Bishop Urwin is at the café Tuesday through to Saturday, about half his working hours. On Tuesday he's up early to run the church's 6.30am morning prayer, followed by mass at 7am. It's then straight to the cafe to start on the coffee machine.

It consumes a lot of energy, but the long-term plan is for volunteers to run the café.

Bishop Urwin said the cafe outreach was a "big adventure". He said it was not meant to compete against a regular cafe serving 600 coffees a day, but to be a community space for conversation.

John MacArthur case a mishandling of Scripture

by Kirralee Nicolle

ANGLICAN COMMENTATORS say they were horrified by the recent report that a woman had been excommunicated from a conservative United States megachurch for separating from her abusive husband.

Both complementarian and egalitarian-leaning Anglicans concurred that this issue was grossly mishandled, but their views differed on how Scripture should have been applied in this instance.

Pastor John MacArthur publicly denounced and "put away from the fellowship" Eileen Gray, according to a report by investigative journalist Julie Roys for her outlet *The Roys Report*.

Ms Gray's sin, according to MacArthur, was applying for legal separation and a restraining order against her abusive husband.

John MacArthur is a prominent voice for complementarian theology and is the Senior Pastor of Grace Community Church in Sun Valley, California.

Prominent Anglican voice for egalitarianism Dr Muriel Porter said this case was an example of an expected outcome of applying complementarian theology to a marriage.

"If you hold to a view that women are in some way or other subservient to men, whether theologically or philosophically, that means that men have a power over women that can be expressed in forms of abuse," Dr Porter said.

Dr Porter said that when women were forbidden from divorcing an abusive spouse, it was an example of Scripture being used as "a polemical weapon to keep women in their place". Dr Porter said that the issue arose when Christians, including leaders such as MacArthur, took a fundamentalist approach to Scripture.

"I know that there are women living within fundamentalist Christian communities, including sadly some within the Anglican church in Australia, who are living lives of fear, and some of the women are convinced to believe it themselves and to accept this abusive treatment [as if it was] ordained by God," Dr Porter said.

Dr Porter's comments echoed the findings of the National Anglican Family Violence Research Report, published in April 2021, which found that "the prevalence of intimate partner violence among Anglicans was the same or higher than in the wider Australian community".

The study also found that it is the belief of most clergy "that Scripture is misused by the abuser in Christian families".

The Roys Report told how Mr Gray, a former children's music and Bible teacher at Grace Community Church, was at the time physically, sexually and mentally abusing Ms Gray and their children.

Roys reported that Mr Gray also threatened to kill both his family and himself.

Mr Gray is now serving a long prison sentence for aggravated child molestation, corporal injury to a child, and child abuse, according to Roys.

Roys told how Ms Gray had approached the eldership at Grace Community Church for counselling regarding her abusive marriage, however the elders never reported the matter to authorities.

MacArthur said that the reason for excommunicating Ms Gray was that she had decided to separate from Mr Gray against "all the instruction and counsel of the elders, all instruction from the Word of God".

Former lay minister at St Jude's Carlton, Fiona McLean, said that this was a case of the wrong Bible

passages being emphasised.

"When people think of the complementarian view, they [tend to] think of the commands given to wives rather than those given to husbands," Ms McLean said.

Ms McLean said that in these instances, husbands needed to "be called to account" and expected to "live up to the Ephesians 5 mandate" of loving their wives.

Ms McLean also said that passages such as Matthew 18, which dealt with handling sin in the church, needed to be applied to abusive partners rather than to partners who were seeking a divorce from their abuser.

"Abuse where it occurs is a serious violation of the marriage covenant," Ms McLean said.

"Commanding wives to just stick it out in a marriage [like this one] means that in effect you are condoning sinful behaviour," said Ms McLean. While Ms McLean said that separating from a spouse was a very serious matter, she agreed that in instances such as these, it was warranted.

Dr Kevin Giles, author of *The Headship of Men and the Abuse of Women*, said that women should never be forced by their church leaders to return to an abusive

husband. Dr Giles said that a minister's priority in these instances was to listen to women.

However, Dr Porter said that a complete theological shift within the church was the only solution.

"The only way we could ever overcome mistreatment of women and children was if we completely changed the rhetoric," Dr Porter said.

Dr Porter said it was "shameful" that the Christian church had offered violent men an excuse to harm their wives and children through poor theological exegesis.

Dr Porter said that due to the accessibility of varied theological teachings on the internet, many Christians, including Anglicans, had fallen prey to believing similar ideas to those of MacArthur.

MacArthur's media ministry, Grace to You, provides sermons and other media materials through both its website, social media and a global network of churches affiliated with MacArthur's training institute, The Master's Seminary.

"I think we need to be very wary of this ratbag theology that comes out of fundamentalist North American preaching," Dr Porter said.

Fairer policy for refugees still vital: Protesters

Jenan Taylor, Stephen Cauchi

CONCERNS FOR THE WELFARE of asylum seekers and refugees tempered jubilation as dozens of detainees were released into the community across Australia recently.

More than 40 asylum seekers held in detention were released from centres in Melbourne, Brisbane, Perth and Adelaide in late March and early April amid protests about their treatment.

The refugees had been held in detention for years under the federal government's now-defunct Medevac legislation.

Activists at more than a dozen Palm Sunday Walks for Justice around Australia celebrated the release, but called for more support for asylum seekers, including permanent visas and the closure of offshore detention.

Anglican Diocese of Melbourne's Social Responsibilities Committee member Dr Audrey Statham said the mood at the march had been celebratory.

But Dr Statham said she was concerned that refugees would not be able to access welfare support because of the bridging visas they had been given.

Refugee advocate Bishop Philip Huggins also noted the harshness of the temporary visas and said more humane policies for the asylum seekers were needed.

Bishop Huggins said the refugees needed to have clarity that they could stay in Australia and that they would have what was needed in order to live, including access to Medicare, training and education.

"They should be able to find the means to settle after years of this



Marchers joined calls for fairer policies at the Walk for Justice for Refugees on Palm Sunday.

Picture: Elspeth Kernebone

level of uncertainty. They should be able to settle in Australia, if there is no security issue about them," he said.

Amnesty International refugee coordinator Dr Graham Thom said the overhaul of the visa system and providing a pathway to permanency was among a number of key things that needed to be addressed by both political parties.

Dr Thom said ministerial discretion was the only way for many to get out of detention and there was no way for people to challenge immigration, even in the courts.

Bridging visas have to be renewed at the discretion of the minister every six months, Dr Thom said. "They have work rights, but no social support. And if you only have a six-month visa, who will give you a job?"

He said temporary protection visas and safe haven visas had to be

"Let's use this moment to reset who we are as an Australian people and nation."

Bishop Philip Huggins

renewed every three to five years and the people on them would never be able to get a permanent visa and see their families again.

The Asylum Seeker Resource Centre estimated that six people transferred from offshore detention for medical treatment were still being held in centres on mainland Australia.



Bishop Philip Huggins protests earlier this year.

In March, New Zealand also agreed to a resettle 450 of the detainees. The ASRC welcomed the move but estimated that some 900 asylum seekers would still be left without a clear resettlement option.

Bishop Huggins said the detention of star tennis player Novak

Djokovic in the Park Hotel in January may have contributed to the release of the asylum seekers, by creating an awareness of the issue.

However, Bishop Huggins urged people to keep the asylum seekers in mind particularly during the federal election campaign.

He called for a change in Australia's refugee and asylum seeker narrative that was politically beneficial, compared to keeping them in indefinite detention.

"Let's be a country that fully welcomes refugees and heals people and doesn't harm people. Let's use this moment to reset who we are as an Australian people and nation," he said.

Groups including Grandmothers for Refugees, and People for Human Rights and Equality, along with several church groups were among the protestors at the Melbourne walk.

'Band-Aid' budget payments fail to address issues

by Elspeth Kernebone

ANGLICAN SOCIAL justice organisations have criticised one-off \$250 payments promised in the federal budget for Australians accessing social support payments, saying they fail to fix underlying problems.

Under the budget released in March people accessing income support payments such as the aged care pension and JobSeeker have been promised a one-off \$250 payment in April.

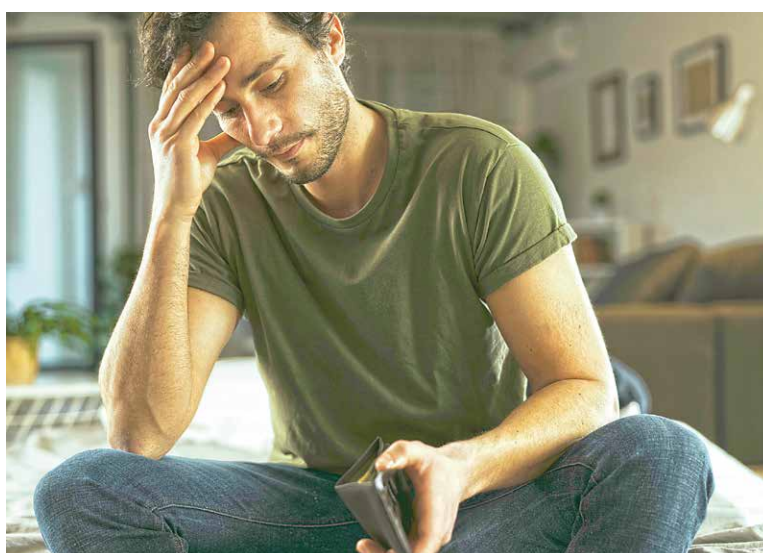
Christian leaders did welcome some other budget measures, such as 16,500 additional places for refugees from Afghanistan.

But Brotherhood of St Laurence acting executive director Dr Lucia Boxelaar said one-off payments did very little to address long-term issues, such as poverty.

Dr Boxelaar said without an adequate social security system too many Australians would continue to live in poverty, and be exposed to the worst effects of current and future crises.

She said much more needed to be done to address the structural barriers to work for people who were long-term unemployed.

"Rather than blaming and



Social justice agencies have warned the budget fails to address drivers of poverty. Picture: iStock

punishing individuals, the federal government needs to invest in the social infrastructure and meaningful, tailored employment support that people need to find work," Dr Boxelaar said.

Dr Boxelaar said measures to address climate were also disappointing, as there was no clear and ambitious plan to support households to respond to climate change.

She said Australia needed investment in lasting measures to

reduce cost of living pressures, such as targeted home energy efficiency and rooftop solar upgrades for low-income households.

Anglicare Australia acting executive director Maiy Azize said the government said the budget would help people meet everyday costs, but it seemed blind to those who were struggling most.

Ms Azize said Australia need to fix its problems, rather than put a Band-Aid over them.

"Living costs are spiralling, people are still recovering from the pandemic, and many communities are reeling after floods and storms. One-off payments and tax cuts are not the answer to these problems, and Australians know it," Ms Azize said.

"Millions of Australians are trapped in housing stress. And hundreds of thousands of people out of work are stuck on payments that are frozen on dangerously low levels.

"We know what we need to do to make Australia fairer – invest in housing for those in need, create secure jobs, and raise payments over the poverty line."

Likewise, Anglicare Australia chief executive Paul McDonald said the budget was completely devoid of awareness about Australia's most pressing social issue: affordable housing.

Australian Council for Social Services chief executive Dr Cassandra Goldie said the budget was full of temporary fixes, rather than permanent solutions.

She welcomed some temporary payments, but said they did little to help people on low incomes in the long-term.

Dr Goldie said while the government said the budget addressed the cost of living, the budget actually did little to address the biggest cost of living, housing.

"This budget ignores the big challenges that this country faces right now, which are poverty, inequality and climate change," Dr Goldie said.

Micah Australia executive director Tim Costello said he was pleased the federal government had listened to Christians' calls for Australia to lift its intake of refugees from Afghanistan.

Micah Australia said the latest announcement meant Australia would offer more than 30,000 refugee visas to Afghan nationals over the next four years.

Mr Costello said into the future, the number of places available in Australia's Refugee and Humanitarian program needed to rise, as the world faced a global refugee crisis on a scale not seen since the end of World War II.

He urged the government to provide a pathway to permanent protection for refugees and asylum seekers waiting in limbo for nearly a decade on temporary protection visas.

The key to growth? Here, it's been the sofa

by Stephen Cauchi

AN ALTERNATIVE FORM OF church at St Stephen's Gardenvale has proved extremely successful, growing the church sixfold in two years.

"Service on the Sofa" developed out of an Alpha course and is held in the church's cafe-lounge area every Sunday evening.

The format is similar to Alpha, with food, a guest speaker, informal discussion, breakout groups, prayer, scripture and worship music.

Harry Potter actress Miriam Margoyles is due to speak in November, while past guest speakers have included Bishop Paul Barker and children's author-illustrator Mitchell Toy.

St Stephen's vicar Paul Carr said the church's growth had been largely down to the new form, which attracted people who were from multiple faiths, age ranges, who were unchurched, new to church, and returning to church, as well as traditional worshippers.

Mr Carr said Service on the Sofa began about two years ago with five attendees and now attracted over 30.

He said it had grown the church from around 20 people in 2017 to more than 135 across the week.

"It is accessible, reflective, informative, and interactive in conversation and testimony – a real deep dive into faith exploration and wrestling with key issues that faith presents," Mr Carr said.



Service on the Sofa at St Stephen's Gardenvale has drawn in people of all ages.

Picture: supplied

Mr Carr said the church provided food and drinks, while each event included worship music, a discussion theme, and a testimony anchored by Scripture. Breakout discussions link the evening's events together.

The group always prays, while the church offers communion once a month – which many of its guests have never experienced.

Mr Carr said he usually hosted the evening himself, with the guest joining him on the sofa. The guest usually has a connection with the theme, and the relevant scripture. The discussions among other guests are supported with video material, or a real-life narrative.

Recent topics have included

"Your life matters," "There is power in your story," "You too, can change" and "God works even through our mess."

Mr Carr said he was amazed at the diversity of people who attended Service on the Sofa. He said some were traditional Anglicans while others had never been to church. Some were anti-church, others wanted to reconnect, and some were from other faiths, he said.

Mr Carr said people from all age groups had attended, and some guests had come from as far away as Geelong, Footscray and Mount Martha. A Zoom audience will often join from interstate, or in the United Kingdom.

"Some have come as atheist, others agnostic, and some simply wondering, 'What is church really?' and 'Who is this God?'" Mr Carr said.

Mr Carr said Service on the Sofa began out of an Alpha Course offered by the church.

"In swept a stream of new people asking big questions about faith and life," he said.

"That group didn't want to separate once the course ended, so they formed as 'BETA' – a new and growing group, a fresh expression of church."

The BETA group journeyed together through the Freedom In Christ discipleship course and then became "Sundays," a new

Sunday evening service.

Mr Carr said the service, held in the comfort of the newly-designed church cafe and lounge, attracted more and more people over time.

He said the cafe environment modernised the approach and accessibility for some people – especially those entering church for the first time – to feel comfortable, bringing church to what was a familiar surroundings.

It's a format that's drawn in visitors from across the denominational spectrum, including Baptists, Anglicans, Catholics, Uniting church members, and people who would consider themselves Evangelical, high church, and low church.

"When people from other churches come, we all recognise the deep desire that we share – to be connected, to feel welcomed," Mr Carr said.

"When we are together, we simply worship and gather in God's name. We talk and debate big issues of faith together, share narrative, pray for each other, support and encourage each other and some even keep coming back."

Other guest speakers have included the director of the Open Haven women's refuge service Sabeel Burgess, mental health practitioner Fiona Whitecross, local grammar school headmaster David Nettlebeck, and Christianity Today journalist Jeremy Dover.

Sunday on the Sofa takes place at 5pm, at St Stephen's Gardenvale.

New Anglican congregation set to launch in Fairfield

by Jenan Taylor

A NEW congregation is set to open in a freshly renovated historical building in Fairfield after Easter.

The Fairfield church is one of five plants set to launch in metropolitan Melbourne this year.

Merri Creek Anglican Vicar Peter Carolane said the opening was drawing interest from young families and young adults, so a

children's ministry was on the cards along with multiple ministries that would run throughout the week.

"Merri Creek has operated every Sunday from Clifton Hill Primary School since 2013 and some of its programs will move to Fairfield because at Clifton Hill the hall means we can only have Sunday services and we've had to hire out other venues for other programs," he said.

"There'll also be homework clubs, a book club where people can join in, and that we hope to run in association with the library across the street.

"Renovations have included painting, replastering, and rebuilding the toilets, and we have long terms plans to add a space out the back part of the property for the children's ministry."

Mr Carolane said there was

great potential ministry for the main street of Fairfield.

"We walk out the front door of the church and on to the main street, so it's going to be like a shop-front church. We're next door to a busy café and there's opportunity to form friendships with the trader's association," Mr Carolane said.

Celebrations for St Paul's 106th anniversary in April will bring an opportunity to bless the commu-

nity and promote the congregation, he said.

"We hope to have hot cross buns, free coffee from the next-door café and, later, jazz concerts, as well as public talks on local Indigenous history," Mr Carolane said.

"There is a need for renewal in the community, and we just hope we can become a thriving church for them."

"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.

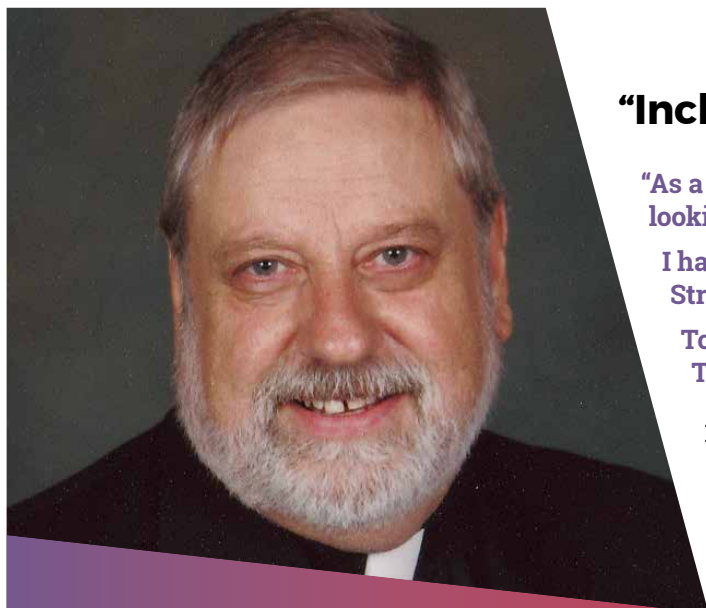
I have been supporting Anglicare Victoria for many years, in fact I supported the Mission to the Streets and Lanes in Melbourne, as many Anglicans did.

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

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



Anglicare Victoria

BETTER TOMORROWS

Marriage debate to continue at General Synod

• From – Page 1

The issue of the blessing of same-sex marriage will also be revisited by delegates at the General Synod.

Two statements with respect to the topic of human sexuality and same-sex marriages were submitted by the Sydney Diocese for discussion on the synod's first day.

A book of essays on marriage and same-sex relationships through a theological lens has been produced to help support respectful conversations about the topic in the church. It had been distributed for the General Synod in 2019 before the planned 2020 session was deferred because of the pandemic.

A contentious issue, debate was underscored by the 2019 Wangaratta same-sex marriage blessing, which then Primate Philip Freier later referred to the Appellate Tribunal.

Since the 2017 synod, other work the approach to same-sex unions included the church liaising with the Scottish Episcopal Church regarding their amendment of the Canon on Marriage.

The report also noted a range

of other resolutions adopted since the seventeenth synod.

These included ministry plans for children and young people and outreach efforts, ecumenical relations, the expansion of liturgical resources, support for the Mission to Seafarers and a resource about Clergy Professional Supervision.

“The issue of the blessing of same-sex marriage will also be revisited by delegates at the General Synod.”

