

THE Melbourne Anglican

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Shoring up support

Tens of thousands of seafarers enter Melbourne's port each year. Far from home, they often spend months at sea working long hours, facing storms and pirates, with as little as eight hours shore leave in port. Anglican charity Mission to Seafarers supports these workers ashore, but it needs more volunteers to continue its services.

Story – P6.



P5
Push to consider 'Yes' vote

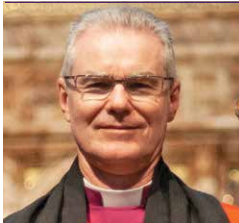


P11
Music draws singer to new home



P23
Tragedy in twisted artwork

Picture: Elspeth Kernebone



May you find peace instead of the crowd's outrage

■ Archbishop Philip Freier

While the memory of the second cricket Test at Lord's in the Ashes series has likely receded from our attention, we may still recall the controversy over the dismissal of English batter, Jonny Bairstow that seized media attention at the time.

As John Silvester wrote in *The Age* newspaper, "... this is the modern world where outrage is the new international currency. Where being mean is a substitute for being strong. Any fool can yell insults. Only the wise see both sides. Both British and Australian PMs have weighed into the Bairstow debate as if it actually matters. You would think they both would have more important things to do."

Unsurprisingly, the wisdom literature of the Bible contains many references to this same phenomenon. Our trajectory towards being outraged may seem modern but is in fact a well-trodden, even if unproductive, path. "Refrain from anger and forsake wrath. Do not fret – it only leads to evil" (Psalm 37:8). And, "Do not be quick to anger, for anger lodges in the bosom of fools" (Ecclesiastes 7:9). Both of these verses come to mind from the Old Testament as does

"Our trajectory towards being outraged may seem modern but is in fact a well-trodden, even if unproductive, path."

2 Timothy 2:23, among many other references in the New Testament, "Have nothing to do with stupid and senseless controversies; you know they breed quarrels."

Even though we are well warned about the unproductiveness of outrage it nonetheless seems very attractive, especially when it becomes a shared societal response. It can seem that the proposition is that, if something really matters it properly should call us to express that conviction with unattenuated intensity. Jesus receives that kind of response when the crowd calls out, "Crucify him". In his pastoral ministry the same response is seen in the accusation that he was "a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!" (Matthew 11:19). Jesus goes on to say in response to this accusation that, "Wisdom is vindicated by her deeds."

As John Silvester said, "Any fool can yell insults. Only the wise see both sides." Foolishness inevitably invites the contrast to wisdom. Foolishness is easily embraced but wisdom arises out of the disciplining, or as we might better say, the disciplining of the mind and the heart. John's gospel tells us that Jesus made the connection between discipleship and abiding in his word. "If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free" (John 8:31, 32). This is powerful and succinct language and, as Jesus elaborates later in the fourth gospel, at the very heart of the question of how his disciples live in the world. Speaking of his forthcoming death Jesus says, "I have said this to you, so that in me you may have peace. In the world you face persecution. But take courage; I have conquered the world" (John 16:33).

May you find the peace that is Jesus' gift to all who follow him. May you also be protected from the unproductive temptation to join in the responses of the "crowd" and instead abide in Jesus' love.

Philip Melbourne

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Vacant Appointments as of 20 July 2023:

St Eanswythe Altona/St Clement Altona Meadows; St Martin, Belgrave Heights; Parish of Brimbank; Christ Church, Brunswick (from April 2024); St Michael, North Carlton (from October 2023); St Catharine, Caulfield South; St Philip, Collingwood; St John the Divine, Croydon; Parish of Mount Dandenong; St Mark, Fitzroy (from October 2023); St Barnabas, Glen Waverley; Christ Church, Melton; St George Monbulk; St Peter's Murrumbidgee with Holy Nativity Hughesdale; St Aidan Noble Park; St Peter's, Ocean Grove with All Saints, Barwon Heads; St Aidan, Parkdale; Pascoe Vale-Oak Park; St Mark, Reservoir; St Mary, Sunbury; Christ Church, South Yarra; Parish of Upwey/Belgrave; St Thomas, Werribee; St John, Wantima South; St Matthew, Wheelers Hill; St Thomas, Winchelsea with Holy Trinity, Barrabool

Appointments:

D'ALTON, The Revd Dr Craig William, appointed Vicar, Christ Church, St Kilda, effective 2 August 2023
DELBIDGE, The Revd Stephen Geoffrey, appointed Chaplain and CPE Supervisor, Austin Health, effective 18 July 2023
FIRTH, The Revd Walter, appointed Intentional Interim Vicar, Christ Church Whittlesea with St Peter, Kinglake, effective 31 August 2023
FLYNN, The Revd Michael, appointed Vicar, St John Chrysostom, Brunswick, effective 23 August 2023
FOOTSON, The Revd Amy Ruth, appointed Assistant Curate, St Paul, Cathedral, Melbourne, effective 17 July 2023
MACPHERSON, The Venerable Peter, appointed extension, Vicar, St Alfred, Blackburn North, effective 18 September 2023
NAGY, The Revd Andrea, appointed Vicar, St Augustine, Mentone, effective 7 October 2023
SCOTT, The Revd Heather, appointed Vicar, St Faith, Burwood, effective 23 September 2023
SHARROCK, The Venerable Dianne Ruth, appointed extension, Vicar, St Stephen and St Mary, Mount Waverley, effective 10 October 2023
SMITH, The Revd Timothy Brian, appointed Vicar from Priest-in-Charge, St Paul, Inverleigh with St John, Bannockburn and Church of the Epiphany, Meredith, effective 18 July 2023
ROLFE, The Revd Dr Sharnie Annette, appointed Vicar, Holy Trinity, Hampton, effective 1 August 2023
WILLSHER, The Revd David Allan, appointed Area Dean, Deanery of Bellarine, effective 28 June 2023
ZHANG, The Revd Fan, appointed Assistant Curate, Parish of Jika Jika, Preston, effective 25 June 2023

Permission to Officiate:

BRUCE, The Revd Richard Leigh, appointed Permission to Officiate within the Diocese of Melbourne, effective 24 July 2023
RUTHERFORD, The Right Revd Canon Graeme Stanley, appointed Permission to Officiate within the Diocese of Melbourne, effective 28 June 2023

Resignations:

BRUCE, The Revd Richard Leigh, Associate Priest, St Hilary, Kew/North Balwyn and Mont Albert North, effective 23 July 2023
HEWITT, The Revd Ben, Assistant Priest, City on a Hill, Melbourne, effective 30 June 2023
URWIN OGS, The Right Revd Lindsay, Christ Church, Brunswick, effective 28 March 2024

Obituaries:

HUDSON, The Revd Wendy Jane, 2 July 2023

Clergy Moves



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



Nathan, Josie, Lucy and Lucy show off their activities at Going Bananas during July.

Picture: Elspeth Kernebone

Church unites to share Jesus' story

■ Elspeth Kernebone

Dozens of children have heard the gospel at an annual school holiday program at St Alfred's Blackburn North.

St Alfred's hosted about 200 children at "Going Bananas" in July, where they played games, did craft, and heard and talked about Bible stories.

Leaders say the event also mobilises the whole church for mission each year, and grows young leaders – many of whom have been through the program themselves just a few years earlier.

St Alfred's children and family's minister Ross Curnow said it was amazing how directly the program shared the gospel with children. He said participants engaged well with discussion and prayer, the intentional times where they encountered the gospel message.

But Mr Curnow said one of the program's biggest fruits was in St Alfred's people, as the whole church worked towards the mission, and teenage leaders grew through being part of a bigger mission. About 120 people of all ages volunteered at the

"We see our church mobilising for mission, and we see our own teenagers serving and developing a servant heart, and being part of a big mission."

Ross Curnow

program this year.

"It's a mission by our church being conducted through children and family's ministry. But it's not just a ministry from kids leaders, it's the whole church," Mr Curnow said.

"We see our church mobilising for mission, and we see our own teenagers serving and developing a servant heart, and being part of a big mission."

Children can come for any or all of the five mornings the program runs during the winter school holidays, for craft, activities, drama, prayer and discussion.

Mr Curnow said children from both church and non-church backgrounds came to the program, including children from churches other than St Alfred's.

He said before COVID-19 more non-church families came, but it felt like this was building up again as they re-established with new families.

Mr Curnow said leaders could see the children connecting, engaging and asking questions during the program, even though it could be hard to measure the long-term effects.

He said it was wonderful the children were receiving so much teaching directly from the Bible.

"[Children are] working the world out now, and they can be followers of Jesus now," Mr Curnow said.

"It's just really important that they hear it, and they hear it for what it is, and they understand it straight away.

"We've sowed those seeds ... It's just really important to tell them, and tell them what the real story is. Jesus came to the world and died for them, and they're part of that – they're part of the body as well."



Colleges and Universities of the Anglican Communion conference participants gathered in Melbourne during July.

Picture: Elspeth Kernebone

Community on colleges' curriculum

■ Elspeth Kernebone

International Anglican educators have explored how to rebuild community in theological colleges and universities post-pandemic at a recent Melbourne meeting.

Teaching academics met at the Colleges and Universities of the Anglican Communion 2023 conference in July, hosted by Trinity College and Janet Clarke Hall.

Trinity College Theological School dean the Reverend Canon Dr Bob Derrenbacker said returning to face-to-face learning had been a challenge for many post-pandemic,

but it was an important part of theological education.

Canon Derrenbacker said those in the West with an individualised, privatised view of society could particularly learn from fellow Anglicans in other parts of the world.

Delegates joined the conference from India, several African nations, North America, Japan, the Philippines, Jamaica, Barbados, New Zealand and Australia.

It's the first time the group has met in six years, after the 2020 conference was cancelled.

CUAC general secretary the Reverend Canon Jamie Callaway said delegates themselves were rediscovering community

after so long without a gathering, at which they connected with member institutions.

Canon Callaway said community was vitally important as a forming force for those studying at Anglican higher education institutions. He said many students returning to study weren't coming from the culture of being in community, and were sometimes timid about it. But he said formation as a person by a community was an important part of Anglican tertiary study.

"In Anglican higher education ... the individual comes together formed by community and discovers who they are and who they're called to be," he said.

Authors vie for Australian Christian Book of the Year title

■ Jenan Taylor

Well-known Melbourne Anglicans and self-published writers are among contenders for the 2023 SparkLit Christian Book of the Year.

The 10 shortlisted books range from essays about technology and parenting, to an exploration of the contribution of the arts in today's world.

