



Visibility
challenge in
growth area P5

An accidental
pastor with a
passion P10



Jessica Thomas, Richard Joseph and Patrick Joseph join in the celebrations at the Provincial Choral Evensong.

Picture: Janine Eastgate

Marking 175 years of shared history in Melbourne

by Kirralee Nicolle

ANGLICAN AND Catholic clergy and parishioners have marked 175 years of both dioceses in

Melbourne with an evensong at St Paul's Cathedral.

Both Anglican Archbishop of Melbourne Philip Freier and Catholic Archbishop of

Melbourne Peter Comensoli were in attendance.

Catholic parishioner Richard Joseph said that as he and his Anglican fiancée Jessica Thomas

were soon to be married, this day held personal significance as it represented a broader union of the two churches.

Attendee Andrew Carroll

said that for him, the occasion was also a momentous one. "It's a very special day for Melbourne and Victoria where the two communities are united," he said.

'Urgent' support need

Calls to train clergy to repair faith-based conversion harms

by Jenan Taylor

THEOLOGICAL COLLEGES have been urged to better educate pastoral care workers to understand the effects of faith-based conversion practices.

It comes as the Anglican church is urged to better support LGBTQIA+ believers recovering from conversion therapy.

University of Divinity vice-chancellor Professor Peter Sherlock said LGBTQIA+ believers who had been traumatised by faith-based conversion practices had a deep spiritual need.

Professor Sherlock said it was urgent that theological colleges and

universities placed such training to support recovery from spiritual harm on the education agenda.

He said the church had an opportunity to build something out of that by supporting these people's recovery from spiritual harm. But he said there were no concerted, institutional efforts within the mainstream church to help them.

A new study found that many had suffered mental health problems such as depression and suicidal thoughts, and they had also experienced religious trauma and moral injury. The study from La Trobe and Macquarie universities explored the spiritual impacts of faith-based conversion practices

on LGBTQIA+ believers.

Researchers surveyed 42 LGBTQIA+ survivors of faith-based conversion over a three-year period. Participants also had relationship problems, feelings of rejection and isolation, and damage to spiritual identity and meaning after their conversion experiences. In some cases, the trauma led to family breakdown and homelessness.

The report also referenced several international studies showing that survivors of conversion practices had heightened poor health and economic outcomes.

It said mental health professionals were well placed to address conversion related spiritual harm.

However, because many LGBTQIA+ survivors were also believers, it recommended improvements in pastoral care to help them recover.

The paper said training for spiritual care-givers should include support in the areas of sexuality and gender identity in particular.

However, it cited a 2017 study that had found that two thirds of Australian clergy and pastoral workers felt that they were not adequately equipped to help survivors.

Report co-author Dr Timothy Jones said many were living with psychological injuries as they had difficulty finding appropriate support in their recovery

Dr Jones said survey participants highlighted that most health practitioners had a very little understanding of what conversion practices were and their effects. He said most of those impacted were people for whom their faith was an important part of who they were.

He said on the one hand survivors were told by their religious community that if they were a person of faith, they couldn't be queer.

But at the same time, they heard if they were queer they couldn't be religious, from workers in the current mental health space and by the wider LGBTQIA+ community.

• Continued – P6

Anglican dialogue makes a strong statement

by Archbishop Philip Freier

IT HAS BEEN A LONG TIME COMING, 14 years in fact, but there is a strong sense of expectation as the bishops of the Anglican Communion and their spouses prepare to gather for the Lambeth Conference in Canterbury, England from 26 July to 8 August. Those who will be present have been invited by the Archbishop of Canterbury. Archbishop Justin Welby is the 105th bishop to hold that office in succession to Augustine of Canterbury. He was enthroned on 21 March 2013. Over the past nine years he has worked hard to build the collegiality of the bishops of the Anglican Communion, personally visiting most provinces of the Communion within his first 18 months in office. I was pleased to welcome him to St Paul's Cathedral on 13 August 2014 and to have him preach at the service of my inauguration as Primate. I'm glad to say that he will return to Australia in early October this year for a formal visit during which he will return to our cathedral.

The Anglican Communion looks to "bonds of affection" as the basis of our shared life in Communion, and the role of the Archbishop of Canterbury in nurturing this is significant. The Archbishop of Canterbury along with the Lambeth Conference, the Anglican Consultative Council and the Primates' Meetings constitute the four "Instruments of Communion" that nurture the life of the worldwide Communion. I have felt very privileged to have been able to contribute to the three



"In a world that readily descends into conflict ... it makes a strong statement that Anglican leaders from all around the world intend to join together for prayer."

corporate instruments and to have worked closely with Archbishop Justin over my term as Primate of Australia. In a world that readily descends into conflict and unreconcilable positions it makes a strong statement that Anglican leaders from all around the world intend to join together for prayer, shared study and worship simply out of the "bonds of affection" they have for each other by reason of a shared episcopal office and vocation.

I know that what I have

described can be readily derided as a "talkfest", but I think that the truly dialogical and discursive relationality that I am outlining commends itself as a "disruptive practice" to a world weighed down by conflict, division and the failure of many formal systems. Amazing, isn't it, that a permanent member of the security council of the United Nations can veto any matter that disturbs its interests? In the face of the Russian invasion of Ukraine this formal system is muted by its



own design by the victorious great powers after the Second World War. Later in the month of August, the World Council of Churches will meet in Germany for its 11th Assembly. This will be an important opportunity for dialogue on current world issues and is one that I hope the influential Russian Orthodox Church will join. The focus of the assembly in Europe will make the reality that it is once again a continent in military conflict even more pressing.

Please pray for the bishops of our diocese as we prepare to attend the Lambeth Conference. There have been excellent preparatory events online for spouses and for bishops, so we approach this time together with good spiritual and relation preparation.

Philip Meller

Clergy Moves

Vacant Appointments as of 16 June 2022:

Holy Trinity, Bacchus Marsh with Christ Church, Myrniong and St George's Balliang; St Martin, Belgrave Heights; Parish of Box Hill (from October 2022); St Edward, Blackburn South; St Peter, Bundoora; St John Chrysostom, Brunswick West; St Faith, Burwood; St Mark, Camberwell (from December 2022); St Catharine, Caulfield South; St Alban, Coburg West; St Philip, Collingwood; St Michael's & St Luke's, North Dandenong; Darebin South; St Mark, Dromana; St Margaret, Eltham; Christ Church, Geelong; St Stephen, Greythorn; Holy Trinity, Hampton; St James, Ivanhoe (from October 2022); 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 Mark, Reservoir; St Andrew, Somerville; Christ Church, South Yarra; St Luke, Sydenham; St Thomas, Upper Ferntree Gully; All Saints' Carlotta Tye Memorial, Selby; St Thomas, Winchelsea with Holy Trinity, Barrabool and St Paul's, Deans Marsh; St Paul, Westmeadows; St Matthew, Wheeler's Hill (from November 2022); Christ Church, Whittlesea with St Peter's, Kinglake

Appointments:

DWYER, The Revd Helen, appointed Canon to St Paul's, Cathedral, effective 7 June 2022
HENDERSON, The Rev Vijay, appointed Priest-in-Charge, Christ Church, Berwick, effective 28 September 2022

ROSNER, The Revd Brian, appointed Canon to St Paul's, Cathedral, effective 7 June 2022
ROSS, The Revd Alexander, appointed Incumbent from Priest-in-Charge, St John, Malvern East with St Agnes, Glen Huntly, effective 29 June 2022

Permission to Officiate:

FILEWOOD, The Revd Trevor Dennis, appointed Renewal of Permission to Officiate within the Diocese of Melbourne, effective 26 May 2022

MARIES, The Revd Rosemary Ellen, appointed Renewal of Permission to Officiate within the Diocese of Melbourne, effective 2 June 2022

RAIKE, The Revd John Alan, appointed Permission to Officiate within the Diocese of Melbourne, effective 9 June 2022

ROLFE, The Revd Dr Sharne Annette, appointed Permission to Officiate within the Diocese of Melbourne, effective 9 June 2022

Retirements:

MAY, The Revd Stephen, Incumbent, St James, Ivanhoe, effective 10 October 2022

Clergy Moves Corrections

Apologies to: D'Alton, The Revd Craig, Resignation as Incumbent, Christ Church, South Yarra, effective 10 September 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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St Paul's Cathedral

Together transforming our City and Diocese

UPCOMING EVENTS & SERVICES

Apr 2022 – 10 July 2022

Wednesdays 1pm

Luke Jerram's *Gaia* at the Cathedral
www.cathedral.org.au/Gaia

Lunchtime Concert Series
(see website for upcoming concerts)

Sat 16 July 10am

First Nations Cultural Awareness Session
with Canon Glenn Loughrey

Thurs 21 July 2pm

Anglican Schools Combined Service

Fri 22 July 2pm

Cathedral Seniors Group
Speaker: Jo Knight, CEO Anglican Overseas Aid

Sun 7 Aug 10am

Hiroshima Peace Day Service

Choral Evensong with members of MICCIA
Preacher: The Revd Alister McCrae

REGULAR SERVICES

Sundays 8am

Holy Communion (BCP)

10am

Choral Eucharist

1pm

Bilingual Eucharist 華語崇拜

4pm

Choral Evensong (not on Sun 3 & 10 July)

Weekdays 12.15pm

Holy Eucharist

5.10pm

Choral Evensong or Evening Prayer

The Cathedral is open Monday to Friday 10am – 5pm | Saturdays 10am 3pm.

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The priest riding to break bowel disease taboo

by Kirralee Nicolle

REVEREND JIMMY YOUNG CAN often be found in one of several natural habitats – at St John's Cranbourne, at his Clyde home, and on his bicycle in the Dandenongs.

In March 2022, Mr Young attained a coveted achievement among cyclists: he was an official finisher in the brutal Peaks Challenge Falls Creek, a 235km cycling event in Alpine Victoria.

Mr Young cycles 150 to 200kms in a standard week, impressive for anyone, but especially so when you consider that his health journey has not been straightforward.

In the lead up to the Peaks Challenge, he cycled 250 to 300 kilometres a week.

"It was the hardest thing that I could think of to do, so I wanted to do it," Mr Young said.

"There is no greater challenge for a recreational rider like me than finishing that ride."

Following several health challenges as a child, Mr Young developed chronic fatigue in his early teenage years, which led to him completing year 12 over two years.

Mr Young was then later diagnosed with postural orthostatic tachycardia syndrome, a condition which causes his blood pressure to drop rapidly when he changes position.

Then, two years ago, Mr Young was given a new diagnosis: ulcerative colitis.



Reverend Jimmy Young cycling in the Peaks Challenge at Falls Creek. Picture: supplied

Ulcerative colitis is an inflammatory bowel disease which causes chronic ulcers and inflammation in the large intestine.

Not only did this disease affect Mr Young's life in new ways, it also showed him a different culture around chronic illness.

Mr Young said that while many people may be happier to speak publicly about an illness such as chronic fatigue or POTS, ulcerative colitis was considered too private to talk about.

"Because it is to do with the colon and bowel movements, no one wanted to talk about it," he said.

"I had to go first."

So, Mr Young did talk about it, and he used cycling to tell his story.

He entered the Peaks Challenge for the first time in 2019 but was forced to withdraw partway through due to illness.

This time round, he was in better shape, and had the added motivation of raising funds for Crohn's and Colitis Australia, an advocacy agency for those experiencing the disease. He also used it as an opportunity to talk publicly on his Facebook page about the recent diagnosis.

Mr Young said that he had noticed a trend among those he knew from internet groups for those with chronic illness of feeling limited in their abilities and unable to do things which brought them joy or excitement.

"When people have these diagnoses, they shut down. Their diagnosis becomes their identity very quickly," he said.

"Having a series of health troubles makes you believe your body is a bit messed up."

"God's vision for our bodies is that they are good and discovering what they can do is a good thing."

He said a defiant "I'll show you" attitude had become something of a mantra for him when warned by doctors to avoid physical activities.

"God has blessed me with a huge appetite for adventure and challenge and having diagnoses like this doesn't mean that has to end," Mr Young said.

The Peaks Challenge ended up being a gruelling experience for Mr Young. He developed severe cramping, became separated from his group, and finished with just under four minutes to spare before the cut-off time of 13 hours.

However, he kept thinking of the mantra "you belong here".

He belonged in the race, despite what doctors had told him.

"If I could bottle that last ten minutes, that was just about the best feeling I have ever had," he said. "All the hard work, all the pushing, all the really early wake ups, it's a pretty special feeling."

Mr Young also raised just over \$2000 for Crohn's and Colitis Australia. To donate, visit: bit.ly/3bpuaex.

Struggle to run programs as COVID hits volunteers

by Jenan Taylor

DECLINING VOLUNTEER numbers are continuing to challenge Anglican organisations amid surging COVID and influenza cases.

All Saints' Preston, Holy Trinity Hampton Park, and Anglicare Victoria have all warned the situation is causing continued disruption to programs while some initiatives have even faced closure.

Their experiences mirror the findings of the State of Volunteering's 2020 survey, which found that there had been a 50 per cent drop in volunteer participation across most sectors of the community when the pandemic began.

All Saints' Preston vicar the Reverend Michael Hopkins said the absence of volunteers was being felt across a number of projects.

One was the "Keep the Door Open" program, which had been set up to reach out to the local community, he said.

Mr Hopkins said the idea was to enable people to visit the church throughout the week and to have it manned by parishioners.

"Because of COVID restrictions it's been problematic trying to get people to commit. Five people volunteered but it's hard to get consistency," he said.

"It's more just disappointing that we can't be open because we're in a community where people actually focus on the church. It's a bit like St Paul's cathedral ... It's beautiful inside and people just come in and

"... it's been problematic trying to get people to commit."

Michael Hopkins

sit and pray."

The initiative was positive and the response to do it was positive, he said.

But he said there was the challenge of how to implement it on a regular basis to reach the community.

Mr Hopkins said the drop in available volunteers reflected the church's congregation numbers.

They had fallen from 75 to 40 people, he said, and there would be a fair way to go before they got back to pre-COVID attendance levels.

Holy Trinity Hampton Park vicar the Reverend Argho Biswas said COVID presented a huge problem for the church, but that getting enough volunteers had always been hard.

Mr Biswas said Holy Trinity was a very small church with a largely elderly congregation.

He said there were a few young people, but they were not as active or as committed to being involved



Volunteer numbers have been falling. Picture: Anglicare Victoria

with church happenings as the older parishioners.

"So, those who put their names down to help out are usually elderly," Mr Biswas said. "Now since COVID, many have had to take a back step because of their health conditions, so it's quite a challenge."

Some of the parishioners also didn't use mobile phones or weren't used to accessing the internet, which gave rise to communication difficulties especially amid COVID restrictions, he said.

Mr Biswas said that frustrated fund-raising efforts that involved the preparation and serving of food in the community because some required volunteers to be able to do food handling courses online.

As volunteers were required to complete Safe Ministry training courses online, Mr Biswas said he held concerns about the continued viability of a range the church's programs and services.

To get around it, however, he was considering conducting a group training session for those with limited technical skills.

Anglicare Victoria volunteers

Anglicare Victoria's parish partnerships manager Chris de Paiva said volunteers played a critical role in the organisation's emergency relief services, in particular, but that their numbers were down by 40 per cent.

Mr de Paiva said there were 17 emergency relief programs and

that they were run almost wholly by volunteers, many of whom were an aging cohort.

The services included supporting people with pharmacy vouchers, food packages and financial counselling.

"On the odd occasion we may advocate if someone's about to be put on the streets, as well," he said.

But Mr de Paiva said many people were hesitant to participate in those programs, because of fears of getting COVID.

As a result, at least one site, at Craigieburn, had to be shuttered for a few days earlier this year.

The organisation's emergency relief volunteer coordinator had even filled in the gaps herself, whenever helpers called in sick, Mr de Paiva said. However, things got particularly difficult when she then became ill with COVID-19.

To work with their constraints, they had offered phone services, and had even handed food through windows and doors to recipients.

"It wasn't always dignified, but at least we were still providing the food," Mr de Paiva said.

He said the organisation had started a volunteer recruitment campaign through online employment sites and was advertising through social media.

It was likely to reach younger people, he said, and there were already promising results.

So far, Mr de Paiva said, they'd received applications from 20 individuals.

How hot breakfasts are strengthening Rye ties

by Stephen Cauchi

A RYE CHURCH HAS BUILT UP huge goodwill in its community through offering a weekly breakfast to children at the local primary school, some of whom might be eating for the first time that day.

Each week St Andrew's Rye volunteers cook 175 breakfasts for 120 children, plus teachers and parents, and even some of the gravediggers at the local cemetery.

The outreach – known as “The Bread Café” – is now integral to St Andrew's mission and outreach.

St Andrew's vicar the Reverend Nick Wallace said for most of the children it was their second breakfast for the morning, but for some, it was their first.