Indigenous communities also had a strong focus with youth suicides, supporting Indigenous calls to end activities such as fracking and other degradations of Indigenous lands areas of cultural significance highlighted.

First General Synod livestream

by Elspeth Kernebone

THE AUSTRALIAN General Synod will be livestreamed for the first time to minimise disruption from COVID-19, allowing delegates to participate in the conference virtually if they are isolating.

Organisers say the decision was a response to the COVID-19 situation, which meant synod delegates might have to isolate at the last minute, possibly even going into isolation during the conference.

A seminar-style livestream will also be available to some people who would normally view the conference but not participate.

It comes after the 2021 Melbourne Synod in October was fully livestreamed, taking place during a lockdown.

General Synod Standing Committee general secretary Anne Hywood said the livestream would allow isolating delegates to participate fully in synod, from their homes or potentially even their hotel rooms.

Ms Hywood said two livestreams would be available: the one for delegates that allowed them to participate fully, and another viewing-only stream for groups such as media that would normally attend in person.

She said the committee had until recently been planning a fully face-to-face event, after several changes during the past year that reflected a changing COVID-19 situation. At various stages a fully online event was planned, while at



A livestream will be available for isolating delegates.

Picture: iStock

others a hybrid event.

Ms Hywood said as General Synod neared, it became obvious to organisers that dioceses would have confirmed who their members were, but then might to change them with only a few days' notice – often without enough time to secure alternates.

She said the technology for livestreaming to delegates had allowed the synod committee to offer a livestream to other people who would normally attend, which might curb the number of people attending in person.

Ms Hywood said information would be provided directly to

dioceses about who would be able to register to view the livestreams of the business sessions.

The event will be the first Australian General Synod in five years, after several postponements due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Australian Primate Archbishop Geoffrey Smith has confirmed that the blessing of same-sex marriage will be among the topics discussed. It comes after the Anglican Church's top legal body the Appellate Tribunal approved a controversial Church blessing for same-sex marriage.

General Synod will run from Sunday 8 May to Friday 13 May.

Sydney's General Synod membership predominates

by Colin Reilly

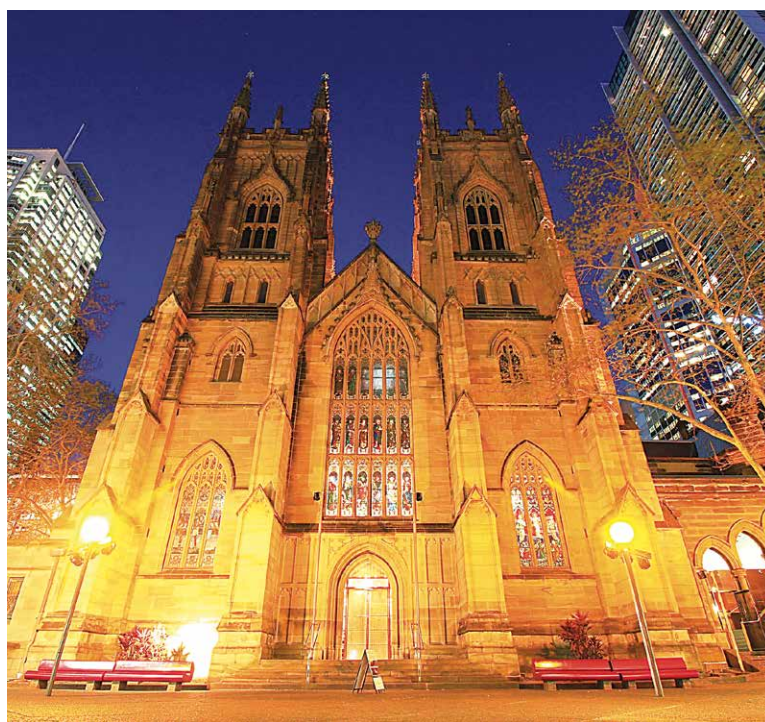
THE LIST of General Synod members for the 2022 session on the Gold Coast in May has been released. So I ask, who makes up the General Synod and how representative is it? Well, the data shows it is skewed towards those already in positions of authority or influence. And, it is possible the system also favours wealthier diocese.

The membership is governed by a table attached to the national constitution which provides for all diocesan bishops to be members, and then a number of clerical and lay representatives.

These representatives are based on a quota system in proportion to the number of clergy in each diocese. There is one representative from the clergy and one lay representative for every 20 clergy who are either incumbents (whether or not stipendiary) or engaged in full-time or near full-time stipendiary ministry. This comes with a proviso that, notwithstanding the quota calculation, every diocese is entitled to at least one clerical and one lay representative as well as its bishop. The National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders Commission also nominates an episcopal, two clerical and two lay members.

The constitution is silent on how each diocese is to select its clerical and lay representatives.

Based on this, the 2022 General



Sydney is entitled to 73 members.

Picture: sydneycathedral.com

Synod has a total membership entitlement of 250. At the time of writing, three of those positions are vacant: two lay in Sydney and one lay Indigenous member. The total number of membership entitlements is 10 lower than the last General Synod in 2017. The proportion of members from the rural dioceses remains the same, at about 22 per cent. But there is now one more diocese with that minimum of three members – its bishop, one clerical, one lay – added to the seven of these exist-

ing in 2017.

Sydney as the largest diocese is now entitled to 73 members compared to 71 in 2017. Melbourne's share is unchanged with 37 member places in 2022. Sydney is the only diocese to its increase numbers in General Synod in 2022, while Adelaide, Bathurst, Brisbane, Canberra and Goulburn, and Perth have all lost members.

It could be said that the constitutional formula, with its emphasis on the ability to pay clergy, favours the better off dioceses. If places

were allocated according to the number of Anglican dioceses as measured by the census, Sydney would have 47 members (19 per cent), Melbourne would have 29 members, and the rural dioceses 58.

The gender balance has been slowly changing from 28 per cent female in 2014 to 29 per cent in 2017 and 33 per cent in 2022. At this rate gender parity may be achieved in about 2049.

So, how stable is General Synod's membership?

Ninety-seven members (or 39 per cent) were not at the 2017 session. Five of the 23 diocesan bishops are new to General Synod, while another nine were clerical members in 2017, and one was translated from Gippsland to Perth. On the other hand, the “father” of General Synod, Dr Robert Tong of Sydney, has been a member since 1981. Twenty-seven members in 2022 began their General Synod service more than twenty years ago – twenty of them lay people. The senior clerk is our Archbishop Philip Freier, who when a member for the now defunct Diocese of Carpentaria in 1987 was the youngest clerical member of General Synod.

The House of Bishops not only exercises its own authority in the General Synod, it also has influence on some of the members who occupy positions normally appointed by the diocesan

bishop. Among the clergy there are 16 assistant bishops and nine cathedral deans. Among the laity there are nine diocesan registrars (or similar positions) and nine who are law officers (chancellor, advocate etc) in the dioceses they represent.

Fifty of the clerical members are parish priests with a further five assistant clergy, making up 50 per cent of the House of Clergy. In contrast, about 75 per cent of all active clergy are engaged in parish ministry. The defence force and other chaplaincy areas are hardly represented at all. On the other hand, as befits a body seeking to make informed decisions, some six or so clerical members are engaged in theological education.

So you read in these numbers how the membership of the General Synod is skewed towards those already in positions of authority or influence. This is hardly surprising given the high expectations of the General Synod despite its relatively small influence on day-to-day ministry – our Australian ecclesiology gives a stronger place to the dioceses than other national Anglican churches. Does its composition matter? Perhaps not, but a more representative body might attract more respect.

Colin Reilly has been a general synod lay representative for Melbourne since 1985.

Music, nature key ways to engage community

by Stephen Cauchi

CHURCHES SHOULD RUN more activities based on nature and music as these are the top spiritual practices that appeal to Australians, according to National Church Life Survey director Dr Ruth Powell.

Dr Powell said the results of the latest NCLS Australian Community Survey showed that seven out of 10 Australians believed spiritual practices were fairly or very important for well-being, especially during tough times.

Spending time in nature and listening to music were the top two choices for Australians, with prayer, meditation and mindfulness practices coming in third.

Dr Powell said churches should listen to the results of the survey and run more activities based on nature and music, to meet Australians halfway. She said the church was in an exciting position, as it could do something about these spiritual choices.

“We’re inviting the church to have a listen to what Australians are saying. They’re telling you that this is helpful to them,” she said.

“They’re reaching a hand out, why don’t you meet them and offer something that they actually are telling you appeals to them?”

“The church can be quite crea-



Ruth Powell has urged churches to offer Australians activities that tie into popular spiritual practices. Picture: supplied

tive, and it’s not out of reach to think about offering help to Australians as they engage spiritual practices around being outside, listening to music or those prayerful practices.”

Dr Powell said spending time in nature and outdoors was particularly powerful, as there was a deep human connection with the land and with nature.

She said some churches had already realised this and were offering bushwalk reflections, meetings in local parks, or trips to oceans and the mountains.

“When we share music together as a community, something happens.”

Dr Ruth Powell

Dr Powell said theologically, nature was God’s creation that he had made for people to steward and enjoy.

“We’re built to be in and part of God’s creation and care for God’s creation,” she said.

Dr Powell said music had a similar effect, as a powerful, universal spiritual language.

She said churches could capitalise on this by promoting their music, such as advertising choirs at times of year such as Easter, or special concerts.

“It doesn’t matter what style of music you like. It’s just this incredible gift to life to have music and to have the rich diversity of music,” she said.

“When we share music together as a community, something hap-

pens – when you make music, incredibly deep, wonderful things happen.”

Dr Powell said the third most popular spiritual practice – prayer, meditation or mindfulness practices – was something that Christians were really good at.

She said this tapped into many Anglican traditions, such as the Book of Common Prayer.

“There are Australians saying, ‘I’m open to this, I would like to use this’ ... the church knows well about this and can offer resources to others,” she said.

Ms Powell said that survey sample included Australians of all beliefs, not just Christians.

Attending religious services was the fourth-most important spiritual practice in the survey, but only 18 per cent of Australians said they found it appealing.

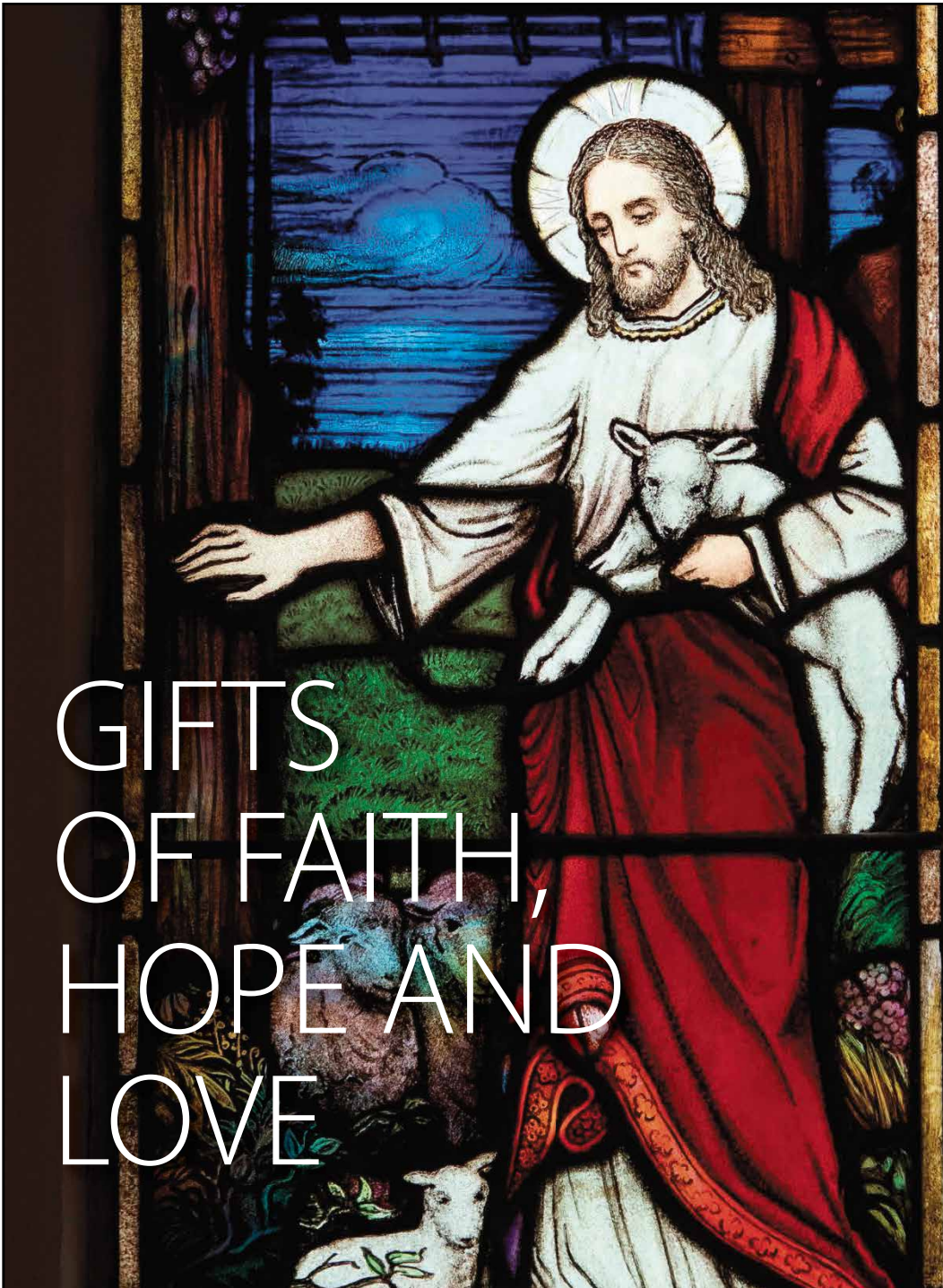
Dr Powell said that NCLS been running the Australian Community Survey since the 1990s.

In the 2020 survey, due to the impact of COVID, questions about well-being and spiritual practices were added.

“What is fantastic about this list is it’s being quite inspirational to churches who are seeing the common ground between Australians and what churches can engage in that may be of interest,” Dr Powell said.

Australians said they found these spiritual practices important:

- spending time in nature or outdoors – 52 per cent
- listening to music – 43 per cent
- prayer, meditation, mindfulness – 34 per cent
- religious, worship services – 18 per cent
- religious, spiritual reading – 16 per cent
- religious, spiritual talks, clips or podcasts – 12 per cent
- small groups – spiritual and social support – 9 per cent
- other spiritual practices – 2 per cent
- none of the above – 22 per cent

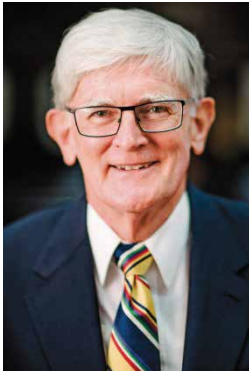


GIFTS
OF FAITH,
HOPE AND
LOVE

Stained glass window at St James' Church Dandenong, photo by Jerome Cole.

“The Anglican Church has been part of my life forever and my involvement with the **Melbourne Anglican Foundation** has confirmed to me there is plenty of interest in ensuring that the Christian legacy passed on to us, is passed on afresh to future generations.”

Geoffrey Court
Bequestor, Patron and Board Member of the Melbourne Anglican Foundation



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The Reverend Natalie Rosner with some of the St Jude's art show pieces. Picture: supplied

Artwork shows light to the world at Easter

by Stephen Cauchi

PEOPLE HAD the chance to reflect on Christ's love in a different way during the Easter period, through an art display at St Jude's Carlton.

Artists from amateur to professional had their work on display throughout the church.

St Jude's associate minister the Reverend Natalie Rosner said the exhibition was a way of reaching out to people, and giving them a chance to think about the message of Easter.

Paintings, drawings, sculptures and cross-stitch pieces were among the artwork included in the exhibit.

"I've seen some beautiful pieces of art. Some of our artists are professionals, some are amateurs," Ms Rosner said.

"I saw a beautiful artwork by a child, her reflection on Jesus on the cross. I loved that she included in that a little light. As she thinks about Jesus' death she sees in him the light of the world."

"I also have seen the photo of another artwork which is a textured artwork with the three women going to the empty tomb, which looked beautiful."

Ms Rosner said that all the artworks had been produced in response to Easter.

"We give people some passages to look at about Easter, so each artwork also has a little paragraph reflection that the artists has written about how the story of Jesus on the cross has precipitated this artwork from them," she said.

"It's really just an exhibition as a way of reaching out to people and giving them an opportunity to reflect on the message of Easter – the love for us in Christ – in a different way."



Several churches joined in the Way of the Cross this Easter. Picture: Kitty Vivekananda

Marchers mark the story of Jesus' Easter journey

by Stephen Cauchi

HUNDREDS OF people have joined in the Good Friday Stations of the Cross, run in Melbourne for the first time since 2019.

The ecumenical walk, designed to remember Jesus' walk to the Cross from Last Supper to Resurrection, was organised by the Melbourne City Churches in Action.

MCCIA convenor, Wesley Uniting Church minister the Reverend Alistair Macrae, said the walk had a "great vibe" and was "wonderful".

"It went really well I thought it was an amazing response given COVID's still hanging around," he said.

"We didn't know how many to expect because we haven't had it for two years because of COVID."

The procession began at St Francis' Church on Lonsdale St at 10am and passed through eight city churches before ending at St Paul's Cathedral at 12.15pm.

Mr Macrae said there were about 1000 marchers.

The 14 stations of the walk were marked by a series of bronze sculptures telling the story of the journey of Jesus from the Last Supper to the Cross.

At each station those participating paused briefly for prayer, readings, reflection and song.

The walk resumed on Easter Sunday at dawn, beginning at St Paul's Cathedral, crossing over the Yarra River, and ending at St John's Southgate. Mr Macrae said a small gathering attended on Easter Sunday.

St Peter's Eastern Hill, St Patrick's Cathedral and St Michael's Uniting were among the participating churches.



From the editor's desk

by Elspeth Kernebone

EVERYONE'S TALKING about churches! Seriously, everybody. If you turn just a few pages, you can read Bishop Brad Billings, Dr Chris Porter and Nils Von

Kalm's perspectives on how to fill up our churches.

Just a few pages back, you will have read about some very successful steps Melbourne churches have taken to reach members of their communities, in the community's context.

Christ Church Brunswick is drawing in passers-by on Sydney Road with coffee, while St Stephen's Gardenvale has had success with a "Service on the Sofa". And if you let your eyes wander just a few centimetres to the left, you can read about St Jude's Carlton's Easter art show: an effort to give

people a chance to reflect on Christ's love in a different way.

You can even read about a new church – in Fairfield, where Merri Creek Anglican is preparing to plant a congregation in an old church building.

It all exciting stuff to read!

So, tell me, does your church have a story? If so, we'd love to hear it. It could be big, it could be small, it could be a first step, or it could be the result of years of work and planning. Whatever the story, we're here for it. You can get in touch at editor@melbourneanglican.org.au.



The Greensborough Repair Café offers a community-based approach to sustainability. Image: supplied

This Christian bookshop wants to help you fix your fridge

by Kirralee Nicolle

A CHRISTIAN bookshop is taking on a new challenge by trying to empower its community to fix broken belongings rather than discarding them.

The Greensborough Christian Book Centre has begun a repair café as an innovative way of building community connections.

Director Christine Kollaris said she hoped the bimonthly events would go some way to reducing the amount of waste in landfill.

Ms Kollaris said that it also offered older members of the community an opportunity to pass on their abilities in areas such as sewing, woodwork and knitting while accessing skills in areas such as technology and electronics repair.

Ms Kollaris said that those involved as repairers so far had included non-church attendees as well as church attendees.

"[Environmental issues] are becoming quite urgent," Ms Kollaris said.