They include works by Ridley College principal Dr Brian Rosner and lecturer Dr Michael Bird, as well as a Melbourne Anglican priest.

In *How to Find Yourself: Why Looking Inward is Not the Answer*, Dr Rosner unspools and responds to popular cultural notions of identity.

Dr Bird's book *Religious Freedom in a Secular Age* probes some of the limited and

more expansive ways of thinking about the issue of religious freedom.

Also shortlisted was *Bringing Forth Life* by Jodie McIver, exploring the spiritual significance of pregnancy, birth and early motherhood.

The Future is Bivocational by Perth-based Baptist pastor Andrew Hamilton made the list too. It argues that having more than one occupation can enhance a person's ability to provide Christian ministry and mission.

Also capturing the judges' attention was *Critical Biblical Theory*. In it, Monash University lecturer Christopher Watkin evaluates how the Bible helps us makes sense of our times.

St Stephen's Richmond priest Michael Wood's work *Practicing Peace* has also been nominated. It examines ways to make

a positive difference through theology, reflection and action.

SparkLit national director Michael Collie said 102 books were submitted for consideration for the 2023 awards. He said relevance and freshness of the writing were the primary criteria.

"The books are judged by their originality and how well they meet a need for Christian writing in Australia," he said.

No fiction works made the shortlist, but Mr Collie said he looked forward to a novel one day winning an Australian Christian Book of the Year award.

The winner will be revealed on Thursday 31 August, along with the Young Australian Christian Writer and Australian Christian Teen Writer awards.

Last year's award went to Tony Rinaudo for *The Forest Underground: Hope for a Planet in Crisis*.



'Yes' nudge from national Church body

■ Maya Pilbrow

An Anglican Church of Australia body has urged all citizens to consider supporting the proposed Voice to Parliament in the upcoming referendum.

The General Synod Standing Committee encouraged parish ministers to hold conversations about the upcoming referendum on constitutional recognition in an April resolution.

The resolution welcomed the conversation about the establishment of a First Nations Voice in the constitution, saying it was an essential step in reconciliation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders.

It resolved to commit to reconciliation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, including hearing their voices.

NATSIAC member the Reverend Canon Glenn Loughrey said the recent resolution continued the church's support for a constitutionally recognised Indigenous Voice.

Mr Loughrey said the church had previously affirmed the Uluru Statement from the Heart but was now building on the processes and aspirations outlined in the statement.

The Uluru Statement from the Heart calls for the establishment of a First Nations Voice enshrined in the Constitution.

"If we feel the Statement from the Heart



Picture: iStock

is worthy of support, then we really have to support the elements that make up that statement," he said.

Mr Loughrey said the next step would be for church leaders to publicly support the Voice.

"We do now need leadership to say very clearly what the vision is," he said.

The standing committee made the resolution in April and sent a memo to diocesan bishops in June.

General Synod general secretary Anne Hywood advised bishops to share the committee's resolution within their dioceses. Ms Hywood said the Synod Public Affairs Commission and the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Anglican Council were preparing resources on the Voice for Anglican parishes, schools and organisations.

Mr Loughrey said he agreed with the NATSIAC statement on the Voice released earlier this year, which framed supporting the Voice as a question of justice and fairness.

Justice organisation Common Grace national director Gershon Nimbalker abiding by Jesus values and principles meant listening to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and acknowledging the forms of justice and reconciliation they supported. He said Jesus' values encouraged love and reconciliation and pushed Christians to recognise the inherent worth in all people.

The Melbourne diocese Reconciliation Working Group has also called on Anglicans and the wider community to support the Voice to Parliament, and Statement from the Heart. Two First Nations leaders at St Paul's Cathedral have also designed a banner in support of the Voice, due to be hung on the south west spire in late July.

Safe space for First Nations' people

■ Jenan Taylor

A new First Nations' gathering place aims to help strengthen the Aboriginal community in Melbourne's east.

The Murnong First Peoples' Gathering Place launched near St Oswald's Glen Iris during NAIDOC week.

Wiradjuri man and founding member the Reverend Canon Glenn Loughrey said the centre would connect Indigenous people with each other, and provide safe wellbeing, cultural and education services and activities to help support their mental health.

Mr Loughrey said the area's Aboriginal community members decided to create the place because there were several Indigenous families in local schools, and a new public housing estate was being finished nearby.

When the Boroondara council identified St Oswald's Wominjeka reconciliation garden as a significant cultural spot in the area, the community decided that near that location was a prime spot for the venue, he said.

Australians urged to respect elders as they look to future

■ Jenan Taylor

Indigenous leaders have urged Australians to embrace what First Peoples can teach them as they look to the country's future, speaking during NAIDOC week.

National Aboriginal Bishop Chris McLeod said Australians could learn much from Indigenous elders many of whom embodied deep cultural wisdom and traditions.

Christian organisation Common Grace said it was important that Australians considered the past, how they got to where they were today, and who came before, as they looked to where they wanted to go.

It came ahead of NAIDOC week celebrations with its For our Elders theme.

Bishop McLeod said respect

for elders was one of the greatest traditions First Nations people had given to Australia, because elders had much to teach.

Gomeri woman and Common Grace Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Justice coordinator Bianca Manning said this year's NAIDOC theme was a reminder to not forget those who paved the way so others could have the opportunities today.

Ms Manning said particularly in the lead up to a referendum for an Indigenous Voice to Parliament, she would be reflecting on the contributions of Aboriginal leaders and activists. She urged Christians to read and reflect on Job 12:12 "Is not wisdom found among the aged, does not life bring understanding."

NAIDOC week took place from 2-9 July.



Mission to Seafarers workers Ben Schroeder and the Reverend Inni Punay prepare for a ship visit.

Picture: Elspeth Kernebone

Help needed for seafarers' support

■ Jenan Taylor

A seafarer-support charity is calling for more volunteers as demand for services increases from maritime workers docked in Melbourne's ports.

Mission to Seafarers' Melbourne centre supports seafarers through hospitality, a ship visiting program, and shuttle buses to facilitate shore leave. About 60,000 of these workers visit Melbourne each year.

But mission staff say it will be impossible to visit all the ships they want to without more volunteers.

Mission chief executive Neil James said the centre needed more volunteers, as many fell away during COVID-19 restrictions. Mr James said the mission relied on volunteers to meet the increased demands of seafarers in an affordable way.

He said workers on ships faced a great deal of hardship every day, while performing an essential role in supplying Australians with 90 per cent of their personal, medical and household needs.

Mr James said hardships included low pay, heavy workloads, periods of more than nine months away from their families, and limited shore leave. They also faced dangerous working conditions, including extreme weather and the risk of attack from pirates.

Mr James said that led to significant

mental health and welfare issues for many seafarers.

He said the COVID pandemic exacerbated the workers' vulnerabilities because most were unable to leave their ships, for more than a year in some cases.

This also affected mission's ability to help them, because its volunteers fell away, and few seafarers were able to use the Melbourne centre.

"If there are 157 ships a month coming to Melbourne, we'd probably only be able to visit 57."

Onofre Punay

Mr James said the centre's shuttle bus services reduced to zero, and the ship visiting team went from a handful of volunteers and pastoral workers to a full-time and a part-time chaplain only.

But now the pandemic restrictions had lifted, about 30 volunteers were needed to help cover the mission's programs, he said.

Mr James said the seafarers' appetite for shore leave and for engaging with people had increased since they were able to leave their ships again.

He said the Melbourne mission's bus

services were now averaging 20 trips a day and the centre was being used by about 35 workers daily.

Every day its chaplains received calls from four to five ships for in-person support for workers unable to get to shore, Mr James said.

Anglican chaplain the Reverend Onofre Punay said it was impossible to get around to all the ships they needed or wanted to see without more volunteers.

"If there are 157 ships a month coming to Melbourne, we'd probably only be able to visit 57," Mr Punay said.

He said some visits could take two hours, and accessing ship boarding permission or transport to ships could be tricky, because of the highly regulated environment in the port.

Mr Punay said although most seafarers in Melbourne were from the Philippines, more international crews including those from Burma were also passing through.

He said that increased the need for translation services, particularly in cases where a crew member was unwell or injured and needed further assistance.

Mr James said he hoped Anglicans would consider donating to help support seafarers, but he also hoped they would reach out to volunteer.

For more information, please email seasunday@missiontoseafarers.com.au.

Tough times drive knitted outreach

■ Maya Pilbrow

Longbeach Anglican parish is helping hundreds of people stay warm this winter as energy prices skyrocket.

The parish has taken part in a Winter Warmer program, delivering cold weather clothes and supplies to vulnerable families in Melbourne's south-east.

Parishioner Dale Sosbey said the program developed after church members noticed people in the community struggling to supply what their families needed for winter.

The Winter Warmer team coordinates with local schools to identify vulnerable families who then receive a hamper with clothing and blankets, much of which are knitted by volunteers.

Mrs Sosbey said this year the church had managed to deliver hampers to 116 families.

This winter will be particularly hard on Australian families trying to stay warm, with the cost-of-living crisis including rising energy costs.

Australian Energy Council chief executive Sarah McNamara said rising wholesale prices for gas and electricity meant retailers were unable to absorb the increased costs, so consumers ended up paying higher prices.

An AEC spokesperson said rising wholesale energy costs were the result of many things including the war in Ukraine, fewer coal plants and a lack of gas generators to



Longbeach Anglican is helping keep families warm this winter.
Picture: supplied

meet higher demand.

Gas prices rose 26.2 per cent over the past 12 months to the March quarter of this year according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

Energy Consumers Australia interim chief executive Jacqueline Crawshaw said energy costs were forecast to rise between 20 to 30 per cent across the country over the coming

months. She said 52 per cent of households were more concerned now than a year ago over being able to pay their energy bills.

Mrs Sosbey said the number of families reached through the Winter Warmer program had shot up over the last few years.

"We've had a lot of people knitting hats, scarves, socks, gloves. Even knitted rugs," she said.

More newly homeless seeking shelter in outer fringes

■ Jenan Taylor

People who have never been homeless before are seeking aid from temporary church shelters in outer Melbourne during mounting hardship.

Yarra Valley and Sunbury Stable One winter shelter network churches say a growing number of their clients have never experienced chronic homelessness before.

St John's Healesville member and Stable One managing director Jenny Willetts said many new guests at the Yarra Valley winter shelter had struggled with circumstances such as relationship breakdowns, job loss and medical conditions.

Ms Willetts said accelerating interest rates, rent and other living costs combined with these problems pushed them into homelessness. She said they were seeing people who couldn't find anywhere to live

that they could afford.