“We know for a fact that some of the kids ... have not eaten until they've got to us. They've got up, got their uniforms on, and they've not eaten a thing. Nothing,” he said.

The weekly breakfasts began in 2018, offering tea, coffee and toast and a monthly barbecue to 80 or 90 students and staff. That has since doubled in size and the barbecue breakfast of sausage, bacon, egg and cheese in a roll is now served every Thursday during term.

“It just evolved like crazy,” Mr Wallace said.

“There is a tremendous amount of goodwill towards the church, even though we don't always get positive publicity ... there's a very warm rapport particularly with the school and the staff.”

Mr Wallace said Thursday morning was “like the MCG”. Nearly every week they run out of food, no matter how much they cook.

“The kids just invade us,” he said.

“I arrive with the team down at the church sometime between 7am and 7.15am when we start cooking. Around about 8am it's like the hordes of Germania – the kids come to church, they come into the atrium, we have fresh perco-



The Reverend Nick Wallace with volunteers Angela Raffaele and Trisna McLeod.

Picture: supplied

“We know for a fact that some of the kids ... have not eaten until they've got to us.”

Nick Wallace

lated coffee brewing, with tea, and we have toast as well.

“They come into the atrium where members of my fabulous, fabulous team give them the breakfasts that we've cooked and put in the oven so they're all nice and hot.”

Some of the Rye Primary students came to the school by bus from outlying areas like Red Hill, he said. If these buses are held up, Mr Wallace and a school staff member take the breakfasts out to the school so the children have enough time to eat before their first lesson.

Mr Wallace said St Andrew's planned to start running a mainly music group after The Bread Café in September, as something extra to offer people with young children.

The Bread Café concept came about from Mr Wallace's experience working in United Kingdom parishes, many of which had explored the concept of “soft interfaces” with the community to engage them, rather than coming straight at them with “churchy stuff”.

St Andrew's parish council agreed to his idea of a free breakfast as a soft interface in 2018, and the idea took off.

Originally, the BBQ was held on the church lawn as it was felt students, staff and parents would be uncomfortable inside the church. Now it is held inside the church, which has prompted a few conversations about faith.

Mr Wallace summed up the breakfasts' effects with reference to Ecclesiastes 11:1

“I always thought that if we cast our bread upon the waters something would come back,” he said.

“Nobody knows how in the future this might create some sort of safe, confident platform for somebody to take a step off [into the Christian faith].”

Breakfast volunteer Angela Raffaele said children were initially reluctant to participate in the breakfast program, but that quickly changed. She said volunteers had watched the progression of children's throughout the long-running program.

Ms Raffaele has been with St Andrew's for 12 years, and involved with the free breakfast from the start.

“We started from really small beginnings – the BBQ used to be way outside. [It's only recently] we've started bringing people into the church because they had no idea what we were about,” she said.

“Initially there was reticence but we've had some of these kids now since grade two – now they're grade six. They came in full of bravado and it's now ‘Hi, how are you?’”

“Now everybody just walks in and it's been really lovely.”

Ms Raffaele said it was clear the Rye community really appreciated the church's work at the breakfast program.

“They just love it, and our church community likewise,” she said. “People donate money on Sunday and say ‘I'd like you to take this to The Bread Café, because they understand how important it is – there's a need for this here. Kids need to eat.”

“They kids are so productive at school on a Thursday. The teachers said what a difference it makes.”

Optimism as tots trickle back to Mandarin playgroup

by Jenan Taylor

CHILDREN ARE returning to a church's bilingual playgroup, but pre-COVID participant numbers are still out of reach.

A popular playgroup for Mandarin-speaking children has resumed as a number of families returned to take advantage of the bilingual activities on offer.

But organisers at St Mark's Templestowe and its partner St Timothy's Bulleen say demand is still not what it was, and that families remain wary of COVID 19 risks.

St Mark's vicar the Reverend Ben Wong said there had been lengthy waiting lists for access to the playgroup up until the start of the pandemic.

Mr Wong said the group has been running for seven years and

had initially started as a way to draw more people to the church.

Leaders had realised that although there were several Mandarin-speaking migrants in the area, there was very little if anything in the way of services for their children, he said.

Mr Wong said St Mark's and St Timothy's had already catered to Mandarin and Cantonese-speaking families, but the attendance numbers had not been ideal.

There were other churches in the neighbourhood offering playgroups, but there was nothing for the area's large Chinese community, Mr Wong said.

“In many Chinese families, the grandparents look after the kids. So, they don't speak much English, or not too well,” Mr Wong said.

The church realised that a bilingual playgroup that offered tod-



Families have started to return to Mandarin playgroup. Picture: supplied

dlers both Mandarin and English would be a drawcard.

Up until the COVID lock-

downs the playgroup had up to 15 children and was run once a week, Mr Wong said.

He said it had also drawn some of the families to the Anglican church services, and a few people who previously were not Christians had even turned to the faith.

Playgroup volunteer Diane Wong said the children had a range of activities to keep them engaged.

These included handicrafts and dancing, and storytime with singing and reading in both Mandarin and English, Ms Wong said.

She said the playgroup numbers were gradually picking up again from word-of-mouth referrals.

Ms Wong said she was optimistic about that.

Some mothers who had been there when the group began, Ms Wong said, were now starting to bring their second and third babies to the group.

Plant flourishing in near-impossible suburb

by Kirralee Nicolle

CRAIGIEBURN IS WHERE “church plants go to die”. But Redemption Church has been an exception.

It began in February 2019 with less than 20 congregants meeting in a community facility.

At the time senior pastor Reverend Akhil Gardner was just 30 years old.

He said the process of pastoring a church plant grew him up very fast, as he had to adjust his expectations of what was possible.

“It is a hard area,” he said.

“We are praying that God would change the story by doing something new.”

Akhil said they had seen several baptisms and new converts, including a family which had formerly held to a Muslim faith.

“There are signs of life happening,” he said.

“There are new people attending on Sundays, people enquiring [from] cultural Christian backgrounds [and] there are so many people coming to weeknight dinners.”

When Akhil left his last position at All Saints Anglican in Greensborough and ventured west, he was warned that the area was an impossible one for new churches.



Reverend Akhil Gardner and Bishop Kate Prowd at the opening of Redemption Church in 2019. Picture: supplied.

But rather than imposing a certain style, Akhil's tactic has been to try to understand the needs of the area and respond to them.

The church began a men's mental health check-in program during COVID-19 lockdowns which served both church members and

men in the wider community.

Akhil said that after the first lockdown, the church recognised that particularly men were needing the opportunity to talk about how they felt.

They organised one-on-one walks with men to ask them how

they were going and offer support.

One of the men who participated in the program went on to become a Christian.

The church also sought to cater to the demographic of the area by establishing a mums and bubs program, Tiny Tots Sing and Play.

The median age in Craigieburn is 30, according to 2016 Census data, so the Redemption Church team knew that families would be a key focus area.

“It is really easy to connect with mums and bubs,” Akhil said.

The northern suburb demographic is also very sports-oriented, and this is something Akhil has chosen to work alongside rather than compete with on a Sunday morning.

He scheduled Sunday services for 4pm instead of during the morning to cater to those playing sports.

Akhil said that with a multicultural congregation, he found that liturgy and creeds offered an accessible way to engage those whose first language was not English, as it was a predictable format.

Four years on, he now has 40 attendees on Sundays. There is a youth group, and the church is looking to establish a student leadership training program for those in year 11 and 12.

Akhil said that as the church continues to establish itself in the Craigieburn area, he wants to see more people engaged both in mid-week programs and Sunday services.

“At the end of the day, we are on about making disciples,” he said.

Costs stymie dream for building in exploding area

by Jenan Taylor

A CHURCH leader wants the Anglican church to be more visible in a Melbourne growth-area, despite current and potential challenges.

Berwick Anglican locum vicar the Reverend Reece Kelly said there was a demand for churches in the outer growth corridors but planning restrictions and rising costs were making it difficult to plant them.

Mr Kelly said he wanted the church to be represented in the south-east growth area of Clyde North in particular.

He said an explosion in resident numbers in that area was driving demand, and there were few or no places to worship.

Mr Kelly cited census figures that showed the population in Clyde and Clyde North had risen by almost 50 times to 48,000 people between 2001 and 2021.

He said further projections showed that figure would triple within the next 20 years.

There were churches in the surrounding suburbs of Berwick, Pakenham and Cranbourne but nothing in Clyde North, Mr Kelly said.

He said Berwick Anglican church was seeing many people coming from the growth area and that its main services often filled quickly.

“So, we tell people if they live close to Pakenham that they should go to Pakenham Anglican, or if they're close to Cranbourne to go to Cranbourne Anglican. But we're seeing a need. People are moving



Berwick Anglican would like the church to be represented in Clyde and Clyde North.

Picture: supplied.

into Clyde North, and they're looking for churches,” Mr Kelly said.

Mr Kelly said he was exploring the availability and suitability of places to plant an Anglican church there.

But Mr Kelly said council policies in the west and south-east growth corridors were making it hard to have churches represented.

He said the Casey council only allowed new churches to be established in residential and industrial zones.

Because of that, some faith organisations were setting up churches in warehouses and factories.

City of Casey planning regulations has specific conditions,

“People are moving into Clyde North, and they're looking for churches.”

Reece Kelly

including site appropriateness and how much building design and style varies from surrounding developments, for establishing new places of worship.

In the last five years, some of those standards have affected the ability of a number of faith organisations, including the Syrian Orthodox Church community and a Seventh Day Adventist group, to gain a foothold with ease in the greater Casey area.

In some instances, some members of the public had referenced the council's standards to mount long-running campaigns objecting to planning applications.

But Mr Kelly said he wanted to plant something that showed that the Anglican Church was represented in the surroundings.

“We'd love to have a building, a visible presence that people can see when they actually drive in Clyde North, so they see that Christ is

honoured and valued and represented in that place,” Mr Kelly said.

He said he wanted a building that was obviously a church and that perhaps had a cross on top.

Mr Kelly said he had also considered the viability of establishing a new church in a factory building.

But he said the cost of land was making it a challenge.

“From when I started looking in 2019 to now, the cost has gone up every month. In terms of a physical factory, it's almost a million dollars more,” Mr Kelly said.

He also said despite there being few churches, there were a number of Christian schools in and around Clyde North.

Mr Kelly said that Berwick Anglican had set up a launch team of 40 people to help find a way to plant a church there.

He said that the team comprised children and adults who were from diverse backgrounds including Sri Lanka, India and the United Kingdom.

He had selected many of them because they lived in Clyde North and had links to sport clubs, schools and social organisations in the area.

Mr Kelly said the team was excited about the idea and brought a sense of energy and passion to the project.

Some of their activities would include doing prayer walks to connect with local people and ascertain what their specific needs were.

“We have a pretty good chess board in front of us about what the city values and we have a good sense of what the city offers that we can be involved in,” Mr Kelly said.

Cautious optimism from Indigenous leaders

by Kirralee Nicolle

A STRONGER ABORIGINAL voice in parliament would lead to concrete change for First Nations Australians, leaders say.

Aboriginal leaders hope for good outcomes in their communities with the recent change in government, but they are hesitant to pin their hopes on Labor.

Aboriginal Christian Leader Brooke Prentis said she was hopeful that the Albanese government would bring much-needed healing for Indigenous Australians but she was cautiously optimistic.

"It meant a great deal to me to have the 31st Prime Minister open with his Acknowledgement of Country and the Statement from the Heart," she said.

Ms Prentis also mentioned that the issue of climate was a pressing one for voters.

"If we don't look after our planet which God entrusted to us, then there is no future for anyone," she said.

Australian National University research associate and PhD candidate Bhiamie Williamson wrote in



Reverend Ray Minniecon is hesitant to expect Labor to be more responsive to Indigenous issues than previous governments. Picture: Supplied.

an article for The Conversation on 1 June how Indigenous peoples had been leading Australia's response to the climate crisis.

Mr Williamson said in the article how there was a "disproportionate" impact on Indigenous peoples of natural disasters, including

floods and fires. He also said in the article that Indigenous Australians were uniquely equipped to address issues of climate due to their vast knowledge of Australia's history, landscapes and ecosystems.

Speaking of the Labor government, Indigenous elder and

Anglican minister Reverend Ray Minniecon said that he was hesitant to anticipate positive change.

"I'm not going to say I'm hopeful," he said.

"There are a lot of platitudes in the Labor promises [to Indigenous Australians]."

"I haven't lost faith, but our hopes have been dashed far too many times by government promises, and we've been left with nothing."

Mr Minniecon said he believed the Uluru Statement from the Heart was vital to greater Indigenous involvement in policy-making.

He said that while he believed Indigenous Australians already had a voice as voting citizens, he said it was important to make sure Indigenous voices were constitutionally recognised.

"Within the mechanism of a structure like a government, somehow our voice needs to be included," he said.

"The first thing is to make sure that when we go to the polls, we vote in favour of the referendum to give Aboriginal Australians a constitutional voice."

Mr Minniecon said that what he would also like to see was funding for Indigenous affairs managed and distributed by Indigenous people.

He also said that he would like an assurance that these funds would remain available despite shifts within political parties or changes of government.

Training for LGBTQIA+ conversations vital: Professor

• From – Page 1

"So, this false opposition between gender diversity and faith is reinforced for them in all those contexts. Whereas what most people want is to be able to explore their faith and their gender and sexuality in a safe and open way," Dr Jones said.

Professor Sherlock said that current trauma-based pastoral practices did not specifically include resources or care for people who had been through conversion experiences.

"There is a really deep spiritual need in queer communities. They are looking for people that they could trust, and for allies and there is an opportunity for churches to build something of that," Professor Sherlock said.

He said there were individuals and a few small groups trying to

make an effort to provide the support, but that there were no concerted, institutional efforts within the mainstream churches.

"I don't think we're sufficiently producing ministers and leaders with the right skills to understand that journey, and to be able to support people and respond to it," Professor Sherlock said.

Trinity College Theological School Ministry Education Centre director the Reverend Dr Fergus King said the business of the church was to accomplish healing and positive transformation.

Dr King said methods of healing that induced trauma seemed counter to those ministries attributed to Jesus in the gospels.

However, even when things were done correctly they could still cause trauma, he said.

Constant ministry reviews would help to ensure that strategies

proclaimed as healing or transformative, were not traumatising.

Dr King said Trinity offered a course for pastoral support of trauma, but that it was not mandatory and did not include a specific topical focus on conversion therapies. He said it gave people from trans backgrounds opportunities to reflect on trauma, but there had to be a balance between its academic content and theological reflection space.

Dr King said candidates for ministry usually engaged in clinical and pastoral education outside Trinity College, and that some students also might handle the issue of conversion within supervised placements in parishes or sector ministries. But Professor Sherlock said providing pastoral care studies wasn't dependent on whether they had students who were LGBTQIA+ identifying or not.

"It's about anyone going into ministry needing to have some training around this, and some good referral. The problem is that people from the queer community who often have a deep history with the faith community have been rejected or deeply hurt by that community. So where do they go?" Professor Sherlock said.

He said that a broad awareness of the variety of traumas was critical.

Responses to domestic violence in the church were an example, in that currently people being trained for ordination weren't necessarily being trained in what to do when someone disclosed to them that they were victims of intimate partner violence, he said.

"You need to be ready for it. You don't need to be an expert, but you need to be ready for it," Professor Sherlock said.

However, there was also a separate, more specific need around ensuring there were ministries that could focus on the spiritual care of LGBTQIA+ people who had experienced conversion practice harm, he said.

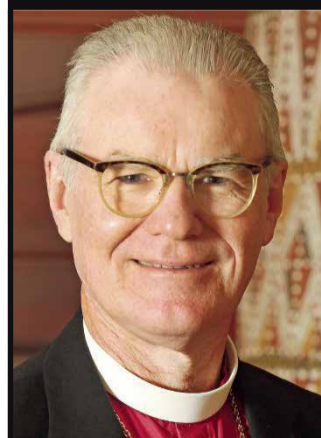
"What happens when you encounter someone who is LGBTQIA+ who might have been through conversion therapy or who might want to have a difficult conversation with you, and you do something that ends up looking awfully like conversion therapy?" Professor Sherlock said.

"We need some training and preparation for that, and I think that's a missing dimension."

Conversion practices are banned in Victoria, Queensland and the ACT.

Ridley College was also approached for comment on the trauma-based training it provides.

Coping with the climate crisis



conversations
with the
archbishop

A new global survey carried out in 10 countries illustrates how anxious young people are feeling about climate change, the BBC reports. Nearly 60% of young people approached say they feel very worried or extremely worried. More than 45% say feelings about the climate affect their daily lives. Three-quarters of them say they find the future frightening. Over half (56%) say they think humanity is doomed. Two-thirds report feeling sad, afraid and anxious. Many feel fear, anger, despair, grief and shame – as well as hope.