"People who care about the environment really want to make a difference."

Ms Kollaris said she would love to see other churches get involved.

She also said she hoped that the event could expand to feature presentations from experts in social justice issues.

"It can hopefully make church more relevant for those who [come]," Ms Kollaris said.

The Repair Café Foundation began in the Netherlands in 2011 and has now spread globally, with the vision of providing those with practical repair skills the opportunity to pass them on to others for free, while reducing waste and building enthusiasm for sustainable living practices.

The next Repair Cafe will be held at Greensborough Christian Book Centre on Saturday 21 May from 12:30pm.

To find out more about Repair Cafes, go to repaircafe.org/en or the website for Greensborough Christian Book Centre: gcbc.net.au.



Op Shop volunteers Norma and Lois try out the new premises. Picture: supplied

Welcome centre opens at Bellarine Gateway Parish

by Michael Dougall

THE BELLARINE Gateway Anglican Parish has entered a new season of revitalisation. On 10 April, Bishop Kate Proud officially opened the Welcome Centre and the relocated Pearly Gates Op Shop when she visited the parish to preside at the Palm Sunday Service. Bishop Kate performed the opening by cutting a length of bunting. After the opening, 60 parishioners and op shop volunteers enjoyed a sumptuous brunch and took the chance to check out the op shop, which enjoyed some excellent one-off Sunday trade!

A little over a year ago, at the Parish Think Tank the seed was sown to move our Op Shop from a shopping strip to the Church Hall, a daunting project. High rent had become an issue but we had mixed emotions about leaving a shop, which had successfully operated for 27 years. Over the past couple of months, enthusiastic parishioners have transformed a tired hall into a functioning Op Shop and a welcoming area for people to sit, relax and talk.

The hall has been painted, walls removed to create sorting and storage space for the op shop and a new Vicar's office configured. Volunteers have made

display racks, shelving and screens for the op shop. Our vicar, the Reverend Dr Elizabeth Breakey had a brilliant idea to brighten up the op shop with colourful bunting. Several working bees were held to cut, sew and join bunting pieces together, which was a fun way to involve all parishioners from both churches. Colourful bunting is now strung in the hall and on the boundary fence and promotes our new look Welcome Centre.

Parishioners from both Worship Centres have energetically joined forces to create the Welcome Centre for the future growth of the parish and its ministry outreach.

Forging a connection with Indigenous history

by Jenan Taylor

AMELBOURNE CHURCH IS aiming to grow cultural harmony in its community by establishing a landmark project, inspired by the area's Indigenous history and traditions.

St Margaret's Anglican Church Eltham has installed a yarning circle in its gardens evocative of the historical meeting spaces where the area's Wurundjeri communities had traditionally gathered to foster respectful relationships and share cultural knowledge.

Yarning circles were meeting environments created by First Nations' people in which participants could communicate and collaborate safely.

St Margaret's Do Justice group member Helen Robertson said the idea came about when the group heard about Indigenous prisoners crafting fire pits as part of their rehabilitation, and decided to commission one.

Completed in early March, the yarning circle features a brazier at its centre, emblazoned with the word "Wominjeka", which means "Welcome" in Woi-wurrung.

Ms Robertson said the Do Justice team had researched First Nations' meeting protocols and had learned that the land for the Wurundjeri was spiritual, just as for today's parishioners the land where the church stood was spiritual.

They also uncovered information about the church's proximity to the old gathering places and that had prompted St Margaret's decision to erect one as a tool for outreach.

Montmorency South Primary School's grade three students were the first members of the wider population to use the yarning circle.

Their visit in late March was the culmination of a pilot six-week Indigenous education agreement



Children take part in a yarning circle at St Margaret's in Eltham.

Picture: Jenan Taylor

between the church and the school.

The students sat cross legged inside the circle as Ms Robertson led them to reflect on questions about culture, identity and sacred spaces.

A display of Indigenous works collected by parishioners, families and friends was also part of the experience. Exhibited near St Margaret's heritage-listed stain glass windows, the works included clap sticks used by the Wurundjeri and paintings by artist Nicky Dhamacy from Worowa College for Indigenous girls.

St Margaret's Anglican vicar, Reverend Dr Linda Fiske said the display was arranged so that the students could note the characteristics of the Indigenous work and think about what it said about the people who created them and their beliefs.

Children's natural curiosity, propensity to listen closely and willingness to learn was why it made sense to reach out to young people first,

"They've learnt about the methodology of the yarning circle, the idea being that it's a space where all people are welcome and where people listen to each other..."

Helen Robertson

Dr Fiske said. "They're the next generation in terms of understanding mutuality, and respect and care for the community," she said.

"They've learnt about the methodology of the yarning circle, the idea being that it's a space where all people are welcome and where people listen to each other and converse and share ideas."

Montmorency South Primary Indigenous program coordinator Tara De Bondi said the students had been confused about why

they were going to be visiting the church.

Ms De Bondi said she had explained to the children that churches were places that people had attached religious beliefs to but were also important spaces where the community could come to be together.

She had also highlighted the Wurundjeri population's approach to sacred gatherings, as significant reasons for reflecting on how land use had changed over time.

For Dr Fiske, the children's responses to the church that indicated that many had not been in one before, was of deep interest.

"We weren't wanting them to focus on the church but they're quite surprised by the space itself," she said.

"So, they're learning about what it means to hold something as sacred and so, out of the yarning pit, they're actually putting into practice the idea of listening and sharing and of mutual respect."

She acknowledged that although the idea of a sacred space was important, they had decided to not proselytise.

"For some people just that initial step into a sacred space is confronting and daunting," Dr Fiske said.

She added that she hoped the circle would encourage people from the community to feel that they could venture on to the church's land.

Dr Fiske said there were plans to open the yarning circle to adults. However, establishing the space was also an education for the church in how to engage better with the Indigenous community.

"We've got people coming in to talk with us about what we need to learn and understand, so it just seems to me to be a fantastic avenue to open up dialogue and interaction. We're really hoping that this would be a spark of something new for this community," Dr Fiske said.

The Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation's special projects officer

Charley Woolley said St Margaret's had been great to work with and had been enthusiastic with their requests for guidance.

Ms Woolley said the church had also requested consultation early and had adhered to suggestions about how to work with First Nations people.

Blessing at Woollies' checkout a timely reminder

by Carol Clark

IMADE a dash to the supermarket one afternoon recently to buy coffee beans for breakfast the next morning. Being in a hurry, I quickly grabbed a credit card and a small shopping bag. Of course, I found other "essential" items so by the time I reached the checkout I had a full bag of goods.

But when I pulled out my card to pay the \$41.35 I owed, I found myself handing over a Myki card. "Oh no, I've brought my Myki - I can't believe it," I exclaimed, wondering aloud whether I could be bothered walking home and back again to pay for the coffee beans and everything else. The young man at the checkout sympathised. "Would you like me to put these aside for you?" he asked as I stood there muttering at my carelessness.

"Excuse me, ma'am," a voice came from the next checkout as a masked man leant towards me. "Will you let me pay for your shopping?". Shock quickly replaced my frustration. "Really - you want



to pay for my shopping?" "Yes, I would like to," he replied.

It was such an unexpected gesture, I experienced an inner struggle before I said, "Thank you, that would be wonderful - and amazing!" In a minute he had quietly paid and left.

The two staff on duty stood there shaking their heads and we all agreed that we'd never seen anything like this at a Woollies checkout. It gave me a jolt to be given this gift simply because my checkout neighbour chose to show me kindness. I've been pondering and sharing the story ever since.

His action took me back to the parable of Jesus when a Samaritan man stopped and reached out to help someone he was culturally supposed to avoid, as we read in Luke 10. It has an impact when a stranger crosses a boundary to give



A surprising blessing at the checkout reminded Carol Clark of habits we should all develop.

Picture: iStock

us the gift of understanding and kindness.

I also remembered Michael Frost's book, *Surprise the World* which I read in 2018 with a

Parish Renewal group. We were intrigued by his encouragement to Christians to surprise people with their "questionable" lives. These are Christians who intentionally

develop habits that make others stop and ask questions: "I don't know you - why are you helping me?" "Why are you being so kind to me?"

These habits are not what you might expect. They prepare us to be primed and ready to bless those we come across in our church or community, and then to show hospitality, to listen and learn with them. Practising these habits can lead unexpectedly to faith conversations as people become curious to know more, even before we reach the final habit - being sent.

Opportunities to bless both neighbour and stranger will arise spontaneously. But if we want to surprise people with a taste of God's kindness, it means slowing down in order to notice the opportunities, especially with those needing extra care and understanding. What a blessing it will be for people to be surprised by kindness from us - by our listening and hospitality - and what a blessing for us when they want to know more of our story.

It's our future, so how do we train ministers?

by Colleen Arnold-Moore

MINISTRY FORMATION IS crucial for the future of the church. A recent conversation at St Agnes' focused on this need and creative solutions. The panel discussion concerning the shape and breadth of ministry formation within the Anglican church in Australia highlighted the changes formation for ordination has undergone across diverse provinces and regions. As the conversation between those responsible for theological education and training progressed, it became clear that among those seeking ordination there was an increasing need for flexibility in the equipping and training of candidates as well as greater recognition of prior learning, both practical and academic. I was particularly struck by the working solutions for some provinces in their response to the deep need for ordained ministry in rural and regional areas. One such response has been the development of ordination to a particular parish only.

I am reminded, both from my own path to ordination and for many colleagues, that significant



Formal and informal formation need reimagining and rethinking, writes Colleen Arnold-Moore. Picture: iStock

formation occurred prior to any formal academic study at seminary let alone a formal discernment program. The shift in the 1970s and 80s from the historic, near monastic, all male residential seminaries found in Australia to non-residential, co-ed, more university-style study

for ministry downplayed key aspects of Christian formation and practice through its focus on the academic. It has meant that formal and informal formation has needed reimagining and rethinking by both the clergy and laity teaching in theological colleges and seminaries,

and by vicars supervising curates and student placements. Alongside these changes are the substantive shift in the ages of applicants. Now applicants are women and men, many in their fourth decade or older, holding significant secular and spiritual experience, and often

married with children, instead of the predominantly unmarried young men usually in their mid-twenties who populated the curacy prior to the 1980s. Perhaps this change reflects more closely the shape of the earliest church as described in the New Testament epistles.

Surely a key question facing the church is how to both honour and recognize the pre-existing formation and Christian maturity of applicants while still seeking a necessary and agreed measure of training and competence? If too many exceptions are granted, will this ultimately undermine future ministry both for the practitioners as well as those to whom they minister? What models of formation can be provided for those already with spouses and families? Can the diversity of applicants be recognized as the strength it is for God's church and how will we respond to this challenge to further serve the kingdom of God?

The Reverend Colleen Arnold-Moore is vicar of Oakleigh Anglican Churches of Holy Trinity and Emmanuel.

Formation is at a turning point, we need a vision

by Peter Sherlock

WHAT IS the future of Anglican ministry formation in this time and place?

Participants in the St Agnes Seminar offered a kind of desperate hope in answering this question. Much creativity has been exercised in recent decades to call a diverse range of people to ordination, often to bring what God is already doing through them into an Anglican framework. Values such as a robust intellectual formation in the faith remain present, as does the commitment to prophetic and pastoral ministry. Imaginative experiments are underway.

Candidates for ordination can take great heart from this. Their stories, their potential and their ministries were spoken of tenderly

and with compassion.

All this was tempered by the enormity of the practical challenge of staffing over 300 parishes across Victoria. Then there is the exhaustion of COVID-19. Who would offer for ordination at a moment like this?

I want to reframe that question in two ways. The greatest challenge for Victorian Anglicans at the present time is not whether we are ordaining enough of the right kind of people. The true challenge is in the laity, the whole people of God. Colin Reilly tells me the ratio of clergy to laity in Melbourne has probably never been higher. Are we still a baptizing church, growing in converts and maturing in Christian discipleship? The future of Anglican ministry formation must answer that question.



University of Divinity vice-chancellor Peter Sherlock.

Second, as theologian Janet Gaden once said, survival is not a gospel truth. Instead of despair, we need to ponder what new thing God might be doing. Preparation for ordination has changed radically many times in the last 500

years. The dominant phase of the last 150 years – the rise and fall of residential seminaries, the professionalisation of the clergy, and the increasing accessibility of higher education – is drawing to a new turning point. Things will change again.

What we need is a coherent vision.

We need academic pathways that are flexible in form but ensure the content of every program is apostolic, contextual and formative. We need graduates with the attributes of faithfulness, agility and discernment. We are pretty good at the apostolic part, but I wonder if we have the necessary depth of understanding of our context, if we are equipping our clergy with the spiritual resilience they require.

In Melbourne this means we

need to stop outsourcing theological education and formation for ordination and pool our fractured resources. We need to stop doing some things so we can properly fund and support curacies – what the world calls apprenticeships. We are way overdue to rethink field education, or work-integrated learning. And we need more, not less, communal daily prayer.

We also need to equip lay people with basic Christian competencies. Joy Freier spoke powerfully of the need for the catechumenate, such that each of us can communicate our faith and our passion for Jesus to our friends, neighbours and colleagues. I couldn't agree more.

Professor Peter Sherlock is vice-chancellor of the University of Divinity.

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Your say on Ukraine, and building up presence

A radically different approach

Acting on the theory that Putin's mind is megalomaniacal and mega-sadistic, yet humiliatingly vulnerable, what about the Church trying the following?

At present the situation with Ukraine is a classic Jesus's "turn the other cheek" confrontation. The attacked party, Ukraine supported by her allies, is standing her ground defending her citizens, particularly women and children (widows and orphans).

Both countries, antagonistic Russia and victim Ukraine, claim majority populations of Orthodox Christians. Putin's personal allegiance and official policies appear to approve of this Christian denomination. Please would religious leaders from all over the world, especially Christian archbishops, moderators and patriarchs organise a unity with the Russian Church's supreme leader and other prelates there, and beseech Putin for total, immediate troops-withdrawal and peace.

If the Russian Patriarch leads the events with sufficient dignity and ceremony and photo-opportunity, yet with true Christianity, Putin may see himself as a part-winner and hero and dramatically concede.

Sally Salter
Malvern East



The local church buildings and clergy are no longer familiar to most, writes John Altmann

Picture: iStock

Your say on our social media: The answer to church decline (Page 13)

If the presence of the good news of Jesus Christ is to be incarnated only, or focused, in the local vicar and church buildings then we're really in trouble!

Apart from the insufficiency of this – ignoring the people of God sent out into the community – there are a number of very questionable assumptions that the article is built on. The local church buildings and clergy are no longer the most familiar things in the local area. In fact in most people's minds they are positively unsafe and dangerous. Nostalgia for the

good old days won't bring back safe familiarity and attraction. Only unexpected kindness, active service and genuinely embodied grace has any chance of doing that. The article is a woefully missed opportunity to encourage old fashioned, unglamorous, humble service by all of God's people in a

local area as being what might just grow the church. Hint: the clergy and liturgies of grace are only ancillary not central, to equip us all for works of service.

John Altmann

One of the logistical challenges, I suppose, is how to intentionally

Letter of the Month

Considering writing in? Just in case you needed extra reason, *The Melbourne Anglican* is introducing a Letter of the Month award. Each edition the submission judged best will receive a \$30 bookshop voucher.

create or transplant a sensory parish in the growth corridors, where not many church buildings exist amongst massive suburban growth, but there are church plants meeting in schools, halls and sporting club rooms. Up here in the city of Hume, for example, there is no Anglican church in Roxburgh Park – a suburb of 25,000 people, with the majority of residents first or second generation migrants from Iraq, Turkey and India.

Peter Waterhouse



Over to You is a forum for respectful dialogue about material published in *The Melbourne Anglican*, or issues affecting the church or society more broadly. Please email letters to editor@melbourneanglican.org.au. They must be less than 250 words, and include your full name, address and phone number for identity verification. Letters may be edited for clarity, length and grammar.

Quotas are vital to making our equality goals a reality

by Bishop Genieve Blackwell

ARE QUOTAS or targets the best way to achieve increasing the numbers of women in charge of our parishes? The clergy legislation bill to come before our next Melbourne Synod will include provision for Archbishop in Council to set a target. However, I believe setting a quota could work, and that it is important we give the idea serious consideration. It is the difference between an aspiration and a commitment. The wisdom will lie in how to go about introducing quotas.

The current stagnating or decreasing trend in the numbers of women in charge of parishes suggests a new approach is needed. The problem with setting a target is that it relies heavily on incentives for what is essentially an internal process. Targets have been shown to take a long time to be realized, and so as an aspiration are ineffective in driving cultural change.

I understand the key issue with quotas is their mandatory nature – so, how would that translate into our setting? Would a parish be forced to have a vicar who was a woman? No. I am arguing for a quota for recommendations to the archbishop rather than appointments. Those arguing for quotas have no desire to force a recommendation made by a nominating committee.

Translating quotas into our setting will be further enabled by two things.

Firstly, balancing any quota with flexibility for achieving it across the diocese. It varies greatly as to how many names are considered in each nomination process. The assistant bishops lead each nomination committee and work with the archbishop as a team, sharing potential names for consideration. There are already

parishes at both ends of the theological and ecclesiological spectrum who do not agree to women in charge of a parish (or in episcopal leadership). This has always been handled informally rather than formally in Melbourne, underlining the continued need for flexibility to minimise rather than accentuate these differences.

"Organisational change is never easy and it is a price worth paying for the benefits of the gifts women bring."

Bishop Genieve Blackwell

Secondly, we need to set a percentage quota as a starting point for the life of the next synod, which is three years. For example, we might say at least 25 per cent of representatives will be women. This would be very doable given current numbers and allowing three years to meet the quota. We could then gradually increase the quotas every synod, so every three years, to an agreed level.

What we can learn from quotas is the commitment to change coming from the other characteristic quotas introduce – accountability. Examples from the government and corporate spheres show that public reporting of and tracking of outcomes leads to more effective and timely change. We could do this through our

annual synod reports. We could also, and more publicly, report and track through an independent body as well, such as we see with the government-run Workplace Gender Equality Agency.

Together, synod and government reporting would make us more effectively accountable.

Rather than replacing genuine discernment, a quota system would enhance discernment by encouraging us to search more creatively and expansively, and commit to overcoming unconscious bias.

A quota would not operate in a vacuum. There are currently a good number of women coming through the ordination stream in Melbourne. The numbers of men and women at different stages of the journey are close to equal. Increasing numbers of women in ordained leadership in our parishes will encourage the pipeline and vice versa.

Other policies and strategies can help to overcome unhelpful roadblocks, real or perceived, to women seeking parish ministry and leading a parish as their pathway. The evidence from corporate and government sectors suggests that increased numbers of women will also in turn positively impact diversity overall.

Increasing the numbers of women leading parishes is a complex matter. A variety of strategies are needed given the serious and systemic roadblocks that exist. Quotas can play a key role in remedying past discrimination and increase diversity, far more effectively than targets. Their implementation may cause some discomfort, but organisational change is never easy and it is a price worth paying for the benefits of the gifts women bring. Let's commit, rather than just aspire, to increasing the numbers of women leading our parishes.

Correcting the record on quotas

by Bishop Genieve Blackwell

I AM writing in response to Stephen Cauchi's reporting on the draft Clergy Legislation Review bill in April's *The Melbourne Anglican*. The story included the quote that "both the group and Bishop Blackwell had concluded quotas were unworkable and would not solve the problem".

I would like to correct this account of my view. I still believe that quotas are workable.

Both myself and Reverend Steve Webster (seconded of the motion at last year's synod) were grateful for the opportunity to speak to a written submission to the working group, regarding increasing the numbers of female clergy as vicars and priests in charge.