"A couple came to us because they missed a payment and got evicted. Another person has a dog, and can't afford accommodation. He can't go to work because he can't leave the dog in the car all day and sleep in a church at night," she said.

Sunbury Winter Shelter coordinator Di Smale said trends were similar in her area. Ms Smale said some guests reported going from relatively comfortable lives to couch surfing in a short time.

One person lost their house after a family member's death left them unable to meet payments, she said.

Australian Bureau of Statistics data from 2021 estimated 122,000 people in Australia were experiencing homelessness each night.

It also showed that Victoria had the second highest homelessness rate among the states and territories.

Australian Institute of Health and Welfare analysis found financial hardship, family and domestic violence, and the housing crisis were the top three reasons people sought homelessness assistance in Victoria.

Ms Smale said demand had been patchy, creating challenges with volunteer availability and ability to meet some guests' needs. She said between one and seven people had used the temporary accommodation service on the nights it operated since it opened on 1 June.

Ms Willetts said demand was also low at the Yarra Valley shelter this winter. She said it was hard to gauge how many people would use the service because it was difficult to map the need in the outer areas.

"Where we are in the valley, there's a lot of rough sleepers who camp out," she said. "It's not that they're not here. It's just that they're not visible," Ms Willetts said.

Bittersweet honour for hospital carer

■ Jenan Taylor

A Melbourne hospital chaplain has received recognition for her outstanding individual contribution as a spiritual carer.

But she said it was a bittersweet achievement because of uncertainty about the future.

Hospital chaplain the Reverend Melanie Moore received the Best of Care award at the recent Spiritual Care Australia awards.

Ms Moore said it was a wonderful validation of spiritual care work, but the honour was bittersweet because of the Melbourne diocese's decision to cease funding the health chaplaincy program.

She is among nine healthcare chaplains whose futures are hazy because of the cuts which take effect at the end of 2023.

Ms Moore said with just a few months left in her role, winning the award had left her wondering at what God's plan was.

A pastoral carer at the Northern Hospital in Epping for 17 years, Ms Moore said the



The Reverend Melanie Moore (centre) and Northern Health spiritual care team members.

Picture: supplied

feedback she received about her win from staff including medical, allied health and social work employees, was unexpected and especially encouraging.

"It's wonderful to hear how they see my role, that it is my heart beat to be out in the critical care space where I can offer Jesus' love, care and compassion when people are at

their most vulnerable and at the end of life," she said.

Northern Hospital chaplaincy coordinator Natalia Dewiyani said Ms Moore was especially known for her excellent work with palliative care patients, but was a positive presence in which ever ward she was needed.

"She gives it her all, and we have been very lucky to have her

knowledge and wisdom," Ms Dewiyani said.

The Royal Melbourne Hospital chaplaincy team, of which the Reverend Dawn Treloar is a member won the national Spiritual Care Australia Best of Care team award.

Ms Treloar said it was a pleasing recognition for the RMH team.

Training to help clergy meet needs of growing group

■ Jenan Taylor

Melbourne clergy will have the chance to learn how to provide dementia-specific worship services at an upcoming seminar.

Ministry to those living with Dementia workshop is part of a series of training sessions to equip clergy in hospitals and aged care facilities for their roles.

Diocese's health chaplaincy coordinator the Reverend Dawn Treloar said it would enable clergy to feel more comfortable in dementia care and respond to the needs of the growing number of people with dementia.

Workshop presenter and dementia care specialist the Reverend Samantha Lo said ministry to people with dementia was a massive opportunity for the church, but often clergy were fearful because they were unsure of what to do.

She said the specialist ministry would

also send a positive and powerful message to families and loved ones about how the Church viewed and treated their person with dementia.

Ms Lo said her workshop presentation would include an array of practical approaches for clergy.

These ranged from knowing what to do if someone was ill, to how to order a service so it was more interactive, and awareness of what could trigger negative emotional responses in people with dementia.

Ms Lo said these people usually found it difficult to attend worship services, and were often unintentionally excluded from them.

She said there could be long periods of time between church services in residential facilities and those with dementia regularly ended up missing out.

Ms Lo said clergy didn't deliberately want to exclude people with the disease but usually didn't include them because they

assumed everything might be beyond them.

"I've seen people with dementia sing in the choir. They help in the kitchen; they dry the dishes after morning tea. They can be on the door welcome. They can do the Bible readings, even if it means the pastor or someone has to go up to the lectern with them for the reading," Ms Lo said.

"So often, we think of leading in worship as some sort of performance. That automatically excludes people who might get stage fright, or who might stumble on their words, or who might have dementia and might need a hand. We have to include people and encourage them to do everything they can still do. We have to not be horrified at this imperfection. It's okay."

The workshop will take place on 7 August from 11am-12.30pm at St Paul's Cathedral. For more information and to book, contact Dawn Treloar at dtreloar@melbourneanglican.org.au.



Peni Naros, the Ni-Vanuatu group and other singers at the Stawell gospel concert.

Picture: supplied.

Islanders' songs bring churches life

■ Jenan Taylor

Peni Naros remembers scanning the vast green and brown land on the day he arrived in Australia.

Travelling from Melbourne to Stawell, he was looking everywhere for a church, he could attend.

A devout Christian, faith has always been important to Mr Naros, as it is to many of his fellow Ni-Vanuatu workers who come to Australia for work.

Many churches and faith-based organisations provide the temporary workers with connections and pastoral care to help ease them into life in regional Victoria and outer Melbourne.

For Mr Naros and his friends, it has been a reciprocal relationship. They are determined to be an uplifting presence in the communities where they have been placed, and in their churches.

More than 38,000 Pacific and Timorese people work in Australia's regional areas, in fields where labour can be hard to find.

An abattoir worker in Stawell, Mr Naros and some of his colleagues have been in Australia for three years. Many were unable to go back home to Vanuatu because of COVID.

The longed for their families, friends and island home. But they also longed for some of their faith traditions, such as music ministry.

So, the Ni-Vanuatu workers joined a Stawell chapter of the Victorian Adventist Wantok church, and became involved with its choir to try and feel more at home.

Mr Naros said getting back into group singing enabled them to help newer work

teams arriving from Vanuatu settle in.

"We knew hearing the music they loved would revive them, so after work we'd put spiritual music on in the background and then all sing together," Mr Naros said.

"The messages of the songs made us feel closer to God. It made us want to present that in other places too."

Another Ni-Vanuatu faith tradition involves helping community members who need a hand, especially the elderly.

Mr Naros said this usually meant helping people clean up their houses or yards. This also gave group with the chance to try music ministry as a Ni-Vanuatu ensemble.

After finishing each clean up, Mr Naros and his friends would assemble to sing their host hymns.

He said people were moved to tears in many instances.

At other times, some would be rowdy, swigging beers, smoking and scathing. But then, some of them went quiet as they sung, so the group knew the Spirit was working in them.

Stawell Anglican parish's former priest-in-charge the Reverend Heather Scott came to know the Ni-Vanuatu workers through their community gestures, like many others in the town.

Ms Scott said the group helped whoever had a need, quickly breaking down barriers in the community through their generosity.

"They don't just seek out Christians. They go to whoever has a need. This is what we're all meant to be about – caring for others around us," Ms Scott said.

"Sometimes in a rural community, there's a barrier, because people are different, and it can take long time to break down

that barrier. But they've broken them very quickly because they have been so generous."

The Vanuatu workers wanted to lift local spirits after COVID restrictions, so they organised a gospel music night inviting people from multiple churches.

Since then they been invited to sing at various churches and perform at a range of events, including a fundraiser for Vanuatu after a category five cyclone hit the country.

Earlier this year, the Anglican parish asked Mr Naros and his friends to participate in a fundraiser for survivors of the Türkiye and Syrian earthquakes.

Ms Scott said the Ni-Vanuatu performance enlivened the day, bringing people who wouldn't usually attend church to the fundraiser.

"People were relaxed, getting along. Children were running around. I loved that we used this sacred space for something that reached out to the community," Ms Scott said.

Likewise, Stawell Seventh Day Adventist treasurer Denise Sumper said the Ni-Vanuatu men bring their music with them and lift the service when they attend services.

Mr Naros had heard of a Ni-Vanuatu group in Moe doing something similar in churches.

He expects to finish his work contract and go home in January next year.

But for now, he is delighted that many people, churches and organisations associate his Ni-Vanuatu group with music.

"We are really happy with what we are doing now for the Lord," Mr Naros said. "It is helping us spiritually."

Faithful farewell longstanding church

■ Jenan Taylor

Members of an outer west parish have lost their place of worship, but kept their faith community after their church was deconsecrated.

St Paul's Deans Marsh closed in June after 139 years. But its congregation's values live on in the strong community bonds in that locality.

One of St Paul's last three members Frances Tyrer said the church was still there because of the close-knit sense of community its once substantial congregation fostered in Deans Marsh.

Ms Tyrer said the church had been an active part of the school community, and that its ladies' guilds had also provided catering for functions and held fetes and participated at harvest festivals, among other things.

She said St Paul's became Deans Marsh's only remaining place of worship after Methodist and Presbyterian churches closed.

Ms Tyrer said the sense of church community was so strong no one ever intentionally left St Paul's, only leaving if they moved away or died.

But she said services fell from weekly to

fortnightly to monthly in the past six years. The church ran its final worship service in 2019.

Ms Tyrer said the Melbourne diocese's decision to close St Paul's was disappointing but understandable.

"There weren't new people coming to it. That's what happens in rural towns, so it just wasn't viable for it to continue."

Frances Tyrer

"The church members had by then got to their 70s, 80s, 90s and older, and there weren't new people coming to it. That's what happens in rural towns, it just wasn't viable for it to continue," Ms Tyrer said.

Winchelsea Parish locum the Reverend Philip Jacobson said the deconsecration process had considered the history of the congregants, and a time frame that allowed them to come to terms with what was going to happen had been critical.

He said the deconsecration service

itself was developed to involve the parishioners. Ms Tyrer played the hymns and read the intercessions, while one of the other members did further readings.

Mr Jacobson said the sermon had been a key part of helping people see how their community might go on.

He said Bishop Brad Billings' sermon carefully emphasised that although church was traditionally linked to a building, the church was not the building.

Mr Jacobson said despite St Paul's only having three congregants, 36 people came for the final service.

"Even though they were not all St Paul's church-goers, they still have a connection, and that connection was also invoked during the service," he said.

Mr Jacobson said those parishioners who had decided to travel out of Deans Marsh to join the larger congregation at St Thomas' Winchelsea appeared to be settling in with ease.