Is the crisis as inevitable as they fear? Is there still time to stop the worst effects? What can young people do? Melbourne Anglican **Archbishop Philip Freier's** second public conversation for 2022 will focus on the climate crisis. He is joined by **Tony Rinaudo, Olivia Livingstone** and **Jack Lowman**. The discussion will be hosted by Melbourne Grammar School at 10:30 am **August 19**. As this is an **online event** please book via this link – <https://www.trybooking.com/CAGIG>



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of St Laurence



Tony Rinaudo

World Vision's senior climate action adviser, who achieved fame as "the forest maker" in Africa. A documentary about him described him as the man who might actually save the planet.



Olivia Livingstone

of the Australian Youth Climate Coalition, activist and coordinator of their national schools program.



Jack Lowman

Melbourne Grammar School, secretary Sustainable Lifestyle Initiatives Committee.

Honours celebrate Anglicans' years of service

by Jenan Taylor

A LIFELONG ANGLICAN AND 2022 Senior Australian of the Year nominee has received a Medal of the Order of Australia on this year's Queen's Birthday honour list.

Mabel Hibbert has been honoured with a OAM for her services to the Anglican Church of Australia, after being a member of the Oakleigh Anglican churches all her life.

Other Anglicans on the list were former Janet Clarke Hall chair Margaret Richardson, former Melbourne Anglican Foundation director the late Ian Reid, and hotel-owner and Tolarno Art Prize sponsor Bernard Corser.

Mrs Hibbert was also former president of the Anglican Mother's Union where she has been a member since 1957.

Known for her love of knitting, some of her achievements as part of her Mother's Union work included creating beanies and gloves for frontline soldiers and thousands of teddy bears for children in hospital.

Oakleigh Anglican vicar the



Margaret Richardson AM was among those honoured. Picture: supplied

Reverend Colleen Arnold-Moore said that although in her 90s Mrs Hibbert was still involved with the Mainly Music, hospitality and children's ministry programs.

Ms Arnold-Moore described Mrs Hibbert as an "indomitable woman" with phenomenal energy and focus.

She said that once when Mrs

Hibbert had been asked what has kept her going, she'd answered it was God.

"She said, 'God is the reason I do everything because God loves us,'" Ms Arnold-Moore said.

Ms Richardson was also awarded a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) for significant services to the Anglican Church of Australia. She was chair of council at Janet Clarke Hall from 2006 to 2008 and again from 2014 to 2018.

Some of her roles within the church included academic roles in Anglican colleges, and being a council member of Anglican Community Services in Adelaide in the 1990s. She also supported her husband's role as a representative of the Archbishop of Canterbury to the Holy See, among others.

Ms Richardson said two particularly fulfilling contributions had included connecting Janet Clarke Hall with significant benefactors, and the work she had done in Rome while her husband had been in tenure there.

It had involved assisting people from the Roman Catholic Church and the Anglican Church to develop purposeful connections.

She also said contributing to the reshaping of Adelaide's Magdalene Centre, a service for people in need, as a St Peter's cathedral representative, had been especially rewarding.

The late Mr Reid was honoured with an AM for his significant service to the community including through social welfare organisations. The former senior executive for Australian Consolidated Industries had also been a board member of the Brotherhood of St Laurence from 1983 to 2008, a panel selection member of the Churchill Trust for more than 20 years and had held leadership positions at the Melbourne Anglican Foundation from 1988 to 2011.

Mr Corser received an OAM for his services to the community through a range of roles. These included his work on the board of Boroondara Aged Care Services Society Care, his voluntary work with the Catholic Church of Australia and his current position as warden of the St Dunstan's Anglican Church in Camberwell, where he has been a parishioner since 1958.

Good expected from Lambeth relationship building

by Stephen Cauchi

LAMBETH CONFERENCE is unlikely to engage significantly with controversial topics but instead focus on relationship building, according to one Melbourne bishop.

Organisers are billing the upcoming worldwide bishops' meeting as one of the most crucial since the event was formed in 1857.

The conference is once-a-decade meeting of Anglican bishops from across the worldwide Anglican Communion, including bishops and archbishops from Australia. It will be held in the United Kingdom in July and August.

Diocese of Melbourne's Bishop Brad Billings said he was not sure exactly what to expect, but it looked like the Archbishop of Canterbury wanted to make the conference as relational and relationship-building as possible, rather than issues driven.

He said the conference's key theme would be harmony.

Bishop Billings said there were no agenda items dedicated to many controversial issues, but he was sure topics such as same-sex blessings within the church would arise.

But Bishop Billings said the fact that the conference would not have resolutions would keep a lid on controversial discussion. He said the conference was unlikely to have any significant engagement with such topics, because whatever emerged would not have the status of a resolution.

"They're looking to not pass resolutions, as I understand it, but to issue calls – like calling on the church to observe or do things," Bishop Billings said.

"It's quite easy to take a different view from a distance, but when you're face-to-face with someone and realise they're a brother or sister in Christ as well, that can only help."

Bishop Brad Billings

Another controversial topic likely to arise will be the proposal to change the mix of senior clergy who elect the Archbishop of Canterbury to allow for more overseas involvement.

Bishop Billings said he hadn't seen any specific Australian-focused issues at Lambeth.

He said most of the conference agenda would be social issues, matters around Indigenous and First Nations peoples and climate change.

Bishop Billings said he thought



Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby will host Lambeth Conference in July and August. Picture: Jaqui J Sze

that Archbishop Welby had got it right in terms of Lambeth's general approach.

"I think it's a time for the communion to build relationships, repair relationships, seek unity across the difference, all those things. I think the way that it's sort of been crafted and pitched is what we need at the present time," he said.

"I just hope bishops from around the world, who are perhaps not thinking of coming, do come and engage. Because only good can come from fostering relationships with one another.

"It's quite easy to take a different view from a distance, but when you're face-to-face with someone and realise they're a brother or sister in Christ as well, that can only help."

Press material for the event states that it will join the ranks of previous Lambeth Conferences that have met after times of global crises.

The conference will be held at the University of Kent in Canterbury from 26 July to 8 August.

There will also be events at Canterbury Cathedral and at Lambeth Palace. It will have the theme of "God's church for God's World" and will explore what it means for the Anglican Communion to respond to the needs of a 21st century world.

The conference will feature three addresses from Archbishop Welby, daily keynote addresses from guest speakers, a day of symbolic action on environmental and economic justice at Lambeth Palace, opening and closing services at Canterbury Cathedral, and a program for spouses of the attending bishops.

Church's garden tea cosy takes out top prize

by Jenan Taylor

A GROUP of church gardeners is celebrating after their knitting project created during the COVID lockdowns scooped a prize in a craft festival.

A tea cosy made by the gardeners from St John's Riverside Community Garden won the judge's prize at the Fish Creek tea cosy festival.

The group had knitted the tea cosy during the lockdowns for Brewster, a metallic sculpture of a tea pot that sits in the community garden.

St John's gardening coordinator Katrina Philip said the tea pot was used to compost the oak leaves that fell from trees around the church, and to "brew compost tea".

Ms Philip said the idea for the tea cosy began when the parishioners and local community members who partner with the church in the garden, decided Brewster needed to be adorned.

"We thought we could all knit squares and make a tea cosy. We thought it would be something to bond the community when no one could see each other, and that it would be something creative to do particularly for the older parishioners," Ms Philip said.

She said several people knitted and then fashioned the squares into a tea cosy



The prize-winning tea cosy on display.

Picture: supplied

that would be brought out for ceremonial occasions.

They decided to enter it into the Fish Creek tea cosy festival on a whim and were thrilled when it won the judge's prize.

Situated just inside the Yarra Trail, the tea pot is visible to walkers and cyclists who then often visit the garden, Ms Philip said.

The garden itself was established on the site of the church's old car park about eight years ago, and had now also taken over a tennis court, she said.

Ms Philip said members grew vegetables and flowers, and could plant whatever they

wanted.

"It hasn't been a Rolls Royce garden so it's meant that people have felt comfortable to try a bit of this and a bit of that," Ms Philip said.

She said the space also had a number of art installations, and that a beekeepers club used it for training.

She said membership had grown as the garden evolved, and that people loved to visit in the evenings, in particular.

"People come and sit in the garden just to have their coffee and chat, and then some might reminisce about when they were married in the church," Ms Philip said.

Cooking support spans the years

by Stephen Cauchi

ALL SAINTS' Mitcham parishioner Pat Falkenberg has chalked up more than 15 years raising funds a single cause.

Since the early 2000s Ms Falkenberg has been baking cakes, biscuits and other treats to raise money for Nungalinga, an Indigenous adult education college in Darwin.

With the help of her fellow parishioners Ms Falkenberg's goodies stall has been a remarkably successful operation. Some years it has raised over \$2000.

Ms Falkenberg began raising funds with the Ladies Guild of a Nunawading church she attended. When this church merged with the Mitcham church the enterprise turned into a cake stall.

She makes biscuits, cakes, jams, lemon butter and pickles and has successfully convinced a few others to contribute.

Ms Falkenberg also receives help from vicar Greg Wong and others at All Saints to make the stall happen, including ingredient donations.

COVID-19 interrupted the stall, but it's now back and running. It raised \$240 on the April stall and \$320 on the June stall.

Ms Falkenberg said there were a lot of things she could do – but she still could cook.

"It gives me an interest to

be able to support Nungalinga through the cake stall," she said.



Pat Falkenberg.

Picture: supplied

From the editor's desk

IT WAS a dark, cold 6pm. I'd dragged myself out for a run after a long day. Them BAM. A great idea hit me. It was the solution to a problem I had been struggling with for months. It was an encouragement that was a real blessing from God. So what was the idea? Well, you'll have to wait and see – and keep an eye on *The Melbourne Anglican* of course.



Helping learn

THE PREVENTION of Violence Against Women has relaunched its violence response and prevention training for church leaders across Melbourne. Leaders from 11 parishes attended an event on 4 June which equipped leaders with methods to respond to disclosures of family violence, as well as helping them to gain a greater understanding of the drivers of violence against women and what actions churches can take to prevent it.

Ridley dean earns prestigious fellowship

by Kirralee Nicolle

A RIDLEY dean and church history lecturer has been honoured for making an original contribution as a historian.

Ridley College Anglican Institute dean Reverend Canon Dr Rhys Bezzant was recently awarded a Fellowship of the Royal Historical Society.

Dr Bezzant said that Australia had a comparatively small presence in historical scholarship, and the fellowship offered meaningful connections to historians across the world.

The fellowship was typically offered to those who have made an original contribution to historical scholarship, typically through the authorship of a book, a body of scholarly work similar in scale and impact to a book, the organisation of exhibitions and conferences, the editing of journals, and other works of diffusion and dissemination grounded in historical research, according to the Royal Historical Society.

Dr Bezzant said the fellowship offered many privileges, including participation in a global network of historians, invitations to public lectures and access to historical documents.

He said that church history was typically underrepresented in these kinds of forums.

Dr Bezzant said said the opportunity affirmed Ridley's commitment to teaching church history, which was an unusual feature for an Australian theological college.

"Very few theological colleges in Australia employ church historians who only teach church history," Dr Bezzant said.



Dr Rhys Bezzant has achieved international recognition for his work as a historian.



Berwick Anglican Associate Minister Reverend Reece Kelly baptising Anneliese Hall at Lysterfield Lake. Picture: supplied

Braving icy waters for baptism

by Kirralee Nicolle

TWO YOUNG people have been baptised after wrestling with deep questions and realising the importance of following Jesus.

Nine-year-old Joshua Anderson and 21-year-old Anneliese Hall from Berwick Anglican were baptised in Lysterfield Lake in 16 degree weather.

The pair made their public commitment of faith on Sunday 22 May in front of around 40 family, friends and church members.

Ms Hall said that after rejecting the faith she had held previously, she found herself forced to bring her busy life to a halt during lockdowns and sit in silence.

"I started to wonder what was really important to me," she said.

Ms Hall told how after facing a period of darkness, she committed to asking questions, reading Scripture, talking to leaders, praying and "searching for the light".

"It wasn't until I stopped focusing on other people's faith journeys and started focusing solely on my own relationship with God that I found the fulfillment that my soul and spirit longed for," she said.

Joshua said in his testimony that for him, being a Christian meant listening to Jesus, obeying Jesus and following Jesus.

"And that's what I want to do," he said.

Berwick Anglican Associate Minister Reverend Reece Kelly said that the church had seen four adult baptisms recently, among the 14 baptisms conducted in the past year.

He said he believed that people were hearing the gospel and being challenged to respond.

"Because we are in a growth corridor, we try to use every opportunity we can to preach the gospel," Mr Kelly said.

"I think that explains a lot about why we are seeing [so many] adult baptisms."

Accessibility not a 'matter of special privilege'

by Kirralee Nicolle

THE ANGLICAN CHURCH HAS been urged to improve accessibility of its governance forums, despite a motion in favour of increased accessibility failing to pass at General Synod.

General Synod delegates experiencing a disability, illness, injury or medical condition are not permitted to join meetings via videoconference due to their medical requirements.

Melbourne lay delegate at this year's General Synod Elizabeth Culhane proposed an amendment to a bill which dealt with the ways in which delegates were permitted to attend meetings.

The proposed amendment sought to ensure that those who by reason of a temporary or permanent disability, disease or illness, medical condition, or injury were unable, or would find it difficult, to attend were able to join the proceedings via videoconference.

General Synod did not pass the amendment, though initially it was agreed to by a narrow majority.

The following day, the amendment was called into question and revoked.

Ms Culhane said she was surprised that the matter was

considered controversial.

"Participation should not be determined by a person's physical abilities," Ms Culhane said.

"Accessibility affects everyone, because most, if not all, people will experience disability at some point in their lives.

"If not a disability, most of us will probably experience some kind of differing ability for a period of time."

Ms Culhane said that electronic participation and voting had worked well at this year's General Synod.

She said that the members who wished to register to attend via Zoom due to disability or illness were valuable despite being small in number.

"The invitation for the church is to not treat accessibility as a matter of a special privilege to be judged on the basis of reasonableness or merit, or as a benefit that the 'capable' might consider extending to the 'weak'.

"The qualifications for contributing to our church laws and resolutions about governance, ritual, ceremony and discipline should be determined on the basis of Spirit-given gifts of wisdom, character, and competence."

Bishop of Bendigo Matt Brain



General Synod lay representative from Melbourne, Elizabeth Culhane. Picture: supplied

said he believed Ms Culhane had raised a great topic, and one by which the church would be poorer for not having paid attention to.

Bishop Brain was previously a physiotherapist assisting children experiencing cerebral palsy.

He said there was an issue with

focusing on the cost of finding solutions rather than focusing on assisting delegates to interact to their best ability.

But Bishop Brain also said that he was grateful that a later motion was passed which attempted to address some of the concerns raised by Ms Culhane.

An additional motion was proposed by the original movers of the Bill and later passed. This motion tasked the Standing Committee with the following responsibility:

"That this Synod requests the Standing Committee to develop the reasonably required measures, including legislation, to enable greater accessible participation, including online and in-person attendance in meetings of the General Synod, particularly by persons unable to attend or participate physically in such meetings by reasons such as disability, disease or illness, medical condition or injury and that any legislation required be presented to a special session of General Synod, held by video conference, at least one year before the next ordinary session of General Synod."

Clergy often approached about family violence: study

by Stephen Cauchi

SALVATION ARMY clergy are best equipped of Australian clergy to deal with cases of domestic and family violence, according to a new landmark study.

Nearly seven out of ten Australian clergy have experience in supporting people in family violence situations, according to the National Church Life Survey study.

It found members of the Catholic Church were the most reluctant to approach their church about family violence situations.

The study by Dr Miriam Pepper and Dr Ruth Powell is the first national, cross-denominational analysis of Australian clergy responses to domestic abuse.

It follows last year's release of the National Anglican Family Violence Research Report, which found that the incidence of domestic abuse was greater among Anglicans in Australia than the general population. Anglican General Synod in May passed several motions regarding the report.

According to the Anglican report, 44 per cent of Anglicans said they had experienced domestic violence, compared to 38 per cent of the general population.

The NCLS study made major findings in the areas of clergy response, denomination response, churchgoer confidence in clergy, and familiarity of clergy with family violence support services.

Denomination response

The study revealed The Salvation Army was the Christian denomination most likely to have helped victims of domestic abuse.



Clergy often support people through family violence. Picture: iStock

Eighty-eight per cent of local church leaders in The Salvation Army had dealt with family violence situations, compared with 67 per cent of leaders in all-denominations nationally, the report said.

Nearly all had referred a victim of family violence to support service agencies. They were also the most likely to have undertaken a safety risk assessment.

These findings suggested a depth of experience among Salvationist leaders about family violence, and strength of awareness of the needs of victims for safety and specialist support, the report said.

In other denominational findings:

- Salvation Army leaders were six times more likely to have responded to family violence than Uniting Church leaders, while Pentecostal leaders were

twice as likely.