We agree the issue is not just about legislation, but we also argued strongly that legislation does have a critical role in achieving cultural change and that we have much to learn from places and institutions where quotas have been implemented to great effect. In addition to the implementation of quotas, our submission also argued for applying a single schedule providing for a gender analysis to be applied to all aspects of the proposed legislation.

This significant review of our legislation in relation to clergy and the drafting of a new act is a once in a generation moment to express our commitment to women in charge of our parishes and Authorised Anglican Congregations. The changes we suggested could make a critical and strategic contribution to this.

Here's how we'll fill up our churches again

by Nils von Kalm

IT IS NO SECRET THAT REGULAR church attendance in Australia has been declining over the last 50 years. Data from the National Church Life Survey shows, the proportion of Australians attending church at least monthly has declined from 36 per cent in 1972 to 15 per cent today.

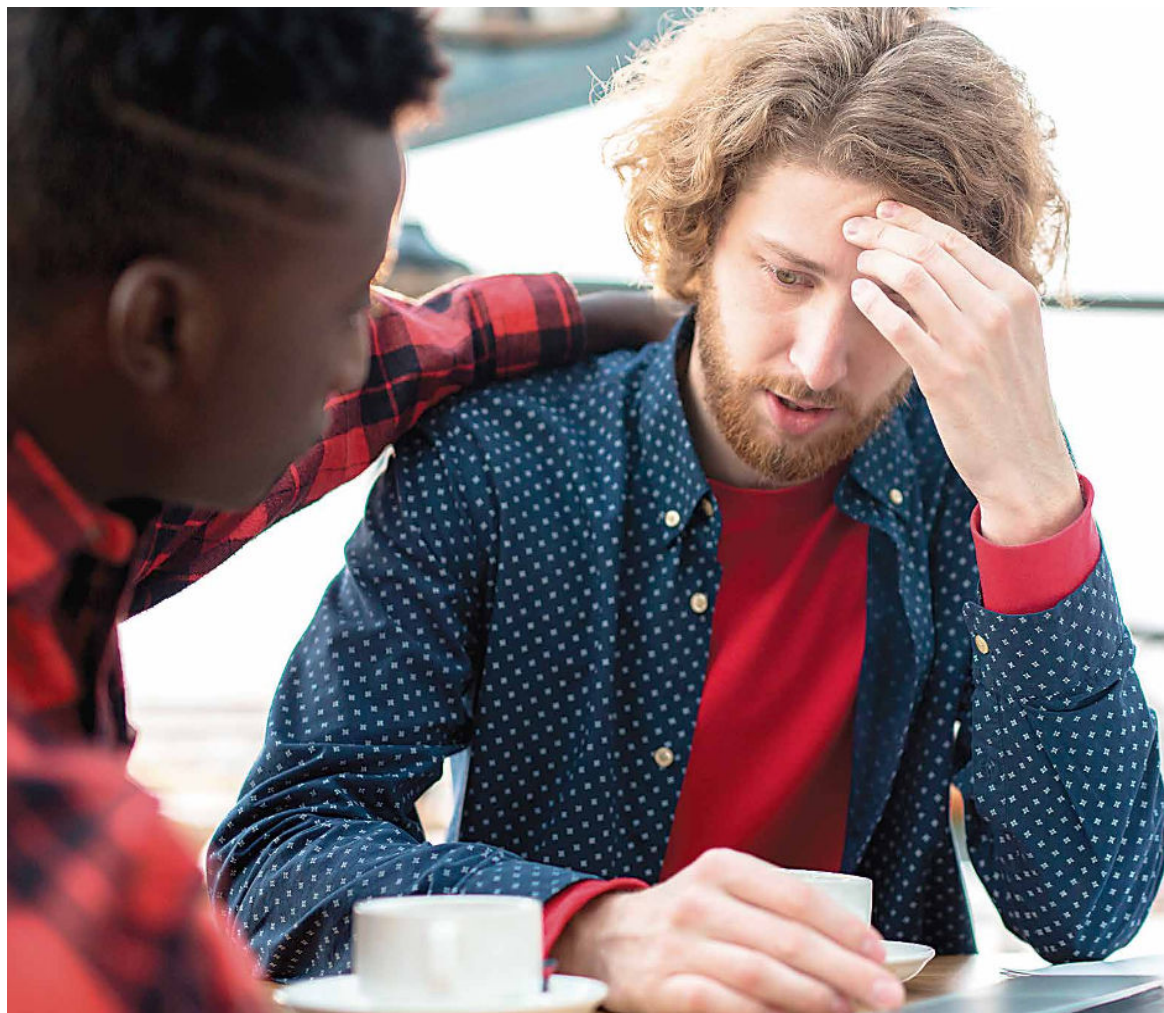
All of this forces us to ask why we go to church in the first place. Of course there are many reasons, but is attending church just religion to us? Is it just something we do on a Sunday morning because that's what we've done for so many years? Is that why some of us haven't returned after the lockdowns ended, because we've gotten out of the habit?

As attendance has declined, many churches have sought to become more relevant to people's felt needs, to persuade them back to the fold. In my experience, the unfortunate result has been in many cases a watering down of the gospel in the name of relevance. I have seen churches run like businesses, with the pastor as a sort of chief executive and marketing guru. Worship has become entertainment where people no longer participate, but watch transfixed, like they're at a concert, rather than worshipping God and participating with others.

Australian pastor and author Mark Sayers adds to this. He writes that he has noticed over the years, "the disappearance of a mode of church engagement characterized by commitment, resilience, and sacrifice among many Western believers". In its place he believes has come: "A new mode of disengaged Christian faith and church interaction ... characterized by sporadic engagement, passivity, commitment phobia, and a consumerist framework".

What Sayers is describing is generally seen in large mega-churches, but he adds that he has seen, "The same bored eyes in liturgical-heavy high churches". It leads me to ask, are we bored spectators in church or are we disciples?

American pastor, Jay Kim, says that some Christians choose a particular church for the following reasons:



Many of us lament the fact people no longer come to church but that's not the answer.

Picture: iStock

- What's most comfortable?
- What's most agreeable?
- What's most entertaining?

Kim goes on to say that, "Unfortunately, the underlying forces driving some church searches are the basic tenets of individualistic consumerism, born out of an assumption that 'church' is primarily a product package of goods and services, designed and marketed to achieve customer satisfaction."

Discipleship is the endgame of going to church as I see it. Formation as a community into Christlikeness, and then going out into the world to be Christ, is why we go to church. We are to be a light on a hill. Jesus called his disciples the light of the world. The early church displayed this impressively. In Acts 2 and 4, we see that the fledgling Christian movement ate and prayed together and shared everything in common, including

"Churches that look inward and focus on survival are the ones that die."

Nils von Kalm

all their possessions, living in community with joy and abandonment to Christ. Nothing else mattered anymore.

This was generally the case for the first 300 years of the church. The Sermon on the Mount was their guiding framework. The poor were blessed, those who mourned were comforted, and the peacemakers were the ones who were the children of God. Social historian, Rodney Stark, says that the main reason for the explosive growth in the church in the first few centuries was its care for the poor and abandoned. In a society which literally abandoned many

children on rubbish dumps to die, it was Christians who took them in and cared for them. That's largely how the church grew.

The radical exercise of love for others continued throughout the centuries. During several pandemics, Christians risked their lives to save the sick. The first hospitals in history were set up by Christians, and education became a Christian cause, to the point that universities such as Harvard, Yale and Princeton in the United States were set up by Christians because they wanted people to be educated about life and how God's universe works. Harvard was called 'The

School of the Prophets' and was originally a university for Puritan ministers. Similarly, the anti-slavery movement was almost entirely Christian. People like John Wesley and William Wilberforce gave their lives to the abolitionist movement. The beginnings of science were also initiated by Christians. All this arose out of Christian church communities who just wanted to follow their Lord.

So I would ask again, why do you go to church? Do you go because it's what you've done for years and it's become a tired habit?

I suspect the reasons are varied. Many of us are of the generation that was raised on commitment and loyalty, so we want to live that out regardless of how we feel.

Many of us also lament the fact that most people don't come to church anymore. What about instead of just expecting that they "should" come back, we looked again at the approach of Jesus and the early church?

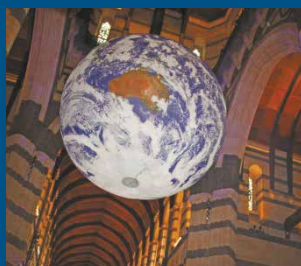
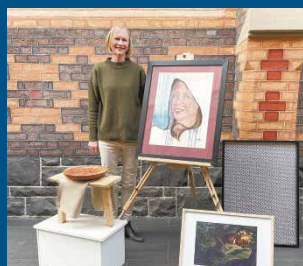
That is how we will fill our churches again. That is to be our reason for going to church. When we come together as a community, knowing we are deeply loved by God, we just want to spread that love to everyone we meet.

We commit ourselves to this every week when we recite the Lord's Prayer. We pray "May your kingdom come on earth as in heaven". Is our religious activity each week empty or is it filled with vibrancy and passion to love God and our neighbour (and even our enemy) right here on earth?

Ultimately, going to church is about growth into Christlikeness and then learning how to reflect that Christlikeness out into the world. Churches that look inward and focus on survival are the ones that die. Churches that come together as a loved and loving community and look outward into Christlike mission thrive.

When we surrender to the will of God, both individually and as a church, pray for the Spirit of God to fill us with the love of Christ, and then go out into the world to be the answer to our prayers, then will the kingdom come on earth as in heaven. Speaking for myself, may that be the reason I go to church this week.

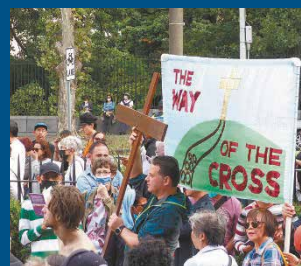
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The answer to decline is right in front of us

by Bishop Brad Billings

IS THE PARISH SYSTEM NOW yesterday's model of ministry, unneeded in the 21st century? Is it a dead weight we drag around with us? Or, is parish at least part of the mix in whatever form the "mixed economy" church will take in the post-pandemic future? These are all questions being asked by many across the Anglican Communion about the role of parish ministry into the future.

Like many Anglicans around the world these questions have come to the fore over the past two years when the assumed presence of the parish became, shockingly, unavailable in person. It is perhaps a case of not realising what you have, until you don't have it!

I should pause at this juncture and define "the parish". By this, I mean the traditional model of parish, which is a geographical area with a church and a vicar. It is a structure that most Anglicans around the world would immediately recognise, and which the vast majority of the faithful will have direct experience of.

What I am increasingly noticing in the post-pandemic world is that there is a great need all around us, and a yearning for, community. Specifically, for local community. Within that again, it is for human-to-human fellowship, the sort of fellowship that comes from being together with others in a communal setting. We all felt the importance of this when it became unavailable to so many during the pandemic. Many people have a desire, often unexpressed but seen



We often look for the answer in the latest fad when it's right in front of us, writes Bishop Brad Billings.

Picture: iStock

in a variety of ways, for the familiar and for the local. In many communities and suburbs and towns there is nothing more familiar and more local than the parish church.

What I am suggesting is that a renewed emphasis on the parish and on parish ministry is what the church needs after the pandemic. It will often be welcomed, and may even result in increased vitality for the church.

There are two important aspects of this thesis that occur to me, that are worthy of further prayerful consideration as we contemplate our future as Anglicans.

Firstly, I was recently in the centre of an overseas city which I won't name. I wanted to enter a

large and historic parish church. This church was in the middle of a pedestrian mall, next to two pubs and the bustling city market, but was completely fenced off by a high, spiked iron gate, every door closed as if shutting out the world, while people flowed all around it. Now, is not the time for the tragedy of the closed church door. Every parish church, within reason and as much as possible, and every parish clergyperson, should be visible and accessible to their community.

Secondly, the gospel, at its heart, is about relationships – with God and with each other. The ministry of the people of God should reflect this.

There is a real and urgent need

for what might be described as traditional parish ministry. What this looks like will be different, according to the needs of different communities and ministries. But the hallmarks are things such as:

- A vicar who is known to his or her community by name and on sight.
- The faithful saying of the daily office at which all are welcomed.
- The regular conduct of the liturgies of the church and the administration of the sacraments on Sundays and on other occasions that are open to all, however unglamorous the service may be.

- And, perhaps most importantly, carrying out a regime of good, old-fashioned pastoral visiting, of both the needy and the unneedy, the grateful and the reticent, and the faithful and faithless.

What I am suggesting is that our present times may be a catalyst for returning our attention and energy to regular, sustained, faithful ministry of a local presence, like that which has been the stuff of parish ministry for centuries. In our dire need to meet the many challenges of church decline we see all around us, we have, it seems, often lifted our gaze from things familiar, in search of the new and innovative.

But the very fact of a presence, physical and human, may be the most powerful witness and the greatest form of evangelism we have at this time. Perhaps best of all, this is not another program, it is not a new cost, nor is it a new and further call on the energy and capacity of already over-stretched people to do more.

Our presence is already there, because it is already who we are and what we do as Anglicans.

One of the paradoxes of the church is that we often look for the answer to our difficulties externally, in the latest program, podcast, or church fad. Often the answer is actually already present, and in this case literally, right there in front of us.

Bishop Brad Billings is director of theological education for the Anglican Diocese of Melbourne.

This isn't 'faddish irrelevance', it's vital to the church

by Chris Porter

A CONTEXTUALISATION of the old children's nursery rhyme for the post-COVID era might go: "Here is the church, here is the steeple, open the doors ... but where are all the people?"

Recently we have seen a variety of responses to the questions of church revitalisation, which is in some cases a question of revivification. More recently a "Save the Parish" type model has been put forward, which would see a return to a traditional model of parish ministry. However, I submit that this suggestion – and many others – belies the complexity of the situation before us.

The "Save the Parish" model advocates for a return to parish-based ministry, focused on the physical place of the church and the person of the vicar. This vicar is "known... by name and on sight", he or she regularly says the office, conducts liturgies of the church, and visit pastorally. There is little to quibble over on this being the remit of the priest within the ordination services, and truly a primary function of the vicar of a parish.

But this model of ministry is intensely leader focused – as is often the case in leadership training and research. A far better model of

leadership is not found with the presumption of special qualities imbued in a leader but instead places the leader within a complex environment. After all if the chief executive is the pinnacle of leadership, then why are business management journals are littered with examples of chief executives who take on new roles and fail dismally at the task? Indeed, research has shown that existing chief executives who take on a new chief executive role perform worse than those promoted into the role.

Why is this the case? Most of the answer lies in the fact that effective leadership – which is what we are asking vicars to do – does not lie solely within the leader. Rather it is a three-way relationship between leaders, members (or followers), and the environment. Leaders cannot exist without those that follow, and the make-up of followership impacts on the efficacy of the leader.

In the church then the congregation plays an intrinsically important part of the leadership environment. Church ministry is a collaborative exercise between the vicar and other ministers, and the congregation. So, what makes for an effective and dynamic vicar cannot be separated from the leader-follower dynamic of the specific scenario. Just ask any vicar or parish what



It's vital parishes seek to engage with their community.

Picture: iStock

happens when the vision of the church differs between the vicar and congregation!

The third aspect of the inter-related triangle is just as important. It's that of the environment in which the leader-follower relationship occurs. Take highly effective teams and place them in new environments and some will fail while others flourish. Can we really say that a "Save the Parish" model would flourish in an environment where there is no concept of the parish, no public community, nor any church building to point people towards?

Recently we commemorated the martyrdom of El Salvadorian Archbishop Oscar Romero, whose pastoral ministry highlights this tripartite leadership pattern. While Romero was a devout and socially conservative parish priest,

his elevation as a bishop and then archbishop profoundly changed his ministry. This new context and new followership transformed his leadership into powerful social justice advocacy for the poor of El Salvador. Romero's leadership was in partnership with those he led and in the environment of junta persecution.

This is not to say that the parish is necessarily an outdated concept that should be done away with. Rather that the symbiotic relationship of *leader-follower-context* entails the need to change the other aspects when one aspect is altered. Indeed, many parishes which adopt a traditional parish model end up reinventing themselves along different lines, as the socio-cultural context of the parish has changed around them. Interestingly, we

see can see this in the example of Service on the Sofa at St Stephen's Gardenvale, where the change of context has naturally meant a different approach to the leader-follower dynamic in the parish.

These churches are not seeking to remove the parish, nor to change the values of the church, nor to adopt a new fad. The intrinsic change in context has altered the dynamic of the structural relationship, meaning the parish itself must change. Indeed, the same is the case as vicars or the congregation change – after all ageing is part of our challenge – where the symbiotic relationship means each factor affects every other factor. Vicars need to work with their parishes and in their environment for contextually effective ministry. And, it is worth noting that many parishes in our diocese already do this.

Vicars and parishes that seek solid engagement with their community, in partnership with their congregation, and in contextual engagement with their environment should be considered part and parcel of the diocese.

All too often they are treated as merely a faddish irrelevance.

The Reverend Dr Christopher Porter is Post-Doctoral Research Fellow at Trinity College Theological School.

Brilliant teacher, talented performer farewelled

by Alan Gregory

Dr Brian Arthur Corless OAM,
9 March 1935 – 7 March 2022.

HAVE KNOWN BRIAN ALL MY life. We were boys together at St Georges' Malvern, then studied at Melbourne High and the University of Melbourne together, then later had Monash University in common.

Brian was a man of two careers: Melbourne High and Monash University, but a man of many more interests. Drama and the arts, cooking, English literature, Anglican liturgy, calligraphy, and St George's Malvern.

Brian attended MHS from 1948-1952, where he was active in drama. He was President of the Drama Club, acted in and produced plays, was a poet, a painter and served on the school magazine committee.

He then completed a bachelor of arts and diploma of education at the University of Melbourne, where he became well known as an actor, producer and designer for plays with both the Melbourne University Dramatic Club and the Marlowe Society. He was engaged in drama when the Union Repertory Company was being formed, and performed along with many actors who became well known professionals, some on the London stage. He even met Laurence Olivier when Olivier visited Melbourne and he entertained Noel Coward.

After a brief stint teaching in Gippsland, Brian came to Melbourne High School in 1960 where he stayed for 30 years, becoming a legendary teacher. He mainly taught English, and was an inspired educator.

Brian was a key figure in the production of top class plays, musicals and operas. He usually worked with David Niven and also the music teacher at the time, notably Bruce Worlan. Together these three did some of the best productions in the school's history, winning awards and prizes. As well as musicals such as *Oklahoma*, there were productions such as *Orpheus and the Underworld*, with full orchestra, *La Belle Helene*, and Gilbert and Sullivan. For 10 years, Brian and David also produced an annual Shakespeare performance.

Brian had a great sense of humour too, and helped stage two staff revues as fundraisers, which were hilarious and successful. In one act Brian played Alice in a send up of Alice In Wonderland.

Alongside all this, Brian was also Captain Corless in his capacity as adjutant to the School Cadet Corps, and was library master of



Brian Corless has been remembered as a man of kindness, and a longstanding member of St George's Malvern.

Picture: Monash University Archives

"Brian was sometimes pontifical. But he could also be hilarious. As one teacher said, 'If you want a successful dinner party just invite Brian.' Underlying a sometimes-formal exterior was a person of generosity and kindness."

Alan Gregory

the substantial school library.

Brian was also a superb organiser. Speech Night never had lapses and always finished on time under his organisation.

He was also a gifted calligrapher. So gifted that on one occasion, the tea lady sighting some of this work was moved to say: "Mr Corless is so gifted he should not have been a teacher, he should have been a sign writer".

During his time at the school there was a group of highly talented and enthusiastic teachers who were kindred spirits to

Brian. Like others in this group, he sacrificed promotion to remain at Melbourne High, where great spirit of camaraderie prevailed.

After a year as acting deputy-principal in 1987, Brian retired in 1989 at the early age of 54. He was later declared a "Distinguished Teacher of the School".