"It's that's part of being a country congregation. They're still within quite often the same friendship cohort, same interest cohort, so it wasn't a traumatic impact to move from one church to the other," Mr Jacobson said.



St Paul's Deans Marsh parishioners and community on deconsecration day. Picture: supplied



Alexandra Amerides shows off the tattoos on their hands that spell out the gender-neutral pronouns they/them.

Picture: supplied.

Transcendent song brings trans, non-binary performer to Anglican home

■ Maya Pilbrow

Alexandra Amerides remembers attending church with their grandparents as a child. One thing they noticed about Greek Orthodox services was the music, Byzantine chants performed by groups of men. The second thing they noticed was the emphasis on gender.

Mx Amerides, who uses they/them pronouns, realised men and women were given very different roles. The men would sing and perform the liturgy while the women sat quietly.

No one could give the young Mx Amerides a good answer to why this gender distinction was so strong.

As a teen, Mx Amerides went to church less and less frequently. They grew bored with the long services in Ancient Greek, only attending for holidays such as Easter and for family events.

Now a professional opera singer with the Australian Contemporary Opera Company, Mx Amerides loved the rich history of Christian musical traditions.

But it took time for them to find their

“[The music] was completely different to anything I’d ever experienced ... [It was] transcendent.”

Alexandra Amerides

way back to church.

In hindsight, this was no surprise. Opera, liturgy and gender expression all have some aspect of performance, which appealed to the performer in Mx Amerides.

These days they sing with the choir at St John’s East Malvern. But it wasn’t until a chance encounter with the Trinity College choir evensong that they first experienced Anglican worship.

“It was completely different to anything I’d ever experienced,” they said. “[It was] transcendent.”

Beautiful music was certainly part of St John’s appeal, but Mx Amerides also felt

a sense of welcome.

People at the parish have been eager to learn more about gender diversity and have caught on quickly to using gender-neutral pronouns.

For Mx Amerides, an open and accepting spiritual home is something they never thought they’d be able to find.

On the *Everyday Saints* podcast, Mx Amerides shares their experiences exploring both their faith and gender identity.

This journey has led them to learn more about the history of gender-nonconforming individuals within the church. It’s also made them feel strongly about those who try to police the faiths and beliefs of others.

To those who try to reject or expel individuals from their church communities based on gender and sexual orientation, Mx Amerides has one thing to say:

“I don’t think you are doing religion right.”

Everyday Saints is a podcast from *The Melbourne Anglican* which features the faith stories of those from Melbourne and beyond.

Mission leaders' work earns praise

■ Dorothy Lee

The executive director of Australia's Anglican Board of Mission has received the Cross of St Augustine for Services to the Anglican Communion.

The Reverend Dr John Deane was recently awarded the Lambeth Award from the Archbishop of Canterbury.

This merit award is given by the Archbishop of Canterbury for major contributions to the life and work of the international Anglican Communion.

The award's citation describes Dr Deane's outstanding leadership in the Communion in the area of holistic mission, including leading the Anglican Board of Mission for more than 20 years and playing a leading catalytic role in the formation of the Anglican Alliance.

Dr Deane has been the executive direction of ABM in Australia since 2008. Although he is now based in Sydney, Dr Deane has close associations with Melbourne where he was ordained in 1990.

Before he moved to Sydney in 1997 to work for ABM, he ministered in several Melbourne parishes and was Registrar of Trinity College Theological School, where he had studied for the priesthood.

In 2020 he gained a PhD from the University of Divinity for his thesis on the Book of Revelation and its missiology, titled *The New Song, the New Creation and the New City: The Missional Perspective of Revelation*.

Dr Deane's work at ABM is grounded in the Five Marks of Mission of the Anglican Communion, first released in 1984 by the



The Reverend Dr John Deane with Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby. Picture: The Reverend Rachel Carnegie

Anglican Consultative Council. These include evangelism (proclaiming the kingdom and nurturing new believers), loving service, the transformation of unjust social structures and the renewal of the earth.

Dr Deane is both a fine New Testament scholar with a broad understanding of mission in Scripture and a practitioner of mission in his daily life through his work with ABM.

Australian Primate Archbishop Geoffrey Smith said of his award: "I join with many others in congratulating John on the award of the Cross of St Augustine. In his more than 25 years working with ABM John has demonstrated a consistent commitment to the mission of God."

The Cross of St Augustine award was created by Archbishop Michael Ramsay in 1965. The award is named after St Augustine,

the first Archbishop of Canterbury, who evangelised England in the late sixth and early seventh centuries.

Another associate of Melbourne, the Reverend Canon John Kafwanka Kaoma also received the Cross of St Augustine, for his outstanding leadership in the Anglican Communion. Canon Kafwanka is a former director for mission of the Anglican Consultative Council. He studied in Melbourne at both Ridley and Trinity Colleges as part of his theological education and now ministers in London.

More information on John Deane and the ABM is available at abmission.org.

Information on the Anglican Alliance is available at anglicanalliance.org.

The Reverend Professor Dorothy Lee was co-supervisor of Dr Deane's PhD, with the Reverend Dr Fergus King, both of Trinity College, University of Divinity.

New start for Geelong church

■ Phillip Swaine

After a lengthy vacancy and wonderful ministry by acting vicar Canon Barry Smith, the Anglican Parish of Christ Church, Geelong welcomed its new vicar Father Lankiri Thaba an institution and commissioning service on 18 July 2023.

Coming from the Church of the Resurrection, Bonteheuvel, in Cape Town South Africa, Father Lankiri has moved to Geelong with his wife and two of his sons and is settling into life in Australia. Parishioners and friends warmly welcomed Father Lankiri and his family and look forward to his ministry.



St Matthew's Olinda members celebrated the church's 120th anniversary in July.



Byrdsong performs at All Saints' Rosebud.

Picture: supplied

Byrdsong brings beautiful music to Rosebud parish

■ Ken Barelli

A Peninsula choir has provided music for an Evensong from the Book of Common Prayer taking place at all Saints' Anglican Church in Rosebud.

The Reverend Dr Garry Deverell preached at the 18 June service, with a message that was especially apposite with the upcoming referendum for the Voice to Parliament.

The music was provided by a choir formed from the Parishes of the Southern Mornington Peninsula: St Mark's

Balnarring, St John's Flinders, St George's Red Hill, St Mark's Dromana, All Saints' Rosebud, St Andrew's Rye and St John's Sorrento.

This choir, known as Byrdsong (a play on the name of the late-Renaissance composer William Byrd), was formed some years ago on the initiative of the Reverend Christine Barren. It started in Flinders-Balnarring but has become so popular that it has expanded to include all the Anglican churches in the Southern Peninsula.

Byrdsong aims to conduct about four Evensong services each year rotating

through the participating churches. It also conducts carol services for Advent and Christmas.

While worship is Byrdsong's raison d'être, it offers an opportunity for choristers to sing together and for congregations to praise God through the beauty of music. The music is of course chosen for the lectionary but often gives the musicians an opportunity to sing repertoire beyond a church choir.

For details, contact Ken Barelli at ken.barelli@bigpond.com.

Joyful celebration of 12 decades at Olinda's heart

■ Jenan Taylor

A Mount Dandenong church is celebrating 120 years as the heart of its community.

Villagers built St Matthew's Olinda in 1903 after two years worshipping from a small cottage, where they sat on planks set on raspberry buckets.

But despite strong support for the church, it still struggles to attract new members.

St Matthew's Olinda councillor Peter Adams said the church was historically regarded as the village centre because it reflected the atmosphere of its small semi-rural locality.

Mr Adams said a parish survey five years ago found that residents, the council and Parks Victoria still saw the church that way.

The church hall in particular has a history as the social

centre of the village, providing activities and community services.

But Mr Adams said attracting new people to the church was a challenge because of the area's small population, and families' and young people's other interests.

Mr Adams said St Matthew's did reach the community through its weekly exercise class, and an autumn fair.

"These events bring people on to the church property and then we try to establish a relationship with them," he said.

Mr Adams said St Matthew's future goals included building after school and holiday programs, restarting a playgroup, and creating welcome packs about the parish for new residents.

He said the church commemorated the milestone with a lunch on Sunday 9 July, but it would be both joyful and sad, as they would be farewelling vicar Andrew Smith.



Picture: supplied

Solutions on the ground are needed

As Christians, we are all concerned about justice for all people in Australia.

It just happens that some of us are not convinced that the proposed Voice to Parliament will achieve what it seems to be about. Firstly, what is the definition of Aboriginality? At present, for Australians whose only connection to an Aboriginal person is several generations ago self-identifying is enough.

The second question is, who is the Voice representing? We do not have a sensible definition of what it is to be Aboriginal. No amount of research is providing me and others with any idea of how the Voice will work. One minute we are told it will be advice only. The next minute are told it is going to change Australia dramatically. How?

We are aware of the issues in some Aboriginal communities, for example, the serious riots at Wadeye last year, of which there was very little media coverage. Many of the Indigenous proponents of the Voice have been involved in Aboriginal advisory positions for some time, yet many of the issues still exist.

Aboriginal people are many voices,

and clan and tribal connections are still strong, especially in remote areas. The solutions need to be made on the ground, in the communities, and not a Voice to the Parliament in Canberra.

It is a pity that by putting recognition of Aboriginal people in the form of the Voice, there is now not an opportunity to support their recognition in a preamble.

Margery Renwick
Brighton

Kings won't save us

I thought *A constitutional monarchy may prevent a descent into despotism* (June 2023) missed the biblical point, so to speak.

Michael Bird has not included what God seemed to think about the idea of regal oversight in 1 Samuel 8:10-18 where all the bad ideas for having a king are listed.

Having a king doesn't ensure the system doesn't become despotic. Witness the origin of our own brand of faith. Not such a saintly origin at all!

Elaine Furniss
Hawthorn East

ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Who is Anglican?

The *Who is Anglican* article is interesting in its reference to a text born in the context of the American Revolution. This context leaves it advocating an Episcopal Church rather than an Anglican Church, for surely to be an Anglican Church involves official relationships with the Church of England. Without such a relationship to Canterbury no Episcopal Church can claim to be Anglican – even if it says an enthusiastic “Yes” to the principle ideas in *The Church Idea*. Let's face it, the Lutheran Church is an Episcopal Church that would endorse those four ideas – but they are not Anglican.

John Clapton

Your say is a forum for respectful dialogue about material published in *The Melbourne Anglican*, or issues affecting the church or society. Email letters to editor@melbourneanglican.org.au.

Letters must be less than 250 words, and include your full name, address and phone number for identity verification. They may be edited for clarity, length and grammar.