- Referral of perpetrators was reported by 40 per cent of Pentecostals and Catholics and 35 per cent of Salvation Army leaders, compared with up to 25 per cent of leaders from other denominations. Anglican and Pentecostal leaders were more likely than their Uniting Church counterparts to have counselled a perpetrator.

Churchgoer confidence in clergy

About six in 10 Australian churchgoers felt they could approach their church or help with domestic and family violence situations, the report found.

Sixty-four per cent of churchgoers said they felt they could go to someone from their church for help if they, or someone they knew, were experiencing family violence.

Three in 10 were not sure if they would seek the church's help for family violence. Seven per cent said they would definitely not go to the church for help in such a situation.

About three-quarters of churchgoers at Anglican, Baptist or Churches of Christ, Pentecostal and other Protestant churches felt that they could approach their church with help for domestic and family violence.

At the Uniting Church, 64 per cent indicated likewise.

Catholics were least likely to agree they could make an approach. Only 52 per cent felt comfortable approaching their church.

Clergy response

Two-thirds of senior local church leaders reported that they had dealt with domestic and family violence situations, the report found.

About 77 per cent referred victims to a support service, while 70 per cent provided direct counselling.

Other common responses included providing marriage or couples counselling (41 per cent), providing counselling to the perpetrator (34 per cent), referring the perpetrator to a service agency (28 per cent), and conducting a safety risk assessment with the victim (23 per cent).

"Findings showed the clear majority of clergy had responded to victims rather than perpetrators," the report said.

"[Clergy] mainly responded to victims of abuse by referring them to specialist services and counselling them. A large minority had also counselled and or referred perpetrators and had counselled couples."

The sex and background of clergy also made a big difference, the report found.

Being female decreased the odds of counselling perpetrators and couples by 53 per cent and 57 per cent respectively.

Leaders born in countries where English was not the main language spoken were 74 per cent less likely than Australian-born clergy to refer victims to service agencies.

Familiarity of clergy with family violence support services

Only 17 per cent of local church leaders indicated that they were very familiar with support services available such as crisis centres or hotlines.

A majority were somewhat familiar (57 per cent) and approximately one-quarter were not familiar (26 per cent).

Those with the lowest levels of formal education expressed greater familiarity than those with higher levels of formal education.

Future research should aim to explore responses to DFV in specific denominations and culturally and linguistic diverse contexts in more detail, the report said.

It should also seek to understand the practices used by clergy who are dealing with perpetrators.

If you or someone you know needs family and domestic violence support, contact:
1800 Respect on 1800 737 732;
Women's Crisis Line on 1800 811 811;
Men's Referral Service 1300 766 491;
Lifeline on 131 114;
If life is in danger contact Triple Zero (000).

The accidental pastor with a gospel passion

by Kirralee Nicolle

KAMWENDE GATENDE NEVER thought she would end up working in a parish.

With a deep love for both mission and evangelism, Ms Gatende thought that she would be serving somewhere in the French-speaking world.

Instead she found herself working as assistant minister at All Saints Anglican in Greensborough earlier this year.

And she is loving it.

"It wasn't what I was expecting, but it is a real joy and a blessing," she said.

"It's a very supportive and loving team and church community."

The 27-year-old grew up in Nairobi, Kenya surrounded by Christians who loved Jesus.

When she moved to Australia to study commerce and French at the University of Melbourne, she was shocked by the prevalence of those among her friends who did not know the gospel.

She attended Christian Union meetings at the University of Melbourne and began to develop a love of evangelism.

"The Christian Union was amazing for me in getting [an] experience [of learning about ministry]," she said.

"My heart for evangelism and discipleship really expanded during that time. I did lots of Bible study leading and reading the Bible one on one with people. That's really where my love for ministry began to develop."

Through the Christian Union Ms Gatende was also introduced to the concept of world missions and joined a small mission breakfast group who met once a week to discuss the topic and speak to mission workers across the world.

She also visited mission conferences, hungry to learn about cross-cultural outreach.

"Kenya is one of the most Christian countries in the world and I didn't quite understand before I came here about unreached people groups. Most of my friends in my first year didn't understand the gospel and I was



Kamwende Gatende never thought her passion for evangelism would lead her to work in a parish in Melbourne's northern suburbs, but she is grateful that it did. Picture: supplied

mind-blown and heartbroken by that," Ms Gatende said.

Then, she became aware of the possibility of studying at Bible college.

"As soon as I realised that Bible college was a thing, and you could go somewhere and read the Bible for three years, I thought 'That's what I want to do!'" she said.

On completing her studies in commerce, Ms Gatende returned to Kenya.

"I wanted to see what it was like to be an adult and a Christian in Kenya," she said.

"Was there something God wanted me to do there?"

Ms Gatende joined a ministry which did outreach programs in universities using music, dance and Bible studies.

This experience helped her to

"I'm quite enjoying getting to see God's grace in the midst of the rhythms of people's lives and the weekly worship service."

Kamwende Gatende

grow a deep love and appreciation for the rich Christian faith in her home country.

"It was very encouraging to see how flourishing, solid and vibrant the church in Kenya is," she said.

Ms Gatende said that even though she planned to work in

a different country eventually, Kenya was set to be her home until she pursued further study.

Then, family ties unexpectedly brought her back to Australia.

She found out that her twin sister who had also moved to Melbourne was pregnant.

Ms Gatende returned to Melbourne to be with her sister and began her master's in divinity at Ridley College.

She found that she thrived with the academic challenge.

She began a journey towards mission work in Tunisia, but her plans were again altered when she met her now-fiancé, Edgar.

The pair decided to stay in Melbourne until they decided where they would go together.

"Rather than going on mission, I started looking for places to serve in this context," she said.

"I honestly wasn't intending to be in parish ministry. I was applying for roles with mission organisations."

Ms Gatende came across the role of associate minister at All Saints in Greensborough and found that she clicked well with senior minister Reverend Julie Blinco-Smith.

"I loved the vibe, the ethos and the culture [of All Saints]," she said.

She said that when she found out that one of her close friends from the University of Melbourne Christian Union had just been appointed youth and young adults pastor, she thought it was too good to be true.

Ms Gatende said she was quite surprised when she was offered the role but has loved the experience.

"It has just been such a joy getting to know the people and getting used to a different style of ministry," she said.

"It's less seasonal than university ministry where you have a semester and then everything slows down. I'm quite enjoying getting to see God's grace in the midst of the rhythms of people's lives and the weekly worship service."

Ms Gatende said she hoped to launch an English as a second language program to grow the church's involvement with those of a variety of cultural backgrounds in the area.

"The church is in a really good place to reach out to people and reflect the increasing diversity of Greensborough," she said.



Share your stories

Our community matters. Big or small, we want to hear your church's news.

Share your news with us at editor@melbourneanglican.org.au

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Anglo-Catholics must share faith more: Vicar

by Stephen Cauchi

TWO THINGS DREW THE incoming vicar at St Peter's Eastern Hill to the Melbourne church: it was a city church, and a great example of the Anglo-Catholic tradition.

The Reverend Michael Bowie said in previous roles he found city-centre churches to be full of people who were interesting, and motivated enough that they travelled to come to church.

For him, the Anglo-Catholic tradition was the first thing that made sense to him of faith. So, St Peter's stood in a tradition he loved and valued.

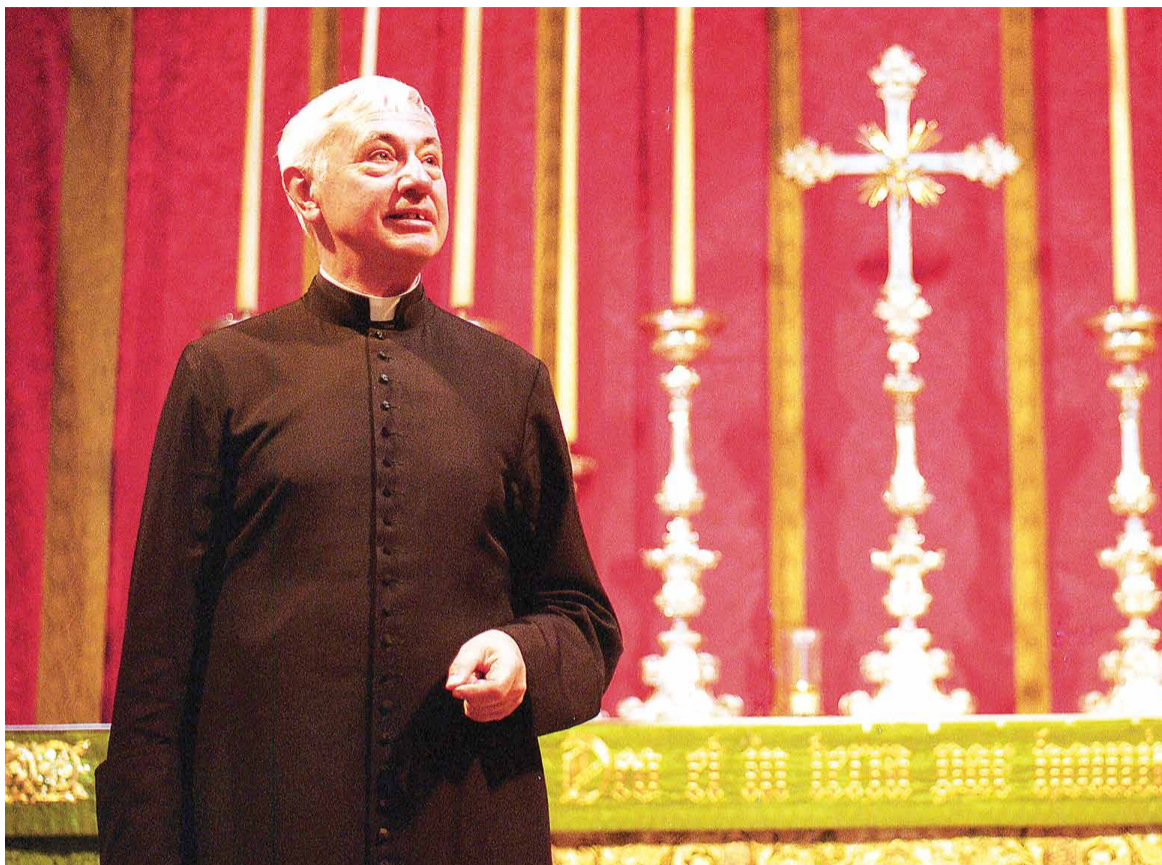
Dr Bowie was most recently assistant priest at All Saints Margaret Street in London, an architecturally striking High Victorian Gothic church built in 1859.

He moved to the United Kingdom after ministering at Christ Church St Laurence in Sydney, working in churches in Hertfordshire and Sheffield before his London role.

At St Peter's Dr Bowie will aim not just to pastor the church, but also spread Anglo-Catholicism in a country where it was not "at its strongest". He said Anglo-Catholics needed to try to share their faith a bit more.

"Evangelicals ... have been better at sharing the product in my lifetime. They've been much better at getting out and talking about what they do than we have," he said.

"The experience here, especially through the pandemic and the lockdowns, has shown that in fact [Anglo-Catholics] need to do a lot better about just sharing what we do.



The Reverend Michael Bowie will soon take up a role at St Peter's Eastern Hill.

Picture: supplied

"The style of worship needs to inspire people to reach out and clearly St Peter's has had a lot of engagement with the wider community ..."

Michael Bowie

"We've tended to just be in our parishes and getting on with things and not perhaps been quite

so good at showing people that there are alternatives sometimes that people have forgotten about."

At All Saints, Dr Bowie said streaming and social media during the pandemic had proven very successful. If nothing else, it reminded people the church still existed.

"It's been astonishing to see how people have joined us, sometimes in person as well, and they simply didn't know any longer that we were here," Dr Bowie said.

"It's been quite surprising how much fruit that has borne and I would encourage my new colleagues and people I'm working with in Melbourne to take that on board."

When Dr Bowie arrives in Australia at the end of June, it will be a journey home. He lived in the

UK as a student, and later a priest, but he said he was looking forward to returning to the country of his birth.

"St Peter's Eastern Hill is a parish I've known since my early 20s," Dr Bowie said.

"Like Christ Church St Laurence Sydney, it's a tradition that's very dear to my heart. The opportunity to come home and work with the people at St Peter's was just too good to miss really."

Dr Bowie said his immediate plans at St Peter's were to acquaint himself with the congregation and to maintain and build the "excellent" profile of the church.

"They're a great bunch of people, very enthusiastic and committed, and it just needs in my view to be a bit more confident in itself and to show how much we love and enjoy the worship of God in this tradition because that is infectious," Dr Bowie said.

St Peter's high church style of worship is renowned, and so is its outreach. It offers breakfast every day for the homeless, while its outreach arm the Lazarus Centre provides food parcels and emergency referrals to people in need, as well as chaplains for State Parliament, RMIT, and nearby major hospitals. Dr Bowie said both worship and outreach needed to go together. He said at the moment worship, and sharing the joy of worship was his priority.

"The style of worship needs to inspire people to reach out and clearly St Peter's has had a lot of engagement with the wider community and worked with poor and disadvantaged people over a century and a half," he said.

"Our tradition of worship is very much about the whole of life and affirming life."

Child poverty high on priority list for new BSL head

by Elspeth Kernebone

GENERATIONAL POVERTY in Australia is among the key issues the new leader of the Brotherhood of St Laurence hopes to address during his tenure.

Travers McLeod has been executive director of the Anglican-linked social justice organisation since late April.

Through his career Mr McLeod has worked in law and policy, most recently at the Centre for Policy Development. He charts his interest in these fields back to values learnt during his childhood in rural Western Australia.

Mr McLeod said his initial priority at BSL was to listen and learn, to get a sense of the organisation as a whole – and how it could make a bigger difference in its 10th decade.

He said his second focus would be on identifying where BSL could make the biggest difference toward helping people who were in poverty or facing disadvantage. He planned to focus especially on making a compelling case as to how Australia could make it less likely that children grew up in poverty.

Mr McLeod said early childhood education was one example of a specific intervention that could be made at a critical time in people's lives.

"The statistics show you're more likely to be in poverty if you're a child than an adult. We also saw during the pandemic the ability to lift thousands of Australians out of poverty with the stroke of a pen," he said.

"It hasn't been firmly in focus on the policy and political agenda."

Mr McLeod dated his interest in public service and public law back to his upbringing in small town Western Australia.

He said growing up in the country set him up with a sense of the way in which communities worked together to improve each other's lives, an experience which he linked to the work of the Brotherhood of St Laurence.

In his hometown of Exmouth, Mr McLeod remembered his Nan starting a Sunday school, teaching kids to read, making bibs for every newborn, and setting up a second-hand furniture shop for those who needed it. For Mr McLeod, her work in the tiny town



BSL executive director Travers McLeod began in April. Picture: supplied

was like the larger-scale work of the Brotherhood of St Laurence.

Mr McLeod said this childhood sparked an interest in social justice, which drove his motivation to see what he could do to improve the lives of others, particularly by exploring the role of justice and law.

He said initially his instinct

was that justice could be achieved through law. But working in law for much of his earlier career, showed Mr McLeod the power of public policy.

"Ultimately I discovered that policy, and the way that we have created and designed big service systems well or not so well, is often a big determinant of whether

people are in poverty or not," Mr McLeod said.

"It's really that experience that took me closer to the world of public policy, and how we can improve not just the wellbeing of Australians, but also the overall health of our society and democracy."

Mr McLeod said he was drawn to the Brotherhood of St Laurence partly because it connected three parts of the agenda: practice, policy and advocacy, making it a unique public institution. He said the Brotherhood's work in communities connected to its research and policy team, which connected on to its constructive, positive voice advocating for how to run systems.

Mr McLeod said BSL's unique connection of research and on-the-ground service meant it was well-placed to be a catalyst for change in Australia.

"The last decade in Australia has been fairly fraught. The political debate has not always been the most constructive. I would like BSL to be a really positive and constructive voice for a much healthier future for Australia," Mr McLeod said.

Megachurches' power can bring risk: Expert

by Kirralee Nicolle

MEGACHURCH ACCOUNTABILITY structures have come under scrutiny following the recent negative publicity surrounding Hillsong and the multi-campus Mars Hill in the United States.

Western Sydney University Religion and Society Research Cluster director Professor Cristina Rocha said that typically male-heavy leadership within churches was a cause for concern, but that Pentecostalism was well-known for offering women a voice in the church.

Sociology researcher and theology lecturer Dr Sam Hey said he believed accountability structures in larger churches may be more robust than those in smaller churches, but that megachurches tended to build their structures around a small number of key leaders.

Allegations recently surfaced of inappropriate behaviour by Brian Houston, the founder of Hillsong Church. A recent *Christianity Today* podcast has also scrutinised the collapse of Mars Hill, founded in 1996 by senior pastor Mark Driscoll.