All his life Brian was an active Anglican at St Georges' Church in Malvern. Here, he held active roles in running services, singing the office, serving, and directing the liturgy.

His calligraphy work was also

much used by the church. The Book of Memory with their one page entry on those who passed away were all done by Brian. He served for many years on the Parish Council including a long period as Honorary Secretary.

Brian chaired and organised the church's 150th anniversary celebrations, and he was writing a history of the parish. He was generous too, many of the objects in the church were donated by him, including the Christus Rex above pulpit in memory of his mother.

At both the church and the school Brian's brilliance at catering was legendary. Suffering dreadful staff dinners at the school, he enquired of the principal as to the cost. Brian then said he would produce a far better meal for less – and indeed he did.

At St Georges' Brian catered annual dinners or dinners for special events until age stopped him. Privately he entertained generously, and his parties were quite amazing.

In retirement, and feeling idle, Brian took what was at first a minor job at Monash University. But his sense of order meant he ended up organising all graduation ceremonies, and he became the Esquire Bedell for the university.

He performed this ancient office with panache, and his Anglican liturgical experience saw him put into proper order not only the graduating students but also the professors and vice-chancellors.

Brian transformed the graduation ceremonies and also put in order the Monash coat of arms and flag. On retiring after 20 years the university invited him to address his last graduation and as a surprise conferred on him an Honorary Doctor of Laws.

His work as a teacher, and for the Anglican Church was recognised too, with the Medal of the Order of Australia.

On the personal side Brian was sometimes pontifical. But he could also be hilarious. As one teacher said, "If you want a successful dinner party just invite Brian". Underlying a sometimes-formal exterior was a person of generosity and kindness.

My sympathy at this time goes out to Brian's partner Chris Clarke. Chris and Brian enjoyed a long and happy partnership. My sympathy also to Brian's brother Dennis and his family.

So we salute Dr Brian Corless OAM, and give thanks to God for his remarkable career with so many accomplishments.

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Flat out helping seafarers caught up in crisis

by Stephen Cauchi

THE LIFE OF A SEAFARER HAS always been difficult but during the COVID-19 pandemic it has been close to unbearable.

It's meant the Anglican Mission to Seafarers has been flat out caring for ship crews who now don't even have access to the meagre eight hours shore leave they once enjoyed.

Nor do they have the option of signing off from the ship, so they can return home by air.

The Flinders Street-based mission's head chaplain the Reverend Onofre Punay said seafarer's suffering was a recognised humanitarian crisis.

"There are lots of issues during the pandemic – seafarers that weren't even allowed to sign off from the ship because of the unavailability of flights during the lockdown.

"It's not unusual to hear of seafarers being on board for two years.

"It's really a crisis. They're forced to extend their contract because there's no flights available."

Mission to Seafarers operates in 200 ports throughout the world, with other centres in Victoria at Geelong, Hastings and Portland. The Catholic Church operates the similar Stella Maris Seafarer's Centre in Little Collins Street.

Mr Punay said that pre-COVID Flinders Street centre would have 80 to 100 people a day, or over 30,000 a year, with similar numbers at Stella Maris.

Seafaring to overseas destinations might be exciting, but the reality is seafarers only get eight hours a day in the cities they visit – if they're allowed off the ship at all.

They must sleep onboard, and work loading and unloading cargo. Usually the ship has just one day in the port before it leaves.

"[Seafarers] work for four hours, and then go off for eight hours, and then they go back to work again," Mr Punay said.

"They're usually in a hurry. The main service that we do is transport from the port to our centre and from the centre to the port."

Most seafarers spend 4am to 8am working, then 8am to 4pm on any shore leave. Mr Punay said some ships had a multi-day stopover in port where crews could go out every day, but most did not.

This assumes of course that seafarers are allowed off the boat at all. Mr Punay said shore leave was like a lottery.

Pre-COVID about 200,000 to 400,000 seafarers came to the Port of Melbourne every year, but only 30,000 would visit the mission's centre.

Shore leave had to be approved by the captain, while the seafarers had a strict time limit out of the port, monitored by security guards.

"You need to be very, very lucky as a seafarer to be able to go out in pre-COVID times because they are still working. Sometimes they are tired. They've probably been stressed with the weather or while coming in here, so they need to have a rest," Mr Punay said.



Melbourne's Mission to Seafarers delivers supplies to those onboard ships.

Picture: supplied

"It's not unusual to hear of seafarers being on board for two years."

Reverend Onofre Punay

Onboard, life is isolating. Mr Punay said few ships had wifi, and email was the most common form of communication.

To help address this, the mission offers seafarers the purchase of SIM cards from its centres.

Despite the strictures, standards for living and working conditions on ships are regulated when the vessel enters Australian waters, under the Maritime Labour Convention implemented by the Australian Maritime Safety Authority.

Part of the job of the Mission is to advocate for the welfare and living conditions of the seafarers.

For instance, if seafarers work and haven't been paid properly the mission must report that to the AMSA, which has the power to inspect and even detain ships.

Mr Punay said abuse of seafarers by shipping companies still took place, but the industry had learned a lesson about what to expect when they came to Australia.

He said the AMSA was – to its credit – very strict about the regulations and documentation shipping companies must adhere to.

When seafarers are allowed to come onshore, they use the Mission's Flinders Street headquarters as their base to go out into the

In terms of activities, Mr Punay said shopping and eating were very popular with the visiting seafarers.

But he said since March 2020 seafarers had not been able to take any shore leave at all, and it was not certain when this would resume.

"Because of COVID, no-one wants to make a decision at this time in terms of departments of the government," Mr Punay said.

"Then there's also the port and there's also the shipping company,



Packing care packages for seafarers stuck onboard in the Port of Melbourne.

Picture: supplied

city, get information, and change money.

Mr Punay said some even went directly to the chapel to pray before they went out, or before they went back to the ship.

who don't want their seafarers going up and about in COVID-infested Melbourne."

The isolation means Mission to Seafarers must deal with not only the mental health of seafarers locked in the port, but also their spiritual and physical needs.

Chaplains and other support staff are not able to make in-person visits to ships, but can "visit" seafarers online.

Although the seafarers' centres are empty and there's no physical meeting, Mr Punay said he had been busier than ever during the pandemic.

For him, the situation means he can spend all day replying to emails and inquiries, and sending messages to ships coming into the port.

Mr Punay said mission staff were also able to buy supplies and drop them off at the port without interacting with the seafarers, which fortunately they had been able to keep doing despite restrictions.

In 2021, the Flinders Street centre purchased \$500,000 worth of goods requested by seafarers, visiting supermarkets, electronic stores and chemists. Grocery items, SIM cards, internet cards and were among the popular items.

The mission also donates care packages containing dental and shaving kits, books, puzzles, reading material, and knitted clothing from volunteers, and prize packs to encourage seafarers to take part in recreational games onboard the ships.

"They only have each other to lean on for support so we're trying to strengthen their camaraderie or team spirit on board. We try to encourage them to have some sort of recreational games," Mr Punay said.

"Some ships are very glad about [the prize packs] and they keep sending photos of winners of the games that they're doing."

Catering for the spiritual needs of seafarers is challenging given their wide background.

The Philippines is the most common place of origin for the seafarers, but many are also Indian, Chinese, or from Europe or other Asian countries.

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, the mission's chaplaincy team's main activity was visiting ships. It was especially important because not all of the seafarers in port were allowed onshore

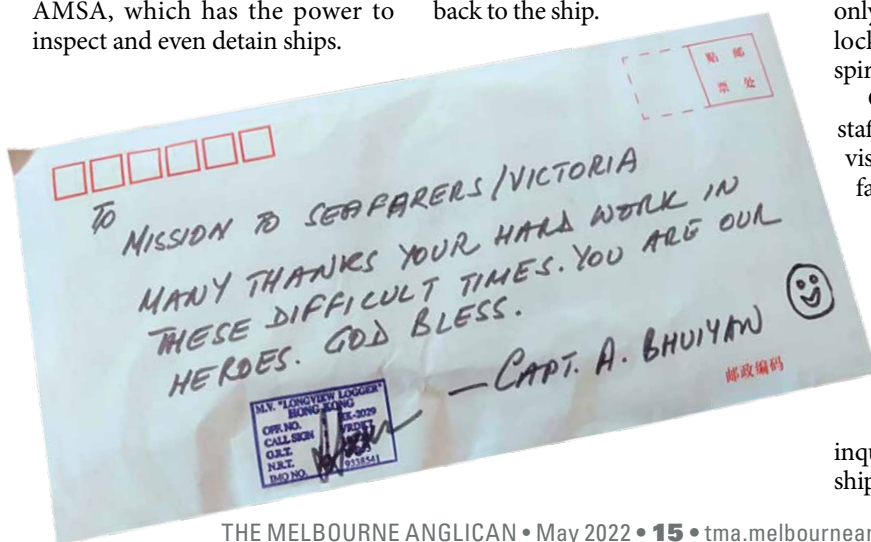
Sometimes they talked about spiritual matters, at other it could be about the working conditions on the ship.

"If there is some sort of trauma that happened on board, we offer counselling and sometimes aspect of spiritual care for those who need it," Mr Punay said.

"Sometimes we end up praying for them. Sometimes they do require some sort of service onboard – like a Eucharist."

Any services on board the boat are non-denominational, as the most common backgrounds for crew were Catholic or Orthodox.

Mr Punay said mission workers would often offer to pray for crew-members, and were often taken up on that.



How Clem Taplin found her own ministry call

by Mark Brolly

THE REVEREND CLEM TAPLIN often winked at the portrait of her father, Archbishop Sir Frank Woods, as she passed it in her work as chaplain for the Anglican Diocese of Melbourne offices, before her retirement in 2021.

Sometimes she sought wisdom from the man who led Melbourne's Anglicans from 1957 to 1977.

Often, she found the portrait had "Mona Lisa eyes" that followed her around.

Then Clem Woods, she was only six when her family arrived in Melbourne from England. Here they lived at Bishops Court, the East Melbourne residence of every Anglican leader since Charles Perry in 1853, for the next 20 years.

At no point during that time was Ms Taplin's own ordination on her radar. Ordination only became possible for any Australian Anglican woman during the next 15 years. Yet both Ms Taplin's father and mother left profound legacies for the ordained ministry that awaited her.

Dr Woods sensed that Clem might have a calling before even she did, and lived long enough to see her become a deacon in 1989. He died only a little more than two weeks before she was one of 33 women to become priests in December 1992, the first women ever ordained priests in the Anglican Diocese of Melbourne.

"I struggled with the call into ordained life," Ms Taplin said. "I was especially grateful to those who took my deep questions seriously during my training. I desperately didn't want this direction to be because of my father, and I had gladly left such public living behind."

Dr Woods had always supported women's ministry, but he was not keen on women wearing all black like the men, or dog collars. Before Ms Taplin was deaconed, she tried to reassure him.

"I said I couldn't really refuse to wear one, but would show him mine: soft blue-green, flowered, white pin-tucked. Collars a little looser. He roared with laughter: 'Well, if that's what you're going to wear, that's all right,'" Ms Taplin said.

Ms Taplin can recall her parents' love of creation, gardening, the countryside and pets. Home was



When Clem Taplin took up pastoral work, she loved it. But when her father suggested ordination, she was horrified.

Picture: Mark Brolly

"I had [male priests] come to me and say 'Just the way you've conducted your ministry, when you're behind the altar, it made no difference'. They often would be in tears."

The Reverend Clem Taplin

the centre of their ministry and a cottage in Upper Beaconsfield a treasured getaway from the 1960s, where her father could engage in manual work around the property and her mother, Jean, could indulge in her love of native flowers and birds.

"Any theology that I imbibed was incarnational and creational," Ms Taplin said. "I think the hospitality was the influence and believing in a massively hospitable God who loved us deeply."

"When I was young, it was always that Jesus came to show us God's love. It led to His death because it was too inclusive, too dramatic, too wondrous for the

people of the time, even His chosen people."

Ms Taplin's mother would house women fleeing family violence in a flat attached to Bishops Court and feed people experiencing homelessness at her back door. Ms Taplin and her older sister Richenda would assist their mother in welcoming guests for dinner.

Mrs Woods had to wear a brace and her husband served her breakfast in bed many mornings, before which she would do her spiritual reading, including Hildegard of Bingen and Julian of Norwich.

"I think she was actually quite a mystic," Ms Taplin said. "But what room was there for women who

were mystic in the church of the early 60s?"

During her father's episcopate, Ms Taplin would serve for him in the Bishops Court chapel and loved to drive him to some engagements, usually the role of his chaplain.

"A profound experience was accompanying my father to visit the diocese of Carpentaria in 1972 when my mother was not well enough," Ms Taplin said. "We toured in the vicar's plane and diocesan boat around the Torres Strait Islands."

Ms Taplin joined her parents in England for a time after her father's retirement and later travelled to places as diverse as Afghanistan, Hungary and the United States.

Active in Department of Christian Education adventure camps in her youth, she worked as diocesan children's worker and as a teacher for a while, becoming active at St Martin's Deepdene and then as pastoral worker at All Saints' Northcote in 1984-85.

"I had to have a robe, I had to run services, which I'd never done in my life ... I loved it," Ms Taplin said. "Eventually, one or two people, including my father, said to me: 'Darling, are you going to be a pastoral worker forever or are you

going to test your vocation?' I was horrified!" Ms Taplin went to selection conference and to her "horror", indeed was selected. But studying at the interdenominational United Faculty of Theology, after prior study through both Ridley and Trinity colleges, helped turn her around.

"Friends thought I might even leave at the retreat but actually I was right by then... The diaconate was the massive turning point for me," Ms Taplin said.

Ms Taplin was appointed to Mornington, where she was to spend five years.

"I loved the place, feeling like having the Sea of Galilee on my doorstep. I loved the work with a richly creative, humorous and integrated priest as Ken Parker and a most supportive field committee," she said.

There, Mr Parker introduced her to female models of ministry, such as Quaker prison reformer and philanthropist Elizabeth Fry, some of whom her mother had read years earlier.

"I was four years a deacon, part of this as deacon-in-charge at Mt Martha, and we had seven retired priests who took turns as the priest ... I didn't know till after I was priested that a few of them weren't in favour of the ordination of women," Ms Taplin said. "I had them come to me and say 'Just the way you've conducted your ministry, when you're behind the altar, it made no difference'. They often would be in tears."

Later, Ms Taplin moved to Vermont South as vicar where she served for seven years. After a period as assistant at St Stephen's Mt Waverley, she became assistant at St Margaret's Eltham. In the meantime, she had "stumbled" into spiritual direction.

"I think that whole contemplative stream is one of the ways of the Church living through these dark ages," Ms Taplin said. "It's interdenominational, it's non-judgmental ... there are massively hurt people who've been invisible and are finding their way again. It's terribly moving. So I feel I'm in God's place."

This profile of the Reverend Clem Taplin is part of a series on women in ministry, marking the December 2022 anniversary of 30 years since women were ordained in the Anglican Diocese of Melbourne.

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FAITH SEEKING UNDERSTANDING

Lindsay Wilson lectures in
Old Testament and Ethics
at Ridley College.



Christians, cast your vote for the common good

by Lindsay Wilson

LET ME TELL YOU HOW TO vote. I won't tell you who to vote for, that is up to you before God. I will go through what kind of facts, principles and values we should consider before we vote. My hope is that it will at least provoke us to explore some key biblical perspectives.

Making statements about politics is often fraught with danger. It is hard to please everyone when speaking politically – you're either too hard or too soft, too naive or too trusting, too extreme or too moderate.

Indeed, many here and abroad are cynical about politics and politicians. The famous political theorist Groucho Marx reportedly said, "Politics is the art of looking for trouble, finding it everywhere, diagnosing it incorrectly and applying the wrong remedies". Despite this, politics matters to society because it is ultimately about how we organise our common life for the benefit of all. And, God is concerned about it because he has a vital stake in every aspect of human lives. We can see that in the active "political" lives of Old Testament characters such as Esther, Daniel and Joseph.

Thus, it is worth asking whether our faith in God has implications for how we vote.

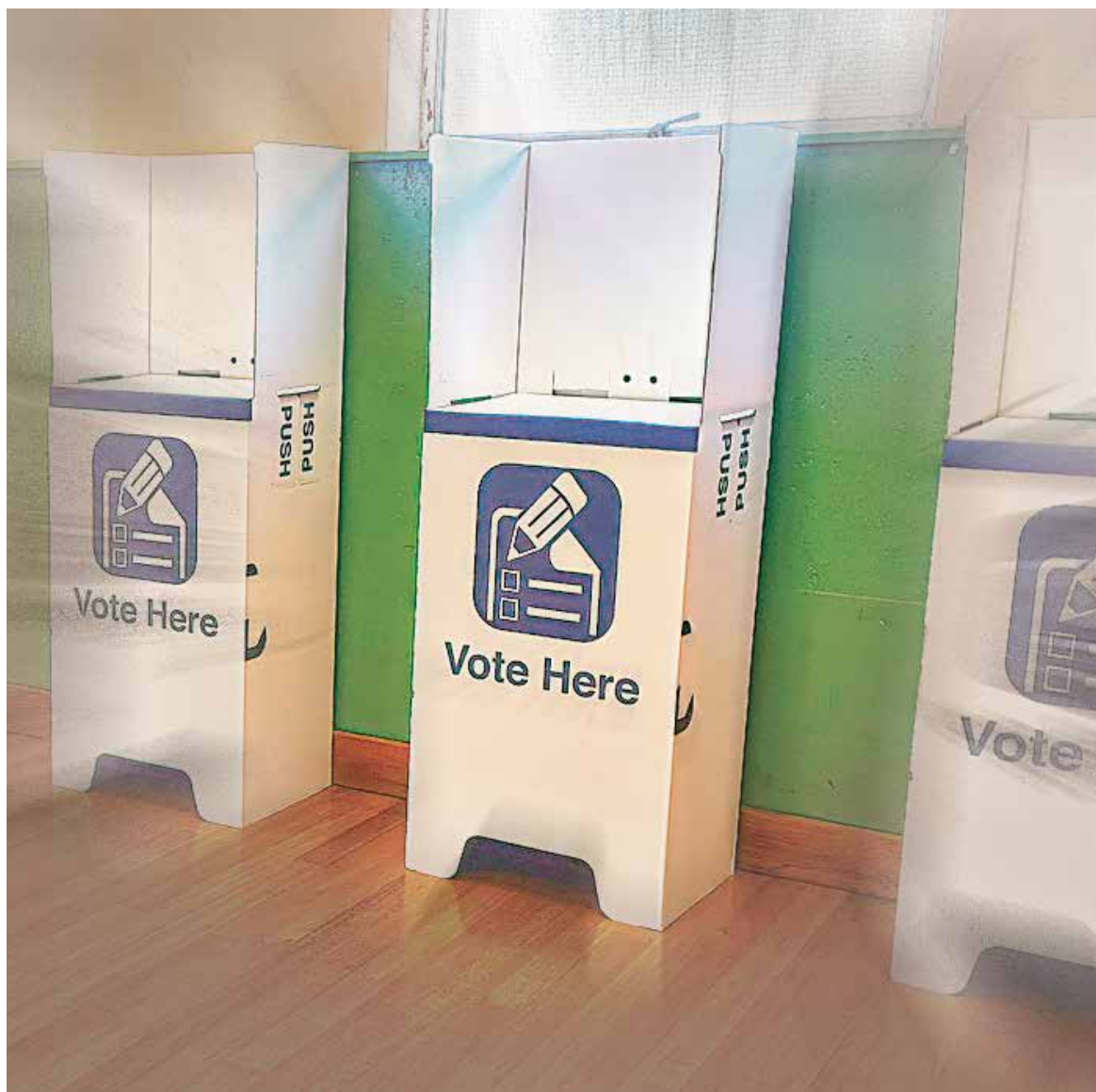
Firstly, being a Christian should make a difference to how we vote, but often it doesn't. Too many of our votes as Christians echo where we live, where we grew up, or how our parents voted. In 2 Corinthians, Paul tells us that, "If anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come". We are new people in Christ, with transformed loyalties. We have put off our old self, put on our new identity, and are being renewed in our thinking (Ephesians 4).