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To decolonise, the church must recognise Indigenous leaders' abilities

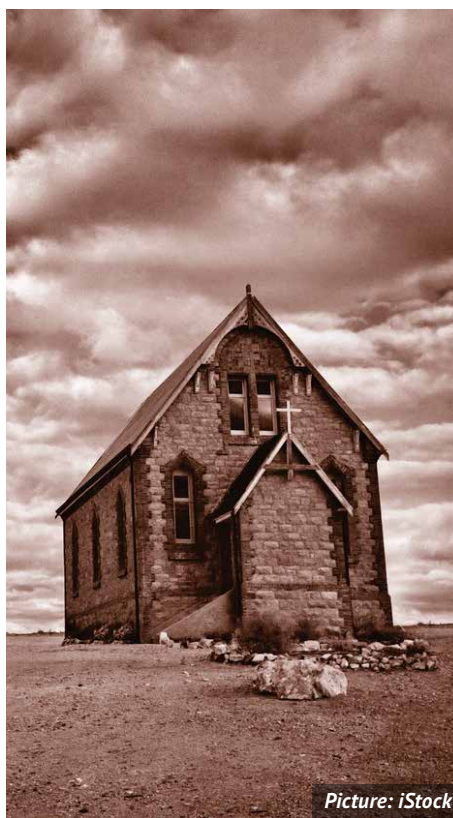
■ Anne Pattel-Gray

I have been asked to write an article on what decolonising the church would look like in practice. This could take many forms as there are many steps we could take. Here, I will consider some we Christians might think about.

The decolonising process Indigenous theologians, Church leaders and Christian community are calling for is to address exclusion and marginalisation – where we find ourselves on the periphery of church structures. So, a good place to start would be to move the Indigenous Church bodies from the periphery to the centre, recognise our leadership, and value our theological insights and the significant cultural contribution we can bring to the church.

Australia's Christian community is multi-cultural, and yet this isn't reflected within the upper levels of leadership of the church: the decision makers, executives and senior clergy. These are still predominately white men and women. There may be a sprinkling of ethnic leaders but certainly no Indigenous leaders in non-Indigenous positions. I believe there is an unspoken belief that Indigenous Christians are unable to provide leadership to the whole church as we lack capability, education, and opportunity. I have been told by various leaders that Indigenous people are incapable of providing leadership to the broader church, that Indigenous people are best to just provide leadership to their own people. This is very disappointing. Many Indigenous leaders bring theological knowledge, sound business acumen, decolonising processes, and transformative practices. These abilities would enhance the Christian faith and build greater relationships, moving us towards a more just and egalitarian Christian community where all people are valued, respected, and embraced. As Galatians 3:28 reminds us, "There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus." How fabulous if this were only true. While Indigenous people remain ostracised, oppressed, and confined to a life of poverty and high incarceration there can be no oneness in Christ.

So, will there ever be an Indigenous person appointed as the Primate of Australia? Will we have more than one national Indigenous Bishop, or an Indigenous



Picture: iStock

General Secretary of the General Synod, and Indigenous appointments on executive committees at the national and state levels? When will Indigenous people be appointed to national and state executive positions within the church? To do so would be a movement forward on decolonising and more importantly a further step towards reconciliation.

Theological education within Australia for Indigenous people has also been a racist system of exclusion. Indigenous Christians have been restrained to an inferior version of the education mainline churches offer. Sadly, many First Nations people had no formal education, some had limited primary education, and there was no financial assistance for secondary education scholarships, let alone university study. Most could only access theological education through Vocational Education and Training establishments. Systemic racism was built into these systems, as with other theological education systems. Most staff at VETs were white, which meant the continuing biblical and theological colonisation of Indigenous people under the guise of ministry training.

In 2022 the University of Divinity established the School of Indigenous Studies, which began the process of decolonising

theological education. It opened the doors for Indigenous Christians to access academic theological education.

The decolonising process is at the heart of our theological education at the School of Indigenous Studies. The school is staffed by Indigenous academics, the curriculum is Indigenous, with an Indigenous pedagogy, founded on Indigenous knowledge and worldview. Part of its purpose is to facilitate spiritual inclusion where historically there was injustice and inequality in tertiary education. It includes social, political, and economic engagement for Indigenous people and recognises sovereignty. The school also engages with non-Indigenous people to educate them on Indigenous knowledges.

This pivotal shift in theological education recognises the capabilities of Indigenous church leaders and theologians. It gives us a position of leadership, including a seat at the decision-making table where we can drive our future, and to influence and shape theological education.

Reparations are another critical part of decolonising the church, as this is where Indigenous land is given back, or Indigenous peoples are compensated for its theft. Colonial invaders stole this land from the Indigenous peoples and the collusion between the Australian government and churches has given churches great wealth, power, and privilege. It is not enough to say "Sorry". It is important for Australian churches to act on delivering justice to Indigenous Christians. Now is the time for "Voice", "Truth-Telling", and "Treaty". And now is the time for churches to atone for the sins of their forebearers and pay reparations to the Indigenous churches and nations for the theft of land, for slavery, cultural genocide, and the stolen generations.

We Christians are given a mandate by God to be for Christ ambassadors for reconciliation in 2 Corinthians 5. This places a great responsibility on us to further reconciliation in this country, to right the wrongs of our past and to build the foundations for justice. Our shared history is one that reflects our courage and boldness to cut a new path towards justice and a shared relationship of respect, commitment, and integrity.

Anne Pattel-Gray is Professor of Indigenous Studies and head of the School of Indigenous Studies at the University of Divinity.



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We thank God for Bishop Perry, and for progress in ecumenical relations

■ Peter Adam

Last year we celebrated the 175th anniversary of the foundation of both the Anglican and the Roman Catholic dioceses of Melbourne. We often heard recounted the story of the rudeness of Bishop Perry, first Bishop of Melbourne, to Dr Geoghegan, the local Roman Catholic priest.

On his arrival in 1848, Bishop Perry declined to meet with Geoghegan. Perry was not at home when he called, so did not “shut the door in his face”, as diarist Georgiana McCrae recorded. Perry wrote to Geoghegan, saying that because of their doctrinal differences, any meeting “could only be an occasion of pain rather than pleasure”.

Not a happy story! But is it fair to judge a person without knowing their historical context? Do we not need more than one story? These are issues relevant to understanding other people in general, and especially those in another cultural or historical context.

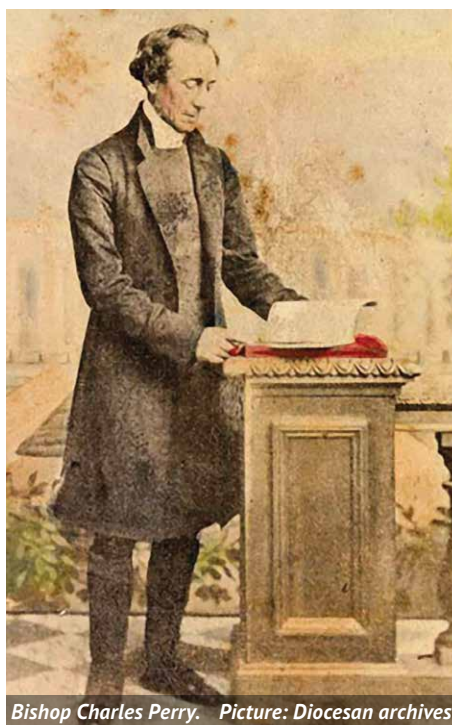
This is an attempt to put that rudeness in its historical context, to better understand it.

In 1843, Bishop Broughton, the Sydney-based, high church Tractarian Bishop of Australia officially and publicly asserted that the Pope had no right to appoint Bishops or create dioceses in Australia. In April the Pope had appointed John Bede Polding as Roman Archbishop of Sydney.

Broughton made his public protest in St James's Church, Sydney, on 25 March, 1843, which included these words:

“The Bishop of Borne [Rome] has not any right or authority, according to the laws of God and the canonical order of the Church, to institute any episcopal or archiepiscopal see or sees within the diocese of Australia and the province of Canterbury aforesaid; and we do hereby publicly, explicitly, and deliberately protest against, dissent from, and contradict any and every act of episcopal or metropolitan authority [that results from such actions]”

It was the first time since the Reformation that the Pope had established a diocese with the title of a city within the realm of England. This meant that there were now two bishops with the same title and diocese. In the words of his biographer



Bishop Charles Perry. Picture: Diocesan archives

“We should praise God for good progress in ecumenical relationships since 1843!”

Peter Adam

Whittington, Broughton therefore claimed that any actions of Roman Catholic bishops were invalid, especially ordinations, “as they were solemnized by a bishop in a state of schism they were, according to every ecclesiastical principle, utterly null and void”.

Broughton was defending the Catholic integrity of the Church of England in Australia. (He was also attempting to continue Anglican ascendancy over other denominations in matters of state aid for clergy, and for church buildings, and in education).

He instructed all clergy in Australia to read his declaration to their congregations. John Wollaston did so in Western Australia, and no doubt it was also read in Melbourne churches.

Broughton also publicly preached against Roman Catholic *doctrines* in Melbourne in 1843. We learn from Georgiana McCrae that in St James' Cathedral Melbourne, the Bishop preached

against praying to the saints, and the transubstantiation of the bread and wine in Holy Communion.

He had previously warned:

In these times of rampant Papistry it becomes the duty of every sincere Protestant to be up and doing before the days come and the years draw nigh when the myridons [sic] of the Vatican will ride rough-shod over the length and breadth of the land, as in the days of bloody Queen Mary.

It is in this context that we should understand the actions of the low-church Evangelical Bishop Perry, who arrived in Melbourne in 1848. Anti Roman Catholic sentiment was strong in England, and he would have known of Broughton's statement in 1843, which Broughton did not retract.

Perry did decline to meet with Geoghegan. However, here is another story.

Perry later publicly supported the staunchly Roman Catholic leader Caroline Chisholm, who provided safety in travel and employment for women who arrived in the colony. He chaired her committee, founded in 1852, and so publicly associated with Geoghegan, also on the committee.

(When Mrs Chisholm approached Broughton for support, he declined any public association with because she was a Roman Catholic, but did give her £5, and allowed his wife to work with her!)

We need to learn to understand people in the context in which they function, and with more evidence than just one story which grabs our attention.

I am full of admiration for Bishop Broughton and Bishop Perry, pioneers of the Anglican Church in Australia. We should understand their actions in their historical context, so different from our own. We might not approve of all their actions, but we can still thank God for them. We should praise God for good progress in ecumenical relationships since 1843! We should also continue to speak the truth, and speak it in love (Ephesians 4:15).