Dr Rocha said combining the spiritual elements within a church with a business-like structure could create fractures.

"You mix the everyday power of a corporation with a spiritual power and it is very hard to control," Professor Rocha said.

"The power is concentrated in the hands of the senior pastor," she said.

Professor Rocha also said desiring to protect the church's brand led to a lack of accountability.

She said that the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse findings showed that this issue was widespread, not just in megachurches.

"Once they have to protect the brand or the church, they have to overlook a few things and then the scandals come out [later than they should have]," she said.

But she said that unlike Mars



Hillsong's founder Brian Houston recently faced controversy and resigned from his position.

Picture: file

Hill, Hillsong recognised the importance of spreading leadership and influence across the organisation.

Dr Rocha said that while the Mars Hill brand centred around Driscoll, Hillsong's popularity and success did not rely on the personality of Brian Houston.

Two women complained about Houston's behaviour towards them in 2013 and 2019, according to an ABC report from March.

The report told how in 2013 Houston was reported to have sent messages of a sexual nature to a female staffer and in 2019 spent time in a woman's hotel room while under the influence of alcohol.

Houston later resigned from his position as Hillsong's senior global pastor.

Mark Driscoll's misogyny and bullying were at the centre of the Seattle-based Mars Hill church's

"You mix the everyday power of a corporation with a spiritual power and it is very hard to control."

Professor Cristina Rocha

demise in 2014, according to *The Rise and Fall of Mars Hill* podcast.

Dr Hey said he believed the megachurch structure could lead to more accountability rather than less.

Dr Hey said that the larger financial structures in a megachurch necessitated greater controls, as the church was required to be accountable to both the congregation and the government.

"They have more and more paperwork, and manuals get thicker each year," he said.

"It would be harder for a megachurch to get into trouble than a smaller church."

But he said that larger churches struggled when one of their key leaders was found to have acted inappropriately.

Dr Hey said that one of the realities of a larger church was a larger need for financial stability, and for this reason megachurches tended to play it safe on matters of doctrine and theology.

He said that the benefit of this was that it offered a place for attendees to discuss dominant

issues in society.

Dr Hey said that a decline in the involvement of individuals in community groups meant that people lacked opportunities to ask faith-related questions.

"In the world over the last 300 years, the focus on the material has created a decline in opportunity to give expression and take note of non-material concerns," he said.

"The megachurch is one response to the loss of opportunity to engage with the big spiritual concerns that people have. They are very pragmatic, in that they respond to very real, pragmatic needs that are found in our society."

However, he said that smaller churches offer a better environment for tackling more controversial issues.

Hillsong has been approached for comment.

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Training frustrates, election proposal suprising

AFTER THE CHARADE OF THE “Fitness for Service” clearance process introduced in 2021, we now encounter the folly of the online Level 1 Safety Training requirement imposed on parishioners in the Melbourne Diocese.

I do not use “folly” lightly. An 88-year-old parishioner, looking after the bookstall in the hall, sadly reflected on her inability to complete the course: “A group of us spent three hours last Saturday, trying to do it, and I’ll probably spend another two hours this afternoon”. I had to tell her that I could not buy any books that day, if she was not certified to sell them safely.

Another savvy lady, sitting in the coffee area, struggled to navigate the course on her iPad: “The screen is telling me I have completed it, but at the top it says 47 per cent and I can’t see the certificate”. Had she indeed completed the course – but actually failed it?

One person doubted that the \$20 online fee she had paid for the course had yielded anything of value: “It’s just common sense!” Wow, Diocese, you are asking people to pay \$20 for this?

Has the Beta testing been sufficiently thorough? I have heard people complain that you cannot do the training on an iPad as that does not allow you to drag and drop, and if you and your partner share an e-mail address, it won’t allow you to access it.

Come on, diocese! Above the sound of the sweet choir, can you hear parishioners’ feet, tramping down the aisle towards the doors?

Dr Peter J Edwards
Black Rock



Dr Jane E Sullivan is mystified as to why the church will not allow same-sex marriage.

Picture: iStock

Archbishop election calls surprising

With considerable experience of archbishop elections in this diocese, I have followed with interest over recent years the trajectory of processes intended to produce reform in the election process, disrupted as those processes were by COVID. More recently there have been surprising calls for a return to board elections.

To me there appeared to be a serious disconnect between synod processes from 2019-2021 on the one hand, and some of the options put forward in April-June by the new committee. These options, which have been adjusted in light of limited wider consultation, seem partially to reflect these unexpected calls for a return to election by board.

In my view, election by a board, or any variation on same, was clearly not recommended in the relevant resolution of the 2019 synod,

which read: “... the review to preserve the election of an archbishop by a two-thirds majority of both the clerical and lay members of the Synod”. Nor was it recommended in the 2021 Report of the Archbishop Election Act Review Committee, or in the relevant resolution of the 2021 synod.

It is thus very surprising to find a board election option, or anything akin to same, proffered by the new committee for comment. Synod might legitimately ask how this came about, and by what authority.

The Reverend Dr David Powys
Sandringham

Marriage denials mystifying

Some things simply mystify me. It is not the ineffable love of God, nor the marvels of the environment, nor the gift of loving relationships, nor the value of the sacraments of the Church or even the richness of liturgy. It is not these but other things.

It mystifies me that we, the Anglican Church of Australia, can sincerely say we are inclusive and all are welcome when, synod debates and votes continue to condescendingly exclude and other homosexuals.

It mystifies me how we can

do this when many people who happen to be homosexual have for eons faithfully served and are serving the Church as clergy and laity.

It mystifies me how we can alter canons about issues such as the ordination of women and the marriage of people who are divorced, and live with differences in between dioceses on various matters, yet not to amend Church ordinances to enable same-sex marriage. It mystifies me how we can marry many heterosexual couples who we will likely never see again in the pew, yet we deny the sacrament of marriage to many committed faithful Anglicans. That’s what is truly mystifying to me.

Dr Jane E Sullivan
Kew East



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.

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.

Jesus’ startling presence in Asia teaches us much

by Rowan Callick

MANY OF us within the Western church world, who think of it wrongly as the ancient epicentre of Christianity, wonder whether we can have anything to learn from those regions closer to Australia.

We quietly believe that surely we’re the ones who take Jesus with us to such places.

But Jesus is already there, alive – transforming people in our region. I have learned this from encounters that I haven’t sought: they have materialised in front of me in places where I had never expected to find him.

I made that discovery for myself arriving from England to work as communications officer for the Anglican diocese of Papua New Guinea. On my first evening there I was the dinner guest of an extraordinarily thoughtful and empathetic Christian family, the Boboms. I realised that God had called me there principally to learn.

That discovery was later framed visually through a visit to a Methodist church in a village on the Fijian island of Taveuni.

On the whole of a great wall inside is a colourful painting depicting the arrival by boat of the first missionaries. They are being



Lisu churches are full, writes Rowan Callick.

Picture: Rowan Callick

welcomed joyfully by the villagers. Standing alongside them, also cheering on the missionaries, is Jesus himself. A big image, in every sense.

I discovered also just how surprising is Jesus’ inventiveness during a visit to a Bible School in Xi’an, whose president was a brilliant, energetic and devout woman.

There were 140 students, resident in six-person dormitories. One group of mainly middle-aged women was especially remarkable.

They were doing a one-year course in evangelism, with their focus on spreading the gospel along the Belt and Road, an initiative which China’s leader Xi Jinping created to boost Beijing’s influence across Asia into Europe.

Here, then, Jesus is inspiring his followers to preach him and his message along that same Belt and Road.

Five years ago I spent a week living among the Lisu, a culture of about 750,000 people, part-

Tibetan, part-Burmese, who live in mountainous north-west Yunnan province in China.

Their original religion was shamanistic, but for the last century they have been devoutly Christian, with a wooden church at the centre of every village. Only two missionaries, Englishman James Fraser, an eager musician, and his co-worker, Karen Burmese evangelist Ba Thaw, ever came to the area, arriving in 1910.

The Lisu now have 720 churches but just 35 paid pastors. Their worship is congregationally-focused, with discussion sometimes about who will lead the next part of a service.

They still sing today the hymns translated into the Lisu language by Fraser – but unaccompanied and with traditional, breathtaking Lisu harmonies. They perform elaborate dance routines to Christian songs. The churches we visited were full.

Or, I recall strongly a conversation with a 26-year-old marketing manager Wang Wei, as he strained one Maundy Thursday to get inside a packed church in south Beijing. Wang explained why he was there: “Most of my friends talk endlessly about their new mobiles. But what I’ve bought mostly lets me down in the end”. So he started coming to church – for the music, the

atmosphere, and in his words, the sincerity.

I have drawn three conclusions from seeing Jesus in action so vividly, when least expected.

First, if we are ever tempted to draw a line between ourselves and others, including people in strikingly different cultures, then we will always find Jesus on the other side of that line. We should have our eyes wide open to see him, ready to be surprised, wherever we go.

Second, people can encounter Jesus through us too, if we walk with him, if we live for others, if we live in him. Our job is to point others not to an ethical code or a system of thought or a group of like-minded people – but to Jesus.

Third, while many may have two or even three passports, we are all “citizens of heaven,” where the Lord Jesus Christ lives,” as Paul says in Philippians. We are fellow pilgrims, wherever we may come from and wherever we may travel in this world, we are all one in Christ Jesus.

Rowan Callick is a China expert and a diocesan examining chaplain. This article is drawn from his Philip Harris Memorial Lecture at Christ Church Brunswick, the full text of which is available at: bit.ly/3tMkaIK.



Cairns couple Isaac Crooks and Jessica Allen.



Alan and Janet Bell from Malvern, Fran and Warwick Romanis from Geelong.



Wendy Carlos and Andrew Carroll.



Provincial Choral Evensong processional.

Celebrated 175 years of shared history in Melbourne

The Anglican and Catholic dioceses of Melbourne have celebrated 175 years of history with an evensong at St Paul's Cathedral.

The Very Reverend Dr Andreas Loewe, Dean of Melbourne, preached on the legacy of both dioceses. He called the church to rediscover unity, joy and strength, be equipped to right past wrongs and share God's goodness, justice, peace and love.

Clergy from across Victoria also prayed for both the churches and the world.

Pictures: Janine Eastgate



Meghan Hoffman and Sandra Roberts, both from Ballarat.



Archbishop Philip Freier with the Most Reverend Peter Comensoli, Catholic Archbishop of Melbourne.



Attendees at the Provincial Choral Evensong at St Paul's Cathedral.



Bishop of Bendigo Matt Brain at the service.



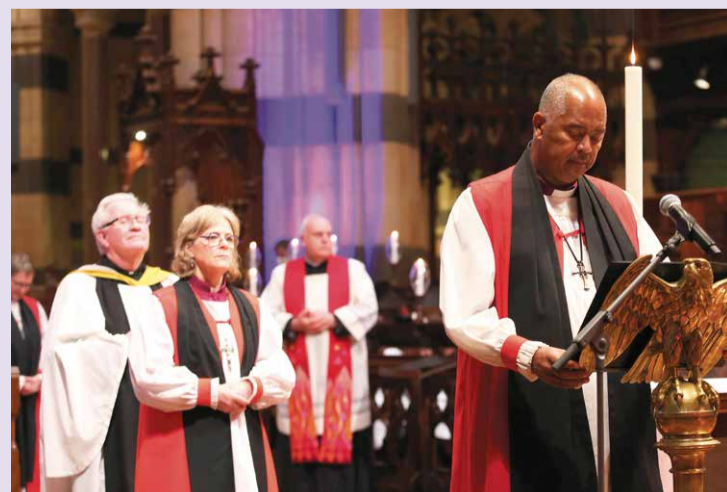
Choir members perform at the evensong at St Paul's Cathedral.



Bishop Kate Prowd at the service.



Ben Adams, Zoe Goodger and Stephanie Goodger.



Clergy at the shared Evensong in Melbourne on June 26.

Relevance wrestle took Breannon to ordination

by Jenan Taylor

THE REVEREND BREANNON Wilkinson thought being a youth pastor was what she most wanted from life. Then she learned to plant.

Ms Wilkinson is a church planter for Sent Collective, and assistant curate at St Philip's Mount Waverley, a partner church to the planting initiative.

Sent Collective takes a micro churches approach to seeding disciples.

Describing it, Ms Wilkinson asks people to picture a dandelion. The gathered worship is the centre of the sun yellow petals she explains, and the wispy seeds are the small micro churches.

Some of the things the micro churches are involved in include engaging people over meals in pubs and restaurants and connecting with theatre students.

At St Philip's, the initiative is there to help the older congregation think about how they can reach out to the local community and be more relevant to it, she said.

For Ms Wilkinson, that means helping the church to engage with all the issues the broader community faces.

She believes the biggest one is how to be an ally to First Nation's people and how to model that for other churches.

It's the reason why all gatherings at St Philip's start with an acknowledgement to country, Ms Wilkinson said.

"Every service involves praying for Indigenous populations and, reminding parishioners that they need to continue to educate themselves about Indigenous issues. They're two things that Christians can do without relying on Indigenous people to teach us," she said.

The church also celebrates Reconciliation and NAIDOC weeks and is consulting with local Indigenous leaders about what other steps they need to take.

"It means thinking about what native plants we should use in our gardens. How we shape our land, how we are to hold culture and creatures together, and all the little things that we can do to say, 'hey, we stand with you in this,'" she said.

Even though Ms Wilkinson's ardour for planting extends well beyond the walled garden that sits behind St Philip's pulpit, it's not what she thought she would be doing.

"If you'd asked me seven years ago, I would have said, I'm just going to be a youth pastor forever. That's what I was passionate about," she said.

Having started out at Hillsong Melbourne, Ms Wilkinson said her worldview had tended to be individualistic. "It was more this is just me and Jesus time and forget the rest," she said.

What attracted her to the Anglican tradition was joining the Glen Waverley Anglican church and studying at Bible college.

Through that, she leaned towards the Anglican way of shared meals and celebrating Jesus' death,



Breannon Wilkinson want the church to engage with issues in the community.

Picture: Michael Wilkinson

"I wrestled with the question of 'What does it look like to be contextually and culturally relevant as the Church?', just because the next generation is hugely unchurched."

Breannon Wilkinson

resurrection and forgiveness. What she was most affected by was the tradition of the Lord's Supper being a "sacred communal space".

Ms Wilkinson said it resonated with the work she was doing with university students, which was about fellowship around shared meals.

But she recognised that some people in the group would never ever step into a traditional church building, and she wondered what kind of worship format they would prefer and what it would be like to be a priest for such a group.

"I wrestled with the question of 'What does it look like to be contextually and culturally relevant as the Church?', just because the next generation is hugely unchurched," she said. She concluding that making changes was necessary.

At the same time Sent Collective was trying to discern what it was doing, who it was trying to reach and indeed whether or not to go ahead, she said.

All that together brought her to the realisation that becoming a priest was what God was calling her to do, and she was ordained in late 2021.

Ms Wilkinson said it seemed to come as no surprise to friends and colleagues because she had often been told that she had a flair for conversation and evangelism.

Nonetheless, Ms Wilkinson believes it was the time she had

spent as a planter in deep conversations in her local area, particularly at the Nottingham Neighbourhood House, that has really given her the scope to practice her talent.

Talking to people in the community has in itself been a learning curve, she said.

As church leader at the neighbourhood house, for example, it was easy to assume that where there are university students there would be a need for food, she said. But that's exactly where it was easy to fall short.

When asked, the neighbourhood house staff told her that connection and food was what was most important to students.

It was especially true for those international students who were here on bridging or work visas and were really struggling, Ms Wilkinson said.

It gave Sent Collective the information to think deeper about how to really help those students and within that, get access to food. "But you only hear those stories

when you have conversations with people," she said.

The closer engagements also helped her to better understand some of the typical living arrangements of the large multicultural community in the area, and what connection looks like for them. These include households where elderly grandparents, their adult children and grandchildren all live together.

It also brought insights into the high rates of domestic violence that occurred in some of them, she said.

As a master's degree graduate from Ridley College, Ms Wilkinson has shelved any further formal study for the time being but immerses herself in as much literature as she can find about Australia's Indigenous people.

It includes finding out where God's story fits into their story, and how to decolonise scripture, she said.

And then there's the question of truth.

"You have your truth; I have my truth. So, what does truth look like in our society today, because it's more blurred than it's ever been," Ms Wilkinson said. "For me and for our church, our big heart is that all these conversations are done in deep relationship in authentic community."

She cited the neighbourhood house as a place where lots of widely varying views happened often, and from where it was possible to have a learning and a listening posture as Christians.

"Because we're not in deep relationship with some people there, it's not really a place where we want to kind of jump on the offensive side, but rather, let's sit and listen. I think we can learn from anyone and everyone, not just people in our church community," Ms Wilkinson said.