Why, then, has our new identity made so little difference to our political views? Why do Christians in Toorak typically vote Liberal and those in Truganina so often vote the other way?

I am not saying there is only one way to vote as a Christian, but that often we have not reflected on our views on politics as Christians. Christians who vote Liberal often do so because of personal ethical values, such as attitudes to abortion, euthanasia, religious liberty, sexuality. Those who vote Labor are often attracted to their social ethical policies, for instance care for the poor and needy.

But both are important areas. No one party has a monopoly on biblical values, and no single issue can be the litmus test for how we vote. Like so many other areas of our life, we need to humbly rethink our attitudes to politics now that we follow Christ.

Secondly, Christians must resist



Lindsay Wilson is urging Christians to think about how their faith in God affects their vote.

Picture: iStock

"As Christians we should be concerned more for the common good, and especially for those without voices or resources because they are on the margins of society."

Lindsay Wilson

the push to put our own interests first. In Philippians Paul writes, "In humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of others". It is common after the major parties have released their policies for journalists to ask people whether they will be financially better under Labor

or Liberal, as if that ought to be the sole determiner of how to vote. As Christians we should be concerned more for the common good, and especially for those without voices or resources because they are on the margins of society. In Old Testament times, this involved obligations to the poor widows, orphans, and foreigners who had no access to the means for creating wealth, such as we see in Deuteronomy 10.

More broadly, it is not about what is best for me myself, but what is best for us all. After all, God is the owner of all (Psalm 24), and has given us the ability to produce wealth (Deuteronomy 8) for the sake of the community as a whole. In practice, this means that we must consider future generations as well as our own, and those outside our nation, some of whom are refugees within our country. The important issue of climate change touches on both these groups, but so do many other issues. We must take short-term and long-term consequences into account. Clearly, then, we cannot simply base our vote on what will leave us in the best short-term financial position.

Thirdly, the main task of government is to govern fairly, justly and competently, rather than to impose Christian moral values on society. We are entitled of course

to argue that biblical values will of great value to the whole community, but governments are primarily established by God to bring justice and order to the society

"Given the party structure of federal politics, we ought to assess both the local representatives we directly vote for, and the leaders of the parties who will often determine the policies. We need to look for character as well as competence."

Lindsay Wilson

(Romans 13). We read in 1 Timothy 2 that we are to pray for our political leaders that they order the society so that we may "live peaceful and quiet lives in all holiness and godliness". Here, Paul hints that this well-managed society will help us pursue our Christian mission. When God appears to Solomon in 1 Kings 3, the king rightly asks for: "a discerning heart to govern your people and to distinguish between right and wrong". We are meant to evaluate any policies by their likelihood of promoting a peaceful, orderly society.

Several aspects of this are important. We should expect policies that are fair to all parts of the community, not just the loudest or most powerful. Fairness must include both the city and rural areas, various ethnic groups, and our Indigenous peoples.

We need to evaluate how competent and trustworthy the parties are, for without the ability to achieve their goals, their promises would be of little value. Competency is an important factor in assessing both politicians and their parties. The biblical book of Proverbs has much to say about the kind of daily living that will both honour God and build up the community. It's worth reading.

Fourthly, so far I have focused on how to evaluate the competing policies. However, the Bible consistently argues that character is a neglected dimension in ethical thinking. We need to evaluate the integrity of people as well as the platforms of the parties. As we read in Colossians 3 and Galatians 5, as Christians we need to have our character because who we are will inevitably affect what we do. This does not mean that we should only vote for Christians. But we certainly should be looking for people of integrity who are committed to serve the community. Given the party structure of federal politics, we ought to assess both the local representatives we directly vote for, and the leaders of the parties who will often determine the policies. We need to look for character as well as competence.

There is very little about voting in the Bible. The apostles even cast lots for a successor to Judas among their group. Yet there are many key biblical principles that need to affect the way we vote. I would ask, has our thinking about politics been transformed by our Christian faith? What will be best for the community – present and future, at home and abroad – rather than what will be in our short-term interests? Which party is best placed to govern fairly, justly and competently? Are the candidates and their party leaders people of integrity and character?

These may not be all the questions we need to ask, but they are a good place to start.

Say 'no' to an insidious genetic determinism

A new kind of genetic determinism is creeping in that can influence the way we think and act. Denis Alexander explores how Christians can respond.

ASKING WHETHER WE ARE slaves to our genes might sound melodramatic. Surely we left that kind of idea a long time ago? But it's a good question for Christians to ask, partly because in its insidious new form genetic determinism can appear to threaten the freedom that we have in Christ.

It's true that the bad old days of genetic determinism belonged to the earlier decades of the 20th century. From the 1880s to the 1940s it was widely believed that heredity determined race, class, mental health, and intelligence. Eugenic legislation ensured the compulsory sterilisation of hundreds of thousands of "physical and mental defectives" in the United States, Denmark, Sweden and Germany.

But we are now seeing a new kind of genetic determinism. Unlike the old, it's absorbed more by a kind of cultural osmosis than by bold "scientific" assertions. Geneticists reporting their results tend to be cautious, highlighting the role of the environment. Despite this the language of genetic determinism has come into daily discourse. Phrases such as "It's in her DNA" or "in this or that institution's DNA" highlight characteristics that are supposedly permanent. The media often reports the discovery of what they call "a gene for" violence, or happiness, or monogamy.

A recent news report from the influential science journal *Nature* proclaimed that: "An increasing number of studies suggest that biology can exert a significant influence on political beliefs and behaviours ... genes could exert a pull on attitudes concerning topics such as abortion, immigration, the death penalty and pacifism". In such descriptions, genes are seen as something different from us ourselves, that exert a "pull".

Rethinking genetics

Part of the problem lies in exaggerated science reporting such as this. When the media reports the science accurately, then the support for genetic determinism fades away and we are left with a very different picture.

The key here is to think about the role of genes in human development. Yes, we wouldn't be humans without the particular genomes – which are sets of DNA genetic information – that we all possess. But what is inherited from the parents is not naked DNA. By itself, DNA can do nothing. Instead egg and sperm fuse together to generate a complex system of molecules that cooperate to produce that lovely baby. Alone, DNA would be as useless as a piece of software without a computer to run it on. Biologically, human life begins as an integrated complex system and carries on that way to the end.

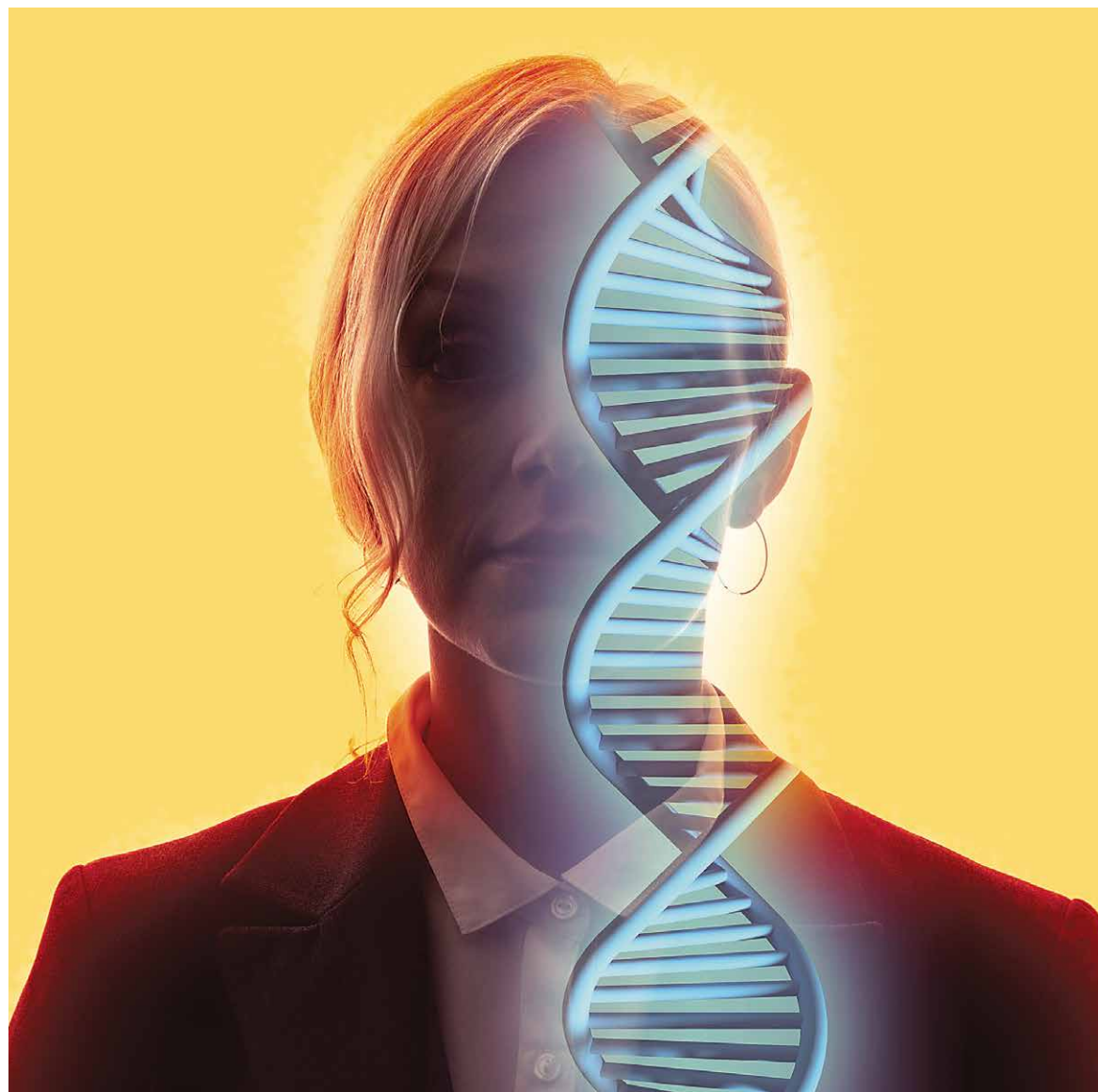
"Environments" are both

internal and external. Inside our bodies every single cell is interacting with millions of other cells and every single organ with all the other organs. But as we continue to develop, our whole bodies are

ments being "knit together". The human brain is the most complex entity in the known universe containing a staggering 500 trillion wiring connections, known as synapses. Amazingly most of the wiring in our brains develops during the first two years after birth. The infant brain is not a miniature version of the adult brain but a self-organising system that only self-assembles correctly if the right

Do different genes cause different behaviours?

We all have pretty much the same genes, otherwise we wouldn't be fellow humans. But slight variations make big contributions to our human uniqueness. If you add up all our DNA variations then you find that all of us around the world differ in our genomes by around 0.5 to 1.0 per cent. Most of these variations make no difference to us



As Christians, we can thank God for our wonderful human diversity, writes Denis Alexander.

Picture: iStock

"Being made in the image of God means that each human individual has a value and status that is not tied to their genetic endowment, social background, race, or any other factor."

Denis Alexander

interacting with thousands of external environments. So our human identities and unique personalities are both 100 per cent genetic and 100 per cent environmental. Millions of factors integrated together during foetal development and in the postnatal years to generate the unique person, the unique "I". The psalmist said that he was "knit together" in his mother's womb, and we are all the products of this great knitting exercise.

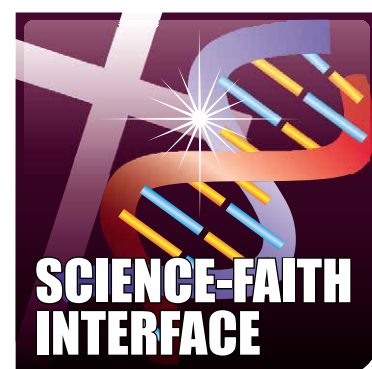
Consider the human brain as an example of genes and environ-

inputs are available at the right time. And that brain self-assembly requires thousands of inputs from the environment to proceed properly – light, sound, touch, pets, bugs, talking, plenty of parental love, and much else besides – all wonderfully combined together to produce a chirpy little cherub. Even in adulthood there is still a constant two-way flow of information going on between our genomes and the world around us. At the regulation level, our DNA is not quite the same after breakfast as it was before.

at all, but some do.

"Behavioural genetics" is the research field that investigates whether and how those slight variations have any influence on our behaviours, often using identical twin studies. One aim of this research field is to calculate the "heritability" of different behavioural characteristics. In its technical sense, this refers to the proportion of the variance in a behavioural characteristic in a specified population that can be ascribed to genetic variation. It's a population statistic about variability.

For example, "educational attainment" has a heritability in the range 40-60 per cent, but this doesn't mean around half your ability to go to university is somehow determined by your genes. Instead, it means is that in the whole population of Melbourne, thousands of variant genes influence brain development in subtle ways during a long process of development in interaction with the environment. The end-result is that some people find academic attainment just that bit easier. But your free will remains intact. You can still choose to spend your life



playing cricket, or making lots of money, or caring for the poor, and forget about going to university.

So variant genes can influence the differences in our behaviours – the likelihood that we do one thing more than another. If we are very tall, then it's more likely that we'll be good at playing basketball. But we need to distinguish carefully between things that "happen to us" with things that "we make happen". We don't choose our personalities – they "happen to us" during childhood as we develop, and our variant genes definitely influence that process. But as we grow up, we start to make things happen.

Humankind in the image of God

In Genesis 1 humankind is created with dignity and worth, and called to play a delegated kingly role in caring for the created order, male and female alike. Each human individual is a unique person, loved by God. We now know that there is sufficient diversity in human DNA to guarantee the uniqueness of every person who has ever lived, or ever will live.

Being made in the image of God means that each human individual has a value and status that is not tied to their genetic endowment, social background, race, or any other factor. It also means that human beings are free to serve Him or not. We read in Joshua: "Choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve!"

We can thank God for our wonderful human diversity. We can thank him also for our amazing genomes that make that diversity possible. We are not slaves to our genes, but free to serve God as we make our choices day by day.

Denis Alexander is a Distinguished Fellow of ISCAST–Christians in Science and Technology and Emeritus Director of The Faraday Institute for Science and Religion, Cambridge, UK. He was previously Chair of the Molecular Immunology Programme at The Babraham Institute, Cambridge UK, and his 40 years in the scientific research community included helping to set up the National Unit of Human Genetics at the American University Hospital in Beirut, Lebanon.

The topic of this article was presented last year at the ISCAST–NZCIS Conversations, an online series where experts present on themes at the science-faith interface. Dr Alexander's presentation can be found at: bit.ly/3v9zubX, while details of the current series can be found at: bit.ly/2022ISCASTCreationCare.

Meet the minister fighting against space junk

by Jenan Taylor

TACKLING CLUTTER OF CELESTIAL proportions from a sloping paddock in Emerald, is all in a day's work for the Reverend Professor Lachlan Thompson.

Five years ago Professor Thompson built a space observatory on his property to track the plethora of man-made junk orbiting the Earth.

It had a powerful telescope that would relay data to Austin University in Texas on clear evenings, as part of a small, but pressing, global program to map and predict the movements of debris.

Travelling seven times faster than a bullet, these objects are potentially catastrophic to weather and communications satellites, the International Space Station, as well as planned launches.

Since it was built, Professor Thompson's observatory has helped map some 5000 of the more than 30 million bits of litter, some no bigger than a box of tissues.

That may not seem like a great deal, Professor Thompson said, but it was helping to find answers to a big problem.

In that sense, for Professor Thompson, using science aligns with doing God's work.

Professor Thompson was an associate professor of aerospace engineering at RMIT and worked in space research for more than 30 years before he became a priest.

Knowledge of his background seems to be a drawcard for people, he said.

"They do get very curious. Here's this man of physics, who's also a priest. What's he all about?" And, of course, there's that question most people ask him – "Is there life out there?"

Journey

Professor Thompson felt drawn to the priesthood because people from students to colleagues would line up outside his office at RMIT to talk with him. "I was apolitical and didn't have a particular interest or position to push. People just seemed to enjoy having a conversation," he said.

But then he realised people were coming to him not just about research and essay deadlines, but to talk about divorce, children with heroin addictions and other distresses.



The Reverend Professor Lachlan Thompson's in his space observatory.

Picture: Jenan Taylor

"They do get very curious. Here's this man of physics, who's also a priest. What's he all about?"

The Reverend Lachlan Thompson

He convinced the university that he should do a clinical pastoral care course and started studying theology at Trinity College.

"It was either do that or a psychology course, and psychology deals with how people think and function," Professor Thompson said. "It doesn't necessarily help you to help people see where they fit into life, the universe and everything. The pastoral side becomes quite important because people get to stages in their life, usually

in some sort of crisis, where it's what's the meaning of life? Why am I here? Why am I putting up with this? What should I be doing? Where am I going? They're looking for a direction."

Professor Thompson could relate to their feelings of having their faith challenged.

There was the death of his infant daughter from leukaemia, which was a particularly dark period for him.

Later, there was the very public deaths of seven astronauts when the space shuttle Columbia exploded upon re-entry into the Earth's atmosphere in 2003. Professor Thompson had had close research connections with the fated shuttle so the incident was another deep shock.

He was ordained as a deacon in 2014 and worked at St Thomas' in Upper Ferntree Gully, before he became a locum priest at St Silas' in Gembrook and eventually assistant priest at All Saints' Anglican, Kooyong.

But Professor Thompson still turns to science to make things more meaningful for the people at his services.

"What we're trying to do is get people and young people excited about science. And to get them to understand that science and religion are not against each other."

The Reverend Lachlan Thompson

In giving scientific context to the Bible's account to the Star of Bethlehem, for instance, he might explain how a one in a thousand

year conjunction of Venus, Jupiter and Saturn would have created the stellar spectacle, he said. "The thing is there were lots of comets and the like whizzing about the skies at that time, but what made the people decide that that particular happening must be a sign? It must have been something very, very special."

Then there are the other initiatives he attends to, including the climate change related projects for the children of the Indonesia service at All Saints'. From backyard ladybugs to honeybees and elephant toothpaste, they tend to capture the children's imagination.

"At Kooyong, we would end up with about 60 to 100 people per session. The kids come along with school mates or bring their other buddies," he said. "What we're trying to do is get people and young people excited about science. And to get them to understand that science and religion are not against each other."

On occasion some people still challenged the justification for focusing on space amid a world filled with problems, Professor Thompson said. But they usually changed their minds when they discovered that robotics, infant clothing in SIDS research, and advances in breast cancer detection stemmed from space research applications.

"There's so little we know. And so much we still need to learn about where we are, how we live, how things work, how the universe works. We mustn't attack people who want to try ideas, because ideas are good. They give us an opportunity to learn about ourselves, and give us an opportunity to learn about God. Because we ask the questions," Professor Thompson said.

So, does he think there is extra-terrestrial life?

"There has to be," Professor Thompson said. "But, in the words of Mr Spock, it's probably not as we know it. If you look at statistics and consider that there is life that we thought could not exist at the bottom of the Marianas Trench. Those life forms extract oxygen from sulphur dioxide, which is toxic to every creature we know of living on the surface of the planet, which is staggering. So why should the effrontery of man put a limitation on the power of God?"



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Sri Lanka faces a humanitarian crisis: Bishops

by Rebecca Paveley

THE BISHOPS OF THE Church of Ceylon have urged the Sri Lankan government to “listen to the cries of the people” and act quickly to avert a humanitarian crisis, as the country faces the worst economic downturn since it became independent more than 70 years ago.