The Reverend Canon Dr Peter Adam OAM is vicar emeritus of St Jude's Carlton, canon emeritus of St Paul's Cathedral, and former principal of Ridley College. A fuller version of this piece, with references, is available at bit.ly/bishoperry.

What does Christianity offer those who

■ Hannah Craven

In an everyday act of insidious double speak, the average Australian woman's size of 16-18 is labelled "plus sized". Diet drugs like Ozempic are taking off. The fitness and wellness industries are booming.

Eating disorder symptoms rose dramatically during the COVID-19 pandemic, with a high risk of relapse, worsening symptoms, more new diagnoses and presentations in children younger than ever, according to research recently published in the *Journal of Eating Disorders*. Presentations increased by 63 per cent during 2020 at the Melbourne Royal Children's Hospital Eating Disorder Service.

It's true that realistic, normal, healthy body sizes and shapes are becoming slightly more visible in stores, advertising, and on TV, but they are barely a drop in the ocean. There are some stand out exceptions, but we all know they are exceptions. Ultimately, thin still wins. My son learns about body-shaming at his high-school. My nine-year-old daughter worries at night that she's fat.

We justify it by trying to believe in a straight line between size and health: thin is healthy, fat is unhealthy, thin is good, fat is bad. But in truth the relationship between size and health is much more complex than we make out. And as the statistics cited above reveal, our obsession with thinness is not making us healthier, it is making many of us unwell. The ultra-thin ideal is not about health. It is unrealistic – even impossible – for most people. It damages self-esteem, it reduces our ability to enjoy our own lives, and it promotes unhealthy patterns of diet and exercise. But healthy or not, we're meant to want to be thin. Or at least – we're not meant to be OK with being "fat".

So, what can Christian theology offer to young Australians who find it so hard to feel

at home in their bodies?

Unfortunately, the answer is that we've often done more harm than good. Christian dieting movements are big business in both the United Kingdom and the United States, with programs such as "Slim for Him", "Weigh Down Ministries", the "3D plan" and more.

"Still focused on the external, many versions of body-positivity simply seek to expand the range of bodies which might be objectified."

Hannah Craven

These movements are less visible in Australian Christian culture, but if all Australian women are swimming in diet-culture then Christian Australian women must be making theological connections and assumptions whether they know it or not. Does God care how much you weigh? What size you are? Is weight and size a Christian moral issue? Have you ever heard a Christian teacher or preacher even approach these questions, apart from a passing reference to his "smokin' hot wife"?

The Evangelical Women in Academia conference in July tackled such questions – along with many other topics often sidelined from mainstream theological reflection. This conference aims to create space for current and aspiring Christian women academics to present, to learn, to ask questions, and to see what's possible. One benefit of platforming different voices in theology is the inclusion of different experiences and topics historically ignored by the male-dominant tradition. We took part in sessions on architecture, fashion, art, hospitality, medical

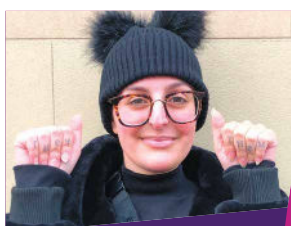
ethics, disability, climate, global poverty, and creative writing, alongside papers in biblical studies and theology. Throughout, conference interrogated the topic of beauty – its potential and its pitfalls, its place in a world of struggle and need.

Clinical psychologist Dr Jessica Green presented a workshop on the Health at Every Size approach to body image and eating disorder recovery. The Health at Every Size movement recognises that you cannot tell someone's health by looking at them, or by their weight. HAES is a non-diet approach to body image that promotes health behaviours above weight loss.

Dr Green also reflected on elements of Christian theology and teaching which intersect with women's experience of disordered eating and body image struggles.

While some feminist theologians have done good work on this topic, not much of this has made it to your average Australian churchgoer. The Christian tradition has associated women's bodies with sin, uncleanness and temptation, while at same time associating women themselves more closely with their bodies, reserving the "rational" – the "life of the mind" – for men. Sexist readings of Genesis 1 and the figure of Eve in particular are the source of many distortions. Eve-Mary typology reinforces the moral dichotomy between "good" women and "bad", strengthening the association between women's bodies and sin. For many women, dieting and weight loss are forms of control and self-discipline, and have moral overtones. Theologian Hannah Bacon points out the religious language so often attached to food – temptation, sacrifice, guilt and transgression, "good" foods and "bad" foods, in her work *Feminist Theology and Contemporary Dieting Culture*.

For me, the notion of my body as "an instrument not an ornament" has been



**Everyday
Saints**
Melbourne
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Alexandra Amerides

hasn't always felt at home with religion. As a non-binary person, they struggled to fit in with their Orthodox Christian upbringing. But joining an Anglican church changed things. These days, Alexandra has found a voice to express themselves through professional opera singing.



For Alexandra's story and more, listen to our podcast.

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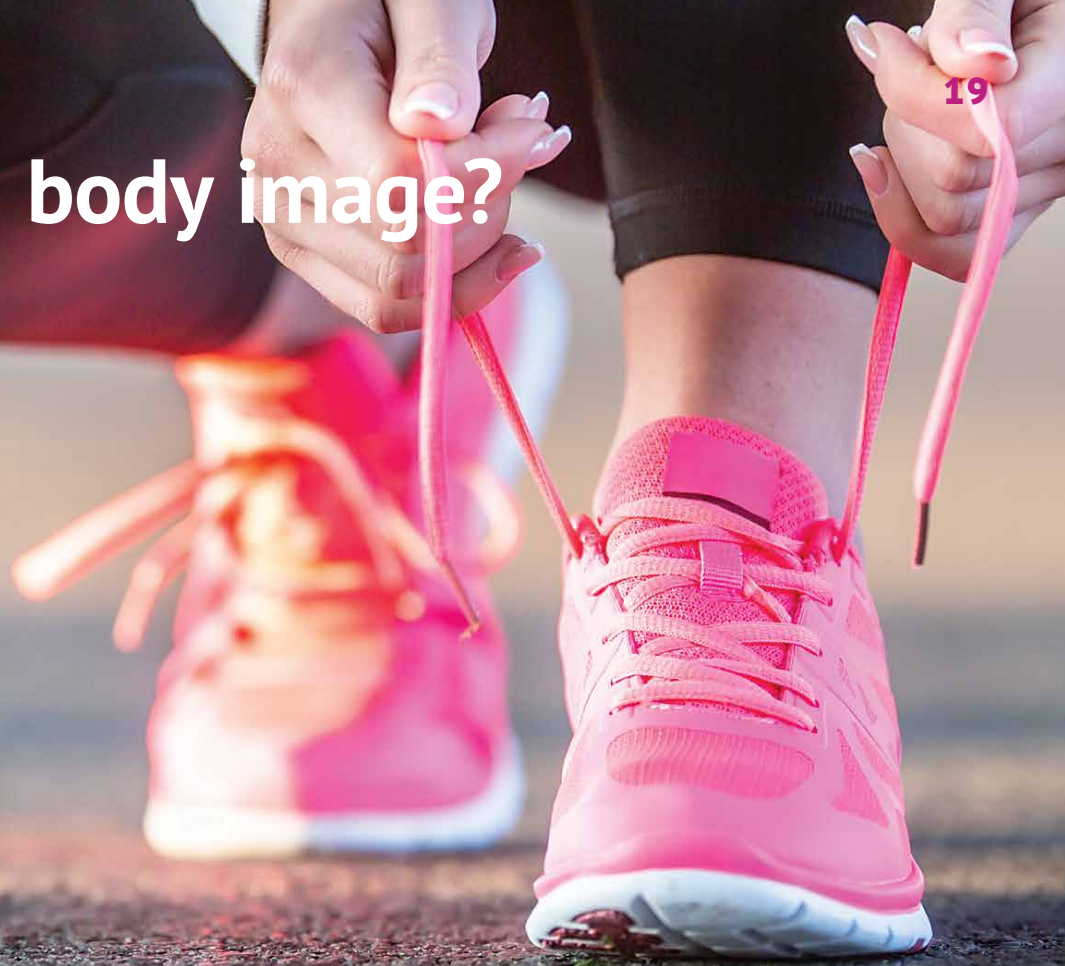
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struggle with body image?



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powerful, helping me to shift my focus and to learn to appreciate my body for things other than its appearance. It's a phrase that comes from the work of US clinical psychologists Lexie and Lindsay Kite.

Fostering gratitude for all the things my body allows me to experience has helped me to "be in it" differently: climbing a hill and taking in the view, running by the river in the early morning light, growing and birthing two babies. During the pandemic I started to exercise outdoors regularly, mostly for the mental health benefits. A bonus has been that now, in my 40s, I am more at ease in my body than ever before. I feel it literally carrying me through each day.

But I also worry that this strategy prioritises function, and marginalises disabled bodies in further ways. It relies on my being able-bodied, which – as John

Swinton so helpfully reminds us – is for all of us only temporary. My husband recently had an accident in which he broke both of his collarbones. Suddenly he was severely limited. He could no longer do the things he could previously do. What then?

Graduate student and Melbourne diocese Access and Inclusion Working Group member Elizabeth Culhane presented a workshop at the conference on the topic of disability inclusion. The slogans of the body positivity movement might not just be insufficient, they might also be destructive – only reinforcing the idea that being and feeling beautiful is what counts. Still focused on the external, many versions of body-positivity simply seek to expand the range of bodies which might be objectified.

Dr Green suggests body neutrality as a healthier way forward. Lifting the pressure

to feel great about our bodies can help us to feel less bad about them too.

So rather than beauty being tied to how you look or what you can do, Ms Culhane proposes an alternate concept of beauty grounded in the inherent worth and dignity of all. This moves beyond a "use based" valuing of bodies altogether, even though some use-based ways of valuing our bodies may be positive for some.

For something that so intimately and fundamentally affects us all, it is strange that theology has only so lately come to reflect on these kinds of questions. I am thankful for the space that Evangelical Women in Academia has given to these topics, and to women's experience.

For support with eating disorders or body image, contact the Butterfly Foundation on 1800 33 4673.

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Why an ex physicist teaches theology at

ISCAST fellow the Reverend Dr Robert Brennan is the training manager and teaches theology at the Indigenous Wontulp-Bi-Buya College in Cairns. It's a college that provides theological tertiary education to First Nations people who would otherwise struggle to access it.

With interests in the historical development of the relationship between theology and science, he has written *Describing the Hand of God: Divine Agency and Augustinian Obstacles to the Dialogue between Theology and Science*.