"For someone who is part of our community, we would sit with them and try to unpack where some [of their views] come from.

"I'd be interested to hear how they got there, how much it differed from what I thought, and to be able to share each other's story."

Ms Wilkinson hopes that the Anglican Church will be spread further through lots of smaller churches in the foreseeable future.

She believes it will happen, particularly through the format of people talking about the Bible over a meal and drinks at the pub.

Despite her devotion to planting, Ms Wilkinson said she would always have a tender spot for working with youths and especially high school students.

"The way that they interpret the world and talk about things, it's fascinating," she said.

"I learn so much about the world that they're being raised in and therefore the culture of the next generation of leaders and disciples.

"It's constantly teaching me to be humble and to learn from everyone, not just those older than me or who seem wiser. But I am pleasantly surprised by who God uses to encourage and teach me things."

"Let's sit and listen. I think we can learn from anyone and everyone, not just people in our church community."

Breannon Wilkinson

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Since 1987, the Melbourne Anglican Foundation has been busy carrying out the vision and mission of Archbishop David Penman who founded the organisation with the view to allowing the Church to think big and dream large about its future and what it really means to be Anglican. We can all walk the talk by donating to and supporting these parish-based programs which seek to benefit all Melburnians while maintaining a Christian presence in the wider community. *Every gift is tax-deductible.*



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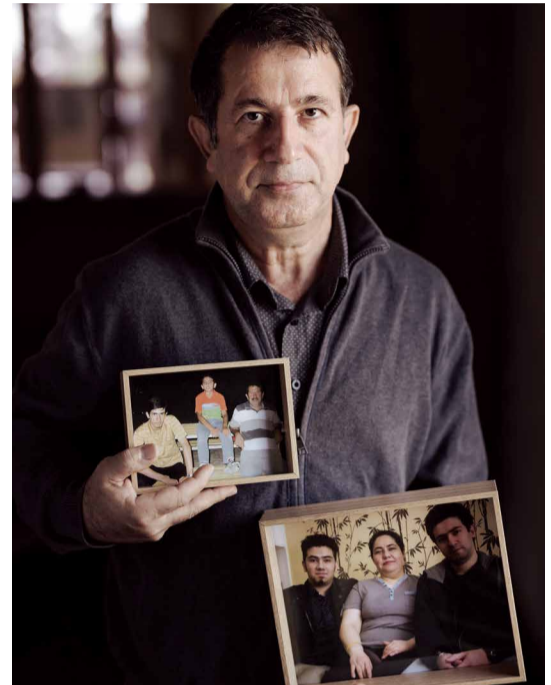
Melburnians Doing it Tough

The Melbourne Anglican Benevolent Society supports projects which assist disadvantaged youth, families and individuals. Parishes can apply for seeding grants for programs such as homework clubs, meals programs, woodwork workshops, school breakfast clubs, camps and conferences.



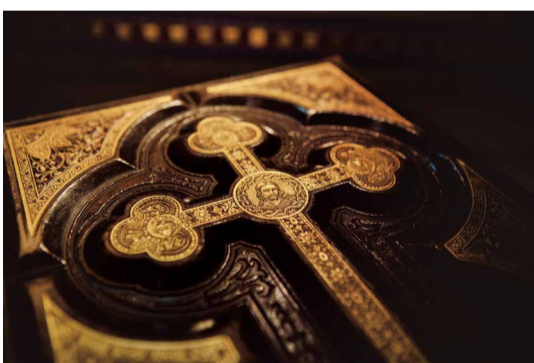
Melbourne Anglican Youth Ministry Fund

Young People Melbourne Anglican Youth Ministry Fund Supporting youth ministry projects which benefit disadvantaged young people, the Melbourne Anglican Youth Ministry Fund assists Anglican parishes to form partnerships with community groups and schools offering camps, youth clubs and counselling programs.



Anglican Diocese of Melbourne Migrants & Refugees Settlement Fund

New arrivals to Australia have multiple needs. Through the Migrants and Refugees Settlement Fund, parishes can apply to support individuals in necessitous need and projects to support emergency accommodation, material aid, skill and language classes.



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Why supervision can be a life-giving support

by Len Firth

SCANDALOUS EXAMPLES OF abuse have eroded confidence in the church and its message. This has profoundly impacted our pastoral ministries and evangelistic endeavours. Society at large, and federal and state government, has responded to these failures and sought to hold the church to account, but we should not have needed these promptings. Our Scriptures and theology call God's people to behave in ways which reflect God's character in the world. Christian lives should be characterised by faith-filled love to those we seek to serve.

In recent years I have chosen to focus on a ministry of professional pastoral supervision. At Ridley College I am involved in teaching a post graduate course this discipline. Clergy and those involved in church and other pastoral ministries need support. "Who cares for the carers?" and "Who listens to those whose ministry involves listening to much brokenness?" are questions which play in my mind.

In two recent ministry conferences, Carol Clark and I presented a workshop introducing the Anglican Diocese of Melbourne supervision program. We called the workshop "Not going it alone". This title echoes the Pauline injunction "Bear one another's burdens, and in this way you will fulfil the law of Christ".

We introduced the session with this paragraph: "Pastoral supervision is a process for ministry flourishing – it takes ministry practitioners and leaders on an accompanied journey of reflection on their roles. In supervision, people are invited to build an integrated perspective on the work of their ministry, their well-being, and their wider ministry context".

However, in the most recent workshop, at the Ootherong Conference, a participant challenged us about the theological foundation for supervision. This raised an important question, which I will address in this article.

The principle theological foundations for pastoral supervision are the character of God and our call to imitate Christ. Historically ethics and theology were seen as belonging together. The Pauline epistles usually expound theological truth and then move to suggest how the readers should behave in the light of those truths. Who God is and how God has acted in the world models for us how we are the live and work. The two great commandments compel God's covenant people to love others, to seek what is best under God.

Jesus taught his disciples saying they were not to be like the rulers of the day who exercised authority over others. They were to be servants of others, just as he himself did not come to be served, but to serve.



The character of God and our call to imitate Christ are the principle theological foundations for pastoral supervision, writes Len Firth. Picture: iStock

"Who God is and how God has acted in the world models for us how we are the live and work."

Len Firth

Followers of Christ are to demonstrate ministry following Christ's own example.

In 1 Peter 2:21 readers are encouraged to reflect on the fact that Christ suffered "leaving you an example, so that you should follow in his steps". The author goes on to describe Christ as the shepherd and guardian of the addressees' souls. These are two words which are synonyms for pastor and supervisor. Jesus is our ultimate pastoral supervisor, and we should follow the example of his ministry and support for leaders (see also 1 Peter 5).

The Ordinal reflects teaching from 1 Peter when it urges those to be ordained priest: "Be a pastor after the pattern of Christ the great Shepherd, who laid down his life for the sheep. Be a teacher taught by the Lord in the wisdom of holiness. Lead the people of God as a servant of Christ. Love and serve the people with whom you work, caring alike for young and old, rich and poor, weak and strong.

Never forget how great a treasure is placed in your care: the Church you must serve is Christ's spouse and body, purchased at the cost of his own life."

The national Anglican code for personal behaviour and the practice of pastoral ministry by clergy and church workers *Faithfulness in Service* argues in its introduction that the call to be holy is reflected in both the Old and New Testaments as the appropriate response to God's grace. It says Christians live according to the knowledge that they have been created by God and redeemed by Christ.

The character of God calls and challenges us to live like Christ, demonstrating and proclaiming a God of love. Our ministries should both commend Christ and have the aroma of his ways. Ministry supervision is a designed to assist those in ministry as they reflect on themselves and their work.

"Never forget how great a treasure is placed in your care: the Church you must serve is Christ's spouse and body, purchased at the cost of his own life."

The Ordinal

The Safe Ministry Commission of our General Synod was tasked with assisting the Anglican Church of Australia in its response to the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. Acceptance and implementation of

the Ministry Commission's report is to be encouraged.

Recommendation 16.5 of the Royal Commission's Final Report stated that the Anglican Church of Australia should develop mandatory national standards to ensure that all people in religious or professional ministry should undertake mandatory regular professional development and professional-pastoral supervision, as well as undergoing regular performance appraisals.

It is this second recommendation which has been the focus of this article.

Christian ministry today carries much unfortunate freight. Those with a vocation in ordained or lay ministry are burdened with the appalling failures of the church to deal with the predatory behaviour of some clergy or other church workers. This undermines our evangelistic endeavours. It is hard

often falls on those who would prefer to direct their energy to areas more closely connected with their ministry vocation.

According to the 2016 National Church Life Survey nearly half of all clergy experience moderate to high levels of stress. In this continuing COVID season stress levels have increased considerably and many find themselves experiencing something akin to burnout. Vicars and other ministers face these challenges with reduced capacity and diminished emotional resources.

Jesus stresses in his great sermon in Matthew 5-7 that character should shape conduct. It is nothing less than hypocrisy to be like salt which has lost its taste. Supervision is a means of support for those in the hard work of authentic Christian ministry to take their burdens and share them with another, to reflect on their life and ministry practice in the light of the model demonstrated and commended by Christ and our Christian scriptures.

It may be tempting to see mandated ministry supervision as just another area of compliance, another box to tick. Rather I believe it should be a life-giving means of support, so that pastors can be pastored, ministers ministered to, as a safe space for significant reflection on concerns and understanding the role of ministry.

Supervision seeks to support and enable those called to serve to flourish in their lives and work in such a way that the gospel is commended, that Jesus may be seen in the lives of those who bear the name of Christian.

The Safe Ministry Commission's full report can be found online at: bit.ly/3xSFNn4.

Can a psychological idea speak into theology?

Psychology is often associated with a secular understanding of human thought and behaviour. In this article, Dr Christa L. McKirland explains how a dialogue between Christian belief and psychology can in fact move us toward a healthier relationship with God.

WHEN YOU THINK ABOUT your needs, what comes to mind? Naturally we think of food, water, and shelter. But what about your mental, emotional, and even spiritual needs? And what even qualifies as a need instead of a want?

In current philosophical treatments of “need”, whatever the need is, its fulfilment should contribute to well-being and its unfulfilment should contribute to harm. A similar idea of fulfilment through non-physical needs is found in psychology’s Self-Determination Theory, which identifies three needs as being universal for human beings: autonomy, relatedness, and competence.

My own theological work has also proposed a specific psycho-spiritual need as fundamental to all humankind. I have proposed this need as being to have a relationship with God in which we know God personally, rather than knowing God as a list of facts. The term “psycho-spiritual” seeks to maintain the importance of the human body including the mind, while also recognising that what satisfies this need is ultimately not physical.

So, for a second think about account our psycho-spiritual need and the question of how psychology and Christian belief might help each other. Taking these into account, is it possible that needs for autonomy and relatedness have overlap with this need to know God personally? What might theology and psychology learn from each other in light of this question?

The benefit of theology for psychology is clear, because a psycho-spiritual need goes beyond the purely psychological and theology focuses on God and all things related to God. In other words, there are certain needs that psychology will be ill-equipped to engage with on its own, as a siloed discipline.

On the other hand, the benefits of what psychology can bring to theology are only beginning to be explored. It is here that the concept of autonomy provides a much-needed touchpoint. This touchpoint has its challenges though. One challenge is how necessary it is to reconcile the different understandings of “autonomy” between psychology and theology. In theology autonomy is a controversial topic because it is typically thought of as independence from others – so it understandably has a rather self-centred feel.

But the way it is understood within psychology’s self-determination theory may provide fertile soil for integration. This theory was proposed in the 1980s and has since gone through international testing and scrutiny, but has only been engaged theologically since 2013. Even then the engagement

has been minimal. In self-determination theory, autonomy means being the source of one’s actions: basically it is the idea that “I am the one willingly raising my arm”. Importantly, autonomy is conditioned by relatedness. In other words, if I believe someone is relating to me in an autonomous way, wherein they don’t have to relate to me but want to relate to me, this deepens my relationship with them. Further, the need to be the source of my own actions will mean choosing to move toward relationships. So, in self-determination theory, to flourish I need to satisfy my needs for autonomy

“What we think of God affects how we relate to God, what we think of ourselves, and how we live our lives.”

and relatedness. Autonomy enriches relatedness and relatedness enriches autonomy. Where the integration with theology may prove fruitful is that these psychological needs can also condition the psycho-spiritual need for a personal relationship with God.

For instance, we could relate to God as if God is a controlling father. This would technically meet the psycho-spiritual need of relating to God personally. However, if I believe that God is not controlling, how could that affect the health of my relationship with God? When people believe God wants them to make decisions and that they do indeed have the autonomy or agency to do so, such a perception contributes to their flourishing. This is born out in studies that have shown what we believe about God affects our flourishing. The first study of its kind into integrating self-determination theory with theology reported that when God is perceived as meeting needs for autonomy, competence and relatedness, lower symptoms of depression and stress were reported among Christian participants. A later study agreed, finding that: “the idea of an autonomy-supporting God is related with vitality, via the mediation of needs satisfaction, whereas a controlling God is connected with depression, through the mediational role of frustration”. The need for autonomy is thwarted when a person believes that God is controlling and will withdraw love



The theory of self-determination could help us understand how we relate to God.

Picture: file

“The idea of an autonomy-supporting God is related with vitality, via the mediation of needs satisfaction, whereas a controlling God is connected with depression, through the mediational role of frustration.”

if the person steps out of line.

In contrast, studies published by Sebastiano Costa and his team argue those who viewed God as one who supports autonomy understood God as inclined to give them the opportunity to choose from various ways of being religious. So, these studies argued, they would consider God aware of human weaknesses and acknowledging of an individual’s perspective, or empathetic.

This understanding of God is especially salient within the Christian faith considering the incarnation. To have a God who freely chose to become human and thereby enter human weaknesses provides theological justification for belief in an autonomy-supporting God. We might think of other examples of God endorsing human agency, for instance, putting the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in the Garden (even if this is

purely a theological narrative), or giving the Law that it might be followed.

What this means is that the psychological theory of self-determination could supplement our theological understanding of how we relate to God. Of course, it’s another matter if God is in fact controlling – but theologically there are many reasons to believe this is not the case. God can be in control without being controlling.

One challenge is to appreciate the limitations of both theology and psychology as disciplines if we are seeking to bring the two together to consider the topic of humanity’s proposed fundamental psycho-spiritual need. Psychology cannot tell us if God is supportive of a human being’s autonomy, or if our need for autonomy would exist if we weren’t in a sinful context. Still, it can tell us how understandings of God bear upon

the believer’s psycho-spiritual well-being. On the other hand, theology has the disciplinary task of speaking about who God is, how God relates to this world and how this world is meant to relate back to God, partial though that may be. This would include thinking about whether we might need autonomy regardless of human sinfulness.

Although the tasks of psychology and theology have their respective domains, bringing theology and psychology together illustrates the importance of thinking deeply about our beliefs. What we think of God affects how we relate to God, what we think of ourselves, and how we live our lives. Thinking through our beliefs about God has consequences for how we live in the world. How we talk about God in our church contexts and how we model who God is in our actions really do matter.

Dr McKirland is a lecturer in systematic theology at Carey Baptist College in Aotearoa New Zealand. She is also the executive director of Logia International, an organisation that encourages women to pursue postgraduate divinity education in order to enrich the academy and the church.

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. A link to the completed series is: bit.ly/3n154VC

Behind a life of reaching bikies: Dave's story

by Nils von Kalm

THE RUMBLE OF DAVE Fuller's Harley Davidson stands out amongst the traffic as he arrives at St Mark's Spotswood to greet me on a wet Friday morning. Easily recognisable in the colours of God's Squad Christian Motorcycle Club, he pulls in and says a hearty, "Morning!" as we start to chat and walk into the church.

Dave remains passionately committed to ministry to outlaw bikers after first earning his colours 31 years ago. He is president of the Melbourne chapter of God's Squad and involved with the club's international executive. These days though, Dave is better known in Anglican circles as the vicar of St Mark's, part of the Yarraville Anglican Parish.

It was in northern NSW as a young man in 1980 that Dave had a dramatic encounter with Christ through what would be described as a charismatic Methodist church.

Soon afterwards, aged 21, Dave felt a sense of calling to a Christian vocation.

"It had two elements," he recalls. "One was that God had called me to exercise leadership in his church, and the other one was to preach and teach."

Those two elements have been consistent in all the ministries Dave has undertaken since the late 1980s.

Dave's calling led to his introduction to the outlaw bike scene. He had a natural interest in motorbikes, but it wasn't in what he calls the "one percent" subculture that outlaw bikers represent.

"Occasionally I would ride up to the Surfers Paradise motorcycle races with mates, where I first encountered the 'one percent' outlaw clubs that wore patches to identify them," he explains.

"As a reasonably new Christian, I had heard of this club called God's Squad in Melbourne. I had no idea at that time though that I would have anything to do with them."

But soon after his return to Melbourne, Dave was given a cassette tape (remember this is the 1980s!) of God's Squad founder John Smith preaching.