The country is experiencing high inflation, power cuts, and food shortages. People have to queue for hours for limited food and fuel supplies, and health services have been affected by power cuts.

Hospitals are running out of vital medicines, school exams have been cancelled owing to lack of paper, and newspapers are unable to publish.

The Government of Sri Lanka has approached international aid organisations, including the World Health Organization and the charity World Vision, for drugs and medical supplies.

A month of public unrest at the worsening crisis has spilled over into violence on the streets, and has been suppressed by government forces.

The President of Sri Lanka, Mahinda Rajapaksa, whose economic mismanagement has been blamed by many for the crisis, accused an unidentified extremist group of the violence.

But the bishops of Kurunegala, the Right Reverend Keerthisiri



Bishops have warned Sri Lankans are desperate.

Picture: iStock

Fernando, and of Colombo, the Right Reverend Dushantha Rodrigo, said in a statement that

there was no credible basis for this conclusion.

They said that the protest-

“The suffering masses who have now run out of patience will continue to agitate and react with anger ...”

Bishops of Kurunegala and Colombo

ers were the desperate men and women of Sri Lanka asking for relief in the hope they would be heard.

In a joint statement, the bishops urged the President and the government to listen to the cries of the people, and fulfil their obligations as a responsible administration.

“The state is duty bound to lay out its short, medium and long-term plans for economic recovery as a matter of urgency,” the statement read.

“The government has to devise a mechanism for immediate infusion of foreign currency to the economy in order to avert a human catastrophe of an unprecedented magnitude.”

“The suffering masses who

have now run out of patience will continue to agitate and react with anger since there is still no sign of light at the end of this tunnel. To be blaming such actions on extremist forces is a dangerous attempt which can orchestrate further unrest with communal and religious undertones.”

They warned that the state of emergency imposed by the President after the protests was an incentive to act with impunity.

The President was forced to withdraw a state of emergency after it failed to keep protesters off the streets. His entire cabinet then resigned – apart from his brother, the Prime Minister – and he has called for a unity government to tackle the crisis. Three political parties have been in talks to form an interim government, with a new Prime Minister.

The country’s finance ministry said this week that it will temporarily default on its foreign debts, blaming the impact of the pandemic and the war in Ukraine.

World Vision, which has been working in Sri Lanka for the past 45 years, said that it was prioritising food and the safety of children and families. It is already working with more than 100,000 vulnerable children.

The Archbishop of Canterbury, who is the Metropolitan of the Church of Ceylon, said that the events were deeply concerning.

Church Times

Churches make fresh appeals for peace in Ukraine

by Jonathan Luxmoore

CHURCH LEADERS have stepped up peace appeals for Ukraine, amid growing condemnation of Russian atrocities and the pro-war stance of the Moscow Patriarchate.

Primate of the independent Ukrainian Orthodox Church Metropolitan Epiphany said seeing the suffering, destruction, brutal violence and death, it was clear that a just peace could only be brought about by fighting the aggressor.

“The Lord is with us in this struggle, because we are fighting for truth and goodness against demonic tyranny and resentment,” he said.

“We believe that our people will overcome all new challenges – that Ukraine will win its victory.”

Metropolitan Epiphany was preaching in Chernihiv, north-east of Kyiv, after its recapture by Ukrainian forces from a month-long Russian occupation.

He said that the partly-destroyed town had paid a terrible price in hundreds of lives taken by “Russian murderers” for staunchly resisting Kremlin plans to destroy Ukrainian statehood.

In a reference to other embattled areas, however, he warned that Russia’s invading armies were still preparing the fate of Mariupol, Bucha, Yagidny, and Novoselivka for the whole Ukrainian people.

Head of Ukraine’s Moscow-

“We ask for restraint and condemnation of the war by all those who still have some sense of faith in Russia.”

Ukrainian Orthodox Church

affiliated Orthodox Church, Metropolitan Onufriy said that millions of Ukrainians had now been forced to flee the Russian invasion, mainly to Western Europe, and thanked Orthodox leaders in other countries for their “fraternal support”.

Ukraine’s Roman Catholic bishops said that the massacre of civilians had revealed the true face of Russia and provided traces of genocide.

The bishops said Ukrainians should still “look to the future with hopes of victory”, and that they were grateful to Christians worldwide for offering help to the 4.5 million refugees abroad and



Church leaders have condemned the Russian invasion.

Picture: iStock

the 6.5 million displaced inside their country.

“As Ukrainian Catholics, we are turning to the Russian nation; do not let evil become your deity,” the Bishops’ Conference said in a Holy Week message.

“Those who count themselves a Christian nation have erased the gospel through their actions, abandoning the commandment to love God and neighbour – this is why we ask for restraint and condemnation of the war by all those who still have some sense of faith in Russia.”

In mid-April Russia was reported to have massed 40,000 troops for a new offensive against

eastern Ukraine over the coming days, after being pushed back with heavy losses from Kyiv. Western military analysts expected an all-out attempt to link up with occupied territory on the country’s southern coast.

The United Nations High Commission for Human Rights reported in mid-April that it had documented 1842 civilian deaths and 2493 injuries since the Russian invasion began on 24 February, mostly from artillery, rocket, missile, and air strikes. The commission said that actual figures would be “considerably higher”.

Caritas Internationalis

president Cardinal Luis Tagle of Manila expressed sorrow after two Ukrainian Caritas workers and five of their relatives were killed in an attack on the Caritas office in the besieged Ukrainian city of Mariupol, Vatican News reported on Tuesday.

Addressing pilgrims in Rome on Palm Sunday, the Pope appealed for an Easter truce that would lead to peace through real negotiation in the conflict. He said that it was questionable what kind of victory lay in “planting a flag on a pile of rubble”.

Ukraine’s Greek Catholic Church primate Major Archbishop Sviatoslav Shevchuk of Kyiv-Halych, said that Ukraine was surviving and fighting.”

More damage has been reported to places of worship and church buildings in Ukraine, such as the Holy Resurrection, an Orthodox church at Zolotye, near Luhansk, which was hit by rockets and shells.

More Orthodox parishes were reported to have switched allegiance from the Moscow Patriarchate to Ukraine’s independent Church, as the European Parliament echoed mounting criticism of Patriarch Kirill of Moscow in a 7 April resolution condemning his part in “providing theological cover for Russia’s war of aggression against Ukraine”.

Church Times.

Africans starve while the world watches war

by Rebecca Paveley

THE HUGE RESPONSE TO THE war in Ukraine is overshadowing other crises around the world that need urgent attention, humanitarian organisations have warned.

Charities and NGOs have begun urging governments and individuals not forget the millions who are suffering in other countries.

The United Nations has warned that the situation in Somalia, where 4.5 million people are at risk of starvation owing to the worst drought in a decade, is deteriorating rapidly.

UN humanitarian coordinator for Somalia Adam Abdelmoula said the focus of the international community on Ukraine was sucking all the oxygen out of the room.

The UN has said that US \$1.46 billion is required to meet the immediate needs of Somalis. Only three per cent of that has been secured.

Mr Abdelmoula warned that 350,000 of the 1.4 severely malnourished children in Somalia would die by the summer of 2022 if nothing was done.

"The outlook was already grim prior to the outbreak of the Ukraine crisis," he said. "We have been overshadowed by the crisis in Tigray, Yemen, Afghanistan – and now Ukraine seems to suck all the oxygen that is in the room."

Mr Abdelmoula said already 70 per cent of school-age children were not attending school, while girls were being married off early because their families could not feed them.

United Kingdom's Tearfund international director Veena O'Sullivan said there was a hunger crisis of massive proportions going on in the Horn of Africa, which included Somalia, and ongoing violence and famine in Ethiopia's Tigray region, as



Humanitarian organisations have warned that the situation in parts of Africa is deteriorating rapidly.

Picture: iStock

well as humanitarian crises in Afghanistan, Yemen and Syria.

"While the eyes of the world have been fixed on Ukraine, other horrors have been taking place. With attention elsewhere, there is a risk that the cries of millions of marginalised and oppressed people are going unheard," Ms O'Sullivan said.

Catholic Agency for Overseas Development director Christine Allen said it was right to support a response to the humanitarian crisis in Ukraine, but it could not be at the expense of vital funds meant for tackling the root causes of global poverty.

"Our sisters and brothers around the world – including in Afghanistan, Syria, and South Sudan – are facing daily the impacts of conflict and food scarcity, as well as climate change and Covid-19," she said.

"Our sisters and brothers around the world – including in Afghanistan, Syria, and South Sudan – are facing daily the impacts of conflict and food scarcity, as well as climate change and Covid-19."

Christine Allen

Norwegian Refugee Council secretary-general Jan Egeland, has also called for an equal response to the aid needs in Europe and around the world.

Mr Egeland said he hoped that the outpouring of resources for Ukraine, and willingness to

receive and shield Ukrainians, would be translated to emergencies elsewhere, from Syria to Ethiopia, from Afghanistan to Venezuela.

Church leaders in Africa have described how the war is already affecting food security, as 40 per

cent of Ukraine's wheat and maize is exported to the Middle East and Africa. The poorest people are the most affected as market prices rise. Russia is also the world's largest producer of fertiliser.

Organization of African Instituted Churches general secretary the Reverend Nicta Lubaale said the war had caused a lot of uncertainty, even beyond food supplies.

"In Africa, it affects everybody, but, most especially, people at the bottom of the ladder. It is threatening to drop more people into poverty," he said.

"So, how they are going to enter into this – a crisis that is many thousands of kilometres away, yet it is impacting on them, and this comes in the midst of other things like climate change?"

Church Times.

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2022 Sharwood Lecture in Church Law

7:30pm, Wednesday 18 May 2022
Craig Auditorium, Gateway Building, Trinity College,
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RSVP: Friday 14 May 2022
BOOKINGS: trybooking.com/BXJCF
ENQUIRIES: Briony O'Halloran
events@trinity.unimelb.edu.au
03 9348 7536 (Trinity College)

Law of the State and Religious Institutions – Cause for Concern or Reform?

The fifth Robin Sharwood Lecture will be delivered by Mr Michael Shand AM QC. Michael Shand has practised at the Bar since 1980 and was appointed Queen's Counsel in 1997. Mr Shand has served as Chancellor to the Anglican Primate of Australia and Chancellor of the Anglican dioceses of Melbourne and Ballarat.

Light refreshments will follow the lecture.

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Earth as astronauts see it hangs in St Paul's

by Stephen Cauchi

A GLIMPSE EARTH AS ONLY astronauts see it will be visible at St Paul's Cathedral over the coming months, as a globally renowned seven-metre sculpture of the Earth is exhibited.

The Gaia artwork aims to remind views of the urgency of the climate crisis, as it hangs from the cathedral's ceiling above the choir stalls

Dean of Melbourne the Very Reverend Andreas Loewe said Gaia's purpose was to give people the chance to see the earth in a way only astronauts normally would, suspended in a beautiful holy space like the cathedral.

Created from NASA satellite images, Gaia aims to create a sense of the "overview effect" described by American author Frank White in 1987.

This is a shift in awareness experienced by some astronauts who get a feeling of awe for the planet and an understanding of the interconnectedness of all life, along with a renewed sense of responsibility for taking care of the environment.

Dr Loewe said that for Christians, the artwork was also about viewing Earth as God sees it: whole, entire, and undivided.

"It's a really poignant reminder for us to put urgent action into place in order to mitigate against the climate emergency," he said.

"The cathedral's always been an advocate for positive action in the climate emergency and when we saw the Gaia display at the COP26 [climate summit in Glasgow] we felt this would be a really powerful statement to make."

"The cathedral's always been an advocate for positive action in the climate emergency and when we saw the Gaia display at the COP26 [climate summit in Glasgow] we felt this would be a really powerful statement to make."

The Very Reverend Andreas Loewe

Dr Loewe said the UK-based sculptor of Gaia, Luke Jerram, had previously exhibited another work in Melbourne, the Museum of the Moon, at Scienceworks in 2018-19, visited by tens of thousands of people.

Gaia has previously been exhibited overseas, including at a number of UK cathedrals, and in Perth and the Gold Coast. It is the first time it will be exhibited indoors in Australia.



The installation GAIA by UK artist Luke Jerram.

Picture: Ivan Smith

"When it was exhibited in Liverpool Cathedral it attracted hundreds of thousands of people, so we are hopeful that this is something that will reset visitations in the CBD," Dr Loewe said.

"It's giving people opportunities to spend time reflecting what it is that they can do in order to make sure that the planet is safeguarded and kept and maintained."

Dr Loewe said that the sculpture would be suspended from the cathedral's central tower directly above the choir stalls – close to where sermons are given from.

He said a specially written composition by BAFTA award-winning composer Dan Jones would be played alongside the sculpture while the cathedral would have dedicated volunteers to guide people.

Mr Jerram has been creating sculptures, installations and live arts projects since 1997. His other works include *Glass Microbiology* and *Play Me, I'm Yours*.

The official opening of the Gaia exhibit, on 22 April from 4.30pm to 6pm, featured an expert panel discussing the climate emergency.

The panelists were Lord Mayor's Foundation chief executive Dr Catherine Brown, University of Melbourne Melbourne Climate Futures senior fellow Professor David Karoly, University of Melbourne journalism lecturer Dr Jeff Sparrow, and Aboriginal elder and Australian Catholic University and Aboriginal art and culture lecturer the Reverend Aunty Janet Turpie-Johnstone.

Gaia's official opening was on World Earth Day, 22 April, and the installation will be on display until June 26.

Prayer Diary

Find the prayer diary online at melbourneanglican.org.au/spiritual-resources

MAY

Sun 1: The Episcopal Church in the Philippines; The Diocese of Newcastle (Bp Peter Stuart, Asst Bps Charlie Murry, Sonia Roulston, Clergy & People); Archdeaconry of Dandenong (Jennifer Furphy); Holy Trinity East Melbourne (Grant Edgcombe); St Philip's Collingwood - Pastoral Visit (Bp Genieve Blackwell).

Mon 2: The Diocese of North Queensland (Bp Keith Joseph, Clergy & People); Ivanhoe Girls' Grammar School (Deborah Priest, Principal); St James Old Cathedral West Melbourne (Matthew Williams, Michael Raiter).

Tues 3: The Diocese of North West Australia (Bp Gary Nelson, Clergy & People); Anglican Media (Elspeth Kernebone, Editor); St Luke's South Melbourne (Jon Cox, Michele Moorhouse).

Wed 4: The Diocese of Perth (Abp Kay Goldsworthy, Asst Bps Jeremy James, Kate Wilmot, Clergy & People); Anglican Men's Society; St Mary's Anglican Church (Jan Joustra, Mark Lindsay, Dorothy Lee).

Thurs 5: The Diocese of Riverina (Bp Donald Kirk, Clergy & People); St Paul's Cathedral Melbourne (Andreas Loewe, Kirsty Brown, Robert Vun, Jane Window, Christopher Carolane, Cleopas Zhang).

Fri 6: The Diocese of Rockhampton (Bishop Peter Grice, Clergy & People); Ivanhoe Grammar School (Gerard Foley, Principal, John Sanderson, Chaplain); St Peter's Eastern Hill (Bp David Farrer, Locum); Melbourne Grammar School - Commissioning for new Head of Warhurst

(Bp Genieve Blackwell).

Sat 7: The Diocese of Sydney (Abp Kanishka Raffel, Regional Bps Chris Edwards, Michael Stead, Peter Hayward, Peter Lin, Malcolm Richards, Gary Koo, Clergy & People); Hospital Chaplaincy; Christ Church Melton (Neil Taylor).

Sun 8: Eglise Anglicane du Rwanda; The Diocese of Tasmania (Bp Richard Condie, Missioner Bp Chris Jones, Clergy & People); Archdeaconry of Essendon (Vanessa Bennett); St Augustine's Mentone (Ben Soderlund, Jonathan Chaintrier); 18th Session of General Synod (Abp Philip Freier); St Agnes' Glen Huntly - Pastoral Visit (Bp Brad Billings).

Mon 9: The Diocese of The Murray (Bp Keith Dalby, Clergy & People); Janet Clarke Hall (Damian Powell, Principal); St Matthias Mernda (Craig Ogden, Sandy Solomon).

Tues 10: The Diocese of The Northern Territory (Bp Greg Anderson, Clergy & People); Anglicare Victoria (Paul McDonald, CEO); Merri Creek (Peter Carolane, Robert Miller, Rebecca Miller, James Hale).

Wed 11: The Diocese of Wangaratta (Bp Clarence Bester, Clergy & People); Anglican Overseas Aid (Jo Knight, CEO); All Saints' Mitcham (Greg Wong).

Thurs 12: The Diocese of Willochra (Bp John Stead, Clergy & People); Angliss Health Services; St George's Monbulk (Simon Elliot);

Fri 13: Anglicare Australia (Bp Chris Jones, Chair; Kasy Chambers, Exec Director); Korowa Anglican Girls' School (Helen Carmody, Principal); Kirsten Winkett, Chaplain; St Thomas' Moonee

Ponds (Vanessa Bennett).

Sat 14: Theological Colleges, Church Schools & Church Kindergartens; Authorised Stipendiary Lay-Ministers; St David's Moorabbin (Michelle Wang).

Sun 15: The Scottish Episcopal Church; Mission Agencies of the Anglican Church of Australia; Archdeaconry of Frankston (Helen Phillips); St Nicolas' Mordialloc (Ron Johnson); Holy Trinity Coburg - Pastoral Visit (Bp Genieve Blackwell); St John's East Malvern - Pastoral Visit (Bp Brad Billings).

Mon 16: Religious Orders serving within the Anglican Church of Australia; Lowther Hall Anglican Grammar School (Elisabeth Rhodes, Principal; Fiona Raika, Chaplain); St Augustine's Moreland (Angela Cook).

Tues 17: Locums and all retired clergy; Benetas (Sandra Hills, CEO); St Peter's, Mornington w. St Martin's, Mount Martha (Helen Phillips, John Phillips, Liz Rankin).

Wed 18: The Anglican Church of Australia (Primate Abp Geoffrey Smith, General Secretary Anne Hywood, the General Synod & the Standing Committee); Brotherhood of St Laurence (Conny Lenneberg, CEO, Debra Saffrey-Collins, Scott Holmes chaplains); Parish of Mount Dandenong (Andrew Smith).

Thurs 19: The Diocese of Adelaide (Abp Geoff Smith, Asst Bps Denise Ferguson, Timothy Harris, Christopher McLeod; Clergy & People); Defence Force Chaplains; Parish of Mount Eliza (Tanya Cummings).

Fri 20: The Diocese of Armidale (Bp Rod Chiswell, Clergy & People); University

of Divinity (Peter Sherlock, Vice-Chancellor); St Philip's Mount Waverley (Caroline Newmarch, Breannon Wilkinson).

Sat 21: The Diocese of Ballarat (Bp Garry Weatherill, Clergy & People); Bush Church Aid Society (Adrian Lane, Regional Officer); St Luke's Mulgrave (Bruce Ollington).

Sun 22: Church of the Province of South East Asia; The Diocese of Bathurst (Bp Mark Calder, Clergy & People); Archdeaconry of Geelong (Jill McCoy); Mullum Mullum Ringwood (Maria Brand-Starkey, Isaac Koroh); Hume Anglican Parish - Pastoral Visit (Abp Philip Freier); 150 Anniversary Evensong, Trinity College - Pastoral Visit (Abp Philip Freier); St Dunstan's Camberwell - Pastoral Visit (Bp Genieve Blackwell).

Mon 23: The Diocese of Bendigo (Bp Matt Brain, Clergy & People); Melbourne Girls Grammar School (Dr Toni Meath, Principal; Kirsty Ross, Chaplain); St Peter's, Murrumbidgee w. Holy Nativity, Hughesdale (Lawrence Anbalagan).