His background is in industrial physics, so how did Robert come to be a Uniting Church minister teaching theology to Indigenous people? In this article, Robert reflects on his journey through science and theology.

I grew up loving science and looking to the heavens. It seemed natural to pursue physics to explain the wonder and beauty of creation. While learning science, I also grew in my understanding of the love and power of God.

Practical science entranced me. As a medical physicist, I specialised in ergonomics: designing tools and processes to fit human capabilities. Too often the tools and processes people use at work make people inefficient, error prone and put them at risk. I worked to improve people's safety and health.

In this field, it was always people's attitude that was the key to making them safer and their work better. We humans retain habits even when they are harmful. In working for better ergonomics, it often

seemed impossible to break those habits and instil change. One would think it would be easy to offer people ways to work that did not wreck their hearing or health. It was not! People often stick with the familiar even when it is dangerous, hard or kills them slowly.

Ergonomics required flexible thinking, passionate care and unimaginable persistence to make change. It is interesting that this parallels pastoral work. In ministry too, people can take a lot of convincing to not wreck their lives by persisting with old habits.

I felt a sense of call to ministry from my late teens, but it seems God thought I needed to learn how the world worked in industry before going down the pastoral track. A lot of people could not understand how I could be a scientist and a person of faith. And, there were science-faith issues that I hoped could be resolved.

In my theological degree, I realised that I had been missing out on studying history. I absorbed both theology and history, and could not read enough. I also discovered that scientific training in careful logical thought is invaluable to good theological thinking.

But my earlier questions about the relationship of science to faith continued unanswered. My PhD was an opportunity to tackle one important question about the Holy Spirit's work in people and the world. Key leaders developing early modern science assumed the Holy Spirit's work would reflect God's perfection. They discovered, however, that nature is not always perfect. This led Darwin and others to conclude God did not act: "It couldn't be God's work." This

"I also discovered that scientific training in careful logical thought is invaluable to good theological thinking."

Robert Brennan

forced an all-or-nothing false dichotomy for important thinkers, a dichotomy that was shown to be based on an incomplete understanding of how God's Spirit works in humans and nature.

A call to teach is part of my sense of a call to ministry. So, with a newly minted PhD, I started to look for a teaching post. But I always seemed to be the bridesmaid and never the bride. As I was about to give up a couple of good scientist friends encouraged me. "Keep trying, God has a place for you," they said. Then a position at an ecumenical theological college in Cairns came up. It was the last place on earth I thought I would go. But I've been here for eight years now! It seems that God did have a place for me.

Indigenous communities need leaders and ministers, but Indigenous students have difficulty getting into and through mainstream theological training. Many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders are denied the opportunity to do tertiary study. Fortunately, at Wontulp-Bi-Buya College in Cairns, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders can receive theological training.

The college is culturally appropriate.



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Tuesday 10 October

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Wednesday 11 October

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Wontulp-Bi-Buya College helps Indigenous people access theological education. Picture: supplied

This means working within language limitations. It means allowing people to take time out to grieve and follow cultural practices without question. At other colleges students must make a case for every extension, these are not automatically given. Part of being culturally appropriate is to make those allowances. Then we see Indigenous men and women appointed to leadership positions. One of the high points of last year was seeing one of my students ordained by the Archbishop of Canterbury during a visit to Cairns.

I ask myself, "Why am I here at Wontulp-Bi-Buya?" and find three answers.

First, to persist for change in a seemingly impossible situation. Many of my students live in the poorest communities,

too many have been told "You cannot do this". Too many have been denied hope for generations. In Christ we have hope! But it takes much courage and endurance to hold up that light. I have a lot of experience with that.

Secondly, to learn to seek God's strength every day. But this is nothing compared with the strength my students need, as they face poverty, family violence, alcohol and drugs, sexual abuse, systemic injustices and racism.

And, thirdly, to meet the needs of our theologically conservative students. It is good to have someone teaching who is theologically conservative, but mentally flexible enough to work with the interesting and diverse ways Aboriginal and Torres

Strait Islanders think about theology from their own cultural perspective.

However, there is another issue that is becoming clearer to me around many of my Indigenous students' relationship with science and religion.

Highly respected historians Peter Harrison and Stephen Gaukroger, and theologian John Milbank, have recently described how scientific reasoning came to dominate European cultural and racial thought in the late 19th century. Notably, this was contemporary with the worst excesses and violence of our colonial period.

I am tempted to link the dominant, often-unquestioned dogma "it is scientific therefore true," with persistent structural racism. Structural racism is where a dominant culture assumes without question that their way of thinking and solving problems is the only or the best way to think. This could explain why many of the Indigenous people I work with have a deep distrust of science, and accept the conflict narrative that science opposes Christianity. More worryingly, others associate scientific reasoning as being the rationale for generations of abuse: including segregation into reserves, forced assimilation, and stories of unethical experimentation on their people.

To counter this, there is a recent move towards what has been called decolonisation. I am not sure that the term is helpful as it lumps too many ideas together. Nevertheless, it helps to actively question the stories that "everyone knows" about the relationship between science and religion. Quite possibly, this is part of why I need to continue where I am.

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NightTrade in the St Paul's Cathedral carpark at RISING Festival.

Picture: A Caygill

Yes there was a whiff of sulphur, but Christ's invitation still resonated

■ Andreas Loewe

Mortality – the span of our days and how we fill them with meaning – has fascinated artists and authors since the earliest days.

In the book *Ecclesiastes*, Kohelet, the ancient Teacher, devotes whole chapters to exploring the apparent futility of human living and striving. What is life worth, if at the end of it all we do is die? “Meaningless! Meaningless!” says the Teacher. “Everything is meaningless!” (*Ecclesiastes* 12:8). If the dead are not raised by the power of Christ's resurrection, we might as well “eat and drink, for tomorrow we may die”, St Paul knows (1 Corinthians 15:52). Making visible our mortality, and the choices we have in life to do good and resist evil, is one way to encourage people to strive to invest their lives with meaning while we have yet time to change.

From the earliest days, the four last things – death, judgement, hell and heaven – have been depicted in churches. In our book *Martin Luther and the Arts*, my co-author Katherine Firth and I look in detail at how Reformation artists, such as Lucas Cranach, used their imagination and skill to show the fate of those who have turned from Christ in painting the horrors of hell. In one such Reformation altar piece, *Law and Gospel*, a toothed hell-mouth, burping flames,

stands open. A skeleton drives those to be destroyed forever into its fangs. Juxtaposed with the images of death and hell is Christ, the redeemer. Holding the pennant of Resurrection victory, he has opened the gate of heaven to those who believe and trust in him. There's an urgency to Cranach's art. Now is the time to make the decision to turn to Christ. Reproduced in cheap woodcuts, these artistic warnings urging people to turn around their lives while there was yet time reached tens of thousands.

Recently during the RISING festival, hundreds of thousands viewed the activations in St Paul's and the wider precinct. The Haitian depictions of death and hell in the *GHETTO BIENNALE* exhibit were confronting, morbid reminders of an unredeemed fate. The indulgent *NIGHT TRADE* in the cathedral carpark made the real Paul's conclusion that for those who do not know the meaning of the resurrection, eating, drinking and merriment might well be the sole meaning of life. In contrast to both, inside St Paul's, the message of Christ's resurrection was given voice. African-American folk icon Beverly Glenn-Copeland literally breathed a sigh of relief and broke out into song: “Deep river, my home is over Jordan”. Contrasting the morbidity and nihilism of the two activations in the wider cathedral precinct, Glenn-Copeland confronted viewers with the hope

of resurrection: “Oh don't you want to go to the gospel feast, that promised land, where all is peace”.

As the artist's song was projected into the sanctuary of St Paul's, Jordan flowed close-by the cathedral walls. Invisibly, as all numinous boundaries are, it hallowed the festival, giving sanctuary to the wearied, and pointing to the sacred for the seeking; all in the midst of human fallibility and mortality. “Deep river, Lord, I want to cross over into camp-ground”, the Spiritual resounded in the walls of St Paul's. Like the Reformation images of the four last things, RISING on the Cathedral precinct was confrontational and visceral. Art delivered with a distinctive whiff of sulphur. Art to provoke, just like Cranach's. The journey from death and hell to life could be traced during the festival outside and within the walls of St Paul's.

For those with eyes to see and ears to hear, Christ's invitation was at the very heart of the festival. We could hear the call to cross-over and lead a meaning-filled life in this world so as to enter the place “where all is peace” in the next.

Dr Andreas Loewe is dean of St Paul's Cathedral and a senior fellow in Music History at the University of Melbourne's Faculty of Fine Arts. His latest publication, co-authored with Dr Katherine Firth, *Martin Luther and the Arts: Images, Music and Drama to Promote the Reformation*, is published by Brill.

My night at RISING was beautiful at first, it descended quickly

■ Rosie Stanton

Wu Tsang's *ANTHEM* at St Paul's Cathedral was a stunning video work that totally gripped your attention.

A huge silk screen with vibrant video projection that hung from the full height of the ceiling. All the lights turned off with deep vocal sounds playing that vibrated through the room. Your body merged with the church as the sound was conducted through brick and bone.

It was an oasis. A peaceful haven. A place running at a different speed. A steady changing show of images of the sky – the heavens. Glorious scenes of golden sunlight through the clouds. Video of folk icon Beverly Glenn-Copeland singing in the tradition of oral storytelling. Wavelengths that bound people together. The chaos of Friday night Flinders Street was a distant thought. We rested in stillness. All of us, sitting in the pews gazing upwards, mesmerised or meditating in the Church. Was God present?

Leaving *ANTHEM* through the back door, we descended to chaos. Back outside in the cold of the street, we turned down the stairs and into the carpark of the cathedral to *NIGHT TRADE*. Neon flashing lights through

the darkness. Loud dissonant music with unsettling and explicit lyrics. Pungent and indulgent food for trade. The smell of oysters and wine thick in the air. It was busy.

Hieronymus Bosch's *Garden of Earthly Delights* instantly came to mind. We had left the paradise of the left panel and entered the center panel. Chaotic and dark and immoral and indulgent.

I just wanted to go back to *ANTHEM*, but it had closed for the night.

(Why had the soothing *ANTHEM* closed at 10pm but the chaotic *NIGHT TRADE* continues late? It's like the children were sent to bed so the adults could play.)

Moving on to the *GHETTO BIENNALE*. We followed the current of the crowd into the laneway and up a tight staircase.

One look at this place, told me it was evil. This was the third panel.