"It just captivated me like no other preacher had," he says. Soon afterwards he met John and some God's Squad members. Dave's life



Dave Fuller's ministry has always involved leadership, preaching and teaching.

Picture: Nils von Kalm

"I believe that preachers should read prodigiously as we need to keep feeding ourselves and stay committed to life-long learning and keep our preaching interesting."

Dave Fuller

was about to change.

Dave describes the ministry of God's Squad as a ministry of presence. Members have consistently attended bikie functions, made themselves known, and been the presence of Christ to a subculture

that is on the margins, often misunderstood, and shunned by polite society.

Dave cites John Wesley's commitment to personal holiness and social justice, as well as the influence of John Smith, as being cen-

tral to shaping his own sense of the gospel. His approach to ministry has allowed him to change many lives over many years.

So, how did a young guy with long hair, who was a bit of a rebel in his youth, make the shift from outlaw bikie circles to the institution of the Anglican Church?

It turns out that the transition wasn't as big a leap for Dave as readers might think.

"I had my background in the Methodist tradition and I did my theological training at Ridley College, where I came into contact with a lot of Anglicans," he says.

"Having a setup of bishops and authority has always been a part of my DNA."

The Anglican Church is an excellent fit for Dave. Since his 2005 ordination it has given him a home, a space, a family, accountability,

and he has still been able to do all the things he is committed to. Here he puts his gifts as an outward-looking person with evangelistic skills, and as a preacher and teacher to good use, alongside his work in the biker scene.

This has helped in his work on what he calls his "patch" in the western suburbs with St Mark's. When he arrived at the parish, he went around knocking on doors, visited the local primary school, childcare centre, the Returned Soldiers League, and the local football club.

Dave says there is a genuine community atmosphere in the Spotswood area. St Mark's has stood in the area for 130 years, so it is well established as part of the community. Its longevity is only beaten by the local pub, the Spotswood Hotel.

"It feels like a country town in some respects" Dave says. "Football and netball are very big here, and I'm now the honorary chaplain of the local footy club."

Through his work Dave also brings a lot to different generations, including the elderly. The bike culture highly values honour, and that is what Dave wants to bring to the community of St Mark's. He says he wants to honour people by visiting them in nursing homes, and he wants to honour those who have been part of the church for many years. He also expresses a strong desire to create the future, which includes the development of the children's and youth ministry.

Dave also describes himself as a prodigious reader as he slowly turns to his vast bookshelf covering one whole wall of his study. There are probably hundreds of titles there, ranging from the religious to the secular. NT Wright features heavily amongst Dave's immense collection. "I believe that preachers should read prodigiously as we need to keep feeding ourselves and stay committed to life-long learning and keep our preaching interesting," he says.

Having been in ministry for 35 years, what is next for Dave Fuller?

Well, he sees himself long-term at St Mark's and wants to continue to coach younger clerics in the Melbourne Diocese.

Whatever the future holds, the people of Spotswood are sure to see a lot more of Dave Fuller's Harley Davidson.

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Call for dialogue with Russian Orthodox Church

by Jonathan Luxmoore

THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF the World Council of Churches has invited Ukraine's independent Orthodox Church to attend its meetings as an observer, after condemning Russia's "armed aggression" and "illegal invasion" of the country.

But the way has also been cleared for Russian Orthodox leaders to attend the council's assembly this summer.

In a statement, the committee said its members' hearts grieved that that the Russian Federation had launched an illegal invasion of its neighbour.

"This tragic development represents a terrible failure of diplomacy, responsibility, and accountability to international law," the committee said. "We declare that war, with the killing and all the other miserable consequences it entails, is incompatible with God's very nature and will for humanity and against our fundamental Christian and ecumenical principles, and we reject any misuse of religious language and authority to justify armed aggression."

The statement was published at the close of a four-day meet-



The World Council of Churches said it was created as an open platform for dialogue.

Picture: iStock

ing to prepare an agenda for the 11th WCC plenary, which opens in Karlsruhe on 31 August on the theme "Reconciliation and Unity".

The central committee's statement said that Russia's invasion on 24 February had inflicted an appalling toll of death, destruction and displacement on the people of Ukraine, where thousands of civilians had been killed, cities reduced to ruins, and more than 14 million people forced to flee their homes.

The statement said the council

acknowledged and welcomed the commitment of the Moscow Patriarch to engage in and encounter dialogue under WCC auspices, representing the council's constituency in both Russia and Ukraine.

Calls have mounted for the Russian Orthodox Church to be barred from WCC meetings, after unsuccessful appeals for Patriarch Kirill to condemn the invasion and urge a ceasefire and negotiations.

In March, the Russian church named a 23-member delegation

team for the Karlsruhe plenary, headed by its foreign-relations director, Metropolitan Hilarion (Alfeyev), although its final composition remains unclear after Hilarion's demotion in early June by the Church's Holy Synod.

In May, the Moscow Patriarchate welcomed the outcome of an inter-Orthodox consultation in Cyprus in preparation for the WCC plenary. Its final report urged peace in Ukraine but made no mention of Russia's invasion.

In late May, a team from the WCC and Geneva-based ACT Alliance, grouping more than 140 faith-based member-organisations, visited the Russian-Ukrainian border area around Rostov-on-Don to view the Russian Church's work with refugees from the war, at the Moscow Patriarchate's invitation.

In an opening report to the central committee on 15 June, WCC's Orthodox acting secretary-general the Reverend Professor Ioan Sauca said that the WCC had consistently denounced the conflict, while also maintaining contact and dialogue with Churches in Russia and Ukraine.

Professor Sauca said that the WCC had been asked by many to expel the Russian Orthodox Church because of its wartime stance, and that he understood how anger could impel "immediate radical decisions". But he said the WCC was created as an open platform for dialogue encounter and for challenging one another.

"If we exclude those we do not like or agree with, with whom are we going to speak, and how can we advance to reconciliation and a lasting just peace?" he said.

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'Western baggage' put under the microscope

by Jenan Taylor

CHRISTIAN INTERCULTURAL workers have been warned that ignoring their cultural blind spots might pose a risk to their mission.

Faith leaders have urged people working with other cultures to demonstrate more humility, and to be aware of the Western attitudes they take into communities.

Mission training bodies such as St Andrew's Hall say they are putting increasing emphasis on making sure trainees don't take "Western baggage" into the field.

Australian Indigenous Ministries missionaries Sue and Richard Davies say they have witnessed many people new to Indigenous communities commit serious slip-ups and lose their respect and confidence.

The Davies live in Cootamundra but have worked in outback Australia for more than 35 years.

In that time, the couple has travelled all over the Northern Territory, teaching about the Bible and working with various church leaders.

They have had many successes, but their journey has also brought challenges.

Mrs Davies can recall the consternation that arose among some of the men in an Indigenous community, when she decided to breastfeed her baby in public, even discreetly.

Mr Davies can remember complimenting a parishioner on the evening dress she wore to church one Sunday morning, only to be chided by an Aboriginal elder for looking at the younger woman "with the wrong eyes".

The elder considered Mr Davies' attitude to be wrong.

The couple are more focused on translation work these days. But from time to time they help teachers and health professionals new to the communities to be more culturally aware and to adjust more smoothly, Mr Davies said.

The couple believes this is necessary because they have witnessed



Faith leaders have urged intercultural workers to be aware of their Western attitudes.

Picture: iStock

"You've got nothing to say until you've learned because otherwise you are at risk of being so offensive."

Sue Davies

many of those professionals, and faith workers blunder, and then lose the respect and confidence of Indigenous people.

"They ask the wrong questions, ask too many questions, ask questions for which there are no answers, and often make comments when they shouldn't," Mr Davies said.

Mrs Davies said it was vital that workers were better prepared to work respectfully and sensitively.

She said during the intervention in the Northern Territory, they had witnessed government representatives descend on communities using complicated language riddled with acronyms.

"Even the girl who was inter-

preting didn't know what the speakers were talking about. It was such a waste of money," she said. "How could they not know they were not communicating?"

She said people who wanted to work in Indigenous communities needed to learn to slow down and observe carefully if they wanted to be effective in the local cultures.

"You have to come as a learner," Mrs Davies said. "We've had groups come up here who say they want to hit the ground running, and we've said, 'No, you come as a learner. You've got nothing to say until you've learned because otherwise you are at risk of being so offensive.'"

At St Andrew's Hall, a school

for the Church Missionary Society, interdenominational gospel workers are trained to work in places like Japan and Kenya and among Indigenous Australian communities.

The school's director of training and development Dr David Williams said St Andrew's equipped students to acknowledge their own blind spots and the Western lens through which they viewed other cultures.

Dr Williams said that in the last few years the curriculum had become more focused on ensuring that Anglo-Australian or Western students were aware of the power imbalances they often took into their fieldwork.

He said the school wanted gospel workers to recognise the degree to which their world view had been shaped by individualism, egalitarianism and assumptions around freedom and agency.

He said it strengthened them to approach their work with a "high degree of epistemic humility."

That also enabled them to develop alliances with local faith

workers, and to level the playing field between them, Dr Williams said.

The school's strong emphasis on longer term mission, meant workers were encouraged to learn the language of the hearer, alongside considerations of giving away power to balance the relationship, he said.

Dr Williams said that approach could slow the pace of their work among other cultures and be frustrating for gospel workers, initially.

However, he was confident that over time they would see how slowing down could help improve their cultural fitness and help them avoid unsustainable practices.

The approach parallels some of the humanitarian sector's work with communities around the globe.

Anglican Overseas Aid quality and compliance program manager Belinda Lauria said establishing more balanced relationships with local churches and faith agencies in places such as the Solomon Island and Tonga has helped the organisation build robust working structures.

Ms Lauria said ensuring those actors took the reins in decision-making was the most relevant way to develop community development initiatives.

She said it had helped Anglican Overseas Aid support communities in Vanuatu to drive their recovery efforts during emergency crises like tropical cyclone Harold.

But there was still a lot of work to do in the space, Ms Lauria said.

"Because a lot of places get funded by Australia and New Zealand, there's still a need to ensure we're not prioritising our own interests and that we are still listening and actually are allowing decisions to be made by local actors themselves," Ms Lauria said.

"There's a lot of talk, but the actions don't always match the talk and the talk is done by us in the Western countries."

She said people needed to constantly be reflective about their work.

"Change takes time. It's not a straight line," Ms Lauria said.

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Massacre shows risks of faith: Open Doors

by Kirralee Nicolle

CHRISTIANS HAVE BEEN urged to stand with those persecuted for their faith following a massacre in a Nigerian church on June 5.

At least 22 people were confirmed dead and many more were injured after gunmen entered a Catholic church in the town of Owo.

The men fired guns at the worshippers and detonated explosives, but their identity and motivations are yet to be known, according to a report by the ABC.

Open Doors Australia and



Gunmen killed at least 22 churchgoers in Nigeria.

Picture: peeterv

New Zealand executive director Mike Gore said that sadly this was not an isolated incident in Nigeria.

Mr Gore said that 4,000 Christians were killed in Nigeria just last year, a number which averages at around one killed every two hours.

He said that the extremist group Boko Haram and the Fulani herdsmen were primarily to blame for attacks on Christians in the country.

"More Christians are murdered for their faith in Nigeria than any other country," Mr Gore said.

Mr Gore also said that the

broader region of sub-Saharan Africa was set to become the fastest-growing centre of persecution in the world over the next decade.

"We will grieve with the families and the communities who have lost loved ones," he said.

"We encourage Christians in Western nations to stand with their brothers and sisters around the world who share our faith but not our freedom."

Mr Gore also urged Christians to pray for comfort, strength and hope for those affected by such attacks, and to consider financially supporting the work of Open Doors.

Israel convicts aid worker after six years in detention

by Francis Martin

AN ISRAELI court convicted aid worker Mohammed El Halabi on terrorist charges on Wednesday 15 June, after a widely criticised six-year period of pre-trial detention.

The case against Mr Halabi and the process that he underwent have been condemned by human-rights groups and the United Nations.

In 2016, Mr Halabi was arrested and accused of transferring tens of millions of dollars from World Vision, of which he was the Gaza director, to Hamas. At the time, a spokesperson for Hamas said that the group had no connection with Mr El Halabi.

Several independent audits – including one by the Australian government, and another by the company Deloitte – have found no evidence that any funds were misdirected.

At the time, the charity's chief executive Kevin Jenkins noted that World Vision's budget in Gaza over the previous decade had been only \$22.5 million, making it hard to understand how Mr El Halabi could be accused of siphoning \$50 million of charity funds to Hamas.

In a statement released after the verdict, World Vision expressed "disappointment" with the court's decision. "In our view there have been irregularities in the trial process and a lack of substantive, publicly available evidence," the statement said.

In November 2020, four UN Special Rapporteurs called for Mr El Halabi's detention to come to an end, either by granting him a fair trial or by releasing him. They noted that he had been questioned for 50 days after his arrest without being given access



Aid worker Mohammed El Halabi.

Picture: World Vision

to a lawyer, and that many of his court appearances had occurred behind closed doors.

"What is happening to Mr El Halabi bears no relation to the trial standards we expect from democracies," they said. They said it was instead part of a pattern where Israel used secret evidence to indefinitely detain hundreds of Palestinians.

Mr Halabi, who is Palestinian, has denied the charges against him, and repeatedly refused plea deals that would have obtained his release in exchange for admitting guilt.

In the statement on Wednesday, World Vision expressed its support for Mr El Halabi's decision to appeal, and called for a fair and transparent appeal process based on the facts of the case.

Church Times.

Prayer Diary

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

JULY

Fri 1: Ministry with the Aboriginal people of Australia (Bp Chris McLeod, National Aboriginal Bishop, Aboriginal Clergy & People); Archdeaconry of Williamstown (Glenn Buijs); St Stephen's Warrandyte (Mark Hanson);

Sat 2: Ministry with the Torres Strait Islander people of Australia (Torres Strait Islander Clergy & People); Yarra Valley Grammar School (Mark Merry, Principal, Dietrich Cheung, Chaplain); Sojourners Church Werribee (Mark Tibben, Andrew Seedhom);

Sun 3: The Anglican Church of Tanzania (Abp. Maimbo William Mndolwa); The Diocese of Melbourne (Abp Philip Freier, Asst Bps Paul Barker, Bradley Billings, Genieve Blackwell, Kate Prowd, Clergy & People); Ecumenical Affairs Committee; Ecumenical Affairs Committee; St Thomas' Werribee (vacant incumbency, Nisher Kunoo);

Mon 4: The Diocese of Newcastle (Bp Peter Stuart, Asst Bps Charlie Murry, Sonia Roulston, Clergy & People); Evangelical Fellowship in the Anglican Communion (EFAC) (Stephen Hale, Chair); St Matthew's Wheelers Hill (Jed Crispin);

Tues 5: The Diocese of North Queensland (Bp Keith Joseph, Clergy & People); The Parish of Christ Church Whittlesea w St Peter's Kinglake (vacant incumbency);

Wed 6: The Diocese of North West Australia (Episcopacy vacant, Clergy & People); Brighton Grammar School (Ross Featherston, Principal); Chester Lord, Chaplain); Holy Trinity Williamstown

(Elizabeth Murray);

Thurs 7: The Diocese of Perth (Abp Kay Goldsworthy, Asst Bps Jeremy James, Kate Wilmot, Clergy & People); Converge International (Jenny George, CEO, and Chaplains); Yarraville Parish (David Fuller);

Fri 8: The Diocese of Riverina (Bp Donald Kirk, Clergy & People); Archdeaconry of Box Hill (Dianne Sharrock); St Andrew's Aberfeldie (Michael Danaher);

Sat 9: The Diocese of Central Queensland (Bp Peter Grice, Clergy & People); Beacons Hills College (Tony Sheumack, Principal; Peggy Kruse, Chaplain); St Silas and St Anselm Albert Park (Sophie Watkins);

Sun 10: The Church of the Province of Uganda (Abp Stephen Kaziimba); The Diocese of Sydney (Abp Kanishka Raffel, Regional Bps Chris Edwards, Michael Stead, Peter Hayward, Peter Lin, Malcolm Richards, Gary Koo, Clergy & People); Evangelism in the Diocese; St Eanswythe's Altona w St Clement's Altona Meadows (Chris Lancaster, Kathryn Bellhouse);

Mon 11: The Diocese of Tasmania (Bp Richard Condie, Missioner Bp Chris Jones, Clergy & People); Examining Chaplains (Gail Pinchbeck, Lindsay Urwin, Turi Hollis, Noelene Horton AM, Chris Appleby, Peter Martin, Jan Joustra, Dawn Treloar, Victor Yu, Jane Freemantle, Yvonne Poon, Heather Schnagl, Michael Flynn); All Saints' Ascot Vale (Andrew Esnouf);