Tues 24: The Diocese of Brisbane (Abp Phillip Aspinall, Regional Bps Jeremy Greaves, Cameron Venables, John Roundhill, Clergy & People); Melbourne Anglican Diocesan Corporation (Justin Lachal, GM); All Saints' Newtown/Geelong West (Stephen Pollard);

Wed 25: The Diocese of Bunbury (Bp Ian Coutts, Clergy & People); Calling Melbourne2Prayer Group (Jill Firth, Rachel McDougall, Jamie Miller, Philip Trowse); Holy Trinity & Emmanuel Oakleigh (Colleen Arnold-Moore).

Thurs 26: The Diocese of Canberra &

Goulburn (Bp Mark Short, Asst Bps Stephen Pickard, Carol Wagner, Clergy & People); The Parish of St Peter's, Ocean Grove w. All Saints, Barwon Heads (Jill McCoy, Jill Poole).

Fri 27: Ministry to the Defence Force (Bp Grant Dibden, Chaplains & Members of the Defence Forces); Melbourne Grammar School (Philip Grutzner, Principal; Hans Christiansen, William Peacock, Malcolm Woolrich, Helen Dwyer Chaplains); Parish of Ormond (Kevin Pedersen).

Sat 28: The Diocese of Gippsland (Bp Richard Treloar, Clergy & People); Children's & Families' Ministry (Dorothy Hughes, Facilitator); St James' Pakenham (Matthew Scheffer, Kathleen Mildred).

Sun 29: The Church of South India (United); The Diocese of Grafton (Bp Murray Harvey, Clergy & People); Archdeaconry of Kew (Greg Allinson); St Aidan's Parkdale (Daniel Gebert); St John's Bentleigh - Pastoral Visit (Abp Philip Freier); St John's Malvern East - Pastoral Visit (Bp Genieve Blackwell).

Mon 30: Ministry with the Aboriginal people of Australia (Bp Chris McLeod, National Aboriginal Bishop, Aboriginal Clergy & People); Mentone Girls' Grammar School (Natalie Charles, Principal; Philippa Lohmeyer-Collins, Chaplain); St Matthew's Prahran (Jordan Hitchcock).

Tues 31: Ministry with the Torres Strait Islander people of Australia (Torres Strait Islander Clergy & People); Chinese Ministry (Richard Liu, Missioner); St George, Queenscliff and St James Point Lonsdale (Peter Martin).

Breaking down common myths around Pilate

David Lloyd Dusenbury, *The Innocence of Pontius Pilate: How the Roman trial of Jesus shaped history* (London: Hurst and Company, 2021).

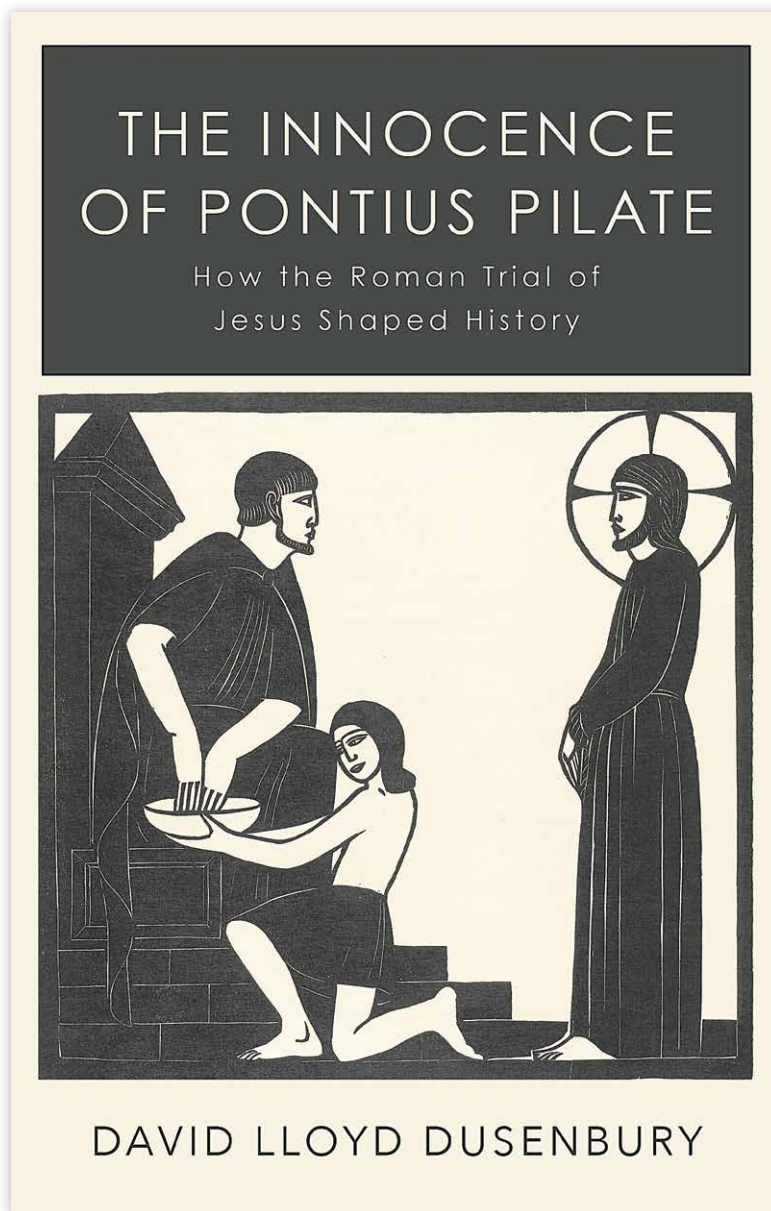
by Alexander Faludy

THIS BOOK CONCERNS JESUS'S brief trial and the, far longer, "trial of Pilate": how theologians and jurists have analysed the Roman governor's actions over two millennia. En route, Dusenbury recovers important, largely forgotten, Christian, Jewish, and Islamic traditions about the death of Jesus and brings them into dialogue with each other and political thought.

A tendency to "wash Pilate's hands" for him established itself early in Christian literature. Outside the canonical New Testament, the Gospel of Peter shifts the blame to Herod (not the Sanhedrin) as early as the second century. The reasons are complex and may initially, Dusenbury suggests controversially, have arisen from a concern to present Christianity as compatible with Roman civil order, not from pernicious anti-Judaism, which he maintains was a later development. The concern about the Roman civil order was a real problem, given Christianity's perception as a "novel" (and thus invalid) religion within the Empire's settled "Temple-State" nexus.

One oddity about the myth of Pilate's "non-judgment" is less its genesis than its continuance. It persists today separate from the (dreadful) myth of a "Jewish crucifixion" which it once supported. It does so in defiance of clear contrary textual evidence, such as Luke 23.40, 24.20.

Yet more surprising is that early Christian assertion of Pilate's innocence of Jesus's death is complemented by overlooked traditions of



Talmudic-Jewish and early Islamic commentary on Jesus's fate. These exonerate the Roman governor by implication, leaving him, and even Jesus's crucifixion, out of the story. In some rabbinic literature, Jesus's death (by hanging or stoning) becomes a matter of intra-sectarian conflict over allegations of sorcery and prophetic authority – not

claims to divinity. Muslim sources posit a body double.

Contrary to these Levantine and Arabian exegetical traditions Dusenbury claims an "African" tradition stands, most fully developed by St Augustine of Hippo. For this bishop, Pilate's passing of sentence on Jesus, and Roman agency in Jesus's arrest and crucifixion, were

"Dusenbury recovers important, largely forgotten, Christian, Jewish, and Islamic traditions about the death of Jesus and brings them into dialogue ..."

not only clear, but vital. This was so that protagonists in the Passion drama might genuinely believe, and act, the absurdity that they held authority over the one from whom all authority stems.

Yet Augustine's establishing Pilate's real co-responsibility with the Temple authorities for Jesus's death goes together with exoneration of both from blame. Governor and priests acted as they did only because, like the soldiers nailing Jesus to the cross, they "knew not what they did" and so were innocent.

Dusenbury claims that Augustine's Homilies 112-17 (on St John's Gospel) contains the first recorded use of the term *mens rea* ("guilty mind") not, as usually held, Homily 180 (on St James's Epistle). Jesus' trial thus grounds the test of criminal responsibility used in courts today

Dusenbury argues that by reprising Augustine's judgement that Pilate's ordering of the execution

of Jesus was "valid" on account of Jesus' assertion of sovereignty ("My kingdom") but mistaken (because the claim is not "of this world") we are able to recover the essential underpinning for distinguishing the earthly and heavenly cities in Augustine's City of God. At heart, Augustine's political theory, if not always his practice, saw Christianity's power as persuasive but the state's as coercive. Thus was born Western Christianity's and, ultimately, Western Modernity's concept of "secularity".

The Innocence of Pontius Pilate is arresting and erudite – but raises other questions that it does not answer. An attractive case is presented for a distinctive "African tradition" of interpreting Jesus's trial – and distinguishing spiritual and temporal power – developing through Tertullian and Augustine to Pope Gelasius I. What, though, was it about life in Roman Africa which stimulated such thinking? We are left to wonder.

The interrelationship in reception history of John 18.36 and the Synoptic saying "Render unto Caesar" (Mark 12.13-17 and parallels) goes unexplored. This surprises, given the care with which Dusenbury articulates the co-dependence of John's "My kingdom" with St Luke's and St Paul's language of "this age" as balancing conceptual categories in interpretative tradition.

Great scholarship, however, arguably does not settle a topic, but opens new questions. Inquiry into the interpretation history of Jesus's Roman trial cannot be the same after Dusenbury's work.

The Reverend Alexander Faludy is a freelance journalist based in Budapest.

Church Times.

God is with us through the very worst

by Clare Boyd-Macrae

EASTER HAS come and gone, but lives on in the life of every Christian, a fact we celebrate every time we gather for worship on a Sunday. This year, with floods, pestilence and war dominating our consciousness, we need the power of Easter more than ever.

And Easter is nothing without Good Friday.

In the Christian story, Good Friday came first. It must have been devastating and utterly bleak.

It's hard for us to imagine how lost and misled the disciples must have felt, as we view Jesus' death from the other side of his resurrection.

Not to mention Jesus himself. If Jesus were genuinely human, he would not have gone to his brutal betrayal and agonizing death thinking, "I just have to wait three days and it'll be fine". Being human, he would have felt confused and despairing. He wasn't simply acting out



a word for all seasons

a charade of death. He died.

To those who speak of God as some heartless, manipulative puppeteer, I want to paint a picture of an incarnate God: born in poverty, a refugee before he was two, misunderstood and betrayed by his friends, persecuted by the political and religious authorities, and eventually tortured to death, feeling abandoned by the God he had tried to follow.

I find this picture of Jesus more helpful than any of the glorious Jesus, golden and raised up and self-assured. When I read the news each morning, the God I want to worship is the God whose heart

is the first to break when human beings are wounded, bewildered or afraid.

When people in my community are knocked sideways by an early death, the end of a marriage, chronic depression, the mental illness or drug addiction of a teenage child, I want to share with them this wounded, vulnerable God who has experienced some of the depths of human pain. Good Friday gives us this reassurance.

And then there is Easter day. Jesus' resurrection isn't simply a continuation of the beautiful and miraculous cycle of life, it's a radical break with the life cycle. It is God saying not

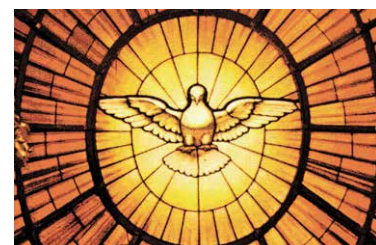
simply that life in some form will continue, but that God is stronger than death itself. That even if we destroy this planet, God will still be there, bringing it all together in God's love.

Clearly God does not reach down and stop a toppling building, or pluck one person out of the path of a tsunami. But I do believe that in the end, God will bring it all in, drying every tear, healing every hurt, making us whole, enabling us, at last, to be completely loving.

For me, the message of Good Friday is that God is there with us in the worst that the world can dish up. The message of Easter is that God, who seems so powerless in the day-to-day tragedies of human life, is ultimately the end point of every life, every striving, every suffering and every human heart.

Clare Boyd-Macrae's blog is at clareboyd-macrae.com

Inset painting by Ivan Smith.



Spirit Words

Keep on loving one another as brothers and sisters.

Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by so doing some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it.

Hebrews 13:1-2

More to *The Duke* than an entertaining caper

by Wendy Knowlton

THE DUKE IS NOT QUITE THE quirky British comedy its trailer suggests. This tale of a pensioner baffling the authorities whilst concealing a stolen Goya in his wardrobe has its humorous moments, but social issues, personal grief, and a twist at the end, make the modest film more thought-provoking than expected.

The premise seems improbable, but the story is based on true events. In 1961 the newly purchased portrait of the Duke of Wellington was taken from the National Gallery in London. The police theory – a carefully planned heist by a gang of highly-skilled professionals – crumbled when a ransom note arrived, demanding increased financial provision for the elderly. Kempton Bunton (Jim Broadbent), an ageing activist who had been to jail several times after refusing to pay for the television licence he considered an imposition on pensioners, finally returned the



Caption: Kempton Bunton (Jim Broadbent) and his wife, Dorothy (Helen Mirren). Photograph: Pathe UK

painting and stood trial for its theft.

Broadbent makes Bunton a loveable protagonist. He may be

the despair of his careworn wife,

Dorothy (Helen Mirren) who cleans houses to make ends meet,

but his failure to hold down a job is tied to his pursuit of social justice. Sacked for reducing a taxi fare for an elderly passenger or standing up for a fellow worker experiencing racial discrimination, he protests from a soapbox, collects petition signatures and rages against the £140,000 spent on an artwork when people are in need.

But behind the public performances and protests lies a man who can't get the audience he really desires. Bunton blames himself for the death of his young daughter, and his wife refuses to talk about it. He can't find anyone willing to produce the cathartic play he bases on this tragedy and seems lost without a way to confess or achieve any sort of redemption. His opportunity, however, comes in the courtroom, when what appears to be happening conceals a sacrifice that reunites a family in a touching way.

It is in the courtroom scenes that Broadbent shines. Bunton's lawyer seems fondly amused rather

than burdened by a client who has inconveniently confessed. Bunton approaches his court appearance as if he's been hired as a raconteur rather than called to answer for a crime. He genially dismantles the gravity of the case, making fools of the prosecution and causing the female clerk of the court to smile tenderly, as if itching to mother him.

The revelations in the final minutes of the film will send audience members scrolling through the internet to check what really happened, but despite the dramatic licence expected of a feature film, this extraordinary story doesn't stray too far from the facts. When the painted Duke was imprisoned in the wardrobe, he glared balefully through a knothole, as if protesting the indignity to which he's been subjected. But as the surprising verdict is announced and a member of the gallery bursts into a rousing rendition of *Jerusalem*, sympathy certainly lies with the dock and not the prosecution.

Step into the scene of a difficult family balancing act

by Tim Kroenert

WHAT MAKES a good boss? Early in *El Buen Patrón*, as it is in the original Spanish, we see Julio Blanco (Javier Bardem) holding court in the factory he owns. He stands atop a cherry picker, delivering a speech to the workers below. They regard him with near awe as he waxes lyrical about loyalty, about how they are not merely his employees but his family. His soliloquy is interrupted by the howls of an ex-employee who is displeased with the size of his severance pay.

In the next scene, Blanco makes similar allusions to family as he bids farewell to a trio of interns. Caught up in the moment, one of them steps forward and declares her love for him, then scurries away. The moment both reveals the extent of

the admiration to which Blanco is accustomed, and acts as a portent of things to come. His factory manufactures scales, and he is a font of aphorisms about justice and balance. But things in his fiefdom are more off balance than they first appear.

Blanco Scales is in line for an award, and the awards committee is due to drop by any day. In Blanco's home, a spotlight illuminates a blank space on a wall that's otherwise replete with plaques and trophies. He is plagued by that gap. The film traces the lengths to which he'll go to fill it. Keeping things ship-shape for the awards committee turns out to be a delicate balancing act. The howling, disgruntled ex-employee, José (Óscar de la Fuente), is only the beginning of his problems.

Through a dark comic lens, *The Good Boss* supplies a trench-



Business Blanco Scales is the scene of this drama. Picture: filmink.com.au

ant study of power and privilege. As the week progresses Blanco, a married man, navigates the perils

of a flirtation with a new intern (Almudena Amor). He coaches a longtime lieutenant (Manolo

Solo) through a marital rift that is affecting his work, but may have overestimated the sway he holds over this subordinate. José, meanwhile, grows less concerned with restitution than with simply tearing down the kindly despot.

Power corrupts all of Blanco's relationships, no matter how many monologues about family he delivers. Even the favour he does for a worker whose son is in trouble with the law comes at a painful price. The charm and humour of Bardem's performance only makes the character more monstrous. Whatever pretense he makes to justice and balance, his thumb is ever on the scales. The other characters grasp what crumbs of power might spill free. But in the end men like Blanco never really lose.

Screening at Cinema Nova

Doomed orbit central to streamed teenage manslaughter story

by Tim Kroenert

Warning: This review contains discussion of mental ill health and suicide. If you or a loved one need support, contact Lifeline on 13 11 14.

THERE'S A certain mid-tier of made-for-streaming drama that's best described as "sub-premium". Think shows like *Dr Death*, *Unorthodox* and even the very good *Maid*. Such series are competently executed, yet are visually and tonally innocuous. They siphon narrative intrigue from salacious true-life sources, using top-shelf performances and middle-shelf scripts. They employ disjointed chronologies, weaving back and forth in time to gather enough plot for an eight-episode run. Compelling in the moment, they epitomise that proverbial

beast, content: binge now, forget later.

The Girl From Plainville falls neatly into that category – even if it is one of the better examples. Its inspiration is the 2014 case of then 17-year-old Michelle Carter (Elle Fanning), convicted of manslaughter for persuading 18-year-old Conrad Roy (Colton Ryan) to take his own life. The series opens with this incident and its immediate aftermath, then loops backwards through preceding years to explore the characters' history. It pushes forward in the "present day", to portray how Michelle and others, including Conrad's family, react to the gradual revelations of her role in his death.

Among a uniformly solid cast, Fanning is superb. She succeeds admirably at making Michelle both monstrous and sympathetic. The second episode shows

Michelle, still yet to be exposed, hosting a baseball fundraiser in Conrad's honour. Conrad's bereaved best friend Rob (Jeff Wahlberg) and mother Lynn (Chloë Sevigny) are present. Yet Michelle's determination to be the centre of attention is tragic, as well as horrifying. Beneath the facade of near conscience-less bravado we see signs of a hurt and vulnerable young woman who is desperate for affection. In private moments we, the audience, occasionally see the facade shatter entirely, before being hastily glued back together.

The series parallels Michelle and Conrad's experiences, probing each. Both have struggled to meet the social expectations of their peers. Both have experienced slights against their wellbeing by adults who should know better. Michelle's obsession with the TV show *Glee* sees her explicitly, wish-



Elle Fanning as Michelle Carter.

fully play-act moments from that musical soap. Conrad play-acts a kind of aggressive masculinity to

the sounds of hip-hop. Neither is mentally well – both have been prescribed medication, and Conrad has attempted suicide before. Caught in each other's orbit, both seem doomed.

At the time of writing only the first four of eight episodes are available to view. Yet this, combined with the historical record, is more than enough to get a sense of where things are going. By the midway point of the series, we've been introduced to the law-and-order professionals who will bring about Michelle's downfall. There's not much guesswork involved in knowing how it will end. It's an engrossing diversion though – ably filling the time it takes to choose the next parcel of compelling content the platforms of the moment offer up.

Streaming on Stan.