Although I continued for the sake of art, I was unable to stay long in this room. An art exhibit inspired by Haitian Voodoo tradition, it made use of human bones reconstructed as bodies. Sand in patterns on the floor with candles. A subversive shrine to Mary the mother of Jesus in the back corner decorated with blister packs of various pills. A Bible and baby doll (referencing the baby Jesus) propped up in a decaying skeleton.

Where art used to be about the True, Good, and Beautiful, we have twisted it to be about the Dark, the Broken, the Irredeemable.

Human remains and references to death and dark magic. It delights in suspicious thinking and fearful spirituality.

What does this interest people in Melbourne? How does this interest them beyond spiritual tourism? How does this serve them beyond minority cultural consumption?

It perpetuated racial "Othering" and framed tribal minorities as suspicious, magical and dark, practicing traditions that create fear and thrive on suffering.

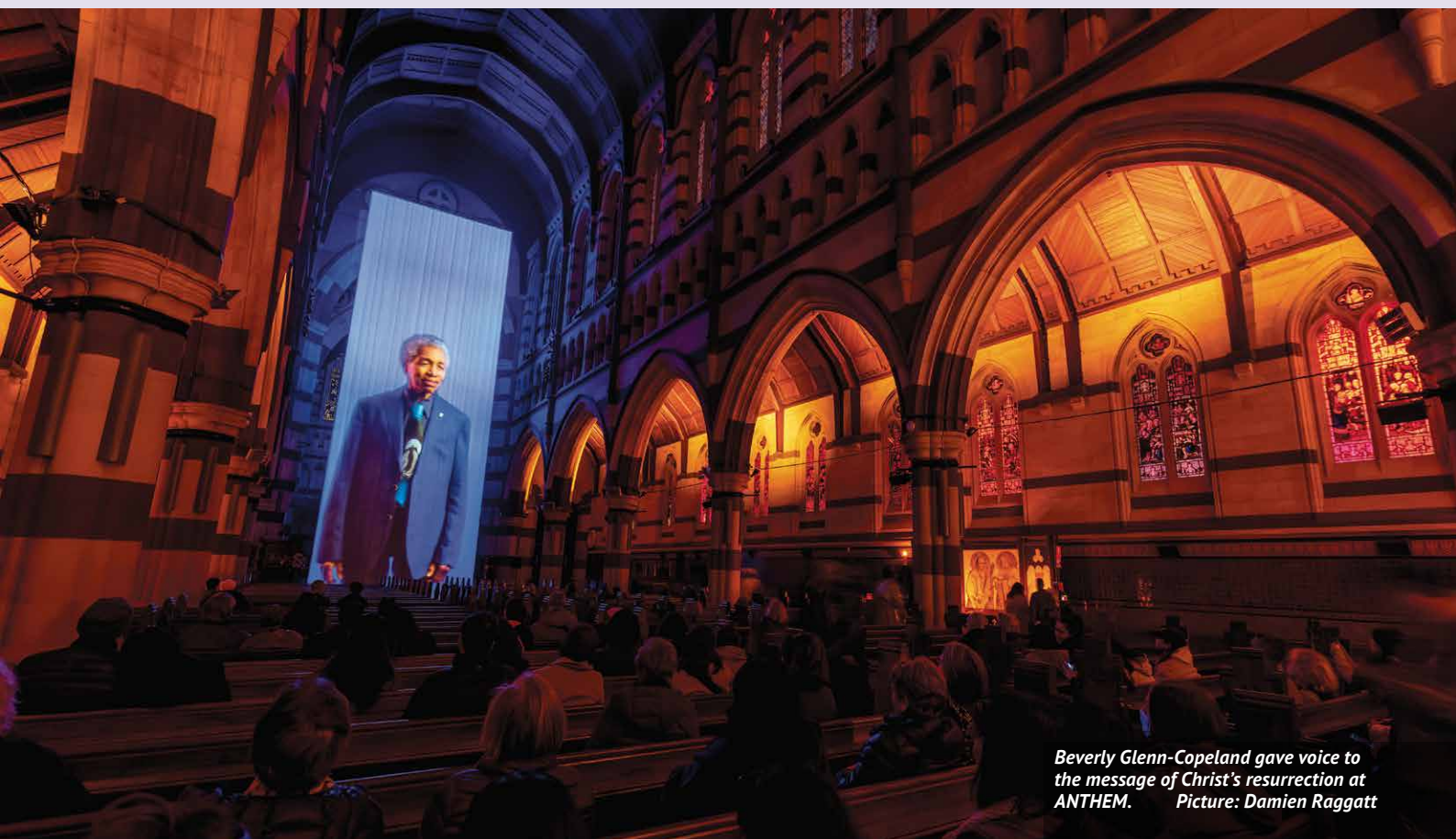
This type of dark spirituality ought not to be played with.

What a tragedy that this content is breaking into mainstream art.

What a shame for art's sake.

What a shame for God's sake.

Rosie Stanton is an emerging artist practicing in Melbourne. She graduated class of 2021 Bachelor of Fine Arts (Visual Arts) from the University of Melbourne. Rosie is a volunteer staff member at St Jude's Parkville. RISING Melbourne took place from 7 to 18 June with different art performances and installations throughout Melbourne. Ms Stanton visited three exhibitions without plan, and shared these reflections.



Beverly Glenn-Copeland gave voice to the message of Christ's resurrection at ANTHEM. Picture: Damien Raggatt

A rich alternative to polarised debates

■ Dan King

Christopher Watkin. Biblical Critical Theory: How the Bible's Unfolding Story Makes Sense of Modern Life and Culture. Michigan: Zondervan Academic, 2022.

In an age of catchy, one-word book titles, a book called *Biblical Critical Theory* may not be the first I'd pick up to browse at the book stall. But if there's danger in judging a book by its cover, we can extend this to its title. If we breezed past Christopher Watkin's latest book, the loss would be all ours.

Watkin lectures and researches in French Studies at Monash University. He is also a Christian author, and his latest book *Biblical Critical Theory* is being widely read and discussed. I first met him at Monash University, where I am involved in student ministry. We now also attend church together.

Despite ministering in a university setting, I admit that I'm not familiar with the academic world of critical theories. I needed the introduction of this book to name examples for me such as feminist theory, psychoanalytic theory, postcolonial theory, queer theory, eco theory, and critical race theory. Critical theories aim to bring to light something that was hidden about the way our society functions, and then argue for social change. Watkin's book expounds a *biblical* critical theory. His hope is that this book will help us to "understand our society, our culture, and ourselves through the lens of the Bible's storyline ... to analyse and critique the culture through the Bible".

One thing I loved about the book was that this critique of culture wasn't a blind affirmation, or a reactive hatchet job. Watkin's

contention is that in many of the polarised debates of our time each end of the spectrum has grasped a part of God's truth while neglecting other important truths. "Given a choice between two camps or positions in our culture, the Bible frequently settles for neither and presents us with something richer than both", Watkins writes. This richer alternative is not "middle-of-the-road compromise", but is rather a *diagonalisation*. Since each pole has grasped part of the truth, what we want is not a "meh" middle ground but rather "both things at the top of their energy".

Perhaps an example will help. In the West today it is common to think of human beings too highly, too lowly, or both by turns. Sometimes we imagine humans to be almost godlike, with limitless potential, believing that given enough time our intelligence and technology will solve all the world's problems and usher in some kind of heaven on earth. At other times we lean too far into evolutionary theory and say that humans are nothing special, just the latest animal that random forces have produced, with ultimately the same value as any other critter. Watkin says that each position has captured something of the truth. On the one hand, we are made in the image of God and so there is something "godlike" about humanity. On the other hand, we have more in common with the rest of creation than we often recognise. We are creatures, and need to treat our fellow creatures with more respect than we often do. The book takes us through scores of such diagonalisations, some of which may be familiar, while others will undoubtedly be fresh and profound.

The book is structured as a biblical theology, working its way from creation to new creation and centred on Christ. This

means that it can be read as a connected whole, following the storyline of the Bible, or as a kind of reference work if the reader is wrestling with a particular part of God's word.

One can't help being struck by the number of fields and disciplines that Watkin is interacting with throughout the book. He has clearly done his homework, discussing a myriad of ways that the Scriptures interact with diverse facets of our society and culture. He writes intelligently and piercingly, but also warmly. What I really appreciate is that, despite his impressive knowledge across many fields, he writes so humbly. The book is scattered with personal anecdotes, dry humour, and moments of vulnerable openness. One of my favourite parts is his original style of review questions at the end of each chapter, such as this: "Take one thought from this chapter and write a note that will travel back in time to *yourself* five years ago. The note begins 'You really need to think about this because...'"

Is there any negative critique? This is a lengthy book, and is certainly an academic work. Perhaps the task of engaging with and critiquing our culture in a nuanced way demands this. But it is a shame, because noticing how our culture ticks and tocks, and then appreciating how the Bible shows the way forward is something that all Christians would benefit from. If you are considering reading Watkin's book – and I hope you are – it will require some work. If philosophy isn't your natural habitat then don't be put off by the book's slightly intimidating introduction! Keep going and you will be richly rewarded.

Dan King ministers with the Australian Fellowship of Evangelical Students.

Windows work casts a light on St Columb's history

■ Stephen Hale

Malcolm Woolrich, Shedding Light: a history of St. Columb's Anglican Church, Hawthorn, through its stained glass windows. Port Adelaide: Green Hill Publishing, 2023.

Malcolm Woolrich's history of St Columb's Anglican Church Hawthorn is a remarkable achievement. There are many church histories, and each in their own way are useful records of the life of a particular church. Most are reasonably modest publications for understandable reasons.

Shedding Light is remarkable in both its

scale, quality and ambition! Over 400 pages, full colour, meticulous research from a wide range of sources, hundreds of pictures. I was tempted to weigh it on the scales because it is in every sense weighty.

Malcolm set out to write a book about the 32 stained glass windows in the church. This evolved into telling the story of the church through the windows, thematically capturing the many aspects of the St Columb's life, worship and witness since its foundation in 1883. It is a wonderful reflection on the Christian faith as captured in each of the windows.

The book introduces the place of stained

glass windows in church history, their journey to today, and puts each of St Columb's 32 windows in its historical context.

Shedding Light is full of theological and pastoral insight, especially as it describes the wonderful windows which capture the range of the words and actions of Jesus. As such it is more than history, but a beautiful work of devotion as we seek to respond to and live out Christ's example and teachings today.

Bishop Stephen Hale was formerly vicar of St Hilary's Network and bishop of Eastern Region Diocese of Melbourne.