Tues 12: The Diocese of The Murray (Bp Keith Dalby, Clergy & People); Spiritual

Health Victoria Council (Cheryl Holmes, CEO); St Matthew's Ashburton (Kurian Peter);

Wed 13: The Diocese of The Northern Territory (Bp Greg Anderson, Clergy & People); Camberwell Girls' Grammar School (Debbie Dunwoody, Principal; Helen Creed, Chaplain); Holy Trinity Bacchus Marsh (vacant incumbency);

Thurs 14: The Diocese of Wangaratta (Bp Clarence Bester, Clergy & People); Girls' Friendly Society (Alison Benfield, Chair); Holy Trinity Balaclava and Elwood (Kathryn Watt);

Fri 15: The Diocese of Willochra (Bp John Stead, Clergy & People); Archdeaconry of Dandenong; St Barnabas' Balwyn (Randle Bond, Kirsty Brown);

Sat 16: Anglicare Australia (Bp Chris Jones, Chair; Kasy Chambers, Exec Director); Camberwell Grammar School (Paul Hicks, Principal; Charles Butler, Chaplain); Parish of Banyule (Denise Nicholls, Jonathan Lopez);

Sun 17: The Episcopal Church in the USA (Bp Michael B Curry); Theological Colleges, Church Schools & Church Kindergartens; Lay Ministry; St Stephen's Bayswater (Jacqui Smith);

Mon 18: Mission Agencies of the Anglican Church of Australia; Relationship Matters (Janet Jukes, CEO); St Michael & All Angels' Beaumaris (Wayne Walters);

Tues 19: Religious Orders serving within the Anglican Church of Australia; Hospital Chaplaincy (Co-ordinator & Chaplains); Bellarine Parish (David Willsher);

Wed 20: Locums and all retired clergy; Caulfield Grammar School (Ashleigh Martin, Principal; Ryan Holt, Amanda Lyons and Kate Jacob, Chaplains); Bellarine Gateway Parish (Elizabeth Breakley)

Thurs 21: The Anglican Church of Australia (Primate Abp Geoffrey Smith, General Secretary Anne Hywood, the General Synod & the Standing Committee); Melbourne Anglican Foundation; St Stephen's Belmont (Shirley Littras);

Fri 22: The Diocese of Adelaide (Abp Geoff Smith, Asst Bps Denise Ferguson, Timothy Harris, Christopher McLeod; Clergy & People); Archdeaconry of Essendon (Vanessa Bennett); Christ Church Berwick (Incumbency vacant; Reece Kelly, Locum Tenens, Samuel Creek);

Sat 23: The Diocese of Armidale (Bp Rod Chiswell, Clergy & People); Christ Church Grammar School (Neil Andary, Principal; Emily Fraser, Chaplain); St Agnes' Black Rock (Jennifer Furphy, Bruce Everett);

Sun 24: The Church in Wales (Abp Andy John); The Diocese of Ballarat (Bp Garry Weatherill, Clergy & People); Ministries to Youth; St Alfred's Blackburn North (Peter MacPherson, Michael McNamara, Nicolas Curtis, Rene Pfizner, Mark Simon, Elizabeth Bolton);

Mon 25: The Diocese of Bathurst (Bp Mark Calder, Clergy & People); Mission to Seafarers (Neil Edwards, Chair; Onfré Punay, Chaplain); St John's Blackburn (Andrew Price, Mark Chew);

Tues 26: The Diocese of Bendigo (Bp

Matt Brain, Clergy & People); St Paul's Boronia (Vaughn Spring);

Wed 27: The Diocese of Brisbane (Abp Phillip Aspinall, Regional Bps Jeremy Greaves, Cameron Venables, John Roundhill, Clergy & People); Firbank Grammar School (Jenny Williams, Principal; Christine Croft, Chaplain); Parish of Box Hill (Shane Hubner, Esther Zhang, Alasdair MacKinnon-Love);

Thurs 28: The Diocese of Bunbury (Bp Ian Coutts, Clergy & People); Mothers' Union Australia, Diocese of Melbourne (Elaine Longford, President); St Andrew's Brighton (Ian Morrison, Molly De-Leon);

Fri 29: The Diocese of Canberra & Goulburn (Bp Mark Short, Asst Bps Stephen Pickard, Carol Wagner, Clergy & People); Archdeaconry of Frankston (Helen Phillips); St Peter's Brighton Beach (Jonathan Chamberlain, Chester Lord);

Sat 30: Ministry to the Defence Force (Bishop Grant Dibden, Chaplains & Members of the Defence Forces); Geelong Grammar School (Rebecca Cody, Principal; Gordon Lingard, Howard Parkinson, Chaplains); Parish of Brimbank (Dave Thompson, Agatha Wakyereza);

Sun 31: The Church of the Province of West Africa (Abp Jonathan B.B. Har); The Diocese of Gippsland (Bp Richard Treloar, Clergy & People); Royal School of Church Music (Roslyn Carolane, Chair); Christ Church Brunswick (Lindsay Urwin OGS, Jack Lindsay, Russell Goulbourne).

Here’s how to help your youth workers grow

by Brian Holden

EARLY IN MY MINISTRY FORMATION I had my first annual review. It didn’t go well. It was held in the third year of my role and the person running it was disconnected from the ministry itself. I was devastated by the result. I went to my leadership team and gave a heartfelt apology for failing them. Of course, they had no idea what I was talking about. In fact, most of the key leaders hadn’t heard about the review at all, and they certainly hadn’t given input. I felt letdown by the review process and believed the church was not interested in me growing as a leader. Years later I know the church was interested it’s just that sometimes we as the church don’t manage process well. Hopefully, my experience and my 15 years of learnings since can be helpful. So, if your parish is lucky enough to have someone working with youth in any capacity consider these tips:

Meet with them

To many this will sound simple and obvious. But scheduling regular one-on-one meetings to discuss the vision of the parish and how it is playing out in the youth ministry will help bring this ministry in from the edges. I once had a leader who would stick their head into the office door once a week and say, “How are things going?”. At the time I didn’t realize this was their attempt at checking on the ministry, my life and my growth in leadership. To be done well, this check-in needs to be a regular kept time with an agenda of things to discuss and



Connect your youth minister back into the parish at every opportunity, writes Brian Holden. Picture: iStock

“Youth ministry can often operate as an island within the parish that feels very isolating as a leader.”

learn about as their leader. It shouldn’t, but youth ministry can often operate as an island within the parish that feels very isolating as a leader. So, connect them back in at every opportunity.

Champion their development
Most Youth Ministers are part-time, and that adds time pressure. They might not feel they have time to attend a full three-day conference. So as leaders help them to see the benefit and make it possible to take development seriously. They are often on the busy dance floor trying to avoid having their toes stood on, so they need the balcony view you can bring. Discuss relevant articles, books or training events regularly, they

“Just show up. It doesn’t have to be every week, maybe once a term organise to be at an event they run and support and encourage them.”

will learn from how seriously you take your own development. Let them know up front that this is an expectation for all leaders so they can build it into their schedule.

Connect them with others
As I’ve already mentioned youth and children’s ministry can be isolating. When you are one to three days a week you don’t often have a large network. Help connect your leaders with others. Have a deanery day where they all come. Connect them with the diocese. Make sure they have appropriate supervision and coaching from outside of the local parish.

Show up
This is the easiest one. Just show up. It doesn’t have to be every week, maybe once a term organise to be at an event they run and support and encourage them. It means more to them than you may realise.

God is out there in unexpected places

by Clare Boyd-Macrae

THERE’S ALMOST an embarrassment of Christian festivals in the months between Christmas and Pentecost. First Christmas of course, then Lent begins, followed by Good Friday and Easter. And just when we thought we could settle in for a run of normal Sundays, Pentecost starts. In the gospels we read that Jesus died an ugly, humiliating criminal’s death, and his followers were scattered and afraid. Then we read of stories that he had come to life again. Some of the women who had followed him claimed they had seen and spoken to him. Then more of his friends and disciples had encounters with him, even the cynical ones like Thomas. And then, he was gone. We read accounts of this in the gospels, and the Acts of the Apostles. Once again his followers were alone, confused and afraid. But Jesus had said to wait for something he was going to send. They waited. And then what Christians call the Holy



Spirit burst down upon the fledgling church, an event we now celebrate as Pentecost. It came like wind, it came like fire. It entered the house where the disciples were huddled behind locked doors and filled them with power, joy and certainty. It changed them into people so filled with an uncontainable spirit they couldn’t help but share it. That was all a long time ago. These days it feels to me like we are more cynical about religious experiences. So, what about mainstream Christians like us, who may be sincere and loyal but who are wearied and unravelled by modern life? What are we celebrating at Pentecost? There are no tongues of flame

a word for all seasons

resting on our heads, no wild, intoxicating winds blow down our locked doors. Few of us speak in tongues, or have even had much experience that we could point to as a profound and unmistakable encounter with the divine. Are we celebrating the fact that we belong to a supportive and lively community that seeks something deeper than the accumulation of wealth or the pursuit of a good lifestyle? No, it goes further than that. People who worship faithfully every week know that the Holy Spirit is still at large in the world. They know that broken relationships mend, that protest and creativity can change governments’ minds, that small groups can change the face of

a suburb, that miracles still happen, and that grace breaks through. But we need to let this happen. We need to make space for the Holy Spirit to come into our lives. This might be through personal and corporate prayer. It might be through building communities who together search for a deeper life. Or it might be by together tackling some of the issues of injustice that are so painfully evident in our world today. Or we could reach out to the stranger in our midst. Or it might be by worshipping, and being open to the surprising ways God communicates with us. God is still out there, and still in here. God is in the most unexpected places and people. We may not see tongues of fire sitting on our heads, or feel a possessing wind blow in our shuttered, fearful doors. But when we put the effort into our lives with God, the effects can be almost as dramatic and profound. Clare Boyd-Macrae’s blog is at clareboyd-macrae.com.



Spirit Words

What is the chief end of man?
Man’s chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy him forever.

Westminster Shorter Catechism

Captivating acting sustains a bold digression

by Tim Kroenert

SEASON ONE OF *RUSSIAN DOLL* WAS A dark comic tour de force. Co-creator (with Amy Poehler) Natasha Lyonne stars as Nadia, a brash, hard-drinking New Yorker cursed to relive her 36th birthday party over and over. On this hellish night she repeatedly dies, only to reset each time to the start of the evening. That present trauma gradually opens a window to deeper trauma: a generational trauma of parental neglect, stemming back to the communal trauma World War II was for Nadia's Jewish forebears. What emerges is an irreverent, modern rabbinic parable on confronting the past.

Season two is less about confronting the past than healing from it. Lyonne and Poehler abandon the first season's gruesome Groundhog Night conceit. In its place is a time travel story that sends Nadia into the past and back via magical subway train. Gifted the opportunity to embody her mother and grandmother in their younger years, Nadia seizes a chance to repair the mistakes (in her view) they made that led to her own discontent in the present day. Specifically, she sets about trying to salvage the familial wealth that was either squandered by her mother, stolen by the Nazis, or both.



Season two of *Russian Doll* is about healing.

Picture: Netflix

It is a bold digression story-wise. Gone are the vivid visual and aural motifs that drove season one – the recurring image of Nadia meeting a mundane fate, then jolting awake in front of a bathroom mirror as party hubbub and Harry Nilsson's debauched anthem "Gotta Get Up" filter in from the next room. Absent in large part, too, is the engaging friendship between Nadia and the helplessly beta Alan (Charlie Bennett), who was her one companion on season one's life-death loop. Alan has his own subplot here but they spend little screen time together, to the story's detriment.

What does remain is Lyonne's incredible performance, which is a captivating blend of loud-mouthed bravado and sarcasm that can turn in an instant to heartbreaking vulnerability. And, the scripts are still punchy and nuanced enough to support it. It may lack the must-binge drive of the first season, but sustains interest enough for its deeper concerns to reveal themselves to patient viewers. From its first episode it was clear *Russian Doll* was underpinned by a potent vision. Season two proves the creators are more interested in the integrity of that vision than in doubling down on gimmicks.

Streaming on Netflix.

A good man, bad choices, and a crumbling world

by Wendy Knowlton

THE OPENING scene of *A Hero* follows Rahim (Amir Jadidi) as he leaves prison and heads to the Tomb of Xerxes where his brother-in-law is working. Rahim needs help to pay off a debt and remain free. Dwarfed by the ancient stone walls that tower above him, he negotiates rickety scaffolding and seemingly endless stairs. This exhausting ascent proves something of a metaphor for what follows.

Written and directed by Iranian film maker Asghar Farhadi, this riveting film explores fine lines. Rahim is a good man who can make bad choices. When his lover Farkhondeh (Sahir Boldoust) finds a handbag containing gold coins, the pair plan to sell them and buy Rahim's liberty. But the value of the coins is insufficient to repay the whole debt, and Rahim's conscience is troubled. So, he decides to pass

what he suspects to be God's test and return the bag instead. When news of his good deed leaks, the media, the prison and a local charity combine to hail him as a hero. Money is raised on his behalf and pressure is placed on his creditor, Bahram (Mohsen Tanabandeh) to accept part payment and approve Rahim's release.

But his story is not quite what was broadcast, and soon he needs to lie to support an unprovable story. We hear Bahram ask peevishly, "Where in the world are people celebrated for *not* doing wrong?". Suddenly it seems everyone has an agenda, and all the shining paths that materialised for Rahim start melting away. He loses a job prospect, a new marriage, a relationship with his son, but most importantly, self-respect.

It is impossible for the audience to do anything but yearn for Rahim's deliverance. Jadidi's beautifully nuanced performance gives us



Rahim (Amir Jadidi) deserves more than he is likely to get. Picture: imdb

a man who is impulsive, financially inept and not above temptation. But he does deserve more than he is likely to get. His soulful eyes seem haunted by uncertainty, even in momentary joy. When the world

sees him as a hero, he sees himself differently too. The prospect that God might be rewarding him after years of struggle is intoxicating, but it is obvious he cannot really allow himself to trust in this blessing.

It is easier for the world to believe in a scam than a selfless deed, a villain than a hero, and as Rahim's story is picked apart, things begin to crumble. Television interviews, social media posts, forwarded emails and security camera footage are mined to suggest different truths. "I didn't lie," Rahim says despairingly. "But you didn't tell the truth," he is told. Has he planned what seemed to be inadvertent? Did he deliberately exploit his stuttering son for sympathy and take advantage of the good nature of others, or is he man who simply did what was right?

The film closes in a shadowy space, but sunlight and a bus about to depart can be glimpsed through an open door. Life beyond the door is tantalisingly close, a reminder of the fine line between what is and what could be.

A Hero is currently showing at Palace Cinemas.

An insight into an American iconoclast 40 years in the making

by Tim Kroenert

KURT VONNEGUT had a special relationship with time. The late American author was often maligned between the high-water marks of his success. As time passed, it was frequently young people discovering his prophetic, iconoclastic fiction that kept his writings relevant.

This would not surprise him. He knew on a cosmic scale that human beings are close together in time. Pressed by younger generations for answers to the world's plight, Vonnegut would quip, "Don't ask me, I just got here myself".

The title of documentary *Kurt Vonnegut: Unstuck in Time* calls back to Vonnegut's most endur-

ing novel, *Slaughterhouse-Five*. Its hero Billy Pilgrim was literally unstuck in time, experiencing the events of his life out of order. This conceit works as an allegory for the persistence of memory, and causal connections across time of past, present and future.

Director Robert Weide discovers the experience of being unstuck in time also applies to the process of filmmaking. His documentary has been 40 years in the making. Weide is as old today as Vonnegut was when they began.

Back then, Weide was one of those young people whose minds had been captured by the incisive wit of *Slaughterhouse-Five* and *Breakfast of Champions*. The two men became close friends as Weide filmed and interviewed Vonnegut

and members of his family over years.

For Weide, the Vonnegut film was a magnum opus he never knew how to finish. His own appearances are drawn from four separate interviews recorded over the course of a decade. Film allows those disparate "Weides" to be condensed into a single two-hour span.

The film permits such philosophical digressions. But it is the friendship between filmmaker and subject, and the insights Weide provides into Vonnegut the man, that are its heart. For example, it concludes with a supercut of Vonnegut wheezing his utterly charming laugh.

Vonnegut's adult daughters are among the interviewees, and



Kurt Vonnegut. Picture: Game-News24

provide fascinating insights into his flawed but profound presence in their family. We see how the

author appeared to those closest to him. It's not always an appealing sight.

Vonnegut died 14 years before the film was finished. But part of the point of the film and of Vonnegut's writing is that death is just a moment, and the sum of a human life cannot be conceived by presenting such moments in a straight line.

Certainly, that is true of Vonnegut, who is described here as the 20th century's Mark Twain. People will be reading his books – and perhaps watching this film – in 200 years. He will be as present to those readers as he is today to us, who by then will also be dead. So it goes on.

Screening at Nova.